

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

3 **MEETING SUMMARY**

4 **Thursday, June 21, 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
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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 5:01 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 Dijk	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		✓
Robert Black	USGS	✓	

15 **II. Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions:** After the customary introductions, Vern
 16 reviewed the agenda – there were no additions. The group paused for a moment of silence.
 17

18 **III. Status of Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Network Results:** A member expressed
 19 concerns about the number of wells the Ambient Monitoring Network (AMN) would be
 20 installing. The text of the contract contained in the 1st Quarter GWMA Report stated that 17
 21 wells would be drilled, and possibly more depending on how much money was left over.
 22 When the concept of an AMN had initially been presented to the group, a goal of 30-40
 23 wells had been set. The member was concerned that an insufficient number of wells would
 24 end up being drilled, and that one of them was located at a high elevation in Konnowac Pass
 25 that would yield low nitrate results. Vern stated that the number of wells drilled would
 26 depend on the bids submitted by contractors in the competitive bidding process, which the

27 County is required by law to use. There was roughly \$500,000 left in the budget, which he
28 thought would very likely fund more than 17 wells. There were aspects of the contract, such
29 as \$9,000 set aside for analyzing the results, that were no longer necessary since Melanie
30 Redding had agreed to take on that task, thus freeing up that money. The wells were
31 expected to be installed by the end of the year.

32
33 The member also inquired how much it would cost to fund the SEPA review of the GWMA
34 Program and the ensuing public participation period. Vern did not know the cost of SEPA
35 offhand, but it was far less than \$10,000. David Bowen stated that the public participation
36 period was funded out of Ecology's budget, and would not be a large expense either. A
37 larger concern was finding a long-term funding source for continuing the wells and
38 analyzing their results. While Ecology had enough money in their budget to continue
39 funding for two to three months, the County was still working on finding something more
40 permanent.

41
42 **IV. Presentation of GWMA Program/Edits and Additions to Program Draft 2:** Jim introduced
43 Volumes 1 and 2 of the GWMA Program and a paper indicating sections that had been
44 added to the second draft, and figures that had been moved around. Volume 1 was the
45 main text of the program. Volume 2 contained appendices of supporting text and
46 information. Jim indicated that portions of Volume 1 would need to be edited in at least
47 two respects: The WSDA had released their final draft Nitrogen Availability Assessment
48 (NAA) earlier that same day, and the old Volume 1 still referred to the earlier NAA; and
49 Ginny Stern had offered to write a summary of the deep soil sampling results, an
50 introduction to an appendix containing Jean Mendoza and Melanie Redding's analyses of
51 the results, and an analysis of historical data.

52
53 A member asked what process the group would use to manage the comments that had
54 been submitted, and would be submitted, to Jim in writing the Program. Some members
55 had not seen some of their comments included in the latest draft of the program. Other
56 members felt it would be too unwieldy for the group to debate every comment.

57
58 Two members expressed concerns about the third and fourth paragraphs on page vi of the
59 Executive Summary. The third paragraph indicated that it had been difficult for the GWAC
60 to attain consensus due to the competing interests represented on the board, and
61 reluctance on the part of government agencies to take bold actions. The fourth paragraph
62 stated that a lawsuit brought against several Valley dairies in late 2012, and settled in early

63 2015, had hampered the ability to gather a large data set of nitrogen results from farmers.
64 Jim defended the paragraphs as being an accurate summary of what had transpired over
65 the six years of the GWMA's operation.

66
67 Other members expressed concern that some of the GWMA maps, particularly Figures 29,
68 31 and 32, depicting the location of USGS drinking water wells in relation to irrigation canals
69 and drains, manure lagoons, and septic tanks, respectively, would lead the casual reader to
70 assume causation of high nitrate levels in the soil due to certain factors in a way that might
71 not be supported by scientific data. Some additional text in the Program explaining those
72 maps raised additional concerns. Jim acknowledged the concerns, and invited feedback on
73 how to present and explain the information given the data the group had to work with.

74
75 **V. Consideration/Approval of Program:** The group discussed whether they wished to vote at
76 the next meeting on whether to accept the new draft of the GWMA Program. A motion was
77 made to cast a recorded vote on whether they wished to vote, but after some discussion,
78 no vote on the matter was held.

79
80 Jim asked the group how they wished to proceed on allowing members who held views
81 distinct from the Program to submit minority reports. At least three members were
82 considering the possibility of submitting minority reports. There were a couple of
83 possibilities for how those materials might be incorporated into the public record. One
84 would be submitting them to Jim before the document was submitted for SEPA review, and
85 including them as separate appendices to the main document. Another approach would be
86 to submit the minority reports during the SEPA process, and include them along with all the
87 other public comments. No final decision was reached.

88
89 **VI. Committee Business:** The May 17, 2018 meeting summary was not approved as presented.
90 A member withheld his support until a handout he had distributed at that meeting
91 comparing septic and manure lagoon storage levels was included as an attachment.

92
93 **VII. Public Comment:** There were no public comments.

94
95 **VIII. Next Meeting:** July 19, 2018.

96
97 **IX. Next Steps:** Members will send Jim Davenport their comments on the latest draft of the
98 GWMA program by July 5.

99

100 **X.** The meeting summary was approved by the GWAC on August 9, 2018.