

LYV-GWMA Implementation Committee Meeting Notes

Thursday, July 10, 2025

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Teams Meeting

Attendees: Obadiah Sheriff (AGR), Kyrre Flege (AGR), Damon Roberts (ECY), Eli Cruz-Brito (ECY), Heather Patt (ECY), Melanie Redding (ECY), Rodney Heit (SYCD), Savannah Crnick (SYCD), Lisa Freund (YCPS), Robert Eastman (DOH), Holly Myers (DOH), David Taylor (Dairy Federation), Commissioner LaDon Linde

- 1:00-1:05: Introductions
- 1:05 – 1:50: Group Roundtable Discussion - Agencies Share on Current Activities
 - Washington State Department of Agriculture
 - Obadiah – We’re trying to round up our implementation plan that we’ve been working on, and priority items and action items that we will be giving a presentation on here shortly.

We have been working on GIS infrastructure that captures most of the dairies’ infrastructure at their dairies. It’s a great tool and will make our work so much easier.

We are also working on trying to capture lagoon storage from all of the dairies.

- Washington State Department of Ecology
 - Damon – Just an update on one of the recommended actions, ESD 105 – regarding curriculum, talking about nitrates. We have a meeting scheduled with them next week and will be moving forward on that recommended action.
 - Eli – An event here this Saturday in Mabton. It’s an all-day event, and we will be there from 7 am to 7 pm. It's called Summer Bash, and it is a community event with resources for the community.
 - Heather – I sent out 10 warning letters to CAFO permittees. I’ve since talked to consultants that represent these permittees about the various assessments that are due/requirements of their permits. We are working

through it. I am happy I am working with Kyrre and Obadiah, and the rest of their team. They just acquired two (I didn't catch the name!) meters to test soil permeability, so we're hoping to line up some permittees to get their soil tests done on their soil pads that prevent leaching into the groundwater. Still working on calling permittees to get some lined up.

- I'm also going to meet with Ricardi tomorrow to clarify some information/things he said in our last nitrate reduction plan meeting. I didn't get a chance to speak up at the meeting, so we are going to meet.
- Melanie – I'm working on some of those recommended actions that haven't been started, and I'm meeting with the Air Quality program next week to get a handle on the Air Quality ones so we can continue to move forward. I appreciate Kyrre talking about adding the strategic implementation areas, because some of the work I have been doing is related to that. I will talk more about that when we get to that agenda point.
- LaDon – I just wanted to say thank you to the Department of Ecology for joining us in our EPA meeting the other day, and special thanks to Melanie for your report of information.
- Melanie – Thank you, I appreciate that. Just so you know, right when this meeting started, I got that map that Commissioner McKinney asked for with the on-sight sewage systems and our nitrate results. And I'll make sure you (Commissioner Linde) also get a copy of that.
- South Yakima Conservation District
 - Rodney – We're busy with our year-end budget closing, grant close-out, and reporting. It won't be until the middle of next week that we are finished. We're working with WSDA and Kyrre on the new contract and budget. We've also put planning on hold until the middle of next week.
 - We're wrapping up some very nice irrigation efficiency projects. I believe Savannah will share some photos of this project.
 - Savannah - We took the Statewide Advisory Committee for Washington State Conservation Commission's Voluntary Stewardship Program on a tour a couple of months ago as part of Yakima County VSP. One stop was on the reservation in the Toppenish area, a landowner who upgraded his irrigation system. His field was half rill/furrow and half wheel line irrigation. Water was supplied from a pump in a fish-bearing stream. His system also

did not have tailwater recovery. Basically, any water that got to the end of his furrow rows would go back into the ditch. So any water that was leaving his field could be contaminated with sediment, nutrients, or pesticides. We were able to help alleviate this by upgrading to an irrigation pivot along with a new pump, irrigation mainline, concrete water box, and dripline system. The center pivot irrigates most of the field, and an above-ground dripline system irrigates the corners. Typically, a solid set sprinkler system is used for corners, but the innovative use of dripline corners helps save more water.

- Damon – I'm wondering, since this is a great example of on-the-ground things happening that are source control measures, it seems like it would be a cool blog or something to put out to talk about what local farmers are doing in the lower valley. Not sure if Dept of Ag has something like this already, but just thinking this would be good to put out there for people in the community to know about.
- Savannah – I think that would be a good idea. I think we will be doing some reporting on some of the projects. We might also find some other way to highlight the projects we have going on.
- Yakima County Public Services
 - Lisa – A couple of meetings ago, someone had asked for the breakdown of hits to the GWMA website that the county hosts. *Lisa presented a report on screen showing almost 3000 hits to the website. The Spanish page for Safe Drinking Water is #3, which is interesting and good that there were that many hits on that page.
 - We are wrapping up the Safe Drinking Water Initiative. The last outlier is the final report, which I am working on now. My goal is to get it to Rob by the end of next week. And with that, we will do the financials, and then it will be done.
 - We did receive some well test requests, which we have forwarded to Rob. We will continue to forward those as we receive them.
 - I have announced my retirement from Yakima County. My last day will be July 31, 2025. I will remain on the payroll through September. I wanted to make sure we got through the Safe Drinking Water Funding before my departure.
- Washington State Department of Health

