

Funding Work Group

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Working Group Members

Vern Redifer (Chair); Bud Rogers; Dan DeGroot; David Bowen; Ginny Prest; Jason Sheehan; Jim Davenport; Laurie Crowe; Matt Bachmann; Rand Elliott; Rick Dinicola; Steve George; Stuart Turner.

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Wednesday, July 12, 2017, 5:00-7:30 PM
Call Number: 360-407-3780 PIN CODE: 3066589#

Participants

Present: Vern Redifer (Chair); Dan DeGroot; David Bowen; Jim Davenport; Laurie Crowe; Steve George; Jason Sheehan; Bud Rogers; Gary Bahr; Sandy Braden, Stuart Crane and Bobbie Brady (Yakima County Support Services). No one was available on the phone.

Key Discussion Points

The meeting began at 5:15 PM. Vern advised that the group would be discussing funding sources for several items that were sure to be a part of the proposed program. The discussion on each item was as follows:

Ambient Water Quality Monitoring and Drinking Water Well Monitoring Programs: A member wanted to know if well monitoring costs would include funding for analysis, sampling and review of data. Vern indicated that the Data Collection Working Group would be coming up with a plan for analysis of this data and added that all of the costs associated with monitoring would be in one package. Another member asked how long the monitoring would continue and stated that it was normal to compile data every year and analyze at five years. He added that some analysis could be done every year because there are seasonal variations. Gary said that five years of quarterly sampling would provide seasonal information and that brief updates could be given with a yearly report and added that it was standard to monitor three years straight with quarterly tests done on the same or as close to the same date possible. He also said that some of the homeowners who had authorized testing of their domestic wells may drop off after the first year, but others may want to be added as they learn more about the program and have an interest in protecting water quality. Jim stated that funding for 15 to 20 years would be optimal and that several working groups had made recommendations for checking status of progress at five or ten years. Gary thought 20 years would be great as groundwater changes can be slow. Jim asked Gary if he could estimate the cost based on his experience. Gary thought tests would be about \$40 and stated that at the peak of his regional and localized monitoring in Idaho the cost was approximately \$350,000 per year for testing. Gary agreed to put some numbers together for the group of quarterly and annual costs from the work he had done (spreadsheets of examples – not a bid). Vern added that Matt Bachmann had provided him with information from USGS. He also

pointed out that since the initial research on the wells was done, some of the larger costs were out of the way and the larger expense going forward would be the cost of labor if those testing would have to travel. Vern stated that in the future it would be his preference for personnel in this area to test to reduce costs. However, he recognized the credibility, professionalism and scientific recognition USGS has which would be an asset. Another member reminded the group that the USGS can't contribute funding for gathering data but can provide funding for analyzing data. A member suggested that responsibilities could be split – testing with a local group and analysis and summaries provided by USGS. Vern thought local people could be trained and confirmed with Laurie that the South Yakima Conservation District (SYCD) could do the testing if a QAPP was in place.

Gary recommended that the group also consider money to implement testing the effectiveness of BMPs. Jim stated that BMP monitoring was on the list of alternatives as a separate line item, but felt it would be approved by the GWAC. Another member wondered if the current dairy cluster testing could be utilized as a pilot project in the GWMA since they're currently sampling the wells they installed for BMP effectiveness on farm ground. He also pointed out that in the long run this would save the group money as well. Vern thought the group could take a look at what's going on versus recommended actions and if they don't match look at it as a supplement. The member went on to say that dairy cluster soil testing had shown benefits but water monitoring was not showing any trends yet. Gary stated that he might have spreadsheets on monitoring BMP effectiveness. Vern said the group would need to find volunteers for BMP effectiveness testing but thought that perhaps incentives could pay for changes (e.g., rill to another kind of irrigation in exchange for permission to monitor) which would benefit everyone.

The group discussed who else could do the monitoring. Concern was voiced by several members when it was suggested that agencies that had regulatory oversight could perform the work. Members stated it may cause people to be slightly more proprietary because of concern that the information could be manipulated. Vern asked what the group thought about the Yakima Health District (YHD) doing the sampling adding that they had done the nitrate testing. A member stated he liked keeping regulatory entities separate from sampling and wondered if YHD was a regulatory authority. Vern pointed out that there would be clearly defined methods of analysis for data collecting so that everyone would know what would be done with the data and added that there is some interest among the County Commissioners to move YHD in that direction. Jim wanted to know if SYCD had enough people to do this monitoring if they were funded to do it. Laurie said yes she has trained staff. Dan added that farmers perceive SYCD as "helpful people." The group also discussed the QAPP requirements. Vern stated that the QAPP for the monitoring program had mostly been written. A member stated that they would like Ecology or Ag to review it. Vern indicated that he had merged QAPPs from PGG and USGS following EPA standards. Vern wanted the QAPP to pass muster with EPA, Ag and Ecology. Another member pointed out that the funding agency will have their own QAPP requirements. . In conclusion, Vern noted that if Yakima County were the lead agency they could be a clearing house for funding like they did with USGS and SYCD and coordinate their functions. He also thought it was important to find agencies that people trusted to do the work.

