

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, August 10, 2017 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

*Yakima County Road Maintenance Conference Room
 1216 South 18th Street, Yakima, WA 98901*

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 5:04 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	✓	

Rodney Heit	South Yakima Conservation District (alternate)		✓
John Van Wingerden, III	Port of Sunnyside	✓	
Jay Decker	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		✓
Lucy Edmondson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	✓	
Nick Peak	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (alternate)		✓
Elizabeth Sanchey	Yakama Nation		✓
Stuart Crane	Yakama Nation (alternate)	✓	
Virginia "Ginny" Prest	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Gary Bahr	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 (alternate)		✓
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:** Introductions were made and Vern
 14 reviewed the agenda. A member asked to add an item to the agenda – a concern she had
 15 that several GWAC members were speaking on behalf of the GWMA purportedly spreading
 16 misinformation. The group agreed to address this at the end of the meeting. The group
 17 then paused for a moment of silence.

18
 19 **III. Continued Review and Discussion of Results of Survey Monkey on Alternative Land and**
 20 **Water Use Management Strategies for Reaching Program Goals and Objectives per WAC**
 21 **173-100-100(4):** Vern reminded everyone of the color-coding system they had developed.
 22 He also advised that he had resorted the list again to move educational alternatives into a
 23 more concise grouping. Vern reminded everyone of the four questions Jean had proposed
 24 to discuss once the first review of the alternatives was complete.

25
 26 **The group agreed to keep these alternatives on the list for further review. (Green)**

27

28 **No. 48:** Develop post GWAC education and outreach campaign.

29 **No. 53:** Develop a K-12 education program about groundwater and best management
30 practices--mobile program visiting schools. *The group agreed this alternative needed to be*
31 *kept and revised and noted the following items should be considered in future discussions:*
32 *1) there may be existing curricula that could be taught in the Lower Yakima Valley; and, 2)*
33 *consider focusing education efforts on 11th and 12th grade students.*

34 **No. 55:** Educate the public, particularly in towns, about lawn and garden nitrogen
35 applications' contribution to nitrate concentrations.

36 **No. 21:** Allocate cost share funding or other funding assistance to operators implementing
37 environmental protection measures. *The group agreed to change "operators" to "people"*
38 *and "environmental" to "groundwater."*

39 **No. 114:** Make grants that complement projects related to non-point source pollution. *The*
40 *group agreed to change "non-point source" to "groundwater."*

41 **No. 240:** Request Washington Conservation Commission and WSU Extension to dedicate
42 additional funding to the Yakima Valley for education and outreach, BMP implementation,
43 irrigation water management, soil nutrient management and manure management and
44 application.

45 **No. 194:** Create irrigation management plans (similar to nutrient management plans) for
46 farms over a minimum size and provide financial assistance for implemented plans.

47 **No. 202:** Schedule water and nitrogen application according to the need for optimal crop
48 yields.

49 **No. 15:** Focus implementation of analyzed data BMPs based on information and data
50 included in the Nitrogen Loading Assessment, Soil Sampling Program, Ambient
51 Groundwater Monitoring Plan, USGS Reports, and other similar scientifically based
52 publications.

53 **No. 85:** Recommend that the Yakima Health District or Yakima County continue the High
54 Risk Well Assessment (survey to identify outreach messaging related to health risks and well
55 sampling) periodically over a 5-10 year period. Collect more information on wells known to
56 have high nitrate concentrations, perhaps identifying whether the concentration is self-
57 caused. *The group agreed to delete the first sentence: "Recommend that the Yakima Health*
58 *District or Yakima County continue the High Risk Well Assessment (survey to identify*
59 *outreach messaging related to health risks and well sampling) periodically over a 5-10 year*
60 *period."*

61 **No. 14:** Collect, analyze, and interpret data to track water quality improvement progress,
62 nutrients generated, applied, or exported, which will inform the implementation of an

63 Adaptive Management Plan within the LYV GWMA. *The group agreed to add the word*
64 *“imported” before “generated.”*

65 **No. 136:** Request that the Department of Ecology analyze the trends of nitrate data
66 contained within reports required by NPDES and SDWA permits. *The group corrected*
67 *“SDWA” to the correct reference which was “SWD.”*

68 **No. 78:** Establish performance objectives against which monitoring data can be compared--
69 number of at risk wells, BMP implementation, funding success, reduction in number of
70 underperforming farming practices.

