

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

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

4 **Thursday, October 20, 2016 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5 *Denny Blaine Boardroom*
 6 *810 East Custer Avenue, Sunnyside, WA*

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

12 **I. Call to Order: This meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM by Vern Redifer, 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)	✓	
Ron Cowin	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control	✓	
	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)	✓	
Dave Cole	Yakima Health District	✓	
Ryan Ibach	Yakima Health District (alternate)		✓
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center	✓	
Lucy Edmondson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	✓	
Peter Contreras	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (alternate)	✓	
Elizabeth Sanchez	Yakama Nation		✓
Stuart Crane	Yakama Nation (alternate)	✓	
Virginia "Ginny" Prest	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Jaclyn Hancock	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)		✓
Andy Cervantes	WA Department of Health		✓
Ginny Stern	WA Department of Health (alternate)	✓	
David Bowen	WA Department of Ecology	✓	
Sage Park	WA Department of Ecology		✓
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative	✓	
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		✓
Jessica Black	Heritage University		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS		✓

13 **II. Welcome & Meeting Overview**

14 Vern Redifer welcomed everyone and announced that Jim Davenport was back and would
 15 rejoin the group shortly. Vern thanked Melanie Redding and Ginny Stern for the pre-meeting
 16 presentation of their groundwater primer which he found to be quite illustrative. The
 17 members and guests introduced themselves and spent a moment in silence to prepare for
 18 the meeting. There were no additions to the agenda.

19

20 **III. Working Group Reports**

21 **Data Working Group:** Melanie Redding gave an update on the work her group had done on
 22 the Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Network proposal which would be presented later on
 23 in the meeting. The Data group had also discussed and prioritized the other monitoring
 24 initiatives presented by PGG in 2013 and recommended common water supply aquifers and
 25 hot spots as its top two choices. Matt Bachmann from USGS had presented an overview of

26 the particle tracking model at a Data meeting. The group's goal had been to determine if this
27 work could benefit current or future efforts. Melanie updated everyone on the status of the
28 Nitrogen Loading Assessment which is still in peer review. Last of all Melanie stated that the
29 Data group had discussed abandoned wells which began a Committee discussion of several
30 possible actions. Finally it was suggested that Vern schedule a joint session of the working
31 groups since several of them had spent time on the topic already to explore this matter
32 further.

33 **Livestock/CAFO:** Chair David Bowen said the group had focused on the following dairy
34 practices: pens, corrals, lagoons/ponds, composting, feed storage and animal mortality
35 operations. They have had ongoing discussions on Best Management Practices (BMPs) and
36 had agreed to use the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) practices relevant to the
37 Lower Yakima Valley GWMA livestock/CAFO's as the foundation of the BMPs to be
38 recommended for use and may augment with other scientifically based methods where they
39 saw gaps when appropriate. Periodic updates had also been provided to the group on the
40 Department of Ecology draft CAFO General Permit.

41 **Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG):** Troy Peters said that his group had focused on solutions
42 to recommend to the Legislature and the group was in agreement on the following: 1) resources and efforts behind education and outreach; 2) help and tools for irrigation water
43 management i.e., soil moisture sensors or consulting on when to turn the water off and on;
44 3) economic help for growers to do soil sampling and nutrient management; and, 4) an effort
45 to engage and work with the fertilizer industry to encourage them to aid in the effort to effect
46 needed changes. Troy said that the group still needs to work through the details of how to
47 carry out and pay for each of these goals. Troy was open to any other suggestions the
48 committee might have but added that the IAWG was not inclined to add any regulations at
49 this time even though they recognized they may have the ability to make changes because
50 they believed that they would hurt people at the same time. A member asked if the group
51 discussed the monetary savings of water management. Troy indicated the group had not only
52 discussed this but also discussed the monetary savings of nutrient management and both
53 would be a part of the educational component.

55 **RCIM Working Group:** Dan Degroot reported that the group was attempting to confirm with
56 the Department of Ecology that they were monitoring (via the NPDES permit) the commercial,
57 industrial and municipal portion of the committee's work. The group hoped to learn what
58 various entities were discharging and when, obtain samples of the reports and specifics of
59 what Ecology does to analyze, chart or monitor each permit. David Bowen will obtain this
60 information for the group and stated that Ecology analyzes exceedances very closely on a
61 monthly basis and also looks for seasonal and annual trends.

62 Dan said that onsite sewage systems (OSS) continue to be a topic discussed by the committee
63 as they do little to treat for nitrogen. Ginny Stern and Leslie Turner (Department of Health)
64 recently attended a meeting and provided the group with a great deal of information on these
65 systems. The group is concerned about outdated systems (that were not correctly
66 engineered or installed), systems that are not maintained, systems that have a larger
67 population than they are designed for and systems found close to each other (more than 40
68 systems per square mile – 16 acres per system) because when density reaches this level the
69 groundwater begins to receive more nitrogen than it can dilute adequately before the next
70 well is encountered. Dan stated that the GWMA features many high density areas. Vern
71 added that the groundwater primer illustrated this well.

