

LYV-GWMA Implementation Committee Meeting

Notes for Thursday, January 9, 2025

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Teams Meeting

- 1:00-1:05: Introductions

Robert Eastman, DOH	Jeff K Johnson, DOH	Shawn Magee, YHD
Ron Cowin	Lisa Freund, YCPS	Obadiah Sheriff, AGR
Eliel Cruz-Brito, ECY	Damon Roberts, ECY	Rodney Heit, SYCD
David Haws, YCPS	Caitlin McConkey, ECY	Savannah SYCD
Anchee Durben, DOH	Holly Myers, DOH	David Taylor, Dairy
Kyrre Flege, AGR	Heather Patt, ECY	Federation
Jocelyn Castillo, YHD	Melanie Redding, ECY	Commissioner LaDon Linde

- 1:05 – 1:50: Group Roundtable- Agency Share on Activities They are Working on.
 - Washington State Department of Agriculture
 - Obadiah – Up to my normal routine, looking up roads, dairies, farms.
 - Kyrre – We had a good workshop internally here at WSDA – talking about nitrogen management here in the LYV. I managed to get 20 of our most experienced crop advisors and fertilizer specialists in a room on Tuesday to talk about this work. We had a good conversation, raised a lot of awareness about this project and overall understanding of how much ag viability is at stake. I feel really optimistic about some cross pollination opportunities within my own division. Great conversations and I will share more about that later. A lot going on with WSDA and the 64 recommended actions and doing the planning and prioritization work surrounding those.
 - Washington State Department of Ecology
 - Damon – A little bit of an update on the abandoned wells. Plan in place to do the community engagement and getting out in the field this spring. We have worked on mapping and GIS exercises to help us prioritize our areas and it's a matter of getting things scheduled. I did get an email from Chelsea from DOH regarding meeting the grant funding for the abandoned wells. I don't think we will need to extend it but will have a chat with Chelsea and staff to see if they will need any kind of extension to accomplish this first phase where we are at. Outside of that, Ecology will bring in Steve Hockett, our new Non-Point staff member, who will be a part of the team working with Obadiah out in the field. I'll introduce him next month.

- Melanie – Working through some data but I think the thing that I want to mention is we got funding through the legislature for a halftime position for outreach. This is Christine Phillipson (SP?). She has done some of the post cards. She is suggesting a few things. 1) She would consolidate some activity books for kids for that we can use at outreach events. 2) If an idea comes to you for something she can do, please let us know.

Comment: Holly Myers – The only thing I can think of is improving website and bringing all our messaging together and utilizing new messaging technology. How do we get our message to resonate with the public.

- Eli – Holly, thank you for that – that is something I have discussed with Anchee and Jocelyn as well. The idea is that we have a more centralized GWMA website that is just dedicated to the GWMA that is simplified and more efficient for the community to use. A couple of updates, we are about ready to head out next week to discuss with a landowner about their abandoned well and just understand what questions they have and just get started on that. Last month I participated in a resource session with Radio KDNA hosted in Granger – it was very popular, very interactive. I met with quite a few people who had participated in the bottled water program, and I was able to answer questions and hear what other questions they had. I've also contacted someone here locally who helps put together projects with the Yakima Valley Libraries. He's set us up with three presentations with Selah, Union Gap, and Zillah. I've not done much in Zillah so I am looking forward to how we can connect more with the community out in Zillah.
- Heather – I've been working on some CAFO compliance issues with at least one facility, potentially two facilities in the Yakima region. Encouraging the consultants to get the groundwater plans completed and to me because most of them have a preliminary plan to keep them from being in violation, but we are past that stage and we need these groundwater plans. Ecology is also working on getting the electronic application process going as well as reports.

○ South Yakima Conservation District

- Rodney – We've been working on the deep soil sampling program. All samples have been submitted for the fall campaign. Landau will be working on the data, and the results will be shared with the group here within this next week. Savannah worked on a tri-fold flyer for deep soil sampling and soil moisture monitoring (in case some are more inclined to do soil moisture monitoring, or they've already done the soil sampling program) these will be going out here to the same phase 1 – 3 areas. We had a good response and still have people on the list. Reached out to Eli to do translation for our upcoming flyers. He was able to assist us before

with a previous mailing. Last week we invited the Yakama Nation's deep soil sampling crew that is sampling Yakama Nation land. They brought up their ag probe which is a different probe than ours. We performed some sampling during the tour and their machine is about twice as fast as ours at recovering a sample with a minimal cost for covering the sample. That's what we are looking into. Also, in the works at trying to get some information from the Yakama Nation on what they are seeing from the samples they are collecting. There's a possibility we may have access to some additional data down the road.

- Savannah – We did a total of 16 fields so far, a lot more in the spring coming up. Out of the fields we did, none of them were owned by dairies, so we are not just focusing on dairies. We are gearing towards those who have 5 acres or more. We are also open to reaching out to landowners who have less than 5 acres. It's nice to be able to reach out to the smaller landowners and to teach them and get them familiar with the program.

Question: Holly Myers – Would like to learn more about data from the outcome of the deep soil sampling. How do we make sure we learn more about this?

Response: Rodney – When we get the information together, we will present it to Kyrre and then have a meeting with the group on what the outcomes are and what the expected results will show us and how that information will be taken back to landowners to update them on their current practices and what historically we are finding, what they can do in the future to alleviate issues or if they're doing a good job.