71 **No. 189:** Monitor nitrate concentrations of irrigation water at head gates. *SVID (Ron*
72 *Cowin) will share this information which is already being collected with USGS (Matt*
73 *Bachmann).*

74

75 **The group agreed to keep these on the list and consolidate them with similar alternatives.**

76

(Yellow)

77

78 **No. 51:** Billboard campaign – urging well testing.

79 **No. 160:** Implement an Education and Outreach Program (EOP) informing producers of Best
80 Management Practices (BMPs) including increased funding for the DNMP assistance
81 program.

82 **No. 16:** Increase education and outreach efforts by improving the availability of technical
83 assistance to develop nutrient management plans for all livestock industries. Assist industry
84 trade organizations to enhance their local efforts to bring information to their members.
85 Help increase livestock operator awareness of the need for procedures for proper
86 management of animal wastes and wastewater. Potential funding sources include industry,
87 government, educational institutions, grants, industry associations, etc.

88 **No. 70:** Enlist advocacy groups/Farm Bureau/federations/associations to host
89 workshops/informational meetings regarding GWMA education goals and partnerships in
90 success.

91 **No. 71:** Make presentations at trade shows, communicate with agricultural consultants
92 who have positive relationships with farmers suggesting that they change practices.

93 **No. 13:** Inform livestock operators and facilitate a dialogue with representatives of the
94 regulatory agencies, other agricultural producers, and the general public through a public
95 information/education program to protect the quality of the area groundwater resource.
96 Information and incentives provided to Lower Yakima Valley agricultural operators will
97 expedite implementation of BMPs.

- 98 **No. 52:** Create 1 FTE Bilingual Outreach Coordinator Position to implement a post-adoption
99 outreach campaign (EPO meeting summary 8/1/2014 & proposed to GWAC 8/21/14 - voted
100 low priority).
- 101 **No. 76:** Provide education about concepts that people must understand in order to
102 evaluate our plans for reducing nitrate in groundwater.
- 103 **No. 190:** Stimulate news coverage of progress in irrigation technology.
- 104 **No. 242:** Develop a system that could be used to determine which farmers need assistance
105 in understanding appropriate farming practices--establish a structure of recommendations
106 establishing clear expectations, list problematic management practices, encourage
107 voluntary compliance, develop peer encouragement system.
- 108 **No. 72:** Partner with UW Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) to continue
109 training local healthcare providers to recognize and address Nitrate risk in their patients
110 (pregnant women and infants up to six months).
- 111 **No. 67:** Outreach targeted to small farm/hobby farm/ranchettes manure management.
- 112 **No. 64:** Prepare a fact sheet/develop outreach campaign to growers that explains
113 agronomic rates, applying nutrients at the right time/right place/right amount.
- 114 **No. 58:** Publish public information about proper septic system construction and operation.
- 115 **No. 56:** Educate private well owners: Re: protect your family; know who's at risk; test your
116 well regularly.
- 117 **No. 57:** Private well owners' responsibility to protect WQ.
- 118 **No. 199:** Manage sprinkler systems so they do not drive nutrients past the root system.
- 119 **No. 200:** Advise farmers of the relative propensity of wheel lines, center pivots, and drip
120 lines to cause leaching.
- 121 **No. 201:** Use available techniques to determine how much and when irrigation is needed
122 instead of irrigating according to a prearranged schedule.
- 123 **No. 203:** Analyze irrigation practices to discover whether frequency or volume creates
124 greater propensity for leaching.
- 125 **No. 210:** Improve micro-irrigation system design and operation.
- 126 **No. 198:** Establish a voluntary irrigation management cost-share program with SYCD. Data
127 shared with public.
- 128 **No. 196:** Provide funding for a mobile irrigation lab to assess the efficiency of current or
129 advised irrigation practices, either through a singular lab or component parts.
- 130 **No. 164:** Collect data to track water quality improvement progress and nutrients
131 generated, applied, or exported within the LYV GWMA. Generate data through soil testing,
132 Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Plan implementation - including purpose built and

- 133 existing wells, sampling of liquid and solid waste to be field applied, composted, or
- 134 exported, the CAFO General Permit, and tracking nutrients applied by non-dairy operations.
- 135 **No. 77:** Use both method-based measurement and performance-based measurement.
- 136 **No. 4:** Drill new 1,500 foot wells to replace contaminated wells.
- 137 **No. 8:** Discontinue use of shallow wells. Rebuild, repair or replace poorly constructed
- 138 wells.
- 139 **No. 61:** Offer incentives to drill deeper wells for homeowners served by shallow, poorly
- 140 constructed, poorly located wells.
- 141 **No. 109:** Drill deeper water wells further from septic drain systems.

