

Draft Notes
LYV-GWMA Implementation Committee
Thursday, April 11, 2024
1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Teams Meeting

➤ Introductions

Damon Roberts
Rodney Heit
Shawn Magee
Andres Cervantes
Gary Bahr
Jason Sheehan
Holly Myers

David Haws
Lisa Freund
Caitlin McConkey
Melanie Redding
Emily Tasaka
Eliel (Eli) Cruz-Brito
LaDon Linde

Kyrre Flege
Jocelyn Castillo
Obadiah Sheriff
David Taylor
Savannah Crnick

- Eli presented a tentative location option to the group for the Open House event in May. Location: La Cosecha Church Please see attached document. Group confirmed that this should be the location. Eli will reach back out to the church to confirm details.
- Emily – Communications Subgroup – Emily shared the most recent draft of the e-newsletter that's been created. The newsletter has clickable links and images that can lead the reader to even more information. This first newsletter highlights two main topics: Safe Water Initiative and Ecology's continued monitoring of nitrate levels. This was all put together highlighting information with photos, links, and FAQ's. Will also update the newsletter with the information for the open house as soon as details are finalized/confirmed. This is an introduction – it's not going to include all the information or address everyone's questions. But it will ease people in so we can begin a conversation and begin a two-way relationship. It's a great way for them to hear from us and for them to know who to reach out to with their questions. We are starting a GWMA email distribution list. We're going to start with people who are receiving water from Yakima Health and then have each agency send this newsletter to their own distribution lists with a note explaining how they can subscribe to future newsletters. Also thinking of mailing paper copies to those who may not have an email address listed.
- Holly – PD's for two new positions to start July 2024
- Outreach and Education Specialist
This will be a project position – will be working side by side with Yakima County to continue the education outreach/testing.
 - GWMA Coordinator position – working with Sheryl and supporting the entire GWMA Implementation Committee

- Will be setting up an interview panel and reaching out to several members of the committee to be a part of this. Goal is to have these positions filled and starting on July 1, 2024. Would be doing interviews around the first week of June to allow time for follow-up interviews, reference checks, etc.
 - As soon as everything goes to recruitment, Holly will share with the group.
- Sheryl – Several outreach opportunities coming up – Need to confirm who all will be at these upcoming events.
 - Open House May 29th
 - WSEHA panel on Tuesday, April 30th 1:00-2:30. Will have a coordination meeting a week or so before the event to discuss the plan for topics.
- Group Roundtable - Agency share on activities they are working on.
 - South Yakima Conservation District – Savannah, Rodney
 - 3 Irrigation conversion projects in process, one should be completed soon
 - Savannah has submitted 164 invitation mailer letters to our phase 1 GWMA area.
 - Submitted a request to MOU to Cascadia Conservation District who provides our archaeological reviews on an area-wide scale.
 - Gearing up to move further up in the irrigated ag lands in GWMA for the deep soil sampling program.
 - All the tooling has been outfitted for the drill we can install soil moisture monitoring at the same time we are providing deep soil sampling.
 - We didn't get the candidate from Ohio, we do have 3 new applicants who we will be chatting with this week.
 - Savannah has also applied for Sustainable Farming and Fields funding to assist one of our dairy producers in the valley with manure transfer.
 - Yakima County Public Services – Lisa
 - Safe Water Initiative - 100 days into the project, we have stayed on task, sending monthly mailings to the targeted areas, sending mailings to anyone returning test strips, and anyone that has had certified labs conducted by the Yakima Health District. I would say a very conservative number of mailings is 1200.
 - We have a contract set in place with Culligan to go out and to start two times a week to conduct maintenance on the 2011 RO systems.
 - We have stood up the website, stood up the hotline, weekly metrics.
 - Also, in the last 100 days we have done two door to door outreaches, all with bilingual county staff. Everything is very targeted.
 - Today we have 10 signed applications for new RO systems and at least 40 people signed up for the reverse osmosis system.

- Yakima Health District –

Shawn -

- As of April 11, 2024 - 102 site visits conducted, 44 of those have had high test strip/initial indicator.
- Will be getting two (paid) interns for summer – they will be tagging along to site visits with our staff – one person conducting survey, one person taking samples so we are hoping to ramp up projects here in the summer months.

Jocelyn -

- Emphasized the need for more outreach in the lower valley communities as well as the continued importance of the bottled water service in the communities.
- EJ grant – Much of the work we have been doing currently has revolved around planning and preparation for grant activities. Some delays due to funding and contractual complexities that have taken some extra time.

- Washington State Department of Agriculture –

Kyrre -

- Communications and Outreach is what we're really gearing up for – ensuring our communications strategy is well oiled. We are short-staffed right now on our communications team so we appreciate the help from Ecology. Overall, just want to make sure our outreach strategy, particularly with the ag pieces is robust so that we can build strong connections and credibility while we are out there in the field.
- Almost done finalizing a WSU contact on the development of a decision support tool. I shared about this in the last implementation meeting. One of the pieces of our project is investing in decision support tools for our growers.

Obadiah –

- Building relationships with growers around the Yakima Valley.
- Excited about the support tool to be implemented for the growers.
- Planning a better system for communication and building credibility.

Gary –

- Teaming with Washington State Conservation System and their work and activities. We will provide updates as things move forward.

- Washington State Department of Ecology –

Melanie -

- Recently accepted to an international conference for sustainable groundwater and agriculture in June – will update the group.
- Developed a postcard for outreach – shared within the chat.

- Back out in the field doing annual sampling for the ambient groundwater network. There is a new probe that monitors nitrate and chloride. Trying to catalog to get a sense for how accurate the nitrate test strips are and how accurate the probe is. Hoping this will provide us good information as we move forward that we can later use at outreach events.
- Overall making progress on a lot of different fronts

Damon –

- We are about to advertise non-point positions. These will work closely with Obadiah when they come on.
- We've hired an additional person at HQ to help with CAFO permit, writing, managing, implementing.
- We're addressing an ERTS right now involving an irrigation line that someone has potentially tapped into with their sewer. Health is also involved in this.

➤ Washington State Department of Health

Holly –

- We are working with this team as well as regular meetings with EPA to meet with the enforcement team and their attorneys to address nitrate contamination. What we have learned from EPA is that Oregon/Umatilla is the shining star and had a similar problem. We reached out to them to learn what they are doing and learning from them – what's working/what's not. Also communicating with Minnesota pollution control monitoring agency and Wisconsin (similar situations) to learn from them and find out what some of the tools are that they are using.

➤ Next meeting: Thursday, May 9, 1:00-3:00