YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GWAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, August 20, 2015 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

KDNA Conference Rooms 1 & 2
121 S. Sunnyside Ave., Granger, WA

Note: This document is only a summary of issues and actions of this meeting. It is not intended to be a transcription of the meeting, but an overview of points raised and responses from Yakima County and Groundwater Advisory Committee members. It may not fully represent the ideas discussed or opinions given. Examination of this document cannot equal or replace attendance.

I. Call to Order

Roll Call: This meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Jim Davenport, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.,	✓	
Chelsea Durfey			✓
Bud Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1	✓	
Kathleen Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1 (alternate)	✓	
Patricia Newhouse	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2		✓
Sue Wedam	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2 (alternate)	✓	
Doug Simpson	Irrigated Crop Producer	✓	
Jean Mendoza	Friends of Toppenish Creek	✓	
Eric Anderson	Friends of Toppenish Creek (alternate)		✓
Jan Whitefoot	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation		✓
Jim Dyjak	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation (alternate)	✓	
Steve George	Yakima County Farm Bureau	✓	
Frank Lyall	Yakima County Farm Bureau (alternate)	✓	
Jason Sheehan	Yakima Dairy Federation	✓	
Dan DeGroot	Yakima Dairy Federation (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)		✓
Robert Farrell	Port of Sunnyside	✓	
John Van Wingerden	Port of Sunnyside (alternate)		✓
Rand Elliott	Yakima County Board of Commissioners	✓	
Vern Redifer	Yakima County Board of Commissioners (alternate)	✓	
Ryan Ibach	Yakima Health District	✓	
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center	✓	
Bill Dunbar	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	*✓	
Marie Jennings	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (alternate)		✓
Elizabeth Sanchey	Yakama Nation		✓
Tom Ring	Yakama Nation (alternate)		✓
Kirk Cook	WA Department of Agriculture		✓
Virginia "Ginny" Prest	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)	✓	
Andy Cervantes	WA Department of Health	✓	
Ginny Stern	WA Department of Health (alternate)		✓
Charlie McKinney	WA Department of Ecology	✓	
Tom Tebb	WA Department of Ecology (alternate)		✓
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative		✓
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		✓
Jessica Black	Heritage University	✓	

*via phone

II. Welcome & Meeting Overview

Quorum was met.

Jim Davenport gave an overview of the agenda and informed the members that there would be an opportunity for the group to give their view on the GWAC such as how we are doing. He reminded the group to keep our success in mind while being courteous of each other.

Moment of Silence.

Introductions were made.

III. Working Group Reports:

Data Working Group –

No report.

Livestock/CAFO Working Group – Charlie McKinney

The last several meetings the Data and Livestock/CAFO groups met jointly to concentrate on the Nitrogen Loading Assessment. Melanie Redding agreed to act as the data work group chair due to Kirk stepping down. At the June 25, 2015 meeting, Melanie gave a presentation to compare and describe lagoon leakages. Jean gave a presentation on lagoons and ponds, proposing a matrix on the three different methods. The group generally agreed to use Darcy's Law. At the July 9, meeting Kirk stepped down. The focus turned to potential nitrogen loading. Methods of calculations and variables were discussed. South Yakima Conservation District provided nitrogen concentration data from 35 different lagoons. Moving forward, lagoon leakage and nitrogen rates are in the process of being calculated. Three peer reviewers, Melanie Redding, Ginny Stern, and Kevin Lindsey, will review prior to the data being presented to the committee. Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture has done an independent study on contribution from dairy pens and will supply that information.

Charlie observed that once the necessary information from the Department of Ecology is obtained, this process can be completed within two to three months.

A concern was expressed that neither advisory group members nor working group members could act as impartial peer reviewers. While some agreed, most observed that the reviewers have the appropriate credentials. It was also pointed out that the purpose of the peer review is to show the appropriate actions were taken in gathering the information, not to re-write the study.