72 **Regulatory Framework Working Group:** Jean indicated that her group made presentations
73 to Livestock/CAFO, Irrigated Ag (this presentation included Ginny Prest from WSDA) and
74 RCIM and passed out their “Analysis of Regulatory Statutes, Voluntary Incentives and
75 Regulatory Assistance Programs” to each. Jean summarized their presentations. In addition,
76 the group is holding discussions on non-point source pollution, composting and WAC
77 173.350.500 in order to look more closely at regulations and exemptions for the dairy
78 industry, regulations for decommissioning abandoned wells, atmospheric deposition, Total
79 Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL’s) and RCW 90.64.180 Protocol for monitoring waters near
80 dairies and CAFO’s with its Executive Summary.

81 **Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Working Group:** Lisa Freund reminded everyone that
82 the GWAC had approved the “test your well” concept and budget EPO had recommended at
83 the August GWAC meeting and noted that two of the three billboards were now under rental
84 agreements: 1) Lamar (\$4,000) on the Yakima Valley Highway and 11th in Sunnyside which
85 will go live on December 12; and, 2) Tom Paul (\$1,800) located at 1600 1st Street in Sunnyside
86 which will go live January 1st. Pat Newhouse explained that the photo shoot had taken place
87 in her home on October 16 with two little boys who lived in the GWMA. She believed the
88 boys responded well and the committee would be pleased with the pictures. The
89 photographer had donated his time and the parents had signed a release for use.

90
91 **IV. Approval of the Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Plan**
92 Melanie Redding addressed the group regarding the June 8, 2016 Lower Yakima Valley
93 GWMA Proposed Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Network plan. She reminded everyone
94 that at the February 2015 GWAC meeting the group had agreed that an ambient groundwater
95 monitoring system was needed with the following characteristics: 35-40 purpose-built wells
96 with linear-flow patterns that were dispersed enough to look at different areas of the GWMA
97 and down to the water table/shallow aquifer. She added that PGG had also included a
98 proposal to monitor drains separately. Melanie noted that the goal of both of these projects
99 was to look at the quality of the water over time and that the ambient groundwater

100 monitoring network was designed to be a baseline – wells or other systems could be added
101 later to answer other questions.

102
103 Melanie explained how PGG located the well sites randomly on a priority basis and that all
104 were within the boundaries of public access so that Yakima County could always monitor
105 them. The committee proceeded asking questions and discussing a variety of topics which
106 included whether there was an adequate number of wells to meet scientific needs, placement
107 of the wells, the importance of drilling new wells and whether surface contamination could
108 occur in these specifically drilled wells, concern that the wells would be roadside and
109 therefore susceptible to contamination, the usefulness of data for other purposes, whether
110 any wells should be site specific, whether adjacent property owners would be made aware of
111 the locations, and the ability to test since the water table varies seasonally. Discussion
112 ensued. A member requested that the attributes of each individual site be noted.

113
114 Rand and Vern explained that the first step in the process was for the GWAC to approve the
115 proposed plan. The County would then begin its process to procure competitive installation
116 bids. They noted that doing this in a timely manner would allow the group to obtain four
117 samplings prior to the committee's presentation to the Legislature. Vern believed this was
118 an important component of the GWAC's recommendations back to the Legislature and that
119 the GWAC budget included the resources to begin well installation and testing costs. Vern
120 then asked for a show of hands of who felt ready to make a decision regarding the Ambient
121 Groundwater Monitoring Plan. All but four members raised their hands indicating they were
122 ready to make a decision. Vern then asked the four members what they needed to reach a
123 decision. A member suggested—and it was agreed—that a meeting with PGG to obtain more
124 information would help them come to a decision. Vern agreed to schedule the meeting with
125 PGG and the four committee members for this purpose.

126
127 **V. Budget Discussion**
128 Vern distributed his "GWAC Budget Discussion 10-20-2016" for the group's review. Due to
129 time constraints, the discussion about reallocating the remaining funds will take place at the
130 next meeting.

131
132 **VI. Public Comment**
133 None. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM. All other agenda items were postponed.

134
135 **VII. Next Meeting**
136 The group agreed to cancel its December meeting and meet again in November. A meeting
137 was scheduled for November 17, 2016, 5:00-7:00 PM, Location: *Denny Blaine Boardroom,*
138 *810 East Custer Ave., Sunnyside, WA.*

140 **VIII. Next Steps**

141 - Schedule a meeting with a PGG representative and the four members who would like
142 additional information regarding the June 8, 2016 *Lower Yakima Valley GWMA Proposed*
143 *Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Network*.
144 - Schedule a joint working group meeting to discuss abandoned wells.
145 - Review the budget allocation worksheet at the November meeting.
146 - Reach a decision regarding the proposed Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Plan.
147
148 Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on November 17, 2016.