

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

3                   **MEETING SUMMARY**

4                   **Thursday, May 3, 2018 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5                   *Denny Blaine Boardroom, Sunnyside School District*  
 6                   *810 E Custer Ave, Sunnyside WA 98944*

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 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 5:06 PM by Jim Davenport, facilitating in  
 13                   Vern's absence.

<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	✓	
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)		✓
Holly Myers	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)	✓	
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		✓
Alex Alexiades	Heritage University		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS	✓	

14           **Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions:** Jim informed the group that Commissioner  
 15           Elliott had been delayed by car problems. The group and members of the audience gave the  
 16           customary introductions.

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 18           **II. Committee Business:** The March 1 and April 5 GWAC Meeting Summaries were approved as  
 19           presented.

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 21           **III. Comments on Program Draft 2:** Jim informed the group that he had received their comments  
 22           on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft of the GWMA Program, and had incorporated many of their suggestions into  
 23           the 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft. He invited members to continue sending in comments.

24  
 25           **IV. Status of Well Monitoring Project:** Jim updated the group as to the status of the ambient  
 26           monitoring network. The bid documents to find drillers to perform the work were almost

27       complete, and would probably be ready in a couple more weeks. Survey crews were checking  
28       each location to make sure they really were within county right-of-way as stipulated. Of the  
29       30 sites, 28 were in county right-of-way, one was in state, and one was in the city of  
30       Grandview. Crews were also doing utility locates to make sure the well drilling didn't  
31       accidentally damage any underground lines. They were proceeding at a pace of two sites-per-  
32       day, so it would be roughly 15 working days to complete the work.

33

34       **V. Analysis of Alternatives/Recommendations:** Jim reviewed the new list of recommended  
35       alternatives. He reminded the group that the initial list had been comprised of roughly 300  
36       items suggested by GWAC members. Each item on the list had been discussed by the group  
37       in meetings running through the latter half of 2017, and narrowed down to those items that  
38       did not receive strong objections. Jim had consolidated the list further down to 66 items,  
39       broken up into seven broad categories: Education, Administrative, Data Collection and  
40       Monitoring, Water, Public Works, Research and Development, and Agriculture.

41

42       Jim told the group he had spent the past month meeting with GWAC members – including  
43       David Bowen, Jason Sheehan, Ryan Ibach, Ginny Stern, Laurie Crowe, Perry Beale, and Gary  
44       Bahr – gathering cost estimates for each potential recommendation. Those estimates had  
45       been included in the spreadsheet of recommendations. Jim asked the group to read the  
46       spreadsheet and send him questions. He also asked members to rank each item on the list,  
47       which would be emailed to members the next day, on a scale from 3 to minus-3, and have  
48       the results in to him in a week's time.

49

50       Some members had questions about the how these recommendations might be  
51       implemented, what funding sources might be involved, and whether there was enough  
52       information available to make informed decisions. Other GWMA's had passed on the  
53       implementation duties to a new lead entity. While some short-term funding came from  
54       federal and state sources, over the long-term, funding came from local sources. Some of the  
55       projects had long-term funding costs that were difficult to project, but Jim felt rough  
56       estimates were necessary to set priorities among the different alternatives.

57

58       **VI. Lead Entity: Whether? Who? What?:** With the GWAC's mandate nearing an end, Jim shared  
59       his thoughts on what types of qualities a successor lead entity in charge of implementing the  
60       GWMA program would need. Initial dollars would need to come through legislative  
61       appropriation or a large capital budget, then contracted to other parties. A lead entity would  
62       need to have a competent management team and credibility with the local population. In

63 Jim's view, there clearly needed to be a lead entity in charge of carrying out these tasks,  
64 securing and directing funding, and instilling the public and existing agencies with a sense of  
65 the importance of the issue. He asked for the group's input as to who they thought should  
66 carry those responsibilities.

