

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

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

4 **Thursday, June 29, 2017 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5 **Radio KDNE Conference Rooms 1-2**
 6 **121 Sunnyside Avenue, Granger, WA 98932**

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 5:01 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		✓

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	✓	
Nick Peak	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	✓	
Sheryl Howe	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 and Introductions:** Everyone introduced themselves. Vern
 14 reviewed the agenda – there were no additions. The group paused for a moment of silence.
 15

16 **III. Working Group Reports:**

17 **Data Collection:** Melanie stated her group had worked through their assignments and she
 18 had nothing to report. Vern asked about data analysis. Melanie said that would be coming
 19 to the group soon.

20 **Livestock/CAFO:** Sage Park reported for David Bowen. The group's final report had been
 21 submitted to Jim Davenport.

22 **Irrigated Ag:** Troy indicated that the group was in a holding pattern.

23 **RCIM:** Dan DeGroot said his group met June 12. As a result of the recommendation made
 24 in the Nitrogen Availability Assessment (NAA) that extreme care is necessary when
 25 comparing onsite sewage system (OSS) discharges with discharges from a cropping system,

26 RCIM Working Group members wanted to emphasize the impact of future increased density
27 of OSS on the aquifer and pointed out that if no action is taken with present OSS
28 regulations, the nitrogen load and nitrate contamination will increase, especially in high-
29 density areas connected to residential onsite sewage systems. The group recommended
30 that when the monitoring system is installed at least two wells should be devoted to the
31 UGA (where high density OSS exists). One well should be placed in a shallow aquifer and
32 one in a deeper aquifer for comparison to surrounding land uses. Dan added that the
33 report and recommendations from RCIM was finalized subject to comments from the
34 GWAC; therefore, no further working group meetings were anticipated at this time. A
35 member stated that he had yet to see proof that a high density of OSS increase nitrates in
36 the groundwater especially since the amount leaked was far less than any dairy. He was
37 also concerned that any laymen reading the report would think OSS were contaminating
38 their drinking water. Several members responded and Vern summarized the RCIM
39 comments by stating that if building increased in the Lower Valley thus increasing the
40 number of OSS, the amount of nitrogen from OSS would increase if nothing was done about
41 its contribution (which is designed to leach to the aquifer). Another member added that
42 engineers have confirmed this. A member asked if the NAA addresses this – Vern said yes.

43 **Regulatory Framework:** Jean reported that her group met last month and reviewed an
44 analysis of Yakima County ordinances that address nitrates in groundwater from agricultural
45 sources, the Growth Management Act and the County's involvement in the Voluntary
46 Stewardship Program (VSP). Jean provided an overview of what the VSP would mean to the
47 County. In addition the group reviewed Yakima County's Conditional Use permitting
48 process and looked specifically at two CAFO permits. Jean stated that the group found
49 areas that could be improved, noting that Yakima County was not allowed to see the CAFO's
50 Dairy Nutrient Management Plan. Jean stated that the group more or less agreed upon
51 Yakima County and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) working more closely on
52 this. Jean added that the group agreed that the majority of manure regulations are directed
53 at dairies and that there was much less regulation of synthetic fertilizer. The group had
54 learned that Maryland does have regulations on synthetic fertilizers. A member said the
55 Regulatory meeting summary stated that SYCD would set up a tour of a dairy for the Yakima
56 County Planning Department and stated that he hoped they would be visiting a "dirty" dairy
57 not one that was being showcased.

58 **EPO:** Lisa Freund said Melanie Redding attended the group's June meeting in order to
59 communicate her committee's needs for short and long-term messaging. Lisa noted that
60 any messaging for the Data Collections group on matters like the NAA would be approved
61 by the GWAC first. Lisa added that it was important for EPO to receive specific messages

62 from the GWAC and that EPO was fully aware of the work they would be doing as the
63 program moved to completion. A member complimented Lisa and the EPO Working Group.
64 He felt that their efforts to get the message out to everyone went above and beyond
65 expectation and wondered if the billboards would come down when the contract ended.
66 Lisa affirmed that the billboards were only under contract for the length of the GWAC and
67 acknowledged the volunteer efforts of many members of her working group. Another
68 member said that in her opinion a huge amount of work was left to be done to reach
69 Spanish speaking people and those less educated in the Lower Valley.