A member pointed out that everyone would need to recognize some fields already have a nitrogen load. Another member agreed that there is a huge denial of legacy nitrogen. A member indicated that he had been taking deep soil samples because of what he learned through his participation in

the GWAC. Vern said there were high numbers in the deep soil samples too but no one knows how long it's been there because of all of the variables. Vern added that the answer is to test soils, consider the organics, know what you need to put on and watch the water you use. Another member added that water can't be watched with rill irrigation. Vern agreed and said it would be important for the group to finish with a meaningful piece of work that included ongoing monitoring efforts to verify things are working because of the legacy issue.

A member added that he recently purchased a field that had been planted in asparagus and corn with no manure application. Because of his participation in the GWMA he soil tested at 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 feet and found increasing levels of nitrates. As a result he changed the crop and the type of irrigation. His concern was that irrigated agriculture was missing the GWMA discussions because they are afraid of some members of the GWAC and their attitudes. Another member agreed that to entice people the group must have a different attitude. He added that the dairymen were at the table and as a result were already applying the things they had learned. Vern agreed that the message needed to get out to the farming community. Vern said that Doug Simpson said the farming community does attend grower meetings. Laurie said that SYCD is trying to piggyback on these groups but there needs to be a bigger venue. Another member said most grower meetings are focused on fruit and other crops need to be addressed as well.

Ongoing Efforts of Lead Entity: Vern stated that there needs to continue to be a lead entity and that someone had suggested an oversight or advisory committee as well. Jim added that if the County was considered the lead entity there would be authority under a State statute to do this. He added that any tangential group would not have this same authority and would need to be advisory. Vern said there seemed to be a consensus for Yakima County to be the lead entity and Rand is agreeable as long as there are resources available. Jim asked Vern if he had an estimate of the cost if Yakima County took on the role of lead entity. Vern said they couldn't estimate costs until a scope of the work had been completed. If the role was to pass out money the cost would be small. If it's to stay engaged and have quarterly meetings with accountability then the cost would be greater. Jim also wanted to know the costs of the educational component if it is housed in the County. Vern said that most likely this work would be subbed out. Jim wanted to know if this would be a minimum of one FTE. Vern didn't think it would require that but if it was a GWAC-like process it could be \$75,000-100,000 per year for salary and benefits plus an operating budget. A member stated that said he liked the thought of Yakima County being an overall manager and subcontracting out what was not their expertise. He did see GIS services as essential.

Yakima Health District Onsite Sewage System Operation and Maintenance (O & M) Plan: The RCIM Working Group has recommended that YHD be funded to write the O&M plan per the WAC. Jim indicated that the O & M plan could be nitrate specific. A member wondered why this required funding. Jim stated that YHD was not currently funded to do the plan. A member wondered what the funding needs were and stated he would be willing to recommend \$50-100,000 to kick start the plan. Additionally, he was unsure why the group needed to make a recommendation to write a plan as that was merely directing them to follow the law. Another member added that if the board of the YHD made it their priority it would get done. Jim agreed to ask David Cole how much it would cost to do this. Jim added as an FYI that no other County in eastern Washington has put together a plan and that twelve counties bordering the Puget Sound were required to do it in a year but other counties weren't given a time frame. Another member

stated that the WAC said they were to educate and while YHD had a lot of educational brochures and informative videos he wasn't aware of any outreach efforts.

Funding of Other Likely Potential Recommendations: Vern indicated that he thought financial resources for education and incentives for irrigation and nutrient management and rill irrigation transitioned to drip, pivot, etc., would also be likely recommendations. Laurie said that SYCD would be able to piggy back and share costs with other agencies which could reduce funding needs. Jim stated that more education to the right audience is a positive asset and underfunded. Another member added that if people recognize the benefits to for themselves then they would welcome education.

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.

Resources Requested

Recommendations for GWAC

Deliverables/Products Status

Proposed Next Steps

1) Gary Bahr agreed to put some numbers together for the group of quarterly and annual costs analysis, sampling and review of data for well testing from the work he had done (spreadsheets of examples – not a bid). 2) Jim agreed to ask David Cole how much it would cost for YHD to prepare a Onsite Sewage System Operation and Maintenance (O & M) Plan in accordance with WAC.