

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

## MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday February 6 , 2013

Radio KDNA  
121 Sunnyside Ave, Granger, WA 98932

### I. Call to Order

**Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by Penny Mable, Facilitator.

**Members present:** Rand Elliott, Yakima County Commissioner; Vern Redifer (alternate) for Yakima County; Charlie McKinney, Department of Ecology; Andy Cervantes, Department of Health; Jim Dyjak, (alternate) for Concerned Citizens for Yakama Reservation; Robert Farrell, Port of Sunnyside; John Van Wingerden (alternate) for the Port of Sunnyside; Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek; Wendell Hannigan (alternate) for Community Association for the Restoration of the Environment; Mark Nielson, Benton Conservation District; Heather Wendt (alternate) for the Benton Conservation District; Stuart Turner, Turner & Company; Chelsea Durfey (alternate) for Turner & Company; Steve George, Yakima Farm Bureau; Jason Sheehan, Yakima Dairy Federation; Dan DeGroot (alternate) for the Yakima Dairy Federation; Gordon Kelly, Yakima Health District; Dr. Troy Peters (alternate) for WSU Irrigated Agricultural Research and Extension Center; Rick Dawson, Benton-Franklin Health District; Jim Trull, SVD; Matt Ely (alternate) for the U.S. Geological Survey; Kirk Cook, Washington State Department of Agriculture.

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

**Members absent:** Jan Whitefoot, Concerned Citizens for Yakima Reservation, Laurie Crowe, South Yakima Conservation District; Helen Reddout, Community Association for Restoration of the Environment; Tom Eaton, EPA; Dr. Kefyalew Desta, WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center; Lonna Frans, U.S. Geological Survey; Lino Guerra, Hispanic Community Representative; Elizabeth Sanchey, Yakama Nation; and alternates: Eric Anderson; Justin Waddington; Jim Newhouse; Tom Tebb; Matt Bachmann; Jaclyn Ford; Ginny Stern; Ron Cowin; Tom Ring; and Rick Perez

### II. Committee Business :

January 17, 2013 meeting summary was approved by consensus.

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. Also, before leaving please check the room to make sure you have all your belongings.

Introductions of new members: Matt Ely is filling in for Lonna Frans, who just had a baby girl (Alexandra), and Matt Bachmann who could not make tonight's meeting. Rick Dawson is here on behalf of Benton Franklin Health District. We also have new representatives for the Hispanic Community, Lino Guerra and Rick Perez. Their letters of appointment are on the way.

Moment of silence.

### **III. Committee Work Plan**

Vern explained changes made to the work plan as previously discussed at the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. He also made grammatical corrections as well. Two paragraphs were added in relation to "Immediate Public Health Needs", Item IV of the work plan. It notes the GWAC will work with State, Federal and Local governments to seek funding to assist private well owners. Charlie McKinney noted that the funds were allocated to accomplish the Work Plan, and this use is not covered under the Work Plan.

Penny asked the committee members if this version of the work plan could be submitted to The Department of Ecology. No objection from the committee. Consensus reached amongst the committee members. The work plan will be submitted to The Department of Ecology.

Side note: Steve George stated he would like to change "farming community," on Page 1 of the work plan under Goals and Objectives, to "agricultural community". Additionally, under GWMA Goals, it was suggested to change the language "Washington State drinking water standards" to "Federal drinking water standards". Penny advised the committee that both of those terms are drawn from other existing documents, one of them being the GWAC's approved Operating Guidelines. The committee agreed to leave the language as is in the work plan, but to consider those changes moving forward.

Work plan approved by consensus.

### **IV. Budget Priorities**

Members were reminded that the advisory committee must spend \$300,000 by the end of June, the end of the state's budget biennium. The County has already spent (or encumbered) \$98,000. The committee needs to spend another \$200,000.

Vern took the information he received from committee members regarding cost estimates, and made a few changes to the budget provided at the previous meeting. The committee needs to make some short term decisions on the budget, but be consistent with long term goals.