Comment: Kyrre – The original recommendation was about creating a data set and having some transparency around that data set. That is still an objective of this project. We are creating a decision support tool for producers that will put the data in their hands as soon as possible so they can make adaptive management decisions on the farm that improve nutrient management and decrease the risk of loss of nitrate to groundwater. South Yakima Conservation District put together a nice QAPP that describes all of that and how that information flow pathway works.

Question: Commissioner LaDon – What results has this program netted and have we seen farmers use this plan effectively? Also, I am looking forward to the aggregated data.

Response: Kyrre – On the Dairy Nutrient Management Act – Which includes the requirement of Dairies to have that plan, that topic would be best suited for a presentation where I can show trends and how implementation of this program is going. I would be happy to do this sometime. I think for our committee to be effective advocates for the overall GWMA, we need to have a

high level of awareness of what each of our individual programs are doing. And to answer the other question regarding when the data will be available, we are year and a half into the newly funded work – a lot of this time was spent developing the QAPP and setting the program up, so not a lot of the data is available yet to look at. I think it would be beneficial for us to wait until we have enough to look at to make sense of it. Rodney and I will chat about this and get back to the group.

Comment: Damon – I think it would be worth thinking about ultimately presenting the information to the EPA on the dairy nutrient management program specifically. We have the GWMA plan that is moving forward, but the reality is the state has a whole lot more that we are implementing to address nitrates in groundwater that are tied to that. I would love to hear other opinions on it. I don't know that the EPA is super familiar with it.

- Yakima County Public Services

- David – As part of the safe water work, part of the task is to prepare a sustainability plan. I just put together a 4-page plan and sent that on to Rob to review. Right now, it's just in bullet point form. That is the latest thing as far as the safe drinking water work goes. Also, I don't know if we've mentioned this here, but if you go to the GWMA main page, at the bottom you can see where we are at with our safe drinking water project. We will be posting more updates there soon.
- Lisa – Mailings/Post Card mailings have all gone out. We will follow up here soon with another last chance post card mailing soon. I was contacted by Brendan Monahan who is an attorney for Cow Palace regarding finding out what we have been doing. We will meet with him next week.

- Yakima Health District

- Shawn – We don't have a ton to update on. We are continuing with Yakima Co. on the safe drinking water work. We still have our emergency hire staff person on staff for the duration of that. I know the EPA is curious around Group B information in Yakima Co. within the GWMA. We do have an inventory of all of those systems, the next step will be how do we fund, how do we implement testing/surveillance program for our Group B's in the GWMA and what options would there be for treatment systems. There's lots to think about and plan for Group B's coming up. Just a little bogged down right now with the new septic system rules. We are chipping away at it though.

- Washington State Department of Health

- Holly – We submitted our progress report on time to EPA. We received confirmation from EPA that they received it. It was great work, and I think we should all be proud of the work we are all doing. Haven't heard where we are going with EPA on that, but we have been doing something equally important and that is this last month we sent out 136 letters to agri-businesses trying to assess their population served on water systems. Still working through the process of responding to EPA's request that we revise our Public Water definition so that it is in-line with the federal definition. We are working on updating this. Our current legislative session has two bills that are focusing on agricultural entities, senate bill 5055, and senate bill 5117. Our intention is to ensure that all residents and employees receive safe drinking water.
- Rob – Only update from me is to let the group know we've been working on a sustainability contract – research into private and shared wells connecting to the water systems throughout the LYV as well as the possibility of creating new water systems.

- Dairy Federation

- David Taylor – Getting ready for legislative session. Holly and I had a great conversation regarding the same farm policy and how to move forward and once again renewing our commitment to be a part of the process and continue the implementation process.
Comment: Holly is sending a list to the group of the agri-businesses that received the letter regarding same farm exemption policy update.

- 1:50 – 2:05 EJ Gov2Gov Grant Information and Updates

- Rob (DOH) – Just want to make sure this group is aware of a grant that DOH has with Yakima Heath District. This grant was awarded in April. We have been a little behind on getting started on this grant work in the LYV because of retirement and the hiring/training of new staff. It is a three-year grant with two years left. The first year focuses on Water Quality, and the second year focuses on Air Quality.
- Jocelyn (YHD) – In December we got started on implementing some of the activities that we had planned under the grant. One of the first tasks was to establish a community advisory group so we can continue to have community engagement and input about well water safety in the Lower Yakima Valley. We will be convening a group of folks to provide input on grant activities and have our first meeting at radio KDNA to kick everything off. There will be multiple agencies there

to represent as well as Sunnyside School District, Inspire Development Center, UW Department of Environmental and Occupational Science, as well as Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic. We are hoping to continue to grow this group as we move forward. If there is any interest in participating, please email Jocelyn and she will provide the details.

The primary focus of the grant is to establish a community health worker program with our partners. We will be training staff at NCEC first to implement this program. They have already hired four outreach specialists that they will be able to dedicate to this work and they will eventually be training students from Heritage University to do the same. They will be going out and conducting home visits in the Lower Yakima Valley to provide more in-depth education on well water safety practices and knowledge. Aside from the well water safety information, we also will include information on septic systems.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 13, 1:00-3:00 pm

- Plan to discuss recommended actions and provide status updates during next meeting.