

Notes for LYV-GWMA Implementation Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 10, 2025

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Meeting Attendees: Steven Hockett (ECY), Robert Eastman (DOH), Holly Myers (DOH), Anchee Durben (DOH), Kyrre Flege (AGR), Savannah Crnick (SYCD), Bailey Draper (SYCD), Eli Brito-Cruz (ECY), Heather Patt (ECY), Caitlin McConkey (ECY), Commissioner LaDon Linde, Lisa Freund (YCPS), Kate W (YCHD), Jocelyn Castillo (YCHD), David Taylor (Dairy Federation)

- 1:05 – 1:50: Group Roundtable Discussion- Agencies Share on Current Activities:
 - Washington State Department of Agriculture - Kyrre
 - We had a vacant position that we recently filled. She's based out of the Tri-Cities. Jara Monighan, we scooped her up from NRCS where she was writing comprehensive nutrient management plans and implementing their conservation plans.
 - I got to go out into the field to do some dairy farm inspections, drove around valley and just observed land use activities. It was a good opportunity to spend some time talking about field surveillance and what kind of observations we can make to help us understand the nutrient management issues in the field.
 - Working on building a field surveillance tool and we will share that with the group.
 - We have been trying to develop more decision support tools such as:
 - We've brought together all the land grant university extension publications for different crops associated with crop fertility and nutrient management. We are trying to bring these together in a library where they are a lot more easily referenced by technical service providers like us, permit writers, and producers.
 - We're taking some of the key ones, some of these things which were written 15 – 20 years ago and converting them into fillable web forms. You'll be able to do things like estimate nitrogen mineralization based on your crop history, soil type, field conditions and get a sense of what is going on with ongoing manure application systems.
 - Washington State Department of Ecology
 - Eli – Last month we had a couple events we participated in. When we have done the report for the Lower Yakima Valley outreach activity log and we come across events that occur outside of the Lower Yakima Valley, so I am going to start tracking these as well.
 - Heather – The 2022 Permit was appealed by environmental groups, we won't name who, but the summary judgement was issued a few weeks ago and was sent back to

Ecology for us to re-write. We did indicate that we would be re-issuing the permit earlier than the 5-year cycle. There are other issues that we want to address within the permit, aside from the 4 remanded topics. Manure Prevention Plans – how to include more field specific budgets in these manure prevention plans. It will also have to be an online process too. Kyrre, if you see in your decision support tools or other states that have good annual report submission programs, please let me know. Also, the Manure Prevention Plans for the previous permittees did not go out for public notice, so whoever has not gone out for public notice for their manure prevention plans needs to go out for notice. We are also to come up with a permeability threshold for the solid materials storage areas. The soil pads which the compost is being stored on need to define/quantify what the permeability is and will have to come up with a number for that. Another big thing is requiring groundwater monitoring for all CAFO's, big and small. This also opened our ability to include other tools to measure and monitor groundwater, not just deep wells. We will explore other tools out there that can help us look at groundwater monitoring. When it comes to groundwater monitoring, I will be forming some sort of technical advisory group which will likely just be agencies. If you have someone from your agency that would like to participate in this, please let me (Heather Pat, ECY) know.

- Steven – Not much more to add other than Eli and I are making good headway on abandoned wells.

- South Yakima Conservation District

- Savannah – SYCD performed spring deep soil sampling for the vineyard at WSU's Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center (WSU IAREC) in Prosser as part of Melanie and Ecology's pilot project with WSU. The pilot project involves looking at different kinds of fertilizer management and irrigation water management in a vineyard setting. SYCD provides deep soil sampling for that vineyard plot twice a year.
- We have a couple of irrigation efficiency projects still underway.
- Bailey and I were also out deep soil sampling last week and successfully sampled 14 of 27 fields so far for spring. We are planning on finishing the remaining 13 fields next week. We are getting more interest in the program from landowners, and more fields are continually being added. We will try to get to those this spring as well.
- We went to the Pacific Northwest Pasture Calendar Forage Workshop that took place at the WSU Prosser location. It featured professors and extension staff from WSU, Oregon State University, and University of Idaho. They talked about forage management, pasture, grazing, and rangeland settings.

- Comment from Kyrre – On the topic of composting area pens and pads – Ecology is working on updating its solid waste rule, as part of that they are going to be re-evaluating the exemption that allows dairies to compost on farm and under the oversight of a dairy nutrient management plan. There are several exemptions that Ecology is looking at now and we will probably see rule making notices here later. Before all the craziness in legislature and budget reductions, the Department of Agriculture put together an agency budget request for what we called a Composting Infrastructure Pilot Project. We are asking for funding to go and look at how do we use composting processes to help solve some of the on-farm nutrient management issues that we see at farms. So, we are asking for money from the legislature to help with implementing pilot programs around that.