Mark reminded the committee that the State Auditor frowns upon money not spent within the same biennium. Charlie McKinney, Department of Ecology, advised that some funding sources can cross bi-annually; however, this grant from the state toxics account is not one of them. He did, however, contact the Ecology water quality budget manager and was told that as long as the funds were encumbered under contract by the end of the biennium (June 30) they will provide the committee with up to a six month leeway.

Members discussed each line item on the draft budget, as to whether or not the item was needed and/or how much money should be dedicated in the short term to that item.

Facilitation: The committee discussed the need for continued facilitation of the meetings. EnviroIssues (Penny) is currently contracted through May 31<sup>st</sup>. Members decided that having Penny facilitate the meetings is beneficial while the work plan is still coming together. The members need someone neutral to keep them on task. Vern suggested extending the facilitation contract through 2013 and re-evaluate at the end of the year. Members agreed by consensus. Vern will work with EnviroIssues to extend the contract through 2013. Jean asked whether work on an evaluation plan could be added to Penny's duties.

Deep soil sampling: An estimated short term amount of \$40,000 was suggested. Kirk Cook felt this was greatly underestimated. The irrigated agriculture work group worked with Kevin Lindsey, GSI, to work up a draft, detailed preliminary budget. \$40,000 for deep soil sampling was just a starting point. The irrigated agriculture work group provided the preliminary budget to the County in response to requests for information from the last GWAC meeting. Several members of the GWAC voiced their concern that they were not provided with a copy of the preliminary budget. Kevin Lindsey explained that the preliminary budget he provided was just a starting point and was only put together in a day. He advised that more thought and planning needs to be done to complete the budget.

Penny advised the committee that the preliminary budget created by Kevin Lindsey was just rough numbers and a result of the work group responding to a request for information from the last GWAC meeting. She noted that while no decisions are being made at this point, that there was a process problem with this information, in large part due to the special budget meeting being scheduled so quickly after the last regular GWAC meeting and this short period didn't allow for information to be disseminated in a timely fashion. She reminded the committee that all information needs to be passed along to the committee from the sub-committees for review prior to GWAC meetings. Information should not come straight to meetings without the GWAC having an opportunity to review ahead of time.

Further discussion on deep soil sampling noted that no other agency has done this before. The committee discussed that this service would need to be hired out. The deep soil sampling findings will not be enforceable. The intent of deep soil sampling would be purely for educational purposes.

Nutrient loading: The committee discussed the intent of developing "nutrient loading" data, which is so the committee can find out the breakdown of the source of nitrates; whether it is synthetic, livestock, septic systems, etc. Dr. Troy Peters advised that WSU has good models to review. One member of the committee would like to have "air pollution" included in the nutrient loading category. Charlie McKinney noted that Ecology already has a study in place that is studying airborne nitrates. He stated that Ecology can present material on the Yakima Air Winter Nitrate Study (YAWNS) to the group if people would like to hear about it. A member stated that Dr. Pius Ndgwa from the WSU School of Agriculture is also an excellent resource for air issues.

Andy Cervantes, Washington Department of Health, discussed education and outreach. The work group discussed the need for surveys as a way of finding the hotspots for nitrates. They learned that Gordon Kelly with Yakima County Health District could provide surveys at a rate of \$80.00 per home. Others, including the state DOH, could do the work at higher rates. Dr. Troy Peters stated that the committee should also educate the farmers and that this is something WSU can help with, by providing workshops. Penny reminded the members that the budget being developed is not to implement the GWMA Program; rather, this budget is for activities to help develop the program. Some members would like to see water sampling conducted as well as surveys. Andy agreed and explained that the intent of the surveys is to find the hotspots and then proceed with sampling. One member stated that before knocking on doors the public must be educated about the problem and the purpose of the surveys; otherwise, there are concerns some members of the Hispanic community will not respond.

Health assessment category: This was added from discussions in the last GWAC meeting. No money has been allocated to health assessment at this time. Jean Mendoza reminded the committee that this is something that should be done; whether by the GWAC or by the health district, as the GWAC needs to know how nitrates are affecting the community.

