

LOWER YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GWAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, February 21, 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 Penny Mable, Facilitator.

Members present: Rand Elliott, Yakima County Commissioner, Vern Redifer (alternate); Charlie McKinney, Department of Ecology, Tom Tebb, Alternate; Andy Cervantes, Department of Health; Jim Dyjak (alternate for Concerned Citizens for Yakima Reservation); Robert Farrell, Port of Sunnyside, John Van Wingerden (alternate); Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek; Chelsea Durfey (alternate for Turner & Co.); Jason Sheehan, Yakima Dairy Federation, (Dan DeGroot, Alternate); Gordon Kelly, Yakima County Health District; Jim Trull, SVID; Jaclyn Ford, Alternate for Washington Department of Agriculture; Tom Eaton, U.S. EPA; Laurie Crowe, South Yakima Conservation District; Elizabeth Sanchey, Yakama Nation, (Tom Ring, Alternate); Helen Reddout, Community Association for Restoration of the Environment; and Lino Guerra, Hispanic Community Representative, (Rick Perez, Alternate)

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

Members absent: Jan Whitefoot, Concerned Citizens for Yakima Reservation; Steve George, Yakima County Farm Bureau; Dr. Kefyalew Desta, WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center; Lonna Frans, U.S. Geological Survey; Rick Dawson, Benton Franklin Health District; Kirk Cook, Washington Department of Agriculture; Mark Neilson, Benton Conservation District; Stuart Turner, Agronomist, Turner and Co.; and alternates: Eric Anderson; Justin Waddington; Jim Newhouse; Matt Bachmann; Dr. Troy Peters; Heather Wendt; Ginny Stern; Ron Cowan and Wendell Hannington

II. Committee Business:

February 6, 2013 meeting summary was not released to the committee. The meeting summary will be provided to the committee prior to our next scheduled meeting for review.

Reminders:

- Please place all cell phones on silent. If you must take a call, please step outside of the room as to not disrupt the meeting.
- Before leaving please check the room to make sure you have all your belongings.
- New meeting location: KDNA Radio in Granger.

The work plan was submitted to the Department of Ecology.

Request for alternates to have alternates: Any additions or changes to the primary or alternate must go through Ecology for approval. The WAC does not speak to the details of whether or not there can be an alternate to the alternate. However, for consistency purposes the committee agrees that there should be an official primary member and one alternate. If the official primary member is seriously ill; then the alternate should step up as the primary and then a new alternate should be renamed. Reminder: As long as either the primary or alternate is at the table no one is at risk of losing their seat.

Moment of silence.

III. Presentation by Phil Richerson with the State of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality: (Presentation will be made available on the website)

Phil worked on two primary GWMA's, the Northern Mahler County GWMA (NMC) started in 1989 and the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA (LUB) started in 1990. In the State of Oregon a GWMA is declared when the groundwater contamination level exceeds certain trigger levels. That trigger level is 50% in most cases.

An action plan developed by an advisory committee like this one along with DEO and ODA. The goal of the GWMA was to reduce nitrates levels to less than 7ml/l.

With respect to the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA there was an overlap of critical groundwater areas. Most nitrate contaminants came from shallow alluvial aquifers. Most overdrafts are in deeper basalt aquifers.

In comparing the two GWMSs soil samples it was found that the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA soils were courser and drained faster. Due to floodplains the Northern Mahler County GWMA groundwater moves faster.

In 1995 a technical report identified five sources of nitrate loading. 1. Confined animal feeding operations; 2. Irrigated agriculture; 3. Land application for food processing water; 4. Septic systems; and 5. The Umatilla Chemical Depot Washout Lagoon (washing explosives). Irrigated agriculture is the largest source of nitrates in both GWMA's. Over two-thirds of the GWMA is zoned for agricultural use.

The estimate of nitrate loading into the groundwater was broken down into three tiers:

Tier One:

81.6% Irrigated agriculture

Tier Two:

Amounts in the single digits such as pastures, food processors, and on-site septic systems.

Tier Three:

Amounts less than 1% such as lawns, depot and vegetable gardens.

CAFOs comparison:

Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA
12 permitted facilities
172,100 animals permitted
Northern Mahler GWMA
43 permitted facilities
76,150 animals

BMPs must be implemented and monitored. They are tailored to each source of nitrate. Irrigated agriculture needs to address fertilizer and irrigation water application rates in order to reduce nitrate levels. Nutrient management and water management are keys to success. There are two types of BMPs followed by CAFOs: Structural and Management. Waste collection and storage treatment are keys to success. BMPs were adopted early on in the process.

