

**LOWER YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE (GWAC)**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Thursday, September 20, 2012**

Denny Blaine Board Room  
810 E. Custer, Sunnyside, WA 98944

**I. Call to Order**

- A. Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm by Penny Mabie, Facilitator.

**Members present:** Rand Elliott, Yakima County Commissioner, Vern Redifer (alternate); Charlie McKinney, Dept. of Ecology, Tom Tebb (alternate); Andy Cervantes, Department of Health; Tom Eaton, EPA; Jim Dyjak (alternate), Concerned Citizens for Yakama Reservation; Robert Farrell, Port of Sunnyside, John Van Wingerden (alternate); Helen Reddout, Community Association for Restoration of the Environment, Wendell Hannigan (alternate); Jim Trull, SVID; Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek, Eric Anderson (alternate); Mark Nielson, Benton Conservation District, Heather Wendt (alternate); Stuart Turner, Turner & Co.; Steve George, Yakima Farm Bureau, Don Young (alternate); Jason Sheehan, Yakima Dairy Federation, Dan DeGroot, (alternate); Laurie Crowe, South Yakima Conservation District, Jim Newhouse (alternate); Tom Ring (alternate), Yakama Nation; Lonna Frans, USGS; Ramon Tobias, Hispanic Community Representative, Margarita Tobias (alternate); Bruce Perkins, Benton-Franklin Health District; and Gordon Kelly, Yakima Health District

**Member seats not represented:** Benton County; Lower Valley Community Representative; and WSU IAREC;

**Members absent:** Jim Beaver, Benton County Commissioner; Robert Morales, Lower Valley Community Representative; Dr. Desta Kefyalew, WSU-IAREAC; Kirk Cook, Washington Department of Agriculture; Elizabeth Sanchez, Yakama Nation; Jan Whitefoot, Concerned Citizens for Yakama Reservation; and alternates: Ginny Stern; Dr. Troy Peters; Matt Bachmann; Ron Cowan; and Jaclyn Ford

**Yakima County Staff:** Ali Sedighi, newly hired hydrogeologist moved here from Florida.

- B. Approval of previous meeting's minutes:** August 9, 2012 minutes were approved.

**II. Committee Business:**  
Agenda:

Mark Nielson would like EPA's recently completed Lower Yakima Valley Nitrate report to be added to the agenda. (Penny advised that a briefing will take place at a future meeting).

Operating Guidelines:

Committee approved Operating Guidelines. Final version will be posted on the website.

### **III. Committee Work Plan**

Two versions of a GWMA GWAC Work Planning Framework table were provided to the committee - one completely blank and the second with the first column (Work Plan Contents) populated with information drawn directly from the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 173-100) regarding Groundwater Management Area programs.

Vern Redifer provided the committee with a handout on the GWMA grant budget. The grant is for \$750,000. \$333,713 has been allocated to cover the County's costs to support the project over the next two years. The committee will decide where the remaining funds should be allocated.

Stuart Turner advised that item 6 "Implementation" on the framework table could start immediately as there may be some clear things we can do now before the study. Additionally, with regards to funding, Stuart has looked into targeting money from other areas, e.g. EPA, etc. Penny noted that there is a section for prioritizing implementation in the work planning framework table and that could be how to address these types of things.

Vern also reminded the committee that the workplan and budget discussed is for developing the GWMA program, not for implementation of the program.

#### **Committee's purpose :**

The committee began to work through completing the work planning framework table. A discussion ensued between some of the committee members regarding the purpose and focus of the committee. One member commented that a lot of the focus was being placed on the technical aspects of the nitrate problem, and that more focus should be given to the health risks associated with nitrates and its impacts to at-risk populations. The group agreed they are sympathetic to the impacted populations; however, the group was reminded that its primary purpose is to reduce nitrate levels in groundwater.

#### **Work Groups (subcommittees):**

The GWAC discussed work groups, how they will be used, populated, and how the work groups relate to the larger committee. The committee agreed that work groups will be established by the GWAC and that the GWAC will decide who is on the work groups, will give each work group their charge, and will discuss outputs and recommendations from the work groups as a whole. The County would like to have at least one County representative on each work group. The work groups work for the committee and will need to report back to the committee with a summary of their meetings.

#### **Work Plan Framework:**

## **Item # 9, Education and Outreach**

The committee agreed to add a new item number to the framework table: Item #9 “Education and Outreach”.

The committee agreed education and outreach is important; and was reminded that in addition to developing the full committee work plan, they also had to develop an outreach and education plan by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. One committee member suggested that to effectively provide education and outreach it is critical to know the area’s population. One committee member expressed a desire to allocate a significant portion of the GWAC budget (more than the \$100,000 currently noted in the GWMA grant budget) to outreach and education. Penny asked members to table any budget discussions until after the work planning framework was completed and discussions about prioritization began, as that would help drive budgeting decisions.

The committee decided there should be a work group to tackle Education and Outreach. They discussed who should be on the work group. Committee members Jean Mendoza and Ramon Tobias agreed to be on the Education and Outreach work group. Tom Eaton advised that he would like to have a representative from the EPA on the Education and Outreach work group. Mark Nielson said they have an environmental educator on staff, Rachel Little. He will talk to her to see if she would be available. Lisa Freund, with Yakima County will head up the work group as the County’s representative. Andy Cervantes also agreed to be on the work group.