Irrigated Ag Working Group – Jim Trull

Jim Trull reported that the group is working on best management practices for Irrigated Agriculture, pairing lists down to ones that are specifically applicable to the Groundwater

Management Area and goals to address nitrogen. Practices fall into two categories: Irrigation Water Management and Nutrient Management. The working group decided not to pursue practices related to storage and handling of agricultural and animal byproducts. Jim stated that the discussion centers on manure storage before applying to fields or spreading, that the source is too small for investigations but they will apply the information. The Livestock/CAFO group will address manure storage.

Regarding Irrigated Agriculture, best management practices are identified as codes which are found on the web, these will eventually be attached to a report. Irrigation Water Management is the practice of managing uniform water application to satisfy crop requirements with amounts of water consistent with intake characteristics of the soil and its moisture holding capacity. Within best management practice there are three levels: 1) the 'Check Book' method, where a producer monitors and reports irrigation and precipitation weekly; 2) the check book method plus installing soil sensors; and 3) installing the soil and moisture sensors with data transmitters.

The focus is on sprinkler and micro irrigation systems that are more suited on crops and soils in our area and developing a plan with recommendations for methodology. In addition to the proper design for an irrigation management system, growers should check nozzles, and use common-sense actions to maintain the systems. Additionally, Micro-irrigation systems include subsurface drip irrigation, regular drip or trickle emitters, and spray or spinners. This practice can be part of a management system to support efficient application of irrigation water and maintain soil moisture. Operation and maintenance is necessary to ensure proper functions, including reference to periodic inspections and prompt repairs. Jim observed that new technology is more efficient.

Jim reviewed nutrient management considerations: managing the amount, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments to minimize excess nitrates reaching the groundwater resources; and to properly utilize manure, municipal and industrial bio solids, and other organic by-products as plant nutrient sources. He added that a nutrient management plan should be developed for nitrogen that considers crop requirements for all potential sources of nutrients.

Deep Soil Sampling. Two rounds have been completed with a third sampling round to start in about 30 days. The working group hopes for more participation; it has been noted that there are not a lot of data sets to balance statistically.

Education and Public outreach is a companion program to Deep Soil Sampling, and Irrigation and Nutrient BMPs. In summary, the working group hopes the GWAC will endorse a reduced scope of Best Management Practices that applies to our Groundwater area. Meanwhile, education and public outreach and post-harvest deep sampling needs to continue.

RCIM Working Group – Robert Farrell

Robert Farrell reported that the group has been looking at nitrogen loading from residential, commercial, and industrial sources while concentrating on residential lawns and hobby farms. The recommendation for residential lawns by professional appliers is approximately 9 pounds of fertilizer per acre per year. Given that not everyone uses services or even bothers with fertilizer they are recommending approximate loading one-tenth of that amount. Another sources suggests using two 20 pound bags of fertilizer which is two-thirds' pound per acre per year from the average homeowner. Most hobby farms don't use any or very little fertilizer.

Another member performed a survey in his neighborhood, from which he concluded his neighbors use about 16 pounds per year of fertilizer. He stated that the nitrogen stays in the clippings which his neighbors are removing.

Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Working Group – Lisa Freund

Lisa Freund presented that the Education and Public Outreach group would be doing the next round of High Risk Well Assessment surveys. A few minor changes have been made to news releases and letters to various people invited; however, they are using the same methodology and messages as in the previous survey. The group is looking to begin surveying in September, 2015. Everyone is urged to participate if they're located in the GWMA area and on a private or shared well. Those interested can contact Yakima County Public Services at (509) 574-2300.

Regulatory Framework Working Group – Jean Mendoza

Jean began her report by reading from WAC 173.100.100.

