

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

## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, March 21, 2013

Radio KDNA  
121 Sunnyside Ave, Granger, WA 98932

### I. Call to Order

**Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm by Penny Mabie, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.		P
Chelsey Durfey	Agronomist, Turner and Co. (alternate)	P	
Mark Nielson	Benton Conservation District	P	
Heather Wendt	Benton Conservation District (alternate)	P	
VACANT	Benton County Board of Commissioners		
Rick Dawson	Benton Franklin Health District	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
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative	P	
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)	P	
VACANT	Lower Yakima Community Representative		
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	
Jaclyn Ford	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	

**Members' seats not represented:** Benton County Commission and Lower Valley Community Representative

**II. Committee Business:**

Jean Mendoza has edits to the February 6, 2013 meeting summary. Those edits will be made and the meeting summary will be passed out again for committee approval. February 21, 2013 meeting summary was approved by the committee.

Reminders:

- Please place all cell phones on silent. If you must take a call, please step outside of the room so as to not disrupt the meeting.
- Before leaving please check the room to make sure you have all your belongings.
- Please keep all side conversations outside of the room so members and observers can hear conversations.

Introductions.

Moment of silence.

Penny advised the committee that only three of the seven working groups met since the last meeting. It is important that the remaining groups meet and discuss their goals and objectives. It would be best if the working groups meet at least 10 days prior to the

GWAC meeting in order to have materials ready for the committee's review. The working groups need to decide whether or not they will require outside technical help as well as membership.

The committee had a discussion about how working groups operate and how their membership is determined. Some committee members expressed concern that working group membership should be open to the community, in order to ensure community voices are fully considered in all discussions. Some members noted that there was an intent and a need to have additional working group members beyond the GWAC members and that those additional members should bring additional expertise to the group. Some committee members expressed a desire to have operational guidelines in place so the working group meetings can be productive. At the conclusion of the discussion, Penny summarized the outcome of the discussion as follows:

- Working groups should have a standing membership
- Working group meetings should be held in the same manner as GWAC meetings. Meetings should be announced on the GWMA website and held in a publicly accessible location. The working group meetings should be open to the public and include a set time during the meetings to take public comments.
- A list of the working groups and their purpose should be posted on the GWMA website, with a notice that working groups are seeking members with technical expertise or knowledge to assist the group.
- Chairs need to be decided on for the remaining workgroups.
- The current list of working group members will be sent to the full GWAC for validation and request for additional participation by GWAC members and alternates.

Working Group Chairs confirmed:

Charlie McKinney - Livestock/CAFO  
Lisa Freund - Education and Outreach  
Kirk Cook - Data Collection  
Mark Neilson - Irrigated Agriculture (interim)

Penny advised the committee that during the May meeting she suggests a review of the Operating Guidelines to see if things are working well. That agenda item will include a discussion on whether or not the GWAC thinks they have the right membership at the table.

### **III. Goals and Objectives:**

There was a brief discussion on the committee's GWMA Program goal statement. The committee decided that the goal statement should be over-arching and not include timeframes. After a discussion and testing for consensus, the committee decided the goal statement would be: "The purpose of the GWMA is to reduce nitrate contamination in groundwater below state drinking water standards."

One member, Mark Nielson, did not support the goal statement, but offered no minority report.

#### **IV. GWMA Outreach Materials :**

The committee was provided with three surveys for their review and approval:

- Risk Assessment for Water Supply Wells - Lower Yakima Valley
- Informational Public Questionnaire
- Questionnaire for Health Care Providers, along with an accompanying letter to providers

Risk Assessment survey: The survey is intended to be conducted by professionals. A few of the committee members voiced concerns with the risk assessment survey language; specifically concerning purpose and specificity of language. Steve George will send specific comments to Lisa for her review. The Education and Public Outreach (EPO) working group will work on clearly identifying the use of the survey, as well as clarifying some of the questions and the purpose of each question. The working group will incorporate edits received into the draft survey and send the updated risk assessment survey by email to the committee. The committee gave the EPO working group the go-ahead on the Risk Assessment survey due to the urgent timeline for getting the survey underway.

Informational Public Questionnaire: The intent of this questionnaire is to find out if the public knows whether or not they are on a public or private well and how the public is getting information on nitrates and what if anything does the public know about nitrates. The questionnaire would be handed out by agencies during meetings with the public. It could also be made available on the website.

The committee will review a revised draft at their next meeting.

Questionnaire for Health Care Providers: The working group is requesting the advice and recommendation of the committee on who should sign the Health Care letter.

The committee was provided with a sheet with four different GWMA logos to choose from. Penny advised the committee to rate the four logos in order of their preference, with one being the most favored logo. Worksheets were turned into Penny and the results will be shared with the GWAC. A committee member asked why a logo was needed. The EPO working group had recommended in earlier sessions that the GWMA and GWAC should have a brand to help ensure their work was recognizable to the public.