It was agreed by the committee that item #9 “Education and Outreach” on the table should read as follows:

- Work needed to complete “Education and Outreach”:
  1. Population analysis;
  2. Learn about previous efforts and effectiveness.
- Resources/Information needed: Population analysis.
- Who will work on it? Work group - Lisa Freund, Jean Mendoza, Ramon Tobias, an EPA representative, Andy Cervantes, and Rachel Little (tentative).
- Schedule/Priority: High.

The Education and Public Outreach work group’s charge is to draft a goal statement, to identify target audiences (e.g., agencies, Non-English speaking, tribal community, disadvantaged, media, and general public) and to develop objectives for each target audience.

The work group will meet before the next committee meeting to begin development of the Education and Public Outreach Plan based on a planning matrix. The work group will report back to the GWAC on the results of their work. Penny will provide the work group with a template for reporting their work to the GWAC. Lisa Freund will make contact with all members of the work group to schedule a time and place to meet.

## **Item #1, Area Characterization**

The committee asked the County to help with providing information for the work plan framework, and particularly for the County to help with the work on Item #1, Area Characterization. The County agreed they can provide this information; however, they noted they will need help from every agency with “Land and Water Use Authorities and Responsibilities”. The County will provide what information they can. Other agencies will need to help fill in the blanks. Members of the committee are comfortable with the County handling this and feel it is a good starting point. USGS has offered to provide the County with information needed.

### **Item #2, “Land and Water Use Activities ”**

The committee turned to Item #2 on the work planning table - “Land and Water Use.” The committee discussed the complexity of the topic and the need for several work groups to address different aspects of #2. Those work groups are:

- Residential, Commercial and Municipal
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO)
- Characterization and Monitoring (cross-cut)
- Education and Outreach

It was agreed by the committee that item #2 “Land and Water Use Activities” on the table should read as follows:

- Work needed to complete: Compare existing data
- Resources/Information needed: Studies and research findings from EPA, NRCS, DOE, DOH, USGS, Dept. of Agriculture, major commodity experts, etc.
- Who will work on it? Work group: Stuart Turner, Mark Nielson, Steve George, Laurie Crowe, Charlie McKinney, Andy Cervantes, Jason Sheehan and Helen Reddout.
- Schedule/Priority: Not determined

### **Item #3 “Water Quality Goals and Objectives ”**

The committee believes this is an important work group, but coming up with clear goals and objectives will be difficult. The committee would like to know what their latitude is on this particular subject before committing to what work needs to be completed.

It was agreed by the committee that item #3 “Water Quality Goals and Objectives” on the table should read as follows:

- Work needed to complete: waiting for info.
- Resources/Information needed: EPA reports
- Who will work on it? Work group? Jean, Helen, member of Ecology
- Schedule/Priority: Follows after item #2

### **Item #4 “Alternatives ”**

The committee identified a need to have a source category to address nitrate directly. Once the source is understood, then the committee can discuss feasibility, time and cost.

The committee discussed that those working on irrigated agriculture should also be on this work group.

One resource suggested is the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Several committee members are part of the 590 subcommittee and can provide information.

The committee did not complete the framework regarding item #4, "Alternatives", other than noting it was a high priority.

Penny advised that she will clean up and update the work plan table to reflect the committee's discussions and distribute it to the committee. Each member can populate the table and send it back to Penny to compile to help with moving the work planning effort. Several committee members suggested that the County do some work to complete the table and bring it to the committee for review. The County has agreed to come up with a framework table for the committee to review, as well as undertaking a review of other GWMA programs, with an emphasis on identifying others' successes, failures, and lessons learned. However, the County wants to make note that they would like the framework to be a reflection of the committee.

#### **IV. Public Comment:**

Pony Ellison - He noted that approaching the work planning and GWMA program development the way the committee proposes is risky, but this committee is capable. The committee needs to obtain summaries of other GWMA's data to review and compare, so that the committee does not overlook any gaps that could hurt us in the future.

Wendell Hannigan - He noted the committee should not forget about the interaction with groundwater and surface water, and should rely on surface water standards.

#### **V. Side issue:**

Committee members queried EPA about their study to be released on September 27. They questioned if EPA is unilaterally moving ahead with actions based on their studies. While it was noted that the new studies were started in 2010, before the GWMA was formed; there is also discussion of Phase II activities on EPA's website. Committee members wondered if EPA plans to work collaboratively with the GWAC or proceed on their own path. EPA responded they will be posting the Lower Valley study to their website on Thursday and has offered to make a presentation to the committee. EPA also noted that their intent is to collaborate with the GWAC, but that they come to the table reserving their right to satisfy their own regulatory requirements and responsibilities.

#### **VI. Next Steps:**

- The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday, October 18, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. at Denny Blaine Board Room.
- County will put together the framework for the work plan for the committee to review next meeting.

- Subcommittee for Education and Public Outreach will meet and advise committee of status.
- Tom Eaton from EPA will brief committee on the nitrate studies at next meeting

**VII. 2012 Meeting Calendar:**

- October 18
- November 15
- December 20

Meeting calendar will be reassessed at the end of the year.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Meeting summary approved by the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee on October 18, 2012.