

1                   **YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
 2                   **(GWAC)**

3                   **MEETING SUMMARY**

4                   **Thursday, February 19, 2015 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5                   *Denny Blaine Building Board Room*  
 6                   *810 E. Custer Avenue, Sunnyside, WA 98944*

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

11                  **I. Call to Order**

12                  **Roll Call:** This meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Jim Davenport, Facilitator.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Seat</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
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)	✓	
Gordon Kelly	Yakima County Health District	✓	
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center	✓	
Tom Eaton	U.S. EPA	✓	
Marie Jennings	U.S. EPA (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)		✓

13

**II. Welcome & Meeting Overview**

14

15      Moment of Silence

16

17      Jim Davenport inquired from the members if they had any suggestions for the Agenda.  
18      While there were no suggestions from the members Jim mentioned that there would be a  
19      change in the order of topics.

20

**III. Committee Business:**

21

22      The December 18, 2014 meeting summary was approved as amended.

23

**IV. Working Group Reports:**

24

25

26

27

28

29

**30 Livestock/CAFO Working Group – Charlie McKinney**

31

32 Charlie McKinney reported the group met on February 5, 2015. They revisited the work  
33 plan and are looking to find more information on possible nitrate sources from manure  
34 lagoons, corrals, pens and manure storage. This will help better define the approach and  
35 potential needs. They will follow up on lagoon information from the last five years.

36

**37 Irrigated Ag Working Group – Jim Trull**

38

39 Jim Trull reported the group met on February 5, 2015 and reviewed the results from the  
40 first round of Deep Soil Sampling (DSS). The group determined that there is not enough  
41 data at this point to come to a conclusion and more sampling will need to be done. They  
42 discussed how to get more useful data and make it more streamlined. He noted they will  
43 start working with Kirk Cook to coordinate the DSS survey/sampling with the nitrogen  
44 loading assessment and are hoping to reach more people that way. Kirk mentioned that 30  
45 percent of the area will be needed for statistical purposes. Pesticide credits may be given to  
46 entice participation in the survey.

47

**48 Regulatory Framework Working Group – Tom Eaton**

49

50 Tom Eaton reported that the group has not yet met in 2015. They will be holding a  
51 conference call on Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm to debrief on the first study session  
52 and to get feedback and ideas for the upcoming sessions.

53

**54 RCIM Working Group – Robert Farrell**

55

Has not met in 2015.

56

**57 Data Working Group – Kirk Cook**

58

59 The group has not met in 2015. They will be meeting soon to discuss the Nitrogen Loading  
60 Assessment. Kirk did attend the Livestock and Irrigated/Ag meetings. He will be working on  
61 protocols to conduct the Nitrogen Loading Assessment.

62

**63 Funding Working Group – Vern Redifer**

64

Has not met.

65

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

66

Lisa Freund announced that the GWMA web site update has been initiated. She reviewed the EPO's findings relative to the Abandoned Well and Septic System campaign, noting that the EPO is remanding the campaign back to the RCIM for more work.

67

**V. Filling Open Committee Positions: Charlie McKinney**

68

Charlie announced that GWAC member Gordon Kelly is retiring from the Yakima Health District and his replacement, Ryan Ibach, will serve as Gordon's successor on the GWAC.

69

Charlie added that there is a membership vacancy with the resignation of CARE. He asked the group to consider Dr. Jessica Black, an environmental sciences professor at Heritage University, to fill the vacancy. Dr. Black has expressed interest in the past and she also volunteered her class to assist with the 2013 door-to-door GWMA survey. A member mentioned that there may be a conflict of interest if the GWAC were to contract with Heritage University in the future. Another member noted that Dr. Black would need to respect the boundaries of the Yakama Nation. Jim Davenport asked who determines the GWAC membership. Charlie noted it is the Department of Ecology, but he appreciates the input from members. He will consider tonight's input before making a decision.

70

Action: Charlie McKinney will review the comments received tonight regarding the environmental membership position.

71

**VI. GWMA PLAN TIMELINE 1/29/15: Vern Redifer**

72

Vern introduced a GWMA Plan timeline, observing that it encompasses everything the GWAC is supposed to do under WAC 173-100. The timeline is organized by the six major WAC guidelines (i.e., area characterization, problem definition, goals and objectives, etc.) and contains over 190 tasks needed to complete the plan. As it appears now, the plan will not be completed until December 2017. Vern requested that the working group chairs review the timeline and provide feedback for the April meeting.

73

Jim Davenport asked what the Department of Ecology's expectations are regarding plan completion. Charlie replied that there are expectations within the current funding contract and they are considering a second contract towards the end of 2016. Kirk observed that it

102 took two and a half years for the Columbia Basin to complete their GWMA, so 2017 is not  
103 an unreasonable completion date.

104  
105 A member asked if it makes sense to wait for Deep Soil Sampling (DSS) to finish (i.e.,  
106 complete the Problem Definition) before moving ahead. It has been determined that after  
107 reviewing the first round of sampling, there was not enough information to make a  
108 determination and the next sampling round will be needed to calibrate the results. Part of  
109 the reason [the plan] is taking so long is because of DSS. Jim Trull counseled patience,  
110 noting that possibly three rounds of DSS will suffice instead of four, and that would help  
111 move the process along more quickly.