#### **V. Working Group reports:**

##### **Data Collection:**

Kirk Cook was named chair for the working group. The working group includes two outside experts and one member of the public. The working group met and focused their discussion on three elements of work:

- Characterization report
- Creation of initial database
- Interface with other work group activities

Ali is in charge of putting together the characterization report. He is working with EPA, DOE, and other agencies. There are still several elements that are unknown. The characterization report will synthesize existing elements, update information, and identify current gaps in information

Database collection will come from several areas:

- VIRE
- USEPA
- USGS
- WDOH
- WSDA

The data collected from 1991-2001 is only a starting point. Ginny Stern with the Department of Health is working on realistic trends. There are data quality concerns with several wells.

The work group will be interfacing with other work groups on several fronts including:

- GW/ soil profile testing
- BMP assessments
- Health surveys (drinking water)

The working group went over the budget numbers for the short-term (6 to 9 months) and noted they will need somewhere between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

The working group is developing a scope as they decided that outside help may be needed. The proposed scope includes:

- Research data additions for inclusion into county GW database
  - Evaluate DOH data
  - Evaluate other data sources note previously considered
- Develop initial monitoring grid based on physical and social factors
  - Statistical monitoring procedures
  - Sampling locations
- Additional NO<sub>3</sub> evaluations
  - QA/QC procedures
  - Document field procedures
- Sampling frequency
- Quarterly report development and review

The working group plans to have a draft to the committee by the next meeting.

#### **Livestock/CAFO:**

Charlie McKinney was appointed chair. In his absence, Steve George briefed the committee on the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The working group has scheduled a standing meeting every 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. They discussed the need to work with the other working groups and possibly having a joint meeting with Irrigated Ag. They further discussed the need for technical resources and how to obtain RFPs. There is a gap in the regulatory framework that needs to be looked into. The working group has no deliverables at this time.

Steve encouraged the staff from Heritage University to sign up on some of the working groups.

**VI. Side note:**

Each working group will be assigned their own color for written materials to make it easy for the committee to differentiate between the work groups.

The committee discussed needing to extend the time of the committee's meetings. With the working groups meeting regularly and providing the committee with materials to review, two hours does not seem enough time. The committee agreed to extend the meeting a half hour if the agenda warrants the extension.

Some members of the committee voiced interest in having a briefing on Ecology's "YAWN" report regarding nitrates in the air. After a brief discussion it was noted that the majority of the committee was not interesting in having a briefing. Members interested discussed the possibility of having a briefing before the committee's next scheduled meeting at approximately 4:30p.m. Penny will send an email to gauge interest.

**VII. Public Comment :**

Jessica Black, Heritage University - Heritage is very interested in this process as their students are living in the area. Heritage has gone over the EPA's report and believes it is just a starting point. There needs to be base line data. Heritage has performed studies on nitrates. They have taken soil samples for testing. Samples have been done of Toppenish Creek. Jessica wants the committee to know that Heritage is a good resource for the committee to use.

Kathleen Rogers - Inquired if there is a Lower Valley Representative opening or not? Penny responded that there has been some confusion on this matter and that Ecology is working on this.

Victor Martinez - He has a place out in Zillah next to a dairy. The health department came out and posted his home for non-occupancy due to septic failure. He is unsure if this is the place to come to or not to discuss this matter. Gordon Kelly was not present at the meeting so Rick Dawson advised Victor that he would meet with him after the meeting to get him to the right people for assistance.

Wendell Hannigan - Made the statement that there are a lot of multi-agency bodies at the table and not a lot of citizen base. The citizens need a way to comment. Additionally, he advised that Jean Mendoza brought water samples from Mabton for the committee and he noticed that no one took a drink.

Kazu Sonoda, Dean of Heritage University - He advised that Heritage tested the same samples as EPA and found there to be high fecal content. EPA does not address this in their report. He states that when finding nitrate you will normally find fecal content as well. If there is no fecal content then the nitrate is chemical based.

Mr. Warner - In reading the materials, he would like to know why the committee is using data collected for the Mahleur GWMA. Penny advised that the committee has not accepted any data at this time. The Mahleur GWMA briefing was just informational. The only data that can be used is data generated within the boundaries of the GWMA.

Larry Findell - Advised that the Mahleur GWMA presentation was very helpful and that the committee should look at the lessons learned.

**VIII. Next Steps:**

- Adjust the agenda
- Discuss goals and objectives.
- Discuss EPO working group materials.
- Working groups need to meet and have reports ready to report back to this committee at the next scheduled meeting. Additionally, each working group needs to select a leader and have proposals for how they will spend their portion of the budget. (Reminder: Vern suggested that Yakima County can provide a staff member to be available for all working group meetings.)
- Mark Nielson has agreed to be interim chair for the Irrigated Ag working group and will put together a meeting prior to the GWAC meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Penny will send an email proposal to the committee about having a briefing on Ecology's "YAWN" report.
- Stuart Turner will provide the committee with studies on lagoon assessment.

**IX. 2013 Meeting Calendar:**

- April 18
- May 16
- June 20
- July 18
- August 15
- September 19
- October 17
- November 21
- December 19

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on April 18, 2013.