

LOWER YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GWAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, August 9, 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 5:00 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; Jan Whitefoot, Concerned Citizens for Yakama Reservation; Kirk Cook, Washington Department of Agriculture; John Van Wingerden (alternate), Port of Sunnyside; Helen Reddout, Community Association for Restoration of the Environment; Wendell Hannigan (alternate); Dr. Kefy Desta, WSU IAREC; Jim Trull, SVID; Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek; Mark Nielson, Benton Conservation District; Heather Wendt (alternate), Stuart Turner, Turner & Co.; Steve George, Yakima Farm Bureau; Jason Sheehan, Yakima Dairy Federation; Laurie Crowe, South Yakima Conservation District; Elizabeth Sanchez, Yakama Nation; Tom Ring (alternate), Lonna Frans, USGS; and Gordon Kelly, Yakima Health District

Members seats not represented: Benton County; Lower Valley Community Representative; and Benton County Health District

Members absent: Jim Beaver, Benton County Commissioner; Bruce Perkins, Benton Franklin Health District; Robert Morales, Mabton School District; Robert Farrell, Port of Sunnyside; and alternates: Eric Anderson; Don Young; Dan DeGroot; Jim Newhouse; Ginny Stern; Dr. Troy Peters; Matt Bachmann; Ron Cowan; and Jaclyn Ford

B. Approval of previous meeting 's minutes: July 12, 2012 minutes were approved.

II. Committee Business:

Operating Guidelines:

Committee approved Operating Guidelines with additional language to be added regarding how minority reports shall be presented and discussed with the media and that minority reports shall also be posted on the website for public viewing. It was agreed that the Chair and the author of a minority report will coordinate on media inquiries or outreach to the media when a minority report is involved in a Committee decision. Penny will draft the revised language and send to the Committee for review via email.

Meeting Summaries:

Question before the committee “Should meeting summaries be translated into Spanish?” There was general support for this to occur, along with suggestions from Committee members that summaries in English and Spanish should be provided to the media, including Hispanic radio stations and newspapers. There was additional discussion regarding other types of outreach as well. Vern Redifer noted that further discussion about outreach and education for the GWMA program and the Committee’s work needs to occur. The translation of summaries will be further discussed when the Committee discusses outreach and education.

III. Informational Needs :

Committee discussed the raw list of informational needs that was developed based on their brainstorming in July. The Committee agreed that the “Groundwater” category will be renamed “Hydrogeology.” There were several concerns expressed by different members regarding the breadth of information suggested. One discussion included the topic of bacteria, and how bacteria and nitrates are related, causes of nitrate contamination, etc. Due to time, the Committee simply identified items on the list that need further discussion, including clarification about the information being requested, should/shouldn’t it be on the list, why it is requested, priority, missing items, and how requested information supports the work of the committee. The Committee also agreed that it would be beneficial to have a fuller discussion of the workplan before delving further into the information needs discussion, as the workplan may help bring some clarity to the list. Penny will revise the raw list with changes discussed at the meeting, and mark the items that need further discussion.

Vern Redifer from Yakima County presented the committee members with a list of reference materials of current available information aligned with the draft raw information needs. This information has been posted on the website. Penny also noted that Jean Mendoza provided a list of research related to the effects of elevated nitrates/nitrites in drinking water. That list will be made available to Committee members as well.

IV. Committee Work Plan :

Vern discussed the need for the committee to work with the county to develop a work plan. The committee has until December 31, 2012 to have the following completed:

- Plan - scope (The county will draft sections of the work plan based on what the committee decides)
- Schedule - Vern provided a very draft schedule for the Committee to use as a basis for their development of a schedule. It was suggested that a monitoring program and funding should be added to the schedules as elements of the GWMA program.
- Budget (Committee needs to come to a decision of how the grant should be spent)
- A plan for how public education and outreach should be done to support the development of the GWMA program and to provide education about nitrates, safety, etc.

Budget - The total grant is for \$750,000.00. The grant is for development of the program; not implementation of the program. Some of the grant has been earmarked for County support staff, Penny Mabie, Committee facilitator and data gathering.

The Committee requested that the county provide them with the budget numbers for the earmarks. The county will have this information available at the next scheduled meeting.

Penny provided the Committee with a graphic from the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Quality Study that suggested a breakout of sub-groups to the Advisory Committee to work on development of the GWMA program. She also provided a rough draft flow chart that also suggested consideration of working groups to help the committee do its work. The Committee will further discuss how they will organize themselves to get the work done at the next meeting. Also discussed will be how to bring in further resources from the community to help on the sub or work-groups.

V. Public Comment:

No public comments.

VI. Next Steps:

- The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday, September 20, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. at the Denny Blaine Board Room.
- Topics:
 - Framework for work plan, including sub-groups.
 - Education and Public Outreach.

VII. Side notes:

- Department of Ecology announced two new alternates appointed.
- Committee members would like to have two more seats added for members of the Hispanic community. Ecology requested help from the Committee in identifying potential representatives to participate in the Committee.
- Tom Eaton, EPA informed the Committee that EPA is planning to have the Lower Yakima Valley Nitrates Report available in September 2012. EPA plans to hold a community meeting in the Valley to share the report. Tom asked the Committee if they wanted to get a briefing from EPA on the report.
- Tom also offered a technical workshop on Environmental Justice to the Committee if that is of interest.

VIII. 2012 Meeting Calendar:

- September 20
- October 18
- November 15
- December 20

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Meeting summary approved by the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee on September 20, 2012.