112  
113 A member asked if Best Management Practices are still a part of the plan. Vern stated that  
114 they are, under 4. Alternatives. The effectiveness still needs to be evaluated and the data  
115 will need to be reviewed.

116 Kirk suggested that collaboration is needed between the working groups to complete  
117 specific tasks, rather than assigning tasks to a specific working group.

118  
119 A member suggested that the Best Management Practices (BMP) need to be updated. The  
120 group can use existing National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) tools that can help  
121 evaluate the BMPs.

122  
123 Another member expressed confusion over the BMPs, requesting clarification regarding 1)  
124 which ones are being used 2) which ones are the right ones for this data, and 3) are we to  
125 comment on eliminating any of them.

126  
127 Jim Davenport stated that the group needs to discuss BMPs, agree on sources and then  
128 move on.

129  
130 Vern stated that between June 1 and July 15<sup>th</sup> there is a lot of information to look at and it  
131 will need to be narrowed down to the most appropriate for this area.

132  
133 **Action:** Working Group Chairs and their respective working groups will review the timeline,  
134 their specific subsections, and provide input for the April GWAC meeting.

135  
136 **VII. Long-Term Monitoring Plan Objectives: Vern Redifer**  
137

138 Vern stated that the group needs to come to a consensus of the definition of a monitoring  
139 system. The group does not have to implement a monitoring system to complete its work.  
140 The group does need to have a design to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and  
141 start new design protocols by July. The group needs to come to an objective of what it is  
142 designing.

143

144 A member asked what is the degree of specificity and how detailed will this monitoring  
145 system be.

146

147 Vern stated that we need to have an idea of the scope of our objective: what types of wells  
148 are most appropriate to meet the objective (i.e., existing wells versus purpose-built wells).  
149 We need an idea of the level of detail that will be needed by the implementing agency. We  
150 need to give an implementation plan to the jurisdiction/agency we hand it off to.

151

152 Melanie Redding, Department of Ecology, described Whatcom County's ambient monitoring  
153 program: the process they used, the results and questions that need to be thought about  
154 when data collecting. Whatcom County used a network of 35 private wells because it was  
155 too expensive to build monitoring wells. They started in 2004 and 10 years later, they have  
156 good data over time. They couldn't determine where the nitrate was coming from but were  
157 able to determine the condition of the aquifer.

158

159 Melanie observed that it's important to identify what questions the group wants answered:  
160 what are the objectives. Each strategy will answer different questions. No one study will  
161 answer all questions.

162

163 A member stated that the backbone should be structured around the GWMA goal: reducing  
164 nitrate in groundwater over time. The accepted BMPs, over time, should answer the  
165 question: is it [nitrate levels] getting better?

166

167 Vern summarized the conversation, noting the following characteristics the group had  
168 discussed:

169

- 35-40 purpose-built wells
- linear-flow patterns
- dispersed enough to look at different areas of the GWMA
- down to the water table/shallow aquifer

170

171

172

173 Vern stated that this is an introduction to this topic and he would like the group to discuss it  
174 with the monitoring plan potential objectives in April. The group needs to come to  
175 consensus on one strategy. They need to answer the question: *what do you want?*

176

177 A member observed that based on the discussion, a decision could be made now on an  
178 ambient monitoring system.

179

180 **Action:** Jim Davenport made a motion asking if an Ambient Monitoring Systems is needed.  
181 The group agreed.

182

### 183 **VIII. Public Comment:**

184

185 A member of the public stated that he is surprised by the [group's] assumption that the  
186 upward nitrate trend will continue. His thoughts are that 1) farmers will become more  
187 efficient with water and nitrate use 2) while more production in valley can cause an  
188 increase in nitrogen levels, if prices decrease, production decreases and farmers can go out  
189 of business.

190

### 191 **IX. Phase I - Well Assessment Survey Preliminary Data Results**

192

193 Vern reviewed the data results and observed that it was difficult to correlate the data.  
194 Accordingly, the survey results are being sent back to the EPO to determine what they think  
195 the data means. He further requested that the EPO correlate the high/medium/low risk.

196

### 197 **X. Next Steps:**

198

199 Future agenda items: Discuss Groundwater testing and provide input on committee  
200 expectations for PGG

201

202 EPO will review the high risk well assessment data and correlate high/medium/low risk

203

204 Work groups will review the GWMA timeline and provide feedback at the April meeting

205

#### 206 **Next Meeting:**

207

- 208 • April 16, 2015 5:00 PM

209

Location: Radio KDNA, 121 Sunnyside Ave, Granger, WA 98932

210

211      **2015 Meeting Calendar**

212

213      April 16, 2015

214      June 18, 2015

215      August 20, 2015

216      October 15, 2015

217      December 17, 2015 (tentative, if needed)

218

219      The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

220

221      Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on April 16, 2015.