

LOWER YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GWAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, June 5, 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. Penny explained that the facilitator's job is to remain neutral and make sure the committee gets tasks accomplished.

Members present: Rand Elliott, Yakima County Commissioner; Charlie McKinney, Dept. of Ecology; Andres Cervantes, Department of Health; Tom Eaton, EPA; Jan Whitefoot, Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation; Kirk Cook, AGR; Robert Farrell, Port of Sunnyside; Helen Reddout, Community Association for the Restoration of the Environment; Dr. Kefy Desta, WSU IAREC; Jim Trull, SVID; Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek; Matt Bachmann, USGS (alternate for Lonna Frans); Mark Nielson, Benton Conservation District; Stuart Turner, Turner & Co.; Steve George, Yakima Farm Bureau; Jason Sheehan, Yakima Dairy Federation; Laurie Crowe, South Yakima Conservation District; Elizabeth Sanchez, Yakama Nation; Bruce Perkins, Benton Franklin Health District; Gordon Kelly, Yakima Health District;

Members absent: Jim Beaver, Benton County Commissioner; Lonna Frans, USGS; Robert Morales, Mabton School District; and alternates Eric Anderson; Jaclyn Ford; Jim Newhouse; Tom Tebb; and John Van Wingerden

B. Selection of Chair: None. Will take place at next scheduled meeting, Thursday, July 12, 2012.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes: None.

II. Unfinished Business: None.

III. New Business:

Committee Members' Expectations

Andy Cervantes – Improve water quality for public and educate the public on opportunities to improve water quality.

Tom Eaton – Determine the best program to improve groundwater quality and protect groundwater from any further pollution. Implement programs - monitor and adjust.

47 Rand Elliott – Develop reasonable and practical solutions to reduce nitrate
48 levels to acceptable levels.

49 Charlie McKinney– That this committee sees this as an opportunity and uses it
50 as such.

51 Jan Whitefoot – Identify sources of pollutants. Work with EPA to enforce the
52 Clean Water Act. Help citizens and municipalities identify pollution in wells.
53 Inform public and prosecute polluters.

54 Kirk Cook – Establish major cause(s) of problems and develop technically-
55 based approach to address the problem areas.

56 Robert Farrell – Help ensure safe, uncontaminated groundwater is available as
57 a potable source for everyone who wants it.

58 Helen Reddout – Restore the lower valley back to a healthy environment it was
59 before ground, air and water pollution. Prosecute those who continue to
60 pollute. Look into limiting the use of groundwater in order to conserve and
61 ensure it is available for all.

62 Dr. Kefy Desta – Develop a process for reviewing data and other information so
63 recommendations and decisions are made on sound information.

64 Jim Trull – Develop strategy. Come up with scientific, technical information to
65 alleviate the problem (research based) and implement the technical measures
66 that come out of this work.

67 Jean Mendoza – Ask our creator to join us and watch over us as we seek our
68 common goals. Ensure future generations of children can ride their horses
69 along and safely drink from the groundwater and surface water.

70 Matt Bachmann – Need to identify scientific questions the US Geologic Survey
71 (USGS) might address.

72 Mark Nielson – Develop a scientifically based plan that relies on voluntary and
73 incentive based actions.

74 Stuart Turner – Assist in the launch of the Groundwater Management Area
75 Committee (GWAC). Develop greater citizen awareness of ground water and
76 the factors that can improve or degrade groundwater. Assist the GWAC
77 members with greater understanding of historic and current agricultural
78 production practices and their potential influence on groundwater over time.

79 Steve George – Prioritize so that the nitrate issue is the first focus of this effort.
80 Identify the status of the current problem and identify solutions. Keep solutions
81 simple and incentive based.

82 Jason Sheehan – Use sound science and facts to identify issues related to
83 ground water. Develop an action plan to improve ground water quality over
84 time.

85 Laurie Crowe – Implement solutions in a reasonable timeframe.

86 Elizabeth Sanchez – Improve groundwater quality. Assure human health is
87 protected and find a doable solution that everyone can incorporate and be
88 happy with.

89 Bruce Perkins – Provide realistic public health perspective and represent Benton
90 County.

91 Gordon Kelly – Arrive at a consensus for a viable, achievable and feasible plan
92 to improve groundwater quality within the GWMA.