Lessons learned:

- The key to reducing nitrates from irrigated agriculture is to control both nutrient application and water application.
- Reduce CAFOs with waste collection and storage treatment.
- Document BMP implementation as it happens - hard to go back after the fact.
- Sample frequently. Started sampling 6 times a year, now 4 times a year due to funding.
- Sample and analytical procedures need to be consistent.
- Keep statistical procedures as consistent as possible.
- Use "Seasonal Kendall Technique" to evaluate individual wells - this is a non-parametric procedure.
- Identify key research early and pursue.
- Engage all stakeholders early.
- Remember that groundwater remediation is a very long process.

IV. Goals and Objectives:

Penny addressed the committee and advised that they needed to develop the GWMA goals and objectives. There are three possible options to come up with the goals and objectives: 1. Have the subcommittees come up with goals and objectives and bring them back to the committee for a vote; 2. Have the committee itself decide; or 3. Have a disappearing task force.

Committee members had no comment on the goals and objectives at this time. A brief discussion of the members brought to conclusion that there would be two sets of goals and objectives. One for subcommittees and then overarching goals and objectives for the committee.

Tom Tebb advised it would be good to discuss the Vital Elements report. Penny will circulate this report to committee members to review.

Goals and objectives will be discussed at our next scheduled meeting.

V. Subcommittee reports:

Education and Outreach:

Lisa Freund was selected the leader of the subcommittee. The subcommittee met and discussed two primary goals: 1. Educate the public, especially those at high risk of nitrates; and 2. Notify general public of the advisory committee. The subcommittee understands that there will be short term and long term action. The committee has come up with 3 surveys:

- General community research - See what the community knows about nitrates.
- High risk well users (private wells) - Ask specific questions about well construction, what takes place around the well, etc.
- Health professional survey - Contact health professionals and provide them with information on the health risks of nitrates.

The GWMA website needs some content. The subcommittee is asking those members belonging to an agency that have information on nitrates to pass that information along to the subcommittee so they may update the website so it is more informative for the public. Please forward documents or web links to Lisa or Penny.

The subcommittee has come up with some logo options to give this project its own identity. The subcommittee will bring in the surveys, letter to health professionals and logos to the next scheduled meeting for the committee's approval.

Data Collection:

Kirk Cook was selected as the leader of the subcommittee. The subcommittee met and discussed creating a shared data plan using one source. That source would be the County. Also, discussed creating a QA - QC to make sure data is qualified. The subcommittee would like to perform a GAP analysis as this will show where the wells are located. Discussed irrigated water management and cropland data. Preparing a characterization report will be the starting point.

The subcommittee is in beginning discussion about data needs, how to obtain the data and how to manage the data.

Penny reminded the committee that there are three other subcommittees that have not met. 1. Irrigated agriculture; 2. Livestock/CAFOs; and Municipal industrial. These committees need to meet before the next scheduled meeting. Technical subcommittees should be meeting at least monthly.

Vern and Charlie will work together on getting initial meetings set up for the remaining subcommittees.

VI. Side note:

Charlie advised that he has a report on a Yakima Air Quality Study. If the committee would like a presentation on the report, he can contact The Department of Ecology or WSU. The report was provided to the members.

Vern advised that there is a funding committee of Rand Elliott and himself. They have forwarded a request to Senator Honeyford for an additional 1.6 million plus to provide portable water to people. Department of Ecology was in support of the request. Vern can provide copies to the committee. Additionally, the County has been able to move around some funds in order to provide help to those people affected.

VII. Public Comment :
No public comment.

VIII. Next Steps:

- Discuss goals and objectives.
- Education and Outreach subcommittee will be bringing materials in for the committee to review and approve at the next meeting.
- Sub-committees need to meet and have reports ready to report back to this committee at the next scheduled meeting. Additionally, each sub-committee 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 sub-committee meetings.)
- Committee members need to advise what education they need to make decisions.
- Stuart Turner will provide the committee with studies on lagoon assessment.

IX. 2013 Meeting Calendar:

- March 21
- 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 7:12 pm.

Meeting summary approved by the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee on March 21, 2013.