



LOWER YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GWAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, November 21, 2013

*Radio KDNA
121 Sunnyside Ave, Granger WA 98932*

I. Call to Order:

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Penny Mabie, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.	✓	
Chelsey Durfey	Agronomist, Turner and Co. (alternate)	✓	
Helen Reddout	Community Association for Restoration of the Environment	✓	
Wendell Hannigan	Community Association for Restoration of the Environment (alternate)		✓
Jan Whitefoot	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation		✓
Jim Dyjak	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation (alternate)	✓	
Jean Mendoza	Friends of Toppenish Creek	✓	
Eric Anderson	Friends of Toppenish Creek (alternate)		✓
Larry Fendell	Friends of Toppenish Creek (Stand in)		✓
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative	✓	
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		✓
Robert Farrell	Port of Sunnyside	✓	
John Van Wingerden	Port of Sunnyside (alternate)		✓
Jim Trull	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control	✓	
Ron Cowin	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control (alternate)		✓
Laurie Crowe	South Yakima Conservation District	✓	
Jim Newhouse	South Yakima Conservation District (alternate)		✓
Tom Eaton	U.S. EPA	✓	
Marie Jennings	U.S. EPA (alternate)		✓



Groundwater Management Area (GWMA):

The purpose of the GWMA is to reduce nitrate contamination concentrations in groundwater below state drinking water standards

Lonna Frans	USGS Washington Water Science Center		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS Washington Water Science Center (alternate)	✓	
Kirk Cook	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Ginny Prest	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)	✓	
Charlie McKinney	WA Department of Ecology	✓	
Tom Tebb	WA Department of Ecology (alternate)		✓
Andy Cervantes	WA Department of Health	✓	
Ginny Stern	WA Department of Health (alternate)	✓	
Dr. Kefy Desta	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center		✓
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center (alternate)	✓	
Elizabeth Sanchez	Yakama Nation	✓	
Tom Ring	Yakama Nation (alternate)	✓	
Rand Elliott	Yakima County Board of Commissioners		✓
Vern Redifer	Yakima County Board of Commissioners (alternate)	✓	
Steve George	Yakima County Farm Bureau	✓	
Justin Waddington	Yakima County Farm Bureau (alternate)		✓
Gordon Kelly	Yakima County Health District	✓	
Jason Sheehan	Yakima Dairy Federation	✓	
Dan DeGroot	Yakima Dairy Federation (alternate)	✓	
Kathleen Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1	✓	
Bud Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1 (alternate)	✓	
Patricia Newhouse	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2	✓	
Sue Wedam	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2 (alternate)		✓
Doug Simpson	Irrigated Crop Producer	✓	

14
15
16
17
18
19
20

II. Welcome and Meeting Overview

Introductions

Moment of Silence

III. Committee Business:

21
22 October 17, 2013 Meeting Summary was approved with no changes.

23
24 December meeting date is confirmed for Thursday, December 19, 2013.

25
26 **GWMA Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC) Self Assessment Survey**

27 Penny Mabie explained that she would be sending an email to all group
28 members with a link to an online survey. The GWMA Groundwater Advisory
29 Committee (GWAC) Self Assessment is a tool that will calculate how well the
30 group is doing. The two-page survey involves rating the statements with 1 =
31 Strongly Disagree; 2 = Don't Feel Strongly or 5 = Strongly Agree. At the end of this
32 survey is a field for comments. Those taking the survey do not have to submit
33 their name. There is a two week deadline for this to be completed. Due date is
34 December 6, 2013.

35
36 **Facilitation Contract Renewal – Vern Redifer**

37 Vern Redifer reminded the group that as it's the end of the year, the committee
38 needs to decide whether or not to continue the contract with Penny Mabie of
39 EnviroIssues. A discussion followed and the end consensus was to continue the
40 contract for 2014 as the group is making good progress, the budget is healthy
41 and the group likes Penny facilitating the meetings. A request was made for
42 receiving the meeting materials in a more timely fashion. Penny noted that often
43 materials await working group meeting review, which affects the schedule, but
44 agreed to send out as much as she could earlier.

