

Data Collection, Characterization, Monitoring

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

A discussion of timelines and details regarding the Nitrate Loading Assessment

Working Group Members

Melanie Redding (Chair); Andres Cervantes; Bob Stevens; Charles (Pony) Ellingson; Charlie McKinney; Chelsea Durfey; Dave Cowan; Donald Brown; Doug Simpson; Elizabeth Sanchez; Eric Winiecki; Frank Lyall; Ginny Stern; Jaclyn Hancock; Jan Whitefoot; Jean Mendoza, Jennifer MacDonald; Jim Trull; John Van Wingerden, Kevin Lindsey; Laurie Crowe; Lino Guerra; Kirk Cook; Mike Shuttleworth; Ralph Fisher; René Fuentes; Robert Farrell; Ron Cowin, Scott Stephen; Sheila Fleming; Steve Swope; Stuart Turner; Dr. Troy Peters

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Thursday, January 14, 2016 10:00 AM

Call Number: 509-574-2353 pin: 2353#

Participants

Present: Melanie Redding (Chair)*, Ralph Fisher*, Gary Bahr*, Kevin Lindsey*, Pony Ellingson (PGG)* and Steve Swope (PGG)*, Jim Davenport, Steve George, Perry Beale, Jean Mendoza, Charlie McKinney, Jim Trull, Vern Redifer, Lee Murdock, and Bobbie Brady (Yakima County Support Staff)

*via phone

Key Discussion Points

Update on PGG Contract Work

Vern asked Pony Ellingson and Steve Swope to report on the progress they had made in designing an ambient groundwater monitoring system for the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area. Steve informed the group that they had spent the last few weeks getting data into the GIF system and printing out maps. This work was now done. Over the next one to two weeks they would begin to select site locations, further develop the concept, and work on ordering the sites including an assessment as to the priority of their order. They anticipated that they would have this ready for the next Data meeting. Jim Davenport noted that the group had contracted with PGG to attend two meetings and inquired about the timing of those meetings and when the results would be ready for this group's review. Steve believed PGG would have a report printed and deliverable to the Data group by the March meeting for their review, input and questions. This meeting would be attended by PGG. The finalization of the work will depend on the modifications the group has for PGG and how long the group needs to work with the preliminary report, but it was his belief that that things could be finalized a month

or two later. Vern asked if they needed any additional information from the County or if they had any questions. Steve indicated that they had been working with a member of the County GIS group and had received everything they needed thus far and were able to fully update their systems.

Update on the Nitrogen Loading Assessment

Melanie advised the group that the peer reviewers had held several meetings to go over the Livestock/CAFO data and loading assessment. They were able to talk about their concerns and issues and have made quite a few comments. Kirk Cook and Kelly McClain from the Department of Agriculture will respond to those comments, which should resolve all of the issues noted by the peer review committee. At that point the report will be presented to this Data Collection group for review. While Melanie understood that many of the Data Collection Group were anticipating receiving that report sooner rather than later, she felt it was premature to discuss it at this time since the peer review committee was actively working with the Department of Agriculture to resolve the concerns and comments they had made. She felt it important to assure the group that just because the peer review committee wasn't discussing the report with the Data Group now didn't mean that those concerns weren't being addressed.

The IAWG and RCIM reports will be done the first part of February and then will begin the peer review process. A member wanted to make sure that the IAWG report would include the deep soil sampling information they had been procuring. Perry Beale said that they were using the data from the deep soil sampling information as one of their sources to reach the conclusions contained in that report.

A member asked if the reports would be given to the Data, IAWG and RCIM working groups first so that they had the opportunity to review and comment before the reports went to the full GWAC. After a short discussion, it was agreed that each working group would have a chance to review and comment on the report before it was sent on to the full committee since that would aid in stream-lining the process and also better establish the merits of each report.

A great deal of time was spent discussing the importance of the transparency of the reports and that the authors of each make sure to describe any assumptions when converting rough data into a useable format. They should also disclose whether or not their assumptions were scientific, personal opinion or professional judgment and specifically how and why each decision was reached. Standard methods of statistical application should be applied. Melanie also stressed the importance of making sure that the reports clearly state the source of the numbers used so that the groups don't have to make those inquiries when the report is received and no search for sources is necessary. She did not want the working group members to have to dig through each report to make those determinations. All three report author groups have already communicated so that the reports themselves will be written up in a similar manner.

Melanie reviewed for Gary Bahr (Kirk Cooke's replacement at the Department of Agriculture) the report process from report compilation through peer review to the working groups and on to the full GWAC in order to bring him up to speed. She noted that the peer review committee had

no ownership in the reports themselves but were charged with identifying technical issues and resolving them so that those problems weren't issues for the groups later and the working groups could focus on the conclusions and consequences of each report instead.

Upon inquiry, Gary confirmed that Kirk Cook is standing by to go over the comments made by the peer review committee on the Livestock/CAFO data and loading assessment report.

A member inquired as to whether there would be a report that includes atmospheric deposition and whether this issue would be addressed in any of the three reports presently under discussion or if this would be reported separately. A discussion ensued and it was agreed by the group that this topic should be produced apart from those already in process. They further agreed that studying atmospheric deposition and volatilization was crucial in order to better understand the atmospheric influence on the nitrogen content in the ground. While the influence might turn out to be minor, obtaining the data would clarify once and for all its impact. The group agreed that this endeavor was certainly worthwhile. As a result, Charlie McKinney committed to have conversations with his air program personnel at the Department of Ecology to inquire into what might be the applicable atmospheric rates of disposition and whether atmospheric disposition rates should be pinpointed field to field or over the general GWMA area. Charlie will email the group in the next week to let everyone know if he can get the information from his air program personnel. Vern committed that the County would process the rate values into GIS and get the appropriate calculations. Gary and Vern will work together to ascertain how the information will fit into a report.

Extension of Department of Agriculture Contract

Kelly McClain had contacted Vern about extending the performance period under the Department of Agriculture contract with Yakima County. After a discussion it was agreed that a four month extension to complete the report project might be appropriate since several milestones still need to be accomplished – reports to the peer reviewers with time to comment and reports to the work groups with time to comment. Gary and Vern will continue these discussions via email.

Miscellaneous

Melanie reminded the group that the peer review committee was going to tour a manure processing operation with Steve Swope in mid-February as per their discussion at last month's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM after it was determined that the group had no additional topics for discussion.

Resources Requested

-

Recommendations for GWAC

-

Deliverables/Products Status

-

Proposed Next Steps

- Charlie McKinney committed to have conversations with his air program personnel at the Department of Ecology to inquire into what might be the applicable atmospheric rates of disposition and whether atmospheric disposition rates should be pinpointed field to field or over the general GWMA area. Charlie will email the group in the next week to let everyone know if he can get the information from his air program personnel.
- Vern committed that the County would process the rate values into GIS and get the appropriate calculations.
- Gary and Vern will work together to ascertain how the information will fit into a report.
- Gary and Vern will continue discussions via email on the Department of Agriculture contract.
- March 10, 2016 meeting PGG will provide an ambient monitoring program report to this group.