

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, June 20, 2013

Radio KDNA

121 Sunnyside Ave, Granger, WA 98932

I. Call to Order

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Angie Thomson, 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)		✓
VACANT	Lower Yakima Community Representative		
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)		✓
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 Sanchey	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)	✓	

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Member seats not represented: Lower Valley Community Representative, Hispanic Community Representative, Yakima County Farm Bureau

II. Committee Business:

Introductions.

Moment of silence.

The May 16, 2013 meeting summary was approved by the committee with no changes.

III. Membership Updates:

The Department of Ecology formally accepted the Benton County Commission's request to withdraw from the GWMA in a letter dated June 7, 2013. Ecology's reaction to the withdrawal is that they are disappointed; however, they respect the decision. Benton County proposed to go under their own GWMA umbrella.

37 There are certain requirements of the WAC to set up a GWMA, and within the
38 next month Ecology will hold a public hearing to take public comments on the
39 boundary change.
40

41 With Benton County's departure, its three member seats (County
42 Commission, Benton-Franklin Health District and Benton Conservation
43 District) are now open. That brings the total to four member positions
44 available. It will also create an impact on the working groups. The Irrigated
45 Agriculture Working Group no longer has a chairman. A member noted that
46 the departure of the conservation district is a "huge loss."
47

48 It was stated that it would be a good idea to keep the membership levels the
49 same in order to maintain the same number for a quorum. If we are losing
50 three members we need to add three members. It's a good opportunity to
51 beef up the membership where it's needed. There are two lower Valley
52 Community positions to be filled; an additional Irrigated Ag representative is
53 also important. Ecology hopes to fill these positions by next month's meeting
54 and they have good candidates in line.
55

56 An alternate rep for the Washington Department of Agriculture, Ginny Prest,
57 has been appointed to replace Jaclyn Ford. She is the Acting Program
58 Manager for Dairy Nutrient Management for the Department of Agriculture
59 and is the alternative for Kirk Cook.
60

61 Members stated that we need to pick our representatives carefully. We need
62 to keep a balanced, engaged membership. The Irrigated Ag working group
63 requires a strong leader, as well as someone who is neutral and without a
64 personal agenda.
65

66
67 **IV. GWMA Program Milestones:**

68 The committee reviewed the GWMA Program Milestones document. The
69 elements of the GWMA provide a timeline to illustrate how the pieces work
70 and come together. This is a just a framework. Does this work for everyone's
71 deadlines? It was stated that some things need to be clarified. For example,
72 what does "Levels of Nitrates" mean? Members stated that this framework is
73 helpful and the pieces need to be identified and have flexible deadlines.
74

75 Members also stated that it needs to be refined, all work groups need to be
76 on the same deadline and we need to revisit the milestones regularly to keep
77 it updated. The goals and objectives are vague. It is unclear what needs to
78 be done now and it was suggested that each working group meet outside of
79 the Committee and work on their goals and objectives.
80
81

82 **V. Consultant Selection:**

83 Four consultants were interviewed on June 4 by the Consultant Selection
84 Committee. HDR, Inc. was selected as a consultant for the project. Scope 1
85 looks at Nitrate Regulatory Framework, Best Management Practices and
86 determines gap analysis. Scope 2 builds on nitrate data that Yakima County
87 has and will develop QA/QC Plan, create a nitrate database, build a data
88 monitoring plan and complete a gap analysis. HDR's proposal was received
89 June 15. The work will be completed by April 2014. Scopes 1 & 2 include
90 development, monitoring plan and research. The budget for scopes 1 and 2
91 is \$215,109.

92
93 HDR, Inc. was asked for a proposal to conduct Optional Task 10 which
94 includes deep soil monitoring. Their cost estimate was \$51,293. They would
95 be doing 20 locations of analysis and digging 8-10 feet, sampling at one foot
96 increments until the total depth is reached. Should we do deep soil testing?
97 Members stated that soil sampling may be unavoidable. If we don't sample
98 the soil we are guessing at the nitrate levels below the root zone of 4 feet.
99 We need to do 20 cropping systems with 6-10 samples per cropping system.

100
101 A discussion ensued about the efficacy of surface versus deeper soil
102 sampling. Deep soil sampling would uncover, for example, whether irrigated
103 agriculture is contributing to the nitrate issue. Without testing the soil we
104 cannot explain what we are doing or if we are making any progress. We need
105 to get baseline data to answer those questions and that will be accomplished
106 with deep soil sampling.

107
108 It was stated that going below 4 feet may be wasting time and money,
109 because focusing on the top few feet is more important—it is where the water
110 table is and we can understand how to control the nitrate before it goes too
111 deep. Another member said that by sampling the top 4 feet we can determine
112 how deep nitrate levels are and whether over irrigating is the cause; however,
113 we need to know how much is leaching into the ground because once nitrate
114 is below root level it can contaminate the groundwater.

115
116 Another member stated that deep soil testing is used to educate farmers to
117 convince them to change practices; however, questions about the results of
118 the Columbia River GWMA give no indication that the practice is useful. It
119 was suggested to get a baseline and sample over time, and another member
120 noted that this sampling could be a great diagnostic tool. Another member
121 worried that the sampling is expensive and may not address all issues.

122
123 There are concerns of who does the monitoring for the Agriculture Industry
124 when it comes to fertilization. Right now Chapter 90.64 RCW ~~the Department~~
125 Of Agriculture only requires dairies to keep records. It was stated that HDR,
126 Inc. will develop the regulatory framework. The soil test will give baseline

127 data to show the profile from top to bottom and give valuable scientific
128 information.

