

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

**MEETING SUMMARY**

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

*Denny Blaine Boardroom  
 810 East Custer Avenue, Sunnyside, 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: This meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM by Vern Redifer, 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)	✓	
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 Sanchey	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)  
43 resources and efforts behind education and outreach; 2) help and tools for irrigation water  
44 management i.e., soil moisture sensors or consulting on when to turn the water off and on;  
45 3) economic help for growers to do soil sampling and nutrient management; and, 4) an effort  
46 to engage and work with the fertilizer industry to encourage them to aid in the effort to effect  
47 needed changes. Troy said that the group still needs to work through the details of how to  
48 carry out and pay for each of these goals. Troy was open to any other suggestions the  
49 committee might have but added that the IAWG was not inclined to add any regulations at  
50 this time even though they recognized they may have the ability to make changes because  
51 they believed that they would hurt people at the same time. A member asked if the group  
52 discussed the monetary savings of water management. Troy indicated the group had not only  
53 discussed this but also discussed the monetary savings of nutrient management and both  
54 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 11<sup>th</sup> in Sunnyside which  
85 will go live on December 12; and, 2) Tom Paul (\$1,800) located at 1600 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Sunnyside  
86 which will go live January 1<sup>st</sup>. 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.*

139

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.