

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

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

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

5 **Yakima County Roads Maintenance Conference Room**
 6 **1216 South 18th Street, WA 98901**

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 5:08 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	✓	
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 Sanchez	Yakama Nation		✓
Stuart Crane	Yakama Nation (alternate)	✓	
Bahr, Gary	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Beale, Perry	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:** After the customary introductions, Vern
 14 reviewed the GWAC's timeline for completing its business. The contract between Yakima
 15 County and the Department of Ecology called for the GWAC to have its business wrapped up
 16 by the end of 2017. For a variety of reasons, this was no longer feasible. Vern and David
 17 Bowen had discussed an extension of the contract in conversations prior to the meeting.
 18 David added that Ecology would not be asking for any additional money to fund this
 19 extension. It would be paid for out of the existing GWMA budget. Items yet to be completed
 20 were 1) Nailing down the final recommended alternatives, 2) Coming to consensus, if
 21 possible, on a final draft Nitrogen Availability Assessment (NAA), 3) Letting USGS finish its
 22 well-sampling, and 4) Completion of the GWMA Program. Vern raised the question of how
 23 often the group might need to meet in 2018, but agreed to defer the question until the end
 24 of the meeting, after the group had heard some of the outstanding business.

25
 26 **III. Refinement of Alternatives:** Jim referred the group to the last three items on Page 2 of the
 27 Draft GWMA Program's Table of Contents, which read: "Description of Alternative Actions to
 28 Address the Problem", "Discussion of Pros and Cons of Alternative Actions", and

29 “Recommended Actions.” These terms came out of WAC 173-100-100. Jim had consolidated
30 the list of green (group-approved) alternatives into a document about one-half to two-thirds
31 the original length, with yellow (wait until later) items added in the “Details” section. On
32 some future agenda, this list should be discussed, and a decision reached on final
33 recommended alternatives. Jim felt this process may take until June.

34

35 **IV. GWMA Draft Program:** Jim drew members’ attention to the completed first draft sections of
36 the GWMA Program. An Excel spreadsheet for submitting comments would be made
37 available to any group member who wanted one, with a goal of getting the editing done by
38 March. The “Investigations and Analysis” section had not been written yet, as the final results
39 from the USGS well-sampling and the final draft NAA had not been completed.

40

41 A member asked if anyone was working on the deep soil sampling and high-risk well
42 questionnaires. She felt very uncomfortable looking at final alternatives without a full
43 analysis of the data. Vern replied that Melanie Redding and Andy Cervantes were reviewing
44 the data. Another member suggested that the alternatives the group had approved weren’t
45 dependent on data. Jim asked the group whether other alternatives could be submitted if
46 data came in suggesting the need for them. Some members were wary of this approach
47 without knowing what those alternatives might be. Others were more open to it. A member
48 asked when the last USGS well tests would be ready, and Matt replied the results would be
49 public by mid-February.

50

51 Jim asked if members had any initial reaction to the draft chapters. One member felt the
52 “Area Characterization” was too general of an overview and needed more details. Another
53 felt it was hard to follow with a lot of inconsistencies. Another member wanted to check with
54 her agency on the descriptions of federal statutes contained in the “Sources of Nitrate and
55 the Regulatory Environment” section. Another member felt there was a gap between the old
56 history of the Lower Valley and the present day, when a great deal of nitrogen had been
57 applied to the soil. Jim encouraged everyone with comments to request a Comments Form.

58

59 **V. GIS Mapping Feedback:** Vern directed the group to the GIS application unveiled at the
60 October 19th GWAC meeting, available at <http://arcg.is/1ie9mp>. Before demonstrating some
61 combinations of operational layers, he responded to some concerns that a group member
62 who was not present at this meeting had raised with him earlier. The group member had
63 been concerned that the total acreage irrigated by the Roza Irrigation District and the
64 Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District exceeded the number given in the NAA as the total GWMA

65 acreage. Vern told the group that since Roza serves areas outside the GWMA, including
66 Terrace Heights, the figure contained in the NAA was correct.

67

68 The first layers Vern showed the group were the “Nitrate mg/l”, “Groundwater Flow”, and
69 “Altitude of Groundwater Levels.” This combination of features showed the location of all
70 well samples collected in the GWMA since 2000, juxtaposed against which direction the
71 groundwater flowed. A member of the group was concerned that the map didn’t contain any
72 of the EPA sampling, including the dairy cluster. Vern replied that this information was
73 confidential due to agreements signed by the EPA. Another member cautioned that the
74 groundwater flow directions depicted on the map were only true for the shallow aquifer.
75 Deeper basalt aquifers flow differently due to tilted layers and fissures within the basalt.
76 While most of the wells sampled were likely also shallow wells, some of them might not be.
77 He urged the group to keep this in mind while assessing the data.

78

79 The next layers were “ROSS Density per SqMi”, “RCIM: ROSS”, “RCIM: LOSS”, and “RCIM:
80 COSS.” Individual septic systems were depicted by dots on the map, while the density was
81 depicted on a grid, with individual square miles of the GWMA colored according to the EPA’s
82 recommended guidelines on safe septic density levels (Green = safe, Red = unsafe, Yellow =
83 in between). A member asked whether the red squares represented the total loading of
84 nitrogen or availability. Vern replied that they represented availability.

85

86 The next layer was labeled “Total Availability Grid,” which overlaid diamond-shaped polygons
87 over the GWMA. These contained all the available nitrogen sources added up, and broken
88 down by category – RCIM, Irrigated Ag, CAFO, and Lagoons. The polygons were slanted into
89 diamond shapes to account for the direction of groundwater flow as much as possible. A
90 group member felt the design and information was good, but that the polygons should be
91 made smaller. Vern said he would talk with County GIS about it. Another member singled
92 out Polygon 192 near the south end of the GWMA, which was colored red and assumed a
93 large amount of nitrogen available from a lagoon in the area. She felt that since these
94 particular lagoons were lined, the number should be lower.

95

96 A member who had used the application mentioned that she had a hard time differentiating
97 among crops in the “AG: 2015 WSDA Crop Type” feature, and asked if there was a way to click
98 a box and single out certain crops. Vern said he would talk with GIS.

99

100 There were other features Vern had wanted to show the group, but with time running out,
101 he opted to leave them for another meeting.

102

103 **VI. Committee Business:** The November 2, 2017 meeting summary was approved as presented.
104 The group moved on to discuss future meetings for 2018, and decided to provisionally
105 schedule two meetings each month from January to June, spaced two weeks apart, with the
106 understanding that some meetings may be cancelled if there wasn't enough material to
107 discuss.

108

109 **VII. Public Comment:** There was none. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

110

111 **VIII. Next Meeting:** January 4, 2018.

112

113 **IX. Next Steps:** 1) The GWAC Member Comment Form would be made available in Excel to any
114 member who wanted one. 2) Vern would talk with GIS about making the "Total Availability
115 Grid" polygons smaller, and adding the ability for users to single out crops in the "2015 WSDA
116 Crop Type" feature.

117

118 **X. Meeting Summary** approved by the GWAC on March 1, 2018.