129
130 Another member wants to make sure that we are not singling out certain
131 groups and should have diverse sampling locations. For example, we should
132 test more than just agriculture; we should test golf courses and private
133 residences. The depth of sampling will focus on the root zone, which will vary
134 depending on the crop and the soil. One member stated that we need to
135 figure out what the purpose of testing the soil is. Are we getting a baseline or
136 prioritizing selected crops systems that leach nitrates? That will determine
137 how much testing we need to do and the costs. Concerns were stated about
138 funding due to Benton County withdrawing from GWMA. Yakima County staff
139 have evaluated the budget and the feasibility. HDR's GWMA contract for
140 \$266,402 (to include Task 10) will go to Board of Yakima County
141 Commissioners' agenda next week.

142
143 The group concluded that deep soil sampling would be conducted, using
144 diverse sampling locations and focusing on the root zone, but getting some
145 deeper samples as appropriate. The deep soil testing will be used as a
146 diagnostic tool, not to develop a baseline.

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149 **VI. Working Group Reports:**

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151 **Livestock/CAFO Working Group: (Green documents)**
152 A special meeting was held on May 23rd. Dr. Robert Stevens was a guest
153 speaker at the meeting. More nitrogen is being imported into the soil via
154 fertilizer and feed sources than expected and irrigation is an important driver
155 in the nitrate contamination problem. The group plans on coordinating work
156 with Irrigated Ag Work Group, Residential, Commercial and Industrial Work
157 Group, and Data Collection, Characterization and Monitoring Work Group to
158 find nitrate sources. Additionally, the group will work with the consultant that
159 will be hired to determine regulatory BMP's and data monitoring plans as well
160 as hold monthly meetings to make sure progress is being made in developing
161 the work plan.

162
163 **Data Collection, Characterization, Monitoring Working Group: (Purple
164 document)**
165 The work group was able to ask the Consultant some questions focusing on
166 quality control issues. The work needs to meet Ecology's quality assurance
167 standards. The group would like to meet with HDR and subcontractor Pacific
168 Groundwater Group once the contract is in place, possibly to occur during the
169 July or August meeting. The group is also looking forward to assistance from
170 the Residential, Commercial and Industrial Work Group.

171

172 **Education & Public Outreach Working Group (EPO): (Orange**
 173 **documents)**

174 By June 25, all three surveys will be underway. The first, the High Risk Well
 175 Survey, will be conducted by the Yakima Health District. The Health District’s
 176 surveyors will conduct well testing and obtain certified lab results. They will
 177 not be making “cold calls”; rather, the residents will be notified in advance.
 178

179 The Yakima Health District will also conduct the second survey—the Health
 180 Care Professional Questionnaire. This survey will help us to see if providers
 181 are noticing anything in their patients that may be nitrate-related.
 182

183 The final survey is the Public Informational Questionnaire. This survey will
 184 help us determine what the public knows about nitrates, the GWAC and the
 185 Groundwater Management Area. The survey will be conducted by Heritage
 186 University students. There are concerns of not being able to obtain an
 187 accurate picture: for example, a renter may not know where their well is
 188 versus someone who just built their home and has more information about
 189 their water source.
 190

191 Due to Benton County withdrawing, all surveys will be conducted in Yakima
 192 County and the County has assessed how many surveys they can conduct
 193 within the budget.
 194

195 A community outreach sign-up sheet was passed around. Members were
 196 asked to list community groups and associations they belong to that might be
 197 interested in receiving or distributing information about nitrates, the GWAC or
 198 the GWMA. Members were also asked to make the initial contact with each
 199 group on behalf of the EPO work group.
 200

201
 202 **VII. Working Group Operations:**

203 There was a proposed addition to the GWAC Operating Guidelines. The line
 204 reads, “Working groups will discuss technical work and issues needed to
 205 support development of the GWMA Program, including”. It was suggested to
 206 add the language, “will discuss and carry out technical work”. On bullet point
 207 #2 it currently reads, “Hear about potential problems and solutions from non-
 208 technical people.” It was suggested to add technical in the language as well.
 209

210
 211 **VIII. Public Comment:**

212 It was suggested that the contractors conducting the outreach surveys should
 213 be well trained and passionate about the nitrate issue and getting the
 214 information back to us.
 215

216

217 **IX. Next Steps:**

218 The GWAC's July meeting is canceled. However, the working groups are
219 welcome to meet on their own. The KDNA room is available if groups would
220 like to use the room. One member suggested having a presentation from
221 HDR, Inc. and then breaking into working groups. Each group needs to figure
222 out what they are meeting about.

223
224 There are several members who are in more than one working group.
225 Several members have not signed up for any working group. By the third
226 week of July you will get a call or an email requesting you to determine which
227 group(s) you will be participating in. Please limit your choices to two. This
228 will help attendance in each working group as it is difficult to be a part of
229 multiple groups. You are still welcome to attend multiple meetings.

230
231 The Committee wants HDR, Inc. to be prepared to make a statement to the
232 general group and then meet with each working group so when a proposal is
233 made the group can understand and bring questions HDR, Inc.

234
235 **Action Items:**

236 We are moving forward with the Deep Soil Testing, the three surveys, and
237 new members.

238
239 At the next meeting the working groups will report on objectives and goals.

240
241
242 **X. 2013 Meeting Calendar:**

- 243 • ~~July 18 CANCELLED~~
- 244 • August 15
- 245 • September 19
- 246 • October 17
- 247 • November 21
- 248 • December 19

249
250 Meeting calendar will be reassessed at the end of the year.

251
252 The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

253
254 Meeting summary approved by the LYV Groundwater Advisory Committee on