She summarized the group's 2015 work to date: In February the EPA and Department of Ecology presented the laws. In April the Natural Resources Conservation presented on Nitrates in the Water. In June Laurie Crowe with South Yakima Conservation District presented an overview of the Conservation Districts while Ginny Prest from the Department

of Agriculture presented the Dairy Nutrient Management Program. Moving forward, the Department of Ecology will present on CAFO, non-point, and underground injection wells. At this point the Regulatory Framework group is in the data gathering mode.

IV. Authorization for Deep Soil Sampling Data Analysis – Jim Trull

Jim Trull asked for GWAC authorization to develop a scope of work and estimated cost for Landau and Associates to analyze the first three Deep Soil Sampling data sets (fall 2014, spring 2015 and fall 2015). He explained that Landau Associates had analyzed the first set of Deep Soil Sampling results and had made a presentation to the Irrigated Agriculture group. The group came to consensus to wait for three data sets before conducting further analysis. Vern explained the contracting process, noting that developing the scope of work and identifying associated fees was the first step. If the GWAC agrees to the scope of work, then the County will enter into negotiations with the contractor. Subject to successful negotiations, the contract would go before the Board of County Commissioners for final approval.

Laurie asked if the contract could be an addendum to the existing Deep Soil Sampling Plan. Vern said it could, subject to discussion by this group. Jim Trull restated the proposal, asking for GWAC approval to develop the scope of work, to include a range of what they think the work should cost, and to deliver the scope of work to Vern, Laurie and the GWAC.

Jim Davenport asked if the group supported Jim's proposal (yes). He asked if there were any outliers (no).

Authorization to develop a scope of work for Deep Soil Sampling Data Analysis approved by consensus.

A member stated he has the right to know what's in the contract. He would appreciate it if, before releasing to commissioners, the group sees the document.

V. Committee Business

Notice of Procedures for Work Group Meetings – Lisa Freund

Working group meeting practices are to include anyone who wants to be included. Yakima County Administration makes sure the meeting groups are informed of new information and meeting dates. Admin works with the chair to identify meeting dates

and calendar the meetings. Anyone who has expressed interested in a working group or has attended a meeting, whether GWAC members or not, are included in the invitation. The meeting information is also posted on the website with dates, times, location, and the call in number. The group was asked if this procedure is acceptable, no one disagreed. The group was reminded to check the website for meeting schedules.

Approve the April 16 and June 18, 2015 meeting summaries

The April 16 and June 18, 2015 meeting summaries were approved as presented.

VI. GWAC Member Comments

The group was asked, "How are we doing?"

The majority of the group members felt that the working groups are in a good place for productivity, our charge is specific and we need to stay focused on the original goal. The groups are settling down, members are listening to each other with less arguing and simply trying to get things done. With such a large and diverse group the committee structure has improved, comments are useful and respected. The public outreach has increased significantly. A few members expressed this process to be like a train, we are heading down the tracks, but there are a lot of people who want to conduct, both speeding us up and slowing us down. Most also agreed that more participation is needed in Deep Soil Sampling. A few members stated they appreciate the work but fear we will not accomplish anything. Overall, it seems that the groups are making more progress now than they have in the last three years.

A member asked for a narrative or presentation ahead of time when a proposal needs authorization.

VII. Public Comment

An advocate for the Hispanic community questioned whether we had a representative for Hispanic Farmers. She was informed that we do have a Hispanic Community Representative. She stated that her dad is a farmer with high Nitrates in his well however it took her a lot of time to finally get our information.

Another member of the public suggested that our GWAC group will lack credibility with farmers unless they've actually been one. He believes the makeup of our groups are heavily leaning towards agriculture and until we find the truth of where nitrates are coming from we will never come up with an answer.

VIII. Next Meeting:

- October 15, 2015 5:00 PM
  Location: Radio KDNA, 121 Sunnyside Ave, Granger, WA 98932

IX. Next Steps

IAWG will develop a scope of work and cost range for Deep Soil Sampling analysis.

X. 2015 Meeting Calendar

December 17, 2015 (tentative, if needed)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on October 15, 2015.