142

143 **The group agreed these alternatives should be removed from the list. (Red)**

144

145 **No. 47:** Establish a more interactive and frequent relationship between Yakima County and

146 NRCS.

147 **No. 63:** Provide a resource hotline (as proposed by RCIM on 8/2014).

148 **No. 192:** Incentives provide credit against county real property tax for investment in source

149 abatement.

150 **No. 238:** Subsidize price of alfalfa to induce greater production so as to remove nitrogen

151 from soils.

152 **No. 191:** Land acquisition purchase properties with greatest nitrate contribution and retire

153 uses that generate nitrate.

154 **No. 205:** Upgrade irrigation districts' open, earthen or concrete delivery laterals and head

155 ditches to PVC pipe.

156 **No. 206:** Route irrigation-return flow through a constructed managed wetland to reduce

157 concentrations of nutrients and suspended sediment.

158 **No. 207:** Add polyacrylamide (PAM) to irrigation water.

159 **No. 208:** Install effective backflow prevention devices on supply lines of water supplied

160 from groundwater wells to avoid backflow from chemigation.

161 **No. 209:** Structure irrigation water pricing by volume per acre used with preference for

162 lower volume use.

163 **No. 211:** Recommend that irrigation districts be authorized to condition delivery of

164 irrigation water on irrigation practices consistent with agronomic rate of application of

165 water.

166 **No. 193:** Develop farmer-specific irrigation water use programs including collection of data,

167 records of irrigation management, education of farmer regarding new processes and

168 technology.

169 **No. 82:** Use hydro-geologically directed monitoring well placement to detect cause/effect
170 remediation opportunities.

171 **No. 86:** Conduct recurrent drinking water testing where drinking water standards have
172 previously been exceeded.

173 **No. 12:** Let the lead agency determine who will do monitoring. Possible assignment of
174 long-term monitoring after 2017 to Yakima Health District.

175 **No. 157:** Establish a BMP monitoring well network. Monitor BMP performance and
176 effectiveness with the monitoring well network first, then monitor water quality.

177

178 **The group agreed to revisit these alternatives at a later date. [Blue]**

179

180 **No. 46:** Measure the effects of GWAC program on Yakima County economics.

181 **No. 30:** Create an aquifer protection area.

182 **No. 197:** Provide financial assistance for 1) conversions from rill irrigation to sprinkler or
183 drip irrigation, 2) installation of flow meters and moisture meters to reflect over-irrigation,
184 high water table, drought conditions, 3) the cost of hiring third party sampling, measuring
185 equipment, personnel or self-test kits, 4) management of sprinkler systems so they do not
186 drive nutrients past the root system.

187

188 **IV. Committee Business:** A member was concerned that GWAC members were discussing
189 GWMA information with others. She was also concerned about the accuracy of their
190 discussions. Her first concern was that she had heard from someone else that Rand Elliott
191 stated during a presentation to the Yakima Farm Bureau that small farmers are the biggest
192 part of the (nitrate) problem. Her concern was that the GWAC hadn't evaluated testing and
193 therefore had not decided this. Her second concern was that the WSDA had presented the
194 Nitrogen Availability Assessment to a group in Olympia prior to presenting it to the GWAC
195 or to the working groups at their joint meeting. Vern stated that he had learned that WSDA
196 had briefed a group of farmer representatives and lobbyists as a political courtesy prior to
197 delivering the NAA to the GWAC to give them a heads up that the report was coming out.
198 He noted that this information had come up during the Irrigated Ag Working Group meeting
199 held earlier this week. Vern did not believe the NAA had been discussed with anyone else.
200 Other members agreed. Vern verified that this had merely been a "heads-up" not a
201 presentation of the draft report itself. Others agreed. Vern went on to say that whether
202 this action was right or wrong the group needed to agree that they would not share
203 information that had not been fully vetted.

204

205 The July 27, 2017 meeting summary could not be approved as it was not included in the
206 group's meeting packet.

207

208 **V. Public Comment:** A member of the public stated that he agreed it was difficult to track
209 changes made by BMPs unless you have a great deal of funding as most studies don't track
210 BMP changes well.

211

212 **VI. Next Meeting:** August 24, 2017.

213

214 **VII. Next Steps:** SVID (Ron Cowin) will share data it is already collecting on nitrate
215 concentrations of irrigation water at head gates with USGS (Matt Bachmann).

216

217 **VIII. Meeting Summary** approved by the GWAC on September 21, 2017.