45
46 **IV. Outstanding Committee Decisions**

47 **Finalize GWMA Program Goals and Objectives – Penny Mabie**

48 Penny stated as she has not received any comments on the working product
49 that it is ready for now. She noted the caveat "For Now" as the group is still in a
50 very early stage (gathering information) so they can consider these as guiding
51 goals but it will remain a working document – it's not locked down. It's reflective
52 as to where the committee is at this point.

53
54 Discussion followed regarding the timeline for finalizing the GWMA program, as
55 goal dates were removed from the current draft of the goals and objectives. The
56 optimistic goal stated to Ecology was five years as there was a need for a
57 timeline to demonstrate some progress. Penny asked if the committee wants to
58 have a timeline in the document. Concerns were voiced in regard to putting
59 timeframes in without knowing what all is involved in collecting the information to
60 make the goal. It was suggested that deadlines, targets and a schedule are
61 needed to keep the GWAC on task. The workgroups are doing the majority of
62 the work and it would be beneficial for them to have a deadline. Vern reminded
63 all that if they review the formation of this group and the RCW, the task of this
64 group is to develop a program to achieve a way of reducing nitrates.
65 Timeframes should be associated with the tasks, instead of the objectives. Once
66 the program is developed, the GWAC will pass on this program to other
67 agencies, users, etc. He reminded the committee that Yakima County has not

68 yet signed a contract with Ecology to free up the \$1.6m. When the County does
69 sign a contract, there will be dates for a completed program. Ecology will
70 decide on the program due date. Decision makers in Olympia have lots of
71 expectations that this group will deliver. The goals and objectives discussion was
72 tabled until December. It was suggested that Matt Bachmann and Jean
73 Mendoza get together and utilizing the last draft, write up proposed language
74 associated with timelines and the group can review their proposal at the next
75 meeting.

76
77 A request was made that the County issue a press release at the end of the year
78 so that the public will know what the GWAC has accomplished. Vern explained
79 that the workplan that we submitted to Ecology has a list where we agreed we
80 would give the public information. He pointed out that the quarterly reports that
81 we produce for Ecology are on the County's website for the public to access.
82 The County will use those quarterly reports and develop an end-of-year report to
83 distribute to the media.

84
85 **Consider Including Agricultural History of Yakima in GWAC Materials – Penny**
86 The GWAC decided the report provided to them for review should be posted on
87 the GWMA website, but with a "draft" stamp on it. A committee member
88 suggested the document does need to expand information on irrigation and
89 canals but that can be added later; others agreed.

90 91 **V. Nutrient Budget and Data Modeling Options – Kirk Cook**

92 Kirk Cook opened by stating that a tremendous amount of work was put into the
93 comparisons of methods to analyze nitrogen loading to groundwater for the
94 Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area and thanked all who
95 contributed. He explained the GWAC needs to decide on an option of either
96 looking at what's occurring at the top of the water table or after the nitrate has
97 gone into the water. Kirk said that the Yakima Valley has pretty good fluctuation
98 in the water table which affects the vadose zone and that it moves during each
99 season.

100
101 He then examined the three proposals presented: 1) USGS Proposal; 2) USGS
102 Yakima GW Model coupled with N Balance and 3) Hybrid Approach. Kirk
103 recommended the USGS Model with N Loading (\$150k) as it is technically solid,
104 addresses GWMA's goal and USGS will match half the cost.