70 **Funding:** Vern stated that the group had met in June and he was appointed chairman. The
71 purpose of the first meeting was to brainstorm, organize and to discuss the group's purpose
72 and goal which was to look at the suggested alternative programs in order to determine
73 their costs so that funding sources could be sought. The group also discussed an effort to
74 continue the work of the GWMA at the local level, a forum to evaluate progress and a
75 forum to collect and monitor data. One thought was that the lead entity could be Yakima
76 County – Vern had agreed to attempt to determine this cost. Discussion also included an
77 additional concerned citizens group or steering, executive or listening committee, but these
78 decisions would be dependent on understanding the GWAC's recommendations of
79 alternatives. Finally, Vern stated the group changed its meeting schedule and would now
80 meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 5:00-7:30 PM at the Department of
81 Ecology (next meeting date is July 12). A member asked Vern to explain what an aquifer
82 protection area was. Vern stated that the Revised Code of Washington allowed for a
83 geographic area to be defined as an aquifer protection area and an additional property tax
84 to be levied to provide funding for the protection of that area. He noted that the
85 Commissioners cannot create this tax by themselves, the people in that area must approve
86 it by a majority vote. Vern said that this was a tool for funding that the group could
87 consider.

88
89 **IV. Sources of Nitrogen – Consolidated Report:** Jim stated that the report had been provided
90 to the group for their review prior to its inclusion in the program and noted that the RCIM
91 and Livestock/CAFO Working Groups had reviewed their portion of this report; Irrigated Ag
92 had not. Jim stated that if members wanted to edit or change any portions of the report
93 the comments or edits needed to be turned in to him in the next two weeks (by July 13).

94
95 Lucy Edmondson (EPA) asked if the group would be discussing the Nitrogen Availability
96 Assessment. Vern said no; but he hoped to have the discussion in a July meeting. Vern
97 added that the Department of Agriculture (WSDA) had finished their review of comments,

98 but he had not completed the review of comments made to the RCIM piece as he had been
99 on vacation. A member wanted to know how many hours a week the WSDA and Yakima
100 County were spending reviewing member comments. Several members of the WSDA
101 related that a number of staff were involved and it would be hard to estimate the number
102 of hours. All parties acknowledged the review had not been put on the back burner. Lucy
103 noted that EPA had some concerns with how the document will continue to develop as they
104 have more data. Vern stated that he had participated in a demonstration of the GIS
105 application and it was ready to go. He directed Lucy to provide the EPA data to the
106 Department of Agriculture. Lucy added that she appreciated the document was designed to
107 be living and could be updated. She said that it was unclear what kind of QAPP had been
108 used and thought WSDA could look to Ecology or EPA for an example. Lucy added that she
109 thought the group should look at the additional data on dairies available on the EPA
110 website. She thought it would be good to look at post-harvest deep soil samples and she
111 encouraged WSDA also to look at some interesting research on soil organic matter which
112 was going on at the University of Idaho – Ralph Fisher is the contact person. Another
113 member was concerned that the Irrigated Ag Working Group had not had an opportunity to
114 address the NAA as other working groups had. After some discussion it was agreed to
115 schedule a meeting of this working group.