67  
68 A member observed that an entity trying to implement a multi-faceted program would need  
69 to have a large staff to carry out the work, and suggested the Department of Ecology. Another  
70 member observed that in other GWMA, the lead entity had always been local in nature,  
71 oftentimes the county, or a collection of counties. The representative for Ecology stated that  
72 in a perfect world, they would prefer Yakima County to take on the role. Another member  
73 suggested that the South Yakima Conservation District or WSU Extension Service would be  
74 ideal choices, since they already have existing relationships with growers and producers, and  
75 don't spend a lot of money. Another member stated that the county already had all the  
76 GWMA information in their possession, and experience with approaching legislators for  
77 money. Jim asked Commissioner Elliott if the County Board had the authority to create a lead  
78 entity. As far as he knew, the answer was yes, although further discussions about what such  
79 a lead entity would do would need to be taken with the other commissioners first. A member  
80 asked what the appropriate WACs said about forming a lead entity, stating they hadn't found  
81 anything. Jim stated that he hadn't either, although he would look again.

82  
83 Jim asked the group if there was consensus that Yakima County should be the lead entity. A  
84 member objected, citing concerns with how the County had operated the GWAC. The group  
85 discussed by what process a lead entity would be named. It was the group's goal to operate  
86 by consensus, although if necessary, actions could be approved by a vote of 75 percent or  
87 more. Since the group was one vote short of a quorum, no action was taken.

88  
89 **VII. Correlation of Mapped Information:** Jim presented the group with nine maps of the GWMA  
90 prepared by Yakima County GIS. The first map portrayed WSDA's calculations of Total  
91 Nitrogen Availability in tons-per-year. Since not all of the nitrogen sources depicted were  
92 necessarily seeping into the groundwater, members felt this map was not useful in informing  
93 the public.

94  
95 The second map contained the same nitrogen availability grid, with the 156 USGS wells from  
96 2017 overlaid on top of them. The third map depicted the USGS wells in relation to canals  
97 and drains. A member cautioned that the orange arrows on the third map had been hand-

98        drawn by John Vaccaro, were applicable only to the shallow water table, and didn't account  
99        for three-dimensional movement.

100  
101        The fourth map depicted the WSDA's 2015 crop data with the USGS 2017 wells overlaid. A  
102        member observed that corn silage emerged as a potentially high source of nitrates, given the  
103        correlation of high-nitrate wells over that crop, although there were complicating factors like  
104        groundwater movement which made it hard to argue causation.

105  
106        The next two maps depicted soil infiltration rates and soil types within the GWMA, with USGS  
107        wells overlaid. The infiltration map was essentially a simplified version of the soil type map.  
108        The source for this data came from the NRCS website.

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110        The seventh map depicted the locations of Residential Onsite Septic Systems in relation to  
111        USGS wells, and the eighth map depicted the locations of dairies, CAFOs and settling ponds  
112        in relation to the wells. Jim stated that the purpose of bringing these maps to the group was  
113        as a starting point. There was a lot going on underground that group members didn't know,  
114        so it was important to begin with what we did. It was Jim's intention to include the maps in  
115        the final GWMA program, without drawing conclusions from them. A member cautioned that  
116        people could nonetheless use these maps to make simple causative judgments that were not  
117        warranted by the facts.

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119        The ninth and final map was a grid depicting the mean annual recharge of water within the  
120        GWMA. The data was based on a USGS Scientific Investigations Report on irrigation methods  
121        from 1959-2001 combined with rain levels, minus crop uptake. According to the data, most  
122        of the low-elevation land was recharging two to four square feet of water.

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124 **VIII. Public Comment:** There was none. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

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126 **IX. Next Meeting:** May 17, 2018.

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128 **X. Next Steps:** 1) Members will send in any comments on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft GWMA Program to Jim  
129        Davenport. 2) Members will send in their votes on recommended alternatives by the end of  
130        day Thursday, May 10.

131  
132 **XI. Meeting Summary** approved by the GWAC on May 17, 2018.