

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

### MEETING SUMMARY

**Thursday, September 19, 2013**

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

#### I. Call to Order:

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Penny Mabie, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.		P
Chelsey Durfey	Agronomist, Turner and Co. (alternate)	P	
Helen Reddout	Community Association for Restoration of the Environment		P
Wendell Hannigan	Community Association for Restoration of the Environment (alternate)		P
Jan Whitefoot	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation		P
Jim Dyjak	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation (alternate)	P	
Jean Mendoza	Friends of Toppenish Creek	P	
Eric Anderson	Friends of Toppenish Creek (alternate)		P
Larry Fendell	Friends of Toppenish Creek (Stand in)	P	
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative	P	
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		P
Robert Farrell	Port of Sunnyside	P	
John Van Wingerden	Port of Sunnyside (alternate)	P	
Jim Trull	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control	P	
Ron Cowin	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control (alternate)		P
Laurie Crowe	South Yakima Conservation District	P	
Jim Newhouse	South Yakima Conservation District (alternate)		P
Tom Eaton	U.S. EPA	P	
Marie Jennings	U.S. EPA (alternate)		P
Lonna Frans	USGS Washington Water Science Center		P
Matt Bachmann	USGS Washington Water Science Center (alternate)	P	
Kirk Cook	WA Department of Agriculture	P	
Ginny Prest	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)	P	
Charlie McKinney	WA Department of Ecology	P	

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

## II. Committee Business:

Introductions

Moment of Silence

August 15, 2013 meeting minutes are still being reviewed and unavailable for approval. If there are any additions or corrections please send them to Penny or Daniel.

November meeting date is confirmed for Thursday, November 21.

## III. Membership Updates:

Charlie McKinney welcomed new GWAC members Kathleen Rogers, Patricia Newhouse and Doug Simpson.

### Reminder:

The GWAC calendar is on the Yakima County website (<http://www.yakimacounty.us/gwma/>). There is a list of working groups so you can participate in other groups or can change working groups if desired.

## IV. Goals & Objectives

Livestock/CAFO working group made some minor suggestions. Under the second bullet, Identify Problems, they suggested it read practices as appropriate, as this will broaden the scope. The second suggestion was on the first bullet, to adjust it to say develop recommendations for Best Management Practices. Penny asked the rest of the working groups to review the Goals and Objectives and provide their input.

**V. USGS Presentation:** Matt Bachmann gave a presentation on USGS and its capabilities to address some of the GWMA data objectives. He described a model that could be constructed to handle all the data for the GWMA and could then be used to look at various management scenarios and predict effectiveness and long term impacts on nitrate contamination. The model would be built on much existing data, with some data refinements needed, as well as additional data inputs. Matt noted that USGS is interested in producing this kind of model, and he sees this as a potential opportunity for the GWAC to leverage funds.

**VI.**

**Group Comments & Questions:**

- How long will it take to get usable results? - It will take at least 18 months to get the bare bones up and running, with a result of three years being more realistic to get usable results.
- One member commented that the model could potentially help to predict what would happen in different scenarios.
- The group discussed whether they wanted to pursue this model. Considerations discussed included whether there are alternatives to the model, the additional time that would be needed to construct the model, and the cost of the model.

Discussion outcome: It was proposed to have Matt meet with the Data Collection working group to have a discussion of the options on a scientific level. Penny asked Data Collection to frame the pros and cons of the different options and bring back a recommendation to the GWAC. Penny asked for a timeframe on when the Data working group could return to the GWAC with the recommendation. Kirk Cook requested time on the November meeting agenda.

**VII. Deliverables from HDR:**

Jay Decker from HDR reviewed the Deliverables Table that lays out the products they will be developing. Sixteen of the deliverables are due by April 15, 2014. It was noted that the deliverable due dates were based on the Scope of Work developed by the County. Some scope changes are being considered and may change the deliverable due dates. The County as the contracting entity has final approval on all deliverable reviews.

**VIII. Working Group Report Out:**

**Data Collection:**

Kirk Cook reported for the Data Collection group. The group is working on resequencing field verifications. They are trying to make it as cost effective as possible. There is currently a database with 1,000 wells with a consultant collecting more information. Kirk reported then need for an analysis first to reduce field activity and focus

on wells that would be included in the field verifications. The group discussed a basin-wide nitrogen assessment. They focused on where efforts should be focused and potential target areas such as drain fields, irrigated agriculture, dairy farms, etc. The working group discussed Deep Soil Sampling (DSS) and whether there were contradictions between the working groups' input. The DSS proposal is planned to be presented at the next GWAC meeting in October.

### **Irrigated Agriculture:**

Jim Trull reported for the Irrigated Ag group. The group recruited new members with technology expertise. Ten people met earlier in the day to discuss a broader view of the issues. They focused on the Deep Soil Sampling plan. The group should have a plan and hope to have a final draft for review for Deep Soil Sampling at the next meeting.