- Yakima County Public Services

- Lisa – (presentation on screen) We have hit 95% of all the households within this green border from Union Gap, south of County Line Road, minus the Yakama Nation. You might recall that we did mailings in phases, starting with the historic high nitrate areas, phases 1 – 7, then started on the areas 8 – 11, which did not have such high levels of nitrates. We did one final last chance post card mailing at the end of March. We are partnering with the Health District; the bottled water will cease here in the next couple weeks. We will discontinue the delivery service, but they will still be able to pick up bottled water. The goal of this effort was to provide ultimately RO systems to people who were above the MCL. If you look in the middle of this map (presented on screen), you'll see that red outline, and then within that you'll see a black crosshatch near the north side, and it says Phase 1 within that golden rod color underneath. I'm drawing your attention to this for a very simple reason. In this area alone, we have the EPA with the dairy subcontractor that has been out there since 2013. Recall last summer, EPA widened those boundaries and those are outlined in red to make it 3.5 miles down-gradient of those dairies. They really expanded the area. The dairies have been contacting me, Shawn (YHD), and the attorneys for the dairies, because they are wanting us (public health) to take over. Yakima County was told which I learned through the dairy's' attorneys, that the DOJ considered our (the group) outreach deficient. I asked the attorneys why it was deemed deficient. They said it was because we missed addresses. I asked for the addresses so we could determine if we missed them or not. When I got the list a few days ago, they claimed that we had missed 180 or more households in that area. We went pouring through the data over two days with several of us looking through all of it. No, we didn't miss any households. But there is clearly no communication between DOJ, EPA, and the dairies. We have been told by EPA since 2013, DO NOT DO OUTREACH and do not go

into that black crosshatched area, the dairies are taking care of it. Guess which addresses show up on this list? It was within that black crosshatched area where we were told to keep out. What I want you to take away is there are a lot of hands in the pot and there are a lot of contradictory requests being made of Yakima County and we assume of others.

- Question: Holly – Who are the attorneys?
- Answer: Lisa – There was an injunction last year that favored the DOJ and EPA. Commissioner Linde can speak at length about this, because Cow Palace went out of business and over 125 jobs were lost. The dairies were hearing from EPA and DOJ that we wouldn't work with them or the Clean Drinking Water Act, and that we were deficient in our outreach. I appreciate the Dairies for reaching out. I feel that EPA wants us to fail, and they want to say that "you missed households, you didn't do this, you didn't do that". We're spending a lot of staff time and funding to prove that we DID do the work.

- Yakima Health District

- Kate – Last month YHD wrapped up the last of our water sampling under our Safe Drinking Water Initiative. We have sampled just under 600 households, and we have been working to follow up with those households to ensure they are aware of the resources they have, including the RO system if they qualify.
- Jocelyn – We have been working on transitioning homes out of the Culligan Water delivery, so they are able to get their RO system installed. Today I was going over our spreadsheet and calculating and it's at 146 homes. There are still some that had coliform detection that are still working on getting their well disinfected, so it is helpful to have the bottled water pick up site for those homes while they work on getting the process completed. We continue to encourage everyone to get their RO systems put in. More households are sending in their information now that they know the program is ending soon for bottled water delivery.
- Shawn – The new onsite sewage wastewater WAC went into effect April 1st. We now have some different treatment tables there that have to do with minimum lot sizing and nitrogen loading based on the lot sizing. It will be another tool in our toolbox to ensure that wastewater disposal is being done properly and adequately moving forward.

- Washington State Department of Health

- Holly – We are preparing for the next round of letters to go out to agriculture businesses and dairies.

- April 15th, we have a meeting with EPA, and on the agenda is a report of how DOH is managing communication with unregulated public water systems. We did receive 34 responses when we sent out the first letter. We are waiting for the legislative session to be over to get together with Dan Wood, Jay Gordon, and David Taylor, to create a draft letter to the dairies that you're comfortable with and that the dairies would be comfortable responding to.
 - Also, just want to share that when I work with EPA on this project, I will be assessing what my staff's capacity is for bringing on new public water systems, reviewing designs, plans, etc. Will be proposing to do this in phases, very similar to what EPA drinking water division does.
 - Anchee – I just want to say thank you to Yakima County and Yakima Health District with regards to letting people know about the bottled water pick up, we had a good turnout in Sunnyside last week.
 - Robert – EPA has eliminated our EJ grant. We are going to appeal it. We have sent messaging to our partners and sub awardees, Yakima Health being the main one, what EPA has done, but that we have put the project/grant in suspension in lieu of termination while we appeal it.
- Dairy Federation
- 1:50 – 2:10: Partner Usage of Logos for Communications
 - Group agrees that the GWMA mission statement would be good to include with the logo but perhaps something with more detail including “ensuring clean drinking water for residents in the Lower Yakima Valley”.
 - Eli (ECY) – I see the purpose of it and the reasoning behind it, but I do see that the community might not see the meaning of it unless it has supporting logos and information that the community is used to. It would be good to have agency logos people have seen before or other recognizable information they have seen before and something to tell them it is not a scam and is something they can trust.
 - Holly (DOH) – We can have a mission statement for the implementation committee which highlights more about what we are all doing. There is more to it than just reducing the nitrates in the groundwater. Will share something more with the group.
 - Lisa (YCPS)- I would caution against cramming too much in a mission statement.
 - 2:10 – 2:20: Community Based Nonprofit Organization ELLA's HEAL Act Grant Overview
 - 2:20 – 2:40: GWMA Panel at the End of May at Radio KDNA – Eli & Damon's idea is to have a panel of people implementing parts of the plan and would include WSDA, Ecology, DOH,

Yakima Health, Yakima County, and SYCD. He said a short presentation which they (Eli & Damon) are willing to do, on the plan, history, and roles. Open it up to residents for questions and after the initial presentation each panel member can talk and then open it up for additional discussion/questions. Gauging interest from the group.

- 2:40 – 3:00: EPA Meeting April 15
- Next meeting: Thursday, May 8, 1:00-3:00 pm