- Holly - We reached out to ELLA to see the documentary before being on a panel. They told us they were going to take some time to add more context and make it more accurate. I am hopeful for that.
- Damon – I agree with the requests to pre-screen the documentary before participating in a panel. We would like to sit on the panel to help support DOH.
- *Others from the group agreed that they would all like to see the documentary in full as well.
- Question – Lisa: Is it completed? Who paid for the documentary? Answer – Holly: It was part of an EJ grant through our Public Health Sciences team. It's not the same EPA EJ grant we've worked through. It is not complete; they are taking another month to work on it.
- Eli – I'm confused because there was a pre-showing of the documentary in Sunnyside at a community event. My question is, why are they showing it if it is not completed, and what did they show?
- Holly – I will continue to ask for a showing. I will follow up.
- Anchee – We are working on our animated videos and had our first draft of those sent to us this week, and will be happy to share those with the group when they are done.
- EPA
 - Nick – One quick administrative update from me, Lucy Edmondson, the Washington State Operations Director, her last day was on July 3. She is taking an early retirement, and we are not able to fill her position. What we are doing with her position is that there are three senior staff that are there to cover the position. Michelle Wilcox will be doing the first 30 days, then another person will rotate in, and then another after that.
 - Holly – The biggest project we are working on with the EPA is reporting and meeting with Ricardi, as well as working on this comprehensive nitrate reduction plan. We will update this committee with a few minutes of information from that meeting. If you are opposed to us sharing updates from those meetings regarding the comprehensive nitrate reduction plan, please let me know.

- Kyrre – I think it's a good idea, Holly. The work by that team is largely managed by the management team on this committee. Keeping the updates flowing to this broader implementation team is helpful.
- Rob – I will make room for this at future implementation meetings.
- Roza/Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District *No one in attendance for the meeting.
- Dairy Federation
 - David – Not much to report. I can confirm that my guys were worked up over the documentary showing in Sunnyside. Aside from that, we are in the middle of everything with harvest and watching the water forecast. I don't know which Dairy it was, but I heard there was a pretty big bonfire down in Sunnyside that burned up a lot of hay.
 - Holly – Will you please pass along to your counterparts that we are undergoing a major reorganization, so we will not be focusing on the letters to the dairies for the same farm exemption. We have deprioritized that, but we will still absolutely work with you on the letters.
- 1:50 – 2:30: Yakima Nitrate Project (YNP) Priorities
 - Obadiah - **Shared screen with the group on what they have been currently doing with WSDA.*

The core value of the work is supporting nutrient management, protection of human health, and promoting agricultural viability. Some highlights are as follows:

- We continue to do our mandate, which was given to us through the Dairy Nutrient Management Act.
- We continue to do routine inspections for the dairies within the valley. If we find any issues with the producers, we go back and work with them to correct any of the issues before we move on.
- We also partner with SYCD to create and review farm plans.
- We investigate and respond to complaints with Ecology.
- We also do windshield surveillance to observe any issues related to water quality or human health and work with the producer to correct the issue. This includes manure

applications in the valley and any nutrient application that is used by the dairy.

- We also do training in nutrient management with the dairy producers.

*Walked the group through the presentation, showing the action items, they are currently working on, items they are planning for, and the various strategies and tools they use, including the decision support tool and training.

- 2:30 – 2:50: Strategic Implementation/Focus Areas for GWMA
 - Kyrre – It's 275 square miles of area in the valley, various crops, farms, septic systems, residential, commercial, municipal, a lot is going on, it's a BIG area. Trying to identify a focus area is something I wanted to talk about. Resources are very limited, and I think we would benefit from focusing on one area and being able to document measurable success.
 - Melanie – I see value in using a tool. Being strategic in where we use our efforts. I think if we do focus on a prioritized area, I think we will be able to show people the value of our work.
 - Interested in further discussion/meetings on this: Kyrre (AGR), Melanie (ECY), Deborah Johnson (DOH), Steven Hucket (ECY), Damon Roberts (ECY).
- 2:50 – 3:00: Open Discussion –
 - Nick mentioned more details about the staffing situation at EPA and the estimated number of staff who are no longer working at EPA.
- Next meeting: Thursday, August 14, 1:00-3:00 pm