### **CAFO/Livestock:**

Charlie McKinney reported for the Livestock/CAFO working group. The group discussed roles and jurisdictions of the working groups. As far as Deep Soil Sampling is concerned, the group feels the livestock group should investigate pens, lagoons, stock piles, etc. The irrigated agriculture working group should focus on nutrients. The group agrees that confidentiality should be maintained for those involved with the studies. It was suggested that new GWAC members need to sign up for a working group.

Vern Redifer commented on the legality of confidentiality. Vern has spoken to the County's Corporate Counsel as to the legality of confidentiality with public disclosure a concern. There is a legal way to keep information confidential. That would require the group to work closely with the South Yakima Conservation District and they can generate reports that will keep names and locations confidential.

### **Regulatory Framework:**

Tom Eaton reported for the Regulatory Framework working group. The group met earlier in the day and suggests getting an analysis of programs. They strongly support the completion of the Nutrient Plan. They propose to use it to look at programs in place in order to evaluate effectiveness, identify potential sources, to conduct an analysis, identify gaps and then make recommendations for improvement. The group still needs a chair.

### **Residential, Commercial, Industrial & Municipal (RCIM)**

The group has not met recently.

### **Education and Public Outreach (EPO)**

Lisa Freund reported for the EPO group. The group is working on developing materials for talking points - defining the GWAC and GWMA, what are nitrates and how to protect yourself, and how to become involved in the GWMA. Once established they will be brought back to the GWAC for review.

#### **Outreach Summary:**

- On September 6th EPO was invited to partner with the EPA's Healthy Homes Program by providing them with materials on the GWMA, GWAC and nitrates.

- September 24th - Department of Ecology has invited GWAC participation in the Spanish-language "Connect with Your Government" radio segment, which partners with the Hispanic Affairs Commission. Andy Cervantes will speak on behalf of the Department of Health and answer any questions related to the GWMA and GWAC. It's a question and answer forum.
- December 2nd El Proyecto Bienstar has invited the GWAC to make a presentation on the GWMA program. As GWAC Chair Commissioner Rand Elliott is unavailable on Dec. 2, the EPO will make a recommendation on who should make the presentation and bring it back to the GWAC next month.

**Public Questionnaire Survey:**

Heritage University completed the door-to-door surveying on Monday and EPO is working on inputting the data. The survey's purpose was to develop a baseline to find out what the public knows about nitrates, GWMA, the GWAC and to assess interest in participating in the High Risk Well Assessment survey.

Out of 300 homes, 136 surveys were completed; 88 were not possible due to dogs or gates; 60 homes declined, and 16 were not attempted. The 300 homes were chosen based on locations where 1) high nitrate concentrations are documented or 2) where there is little data on nitrate levels.

Heritage University was contracted to complete 120-160 surveys. Some unofficial survey results:

Do people know about nitrates? 69% responded yes; 54% indicated their wells had been tested for nitrate. 71% of renters were comfortable asking their landlords to test their well water. The number of people self-identified as at high risk to nitrates was extremely low: just one household reported having a child less than 6 months, one household had a pregnant woman, and seven households indicated someone with a chronic illness lived in the house. It was noted that chronic illness was self-defined by the person responding to the survey.

42% of respondents said they had heard about the Lower Yakima Valley GWMA. When asked if they would participate in a high risk well survey, 45 homes (33%) expressed interest in participating in the high risk well assessment survey.

Lisa joined the last Data Collection conference call to ask the group to identify areas where they would like to have the High Risk Well Assessment survey conducted. On the call it was determined that the 45 homes that expressed interest in the in-depth survey would be approached first. Once the QA QC is completed, the remaining households (areas) can be identified.

Heritage University Assistant Professor Jessica Black, who coordinated the students' survey work, was introduced. She was commended for the students' good work. The EPO looks forward to partnering with Heritage University for additional outreach in the future.

## **IX. Group discussion:**

Penny Mabie felt there may be some confusion regarding who is authorized to speak to the media and the work that the EPO working group is doing. The charter states that only the Chair may speak publicly to the media; however, the EPO group is a little

different in that they aren't speaking "for" the GWAC, they are simply reaching out with public information. Committee members agreed that they understood the difference and it is not an issue.

It was brought to the attention of the group that the Columbia Basin GWMA is making progress and doing some heavy work. The question was posed whether this GWAC should interface with them to see what they are doing. It was suggested to be mindful of what they are doing and see if it is helpful or hurtful.

**X. Public Comment:**

There were no comments from the public.

**XI. Next Steps:**

- Work on Deep Soil Sampling proposal and bring recommendations to the GWAC
- Have Dr. Stevens speak on the basics of Nitrogen in November
- November - bring back more on USGS modeling.

**XII. 2013 Meeting Calendar**

- November 21
- December 19

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Meeting summary approved by the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Advisory Committee on October 17, 2013.