105
106 Discussion followed with some suggesting that modeling is not needed; rather all
107 that is needed is to make changes on the ground instead of working on
108 answering questions for which we already know the answers. The group will
109 consider a no modeling option. Penny observed that it might be useful to the
110 GWAC to have a better sense of the context of the modeling conversations –
111 how they relate to the GWMA program, the purposes for the various technical
112 work, etc. Many GWAC members agreed. She will work with Kirk, Vern, Troy
113 Peters, Charlie McKinney and Matt to frame this in a context so there can be a

114 better conversation next month. Vern pointed out that there is a need to create
115 a plan/program as we do have a deadline with money to spend.
116

117 **VI. Deep Soil Sampling – Jim Trull**

118 Jim noted that participation and cooperation by the landowners is absolutely
119 necessary to make the GWMA effective and functional. The sticking point in
120 finalizing the deep soil sampling plan is the issue of confidentiality. Landowners
121 would like to know if they have high nitrate levels but they are not willing to risk
122 their family and livelihood if high levels are discovered and they are subsequently
123 sued for polluting. Yakima County's prosecuting attorney has reviewed all of the
124 state's statutes and says that information provided through Farm Plans is not
125 discoverable under the Freedom of Information Act. Landowners countered that
126 they could be sued for something else and once in the court system, there could
127 be a disclosure request that would show if their land did have issues with nitrates.
128

129 It was decided that Laurie Crow,, Jim, Vern, a Yakima County Prosecuting
130 Attorney and the Sunnyside-Roza Joint Board of Control's attorney would meet
131 and discuss the confidentiality issue.
132

133 **VII. Standardized Talking Points – Lisa Freund**

134 Lisa presented the 14 talking points slides for the group's review and approval.
135 EPO's charge is the public education component and the group created some
136 very simple, basic slides and a slide template for the working groups and the
137 GWAC to use as a foundation for public presentations. The 14 slides explain what
138 the GWMA is, why it was formed, what the group is doing and how the public
139 can participate. Feedback from the committee suggested that more work
140 needs to be done. Concerns were voiced about the use of "enforcement
141 strategies"; they would like to see more emphasis on identifying the problems, as
142 the GWMA mission is to help producers improve practices. Stuart and Charlie
143 agreed to send Lisa their proposed edits. Penny suggested that Jason and Stuart
144 work together to draft their edits and then send them to Lisa.
145
146

147 **VIII. Working Group Report Outs**

148 As the meeting was exceeding its timeframe, Penny suggested the committee
149 skip the working group report outs unless the working groups had urgent items to
150 address. There were no urgent items.
151

152 **IX. Committee Member Inquiry**

153 Kathleen Rogers asked what is being done to provide alternate water sources for
154 the people in the valley with contaminated wells. Vern answered that the
155 County was successful in a Department of Health request in securing \$150,000 for
156 a clean drinking water program. This is not part of the GWMA funding. This
157 program has not begun yet, but the people that were provided with a reverse
158 osmosis system have been surveyed and the County is hoping that a group
159 could be created with all the agencies together to get some matching money.
160

161

162 **X. Public Comment:**

163 Chelsea Durfey suggested that the group waits until the GWMA Groundwater
164 Advisory Committee (GWAC) Self Assessment Survey results come in before
165 renewing Penny's contract. Vern noted that the committee had already
166 decided to move forward with the contract. He queried the committee if they
167 wanted to reconsider their decision; they did not.

168

169 Pony Ellington pointed out that the group needs hard groundwater data so the
170 consultant team is developing concrete recommendations for sampling, drilling
171 of shallow water wells and a budget discussion.

172

173 **XI. Next Steps:**

- 174 • Penny, Vern, Matt, Kirk and Dr. Troy Peters will discuss how to frame the
- 175 Data Modeling concept in context with the work of other working groups.
- 176 • Edit Standardized Talking Points.
- 177 • Pursue confidentiality Issue.
- 178 • Further consider modeling options.

179

180 **XII. Next Meeting:**

- 181 • Review edits to Goals and Objectives.
- 182 • Identify modeling option.
- 183 • Approve edited Standardized Talking Points.

184

185 **XIII. 2013 Meeting Calendar**

- 186 • December 19

187

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

189

190 The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

191

192 Meeting summary approved by the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Advisory
193 Committee on January 16, 2014

194

195