116
117 **V. Alternative Land and Water Use Management Strategies for Reaching Program Goals and**
118 **Objectives per WAC 173-100-100(4):** Jim Davenport asked the group to look at this
119 spreadsheet and explained that WAC 173-100-100(4) required that the group compile a list
120 of alternative management strategies and consider them in light of the criteria found in the
121 WAC (e.g., feasibility, effectiveness, cost, proposed funding, time, difficulty to implement,
122 and degree of consistency with local comprehensive plans and water management
123 programs) in order to cut the list down. Jim explained that the list included
124 recommendations made by working groups (noted by specific working group), suggestions
125 made during working group discussions that had not been decided upon (“WGD”) and from
126 literature reviews done by Jim (“literature”) then organized by category. Jim’s goal was for
127 the group to review and reduce the list by 25 to 50 percent by the next meeting. Sage
128 asked what criteria determines “good.” Jim stated that the criteria outlined in the WAC
129 appeared in the top line across the chart, but acknowledged that individuals might have
130 their own criteria as well – for example, a member may not desire to see regulatory
131 alternatives, or criteria may be based on cost effectiveness. Jim said that some criteria will
132 be subjective, some will be objective, and stated that the group might decide to change the
133 language of suggested alternatives. Sage also asked if the group should first look at the list

134 without looking at the criteria. Jim said yes, but if a member had information that fit into a
135 criteria category it would be helpful. Vern believed the review of the alternatives should be
136 intuitive – some ideas aren't practical, or some just seem good. Another member pointed
137 out that some of the alternatives could be consolidated and that some of the groups
138 represented at the table (like the Health District or WSDA) would be able to indicate if the
139 alternative was already covered based on their knowledge. A member asked that the list of
140 BMPs the Irrigated Ag and Livestock/CAFO group reviewed be sent out to the group.

141
142 After a lengthy discussion on how the group could best proceed with its evaluation of the
143 list, it was agreed that Ginny Prest would create a survey monkey poll for primary members
144 (or their alternates but only one response could be made from each group), where they
145 could enter "yes", "no" (and comment why) or "maybe" for each alternative. Each member
146 was encouraged to work their way through the list prior to the availability of the survey
147 monkey poll in order to accommodate for the short turn around as the group desired that
148 the results of the poll be available for its next meeting on July 13. Ginny will rank the
149 responses by category.

150
151 A member stated that some objectives focused on health issues and not the purpose of the
152 GWMA to reduce nitrate contamination concentration in groundwater below state drinking
153 water standards. He wondered if those should be eliminated because they don't address
154 the goal. Vern thought that the group should go through the list without regard to the goal;
155 then the revised list could be categorized at a later date. A member thought that if the
156 program addressed both goals it would be appropriate for the alternatives to do so as well.
157 Another member wondered when the group would see area characterization. Jim
158 Davenport said that the document had come to the GWAC several months ago and included
159 everything he could find from the EPA, the Department of Ecology and USGS. The goal now
160 was to have Matt Bachmann refine it before finalizing its placement in the program.
161 Another member asked if it would include the history Laurie Crowe had put together. Vern
162 said that it was his goal to give the group portions of the program in the ensuing months as
163 it must be completed by September.

164
165 **VI. Committee Business:** The May 18, 2017 meeting summary was approved as presented.
166 The group also reviewed an updated meeting schedule which included more meetings
167 because of the amount of work the group had to do.

169 **VII. Public Comment:** A member stated that he opposed regulation of agriculture because he
170 feared the inevitable result would be a choice for large corporate farms over small farms
171 because the tendency of people determining policy was to pay more attention to
172 businesses with money. A member thanked Yakima County Support Staff for their work and
173 another member acknowledged those who were lending their expertise to the group and
174 thanked them for their time on this huge effort. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.
175

176 **VIII. Next Meeting:** July 13, 2017.
177

178 **IX. Next Steps:** 1) Member edits, comments or changes to the Sources of Nitrogen –
179 Consolidated Report need to be to Jim Davenport in the next two weeks (by July 13). 2) A
180 member asked that the list of BMPs the Irrigated Ag and Livestock/CAFO group reviewed be
181 sent out to the group. 3) Ginny Prest will create a survey monkey poll for primary members
182 (or their alternates but only one representative from each group) where they could enter
183 “yes”, “no (and comment why)” or “maybe” for each alternative. The results of the poll will
184 be available for its next meeting on July 13. Ginny will rank the responses by category.
185

186 **X. Meeting Summary** approved by the GWAC on July 13, 2017.