Lagoon Assessment: Vern noted he added the category after discussions with the Department of Ecology. He noted there are perceptions that lagoons either leak a lot or not at all, and there is no definitive answer. Helen refuted this, and noted that she has been told by lagoon liner manufacturers that the liners leak.

Best Management Practices (BMP) identification: The committee discussed the intent of this line item. Some explained that although it is a long way from implementation of the program, the committee does need to identify the current BMP's and whether or not they work. Several members felt this is not a short term need.

Irrigation Water Management: The committee agreed this is a short term need and needs to be implemented. This can provide incentives for growers.

The committee continued with further discussion of the suggested health assessment and air pollution monitoring. Some members would like to see proof of the need before considering. Dr. Troy Peters stated they could provide education to the committee; however, he was not sure it would be worth spending the time. Rand Elliott asked what effect a health assessment would have on the problem of nitrates in groundwater. A committee member stated they believe that some members of the committee don't believe nitrates are a health risk. Several members challenged this statement, noting that no one on this committee has made that statement and, in fact, this committee was formed because of the belief that nitrates are a health risk. Members noted though, that the goal of the committee is not to reduce health risks but rather to reduce nitrates in the groundwater. A member advised that there needs to be a determination of who is at risk first before providing a health assessment. Some public education upfront is needed.

The committee agreed to the starting figures for the short-term budget shown below. In the short-term no money is being allocated to "Lagoon Assessment". Stuart Turner offered to provide the committee with studies. Additionally, no money is being allocated in the short-term for health assessment.

\$11,000 is being allocated to deep soil sampling for the short-term; however, this amount may increase during 2013. The committee agreed to bump up the \$40,000 figure previously discussed to \$60,000 for monitoring for both the program development and to serve as a baseline for program implementation. \$5,000 was allocated to nutrient loading as a place holder for the short-term.

Education and outreach, with two sub-categories (surveying and test samples) was allocated \$50,000. This money will be split between education and outreach and the sub-categories.

The committee agreed to allocate \$15,000 for early work on Best Management Practices (BMPs). Irrigation water management was allocated \$11,000 for initial planning.

The short term budget thru June, 2013 is shown in the table below:

Work Item	2013 Short Term Thru June (Or Obligated to be spent by Year end)
Expenditures Thru 2012	\$ 46,253
Yakima County Lead Entity	\$ 62,000
Facilitation	\$ 39,600
Deep Soil Sampling	\$ 11,000
Long-Term Monitoring (Planning and Design)	\$ 60,000
Long-Term Monitoring (Field Investigation)	\$ -
Long-Term Monitoring (Implementation)	\$ -
Nutrient Loading	\$ 5,000
Education and Outreach	\$ 25,000
Survey & Water Quality Testing	\$ 25,000
Health Assessment	\$ -
Lagoon Assessment	\$ -
Existing BMP Identification	\$ 15,000
BMP Field Research	\$ -
Irrigation Water Management	\$11,000
Air Monitoring	\$ -
Accumulated Total	\$299,853

The committee discussed the need to provide the detailed short term budget to Ecology and decided the work plan will be turned into Department of Ecology with only the general numbers included.

**V. Public Comment :**  
No public comment

**VI. Next Steps:**

- Forward GSI report to all committee members.
- Work groups will have reports ready to report to members at the next scheduled meeting. Additionally, each work group should select a leader. (Reminder: Vern noted that Yakima County has committed to provide a staff member for all work group meetings.)
- Committee members need to advise what education they need to make decisions.
- Stuart Turner will provide the committee with studies on lagoon assessment.

Reminder: Phil Richerson with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will be speaking at our next scheduled meeting to discuss their GWMA Programs.

Vern advised the committee that the California GWMA report is posted on the website library for anyone who would like to read it. It is a good source of information to help

committee members understand more about what we are doing here and where we are headed.

**VII. 2013 Meeting Calendar:**

- February 21
- 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 7:06 pm.

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