

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

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

4 **Thursday, May 17, 2018 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

5 Denny Blaine Boardroom
 6 Sunnyside School District No. 201
 7 810 E. Custer Ave
 8 Sunnyside, WA 98944
 9

10 *Note: This document is only a summary of issues and actions of this meeting. It is not intended to be
 11 a transcription of the meeting, but an overview of points raised and responses from Yakima County
 12 and Groundwater Advisory Committee members. It may not fully represent the ideas discussed or
 13 opinions given. Examination of this document cannot equal or replace attendance.*

14 I. **Call to Order:** This meeting was called to order at 5:06 PM by Jim Davenport, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.,		✓
Chelsea Durfey	Turner and Co. (alternate)		✓
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)		✓
Myers, Holly	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)		✓
Gary Bahr	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Perry Beale	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 (alternate)		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS		✓

15 **II. Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions:** Everyone introduced themselves. Jim
 16 reviewed the agenda – there were no additions. The group paused for a moment of silence.
 17

18 **III. Active GWAC Members:** At the May 3 meeting, after coming up short of a quorum,
 19 members had desired to discuss who was still an active member of the GWAC. David Bowen
 20 had reviewed the attendance list in accordance with the GWAC's operating guidelines,
 21 which stated that if a member is not present for three consecutive meetings, the GWAC
 22 membership can ask that member to be replaced with another representative for their
 23 group, or removed from group membership altogether. As of the May 17 meeting, Dr. Troy
 24 Peters was in this position.
 25

26 Jim asked the group how they wished to proceed. Group members stated that they
27 appreciated Dr. Peters' expertise and wanted him to remain a member of the group, but
28 expressed concern that his absence was contributing to the GWAC being unable to take
29 action on matters before it. A member proposed that Dr. Peters be kept on as a non-voting
30 member. There was no objection from the group.

31

32 **IV. Action on Recommendations for Lead Agency:** Jim reintroduced the subject of who should
33 assume the role of lead entity once the GWMA's mandate had expired. In response to a
34 member's question at the last meeting regarding what WAC 173-100-100 said on the
35 matter, David Bowen replied that the WAC does not specifically mandate a lead agency, but
36 Section 6 does contain language that the GWMA's work plan shall contain an
37 implementation section containing a detailed work plan, a monitoring system, and a
38 process for periodic review of the work plan, which strongly implies the presence of a lead
39 entity in order to carry out that work.

40

41 A member asked if the new lead entity would be governed by the same rules of procedure
42 in the WAC, or whether the group would operate according to its own rules. Jim's
43 interpretation was the latter. There were various scenarios for how a lead entity could
44 operate, depending on who that entity was. If it was Yakima County, rules of procedure
45 would likely be included in the resolution setting up such an entity. If a state agency were to
46 become the lead entity, it would operate according to that agency's guidelines.
47 Commissioner Elliott had engaged in preliminary conversations with his fellow
48 commissioners about taking on the role of lead entity, and discovered a willingness to do
49 so, provided they understood what those responsibilities would entail. After some
50 discussion, a motion was made to recommend Yakima County as the lead entity to
51 implement the GWMA program. A vote was taken as follows:

52

53

Ayes (14)

54 Gary Bahr – WA Department of Agriculture
55 Dr. Jessica Black – Heritage University
56 David Bowen – WA Department of Ecology
57 Andy Cervantes – WA Department of Health
58 Ron Cowin – Roza-SVID Joint Board of Control
59 Laurie Crowe – South Yakima Conservation District
60 Jim Dyjak – Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation
61 Rand Elliott – Yakima County Commissioners

62 Lino Guerra – Latino Community Rep
63 Patricia Newhouse – Lower Valley Community Rep
64 Bud Rogers – Lower Valley Community Rep
65 Jason Sheehan – Yakima County Dairy Federation
66 Doug Simpson – Irrigated Ag Producer
67 John Van Wingerden – Port of Sunnyside

Nays (1)

Jean Mendoza – Friends of Toppenish Creek

Present (1)

Frank Lyall – Yakima County Farm Bureau

A member asked how long it would take for the Board of County Commissioners to get an answer back to the GWAC as to whether it accepted the group's recommendation. Commissioner Elliott replied that it would take a week.