93
94 **Draft Operating Guidelines**
95 Members should read through the Draft Committee Operating Guidelines and
96 provide feedback prior to the next scheduled meeting.
97

98 Foundational information:
99

100 Purpose of this committee is to work collaboratively to implement strategies to
101 reduce nitrate contamination concentrations in groundwater. The GWMA
102 area encompasses the Lower Yakima Valley from Union Gap to Benton City,
103 minus the Yakama Reservation.
104

105 Participation: Facilitator will make sure that all members are heard. Members
106 will not sign off on information on behalf of their constituency. Any and all
107 information can go with members so they can discuss with their constituency.
108 There needs to be consistent participation by members. Suggestion made: If a
109 member misses two meetings they shall receive a warning. If a member misses
110 three meetings they shall be dismissed from the committee.
111

112 Quorum: Committee needs to decide on whether or not a quorum is needed
113 to make decisions. Proposals: 1. 80% of members must be in agreement to
114 adopt a decision. 2. 2/3 of members must be in agreement to adopt a
115 decision. 3. Everyone needs to vote if it is a major issue. Decision regarding
116 what constitutes a quorum will be made at the next scheduled meeting.
117

118 Roles and Responsibilities:
119 Members need to come prepared to each meeting. Read all materials prior to
120 the meeting.
121

122 Decision making:
123 Members need to decide how decisions should be made, whether they are
124 decided by consensus, majority vote or consensus with minority report. In open
125 discussion several members leaned toward consensus with minority report.
126

127 Recording of meetings:
128 A suggestion was made to have meetings recorded, either voice recording or
129 video recording, to promote transparency. Not all members were in favor of
130 recording meetings. The committee needs to make a determination on
131 whether to record meetings or not.
132

IV. Background and Outcomes:

133 Commissioner Rand Elliott thanked all committee members for their willingness to
134 participate and provided a brief history of the events leading up to the formation
135 of the Groundwater Management Area and the Groundwater Advisory
136 Committee.
137

139 Charlie McKinney, Department of Ecology, explained that Ecology is in a two-year
140 contract with Yakima County. Yakima County is in a supportive role. The County
141 will provide administrative and technical support. Committee members are the
142 decision makers.

143

144 **V. Public Comment:**

145

146 Yakima County Public Services Director, Vern Redifer – noted that he wrote the
147 scope for the project. An additional \$450,000 in funding is in the pipeline, thanks to
148 Senator Jim Honeyford giving us \$750,000 for the budget. He added that all
149 members on this committee are appointed and have equal voting rights. There
150 are no ex-officios on this committee.

151

152 **VI. Decisions:**

153 1. Commissioner Rand Elliott will serve as interim chairperson until the
154 committee appoints a chairman.

155 2. A contact list with all members' contact information may be shared
156 amongst members.

157 3. All members of the committee agree to being contacted via email.

158 4. Future meetings: Frequency: Committee agreed to monthly meetings and
159 reassessing in 6 months. Location: Committee agreed to continue having
160 meetings at the Denny Blaine Board Room. Day of the week: Committee
161 agreed to hold monthly meetings every 2nd Thursday of the month. Time of
162 day: Committee agreed that the next 3 meetings will have a start time of
163 5:00 p.m. and will reassess the start time after the third meeting. Length of
164 meetings: Committee agreed to hold meetings for two-hours. Facilitator
165 will reassess meeting length after the first three months.

166

167 **VII. Next Steps:**

168 • The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday, July 12, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. at the
169 Denny Blaine Board Room.

170 • Penny will be contacting each member before the next meeting to
171 conduct interviews.

172 • Based on today's discussion, Penny will make revisions to the Draft
173 Operating Guidelines and send them out to the committee within one
174 week. Please respond within the target date she provides.

175 • Mark Nielson will provide the committee with budget and background
176 information on the Columbia Basin Groundwater Management Area.

177 • GWMA website is currently in production.

178 • File sharing system is in the works.

179 • Watch for and read GWAC communications prior to next meeting.

180 • The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm.

181

182 **VIII. 2012 Meeting Calendar:**

183 • July 12

184 • August 9

185 • September 13
186 • October 11
187 • November 8
188 • December 13

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190

191 Meeting summary approved by the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management
192 Area Advisory Committee on _____;

193
194 Signed: _____.