V. Results on Polling on Draft Recommendations: At the May 3 meeting, Jim had asked members to rank the list of recommendations. Members' votes had been tabulated into a spreadsheet, with most items scoring positive, and a few garnering negative scores. Nineteen members had responded total. In two cases, both the main representative of a group and their alternate had cast votes. Only the votes of the main representative were counted, leading to 17 votes total. The handouts provided at the meeting listed only the grand totals. Some members expressed a desire to see the individual votes, and it was eventually decided to supply the list. (See attached appendix.) The group also decided that votes cast at the meeting would be recorded in the meeting summary.

Discussion ensued as to the reasons individual members had for casting votes. In some cases, members had voted negative because they disagreed with the way the recommendation was written, or because the recommended activities were already being done. One example was the recommendation to distribute educational materials about cleaning septic systems, which are already posted online by the Yakima Health District and the Washington Department of Health. Other members believed that a more aggressive outreach campaign was in fact necessary, since many families on septic systems in rural areas don't have internet access, or the knowledge of where to look for this information.

98 There was further discussion on which positive-scored items the group should recommend.
99 Some members felt that everything with a positive score should be recommended, and
100 prioritized according to their scores. Other members felt that low-scoring positive items did
101 not enjoy consensus, and should be dropped from the list, with only high-scoring positive
102 items recommended. A motion was eventually made to recommend all positive-scored
103 items, prioritized according to their scores. The vote was as follows:
104

105 **Ayes (12)**

106 Gary Bahr – WA Department of Agriculture

107 Dr. Jessica Black – Heritage University

108 Andy Cervantes – WA Department of Health

109 Ron Cowin – Roza-SVID Joint Board of Control

110 Laurie Crowe – South Yakima Conservation District

111 Rand Elliott – Yakima County Commissioners

112 Lino Guerra – Latino Community Rep

113 Patricia Newhouse – Lower Valley Community Rep

114 Bud Rogers – Lower Valley Community Rep

115 Jason Sheehan – Yakima County Dairy Federation

116 Doug Simpson – Irrigated Ag Producer

117 John Van Wingerden – Port of Sunnyside

119 **Nays (3)**

120 Jim Dyjak – Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation

121 Frank Lyall – Yakima County Farm Bureau

122 Jean Mendoza – Friends of Toppenish Creek

124 **Present (1)**

125 David Bowen – WA Department of Ecology

126
127 **VI. Reasonable Annual Groundwater Recharge Estimates:** At the May 3 meeting, Jim had
128 distributed a map of the GWMA showing the mean annual recharge of water based on
129 numbers contained in a 2007 USGS report. Some members felt the map exaggerated the
130 amount of water going into the ground. The Joint Board of Control figures showed that the
131 average farmer was using 3.5 acre-feet of water per-year. In correspondence between Jim
132 and Matt Bachmann, Matt had agreed that there were a number of variables that could
133 impact the recharge numbers – for example, changing crop types, irrigation practices and

134 climate conditions – and felt that an updated study might be a worthwhile project,
135 assuming the GWMA was willing to spend the time or funds on it. A couple of members
136 expressed a desire to follow up on an updated report. Other members were reluctant to
137 make a recommendation on the spot.

138

139 **Committee Business:** The May 3, 2018 meeting summary was approved as presented.

140

141 **VII. Public Comment:** There was no public comment, although a group member distributed an
142 analysis he had performed comparing the storage capacity of septic systems vs. lagoons and
143 settling ponds by gallons of liquid fecal matter. He felt that the septic and point-source
144 maps distributed at the May 3 meeting should attempt to display the difference in volume.

145

146 **VIII. Next Meeting:** June 21, 2018.

147

148 **IX. Next Steps:** 1) Rand Elliott will present his fellow commissioners with the GWAC's
149 recommendation that Yakima County should assume the role of lead entity, with the
150 responsibility of implementing the GWMA's work plan. 2) Jim Davenport will continue to
151 work on the GWMA program, with discussion planned for June 21.

152

153 **X. Meeting Summary** approved by the GWAC on August 9, 2018.