

**YAKIMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 (GWAC)**

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, April 21, 2016 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

*Radio KDNA Conference Rooms 1 & 2
 121 Sunnyside Avenue, Granger, WA*

Note: This document is only a summary of issues and actions of this meeting. It is not intended to be a transcription of the meeting, but an overview of points raised and responses from Yakima County and Groundwater Advisory Committee members. It may not fully represent the ideas discussed or opinions given. Examination of this document cannot equal or replace attendance.

I. Call to Order: This meeting was called to order at 5:06 p.m. by Jim Davenport, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.,	✓	
Chelsea Durfey		✓	
Bud Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1	✓	
Kathleen Rogers	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 1 (alternate)	✓	
Patricia Newhouse	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2	✓	
Sue Wedam	Lower Valley Community Representative Position 2 (alternate)	✓	
Doug Simpson	Irrigated Crop Producer	✓	
Jean Mendoza	Friends of Toppenish Creek	✓	
Eric Anderson	Friends of Toppenish Creek (alternate)		✓
Jan Whitefoot	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation		✓
Jim Dyjak	Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation (alternate)	✓	
Steve George	Yakima County Farm Bureau	✓	
Frank Lyall	Yakima County Farm Bureau (alternate)	✓	
Jason Sheehan	Yakima Dairy Federation	✓	
Dan DeGroot	Yakima Dairy Federation (alternate)	✓	
Ron Cowin	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control	✓	
	Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control (alternate)		
Laurie Crowe	South Yakima Conservation District	✓	

Jim Newhouse	South Yakima Conservation District (alternate)		✓
Robert Farrell	Port of Sunnyside		✓
John Van Wingerden	Port of Sunnyside (alternate)		✓
Rand Elliott	Yakima County Board of Commissioners	✓	
Vern Redifer	Yakima County Board of Commissioners (alternate)	✓	
Ryan Ibach	Yakima Health District		✓
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center	✓	
Lucy Edmondson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	✓	
Marie Jennings	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (alternate)		✓
Elizabeth Sanchey	Yakama Nation		✓
Tom Ring	Yakama Nation (alternate)		✓
Virginia "Ginny" Prest	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Jaclyn Hancock	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)		✓
Andy Cervantes	WA Department of Health		✓
Ginny Stern	WA Department of Health (alternate)	✓	
David Bowen	WA Department of Ecology	✓	
Sage Park	WA Department of Ecology		✓
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative		✓
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		✓
Jessica Black	Heritage University		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS	✓	

*via phone

13 **II. Welcome & Meeting Overview**

14 Facilitator Jim Davenport asked everyone to spend a moment setting the day aside and to
 15 think about courteous ways to engage in meaningful conversation. He commended the
 16 group for the progress they had made in reaching solutions and encouraged everyone to
 17 continue to strive to move forward together.

18
 19 General introductions followed. Jim introduced David Bowen the new Water Quality
 20 Section Manager at the Department of Ecology. David shared his background as a Kittitas
 21 County Commissioner, Auditor and his 25 year participation in the family farm.

22
 23 **III. Working Group Reports:**

24 **Data Working Group – Melanie Redding**

25 **Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Network:** Pacific Groundwater Group (PGG) has a
 26 contract with Yakima County to design an ambient groundwater monitoring network based

27 on the February 19, 2015, GWAC approval of this venture. The system will be the tool that
28 will characterize the state of groundwater and address GWAC's goal to monitor the progress
29 of groundwater quality. Melanie noted that one program will not adequately address all the
30 issues but will require other efforts as described previously by PGG. She reported that PGG
31 submitted a Technical Memorandum to the working group dated March 18, 2016, for their
32 consideration. The goals were to establish a reasonable well density, consider the availability
33 of alternate sampling locations and land use patterns while avoiding sites that could be
34 anomalous and to prioritize well installation sites. Further, they would randomly identify
35 potential monitoring points across the valley and come up with a preliminary drill site
36 selection that would include 30 well sites situated on public lands and take into account
37 various other considerations, i.e., land use, depth, number of wells, costs. They would also
38 consider sampling drains to supplement data. The working group was concerned about
39 several long-term issues: 1) Where will the long-term funding come from to monitor these
40 wells, and 2) who will analyze the data? A member asked about the use of privately owned
41 existing wells. Melanie explained that the group considered the pros and cons and would
42 continue to explore this option. A member wondered if PGG would use the input/concerns
43 expressed in the last Data group meeting. Jim Davenport affirmed that PGG had taken note
44 of all of the comments and were working through what was said.

45
46 **Nitrogen Loading Assessment:** The assessment will provide the relative nitrogen loading
47 from all sources and consists of livestock, irrigated agricultural areas and RCIM components.
48 The challenge is to make sure all three use similar methodology (approach, evaluation, and
49 assumption) in order to have one seamless document that is scientifically sound, neutral,
50 reproducible, transparent, and useful to make future decisions. The process includes: peer
51 review; committee review and then GWAC review. A member asked about the timing.
52 Melanie thought the draft would be completed in the next couple of months. She felt that
53 given the peer review comments on the first assessment (livestock) that each would be a
54 substantially revised product. Another member asked that the group show what was
55 included and what was excluded so that the members could see the peer review process. He
56 was assured that no edits were made to data – only comments to the authors of each piece.

57
58 **Livestock/CAFO Working Group – David Bowen:** No report – the group did not meet.
59 David will be working with Bobbie next week to schedule meetings beginning in June.

60
61 **Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG) – Troy Peters:** Troy Peters reported that Perry Beale
62 had presented his work on the nitrogen loading assessment Irrigated Ag piece at the last

63 meeting. Perry also reported on his meeting with animal scientists and extension specialists
64 at WSU who specialize in crop and soil sciences, and nutrient management. The IAWG
65 reviewed Perry's assessment and mass balance data and felt it was robust, a good effort
66 and had a confidence in the methodology. The group also talked about the deep soil
67 samples, noting that remaining funding could be used to retest some questionable spots,
68 and could also be shared with RCIM for septic system testing although they think the issue
69 is *de-minimis*. In addition, the group started working on a prioritization of ideas that might
70 help make a difference and once refined will be presented to the GWAC.

71
72 **RCIM Working Group – Kathleen Rogers presented on behalf of Ryan Ibach who was**
73 **unable to attend:** Kathleen reported that the group was following up on septic systems as a
74 potential source of nitrates, and that they were interested in using some of the remaining
75 funds from deep soil sampling to conduct further studies. They are also addressing
76 questions about the permitting and testing processes of bio-solids. Dan DeGroot asked
77 about well coverage. Vern replied that the County had several requests for maps, and that
78 well coverage and other map overlays will be presented during tonight's GIS presentation.

79
80 **Regulatory Framework Working Group – Jean Mendoza:** The group had heard from
81 several presenters: Ron Cowin from Roza/Sunnyside Irrigation District talked about
82 irrigation systems and drains. Phil Rigdon also shared about efforts to address nitrate and
83 water issues within the nation. Brent Barnes, WSDA, Assistant Director for Pesticide
84 Management spoke about chemigation and fertigation. Jean provided the highlights of
85 each speaker. In addition, at Jean's direction each member of the work group submitted
86 three items of priority to be considered as the group plans to analyze the data collected to
87 date. Jean distributed the group's list. Jim Davenport noted he found this to be a helpful
88 exercise that other groups should consider using. The group also began to formulate a plan
89 for analysis of the policies, regulations and laws in order to gather together the relevant
90 material for each primary work group—RCIM, Irrigated Ag, CAFO/Livestock—and schedule
91 joint meetings to discuss voluntary incentives and regulatory measures. The group will use
92 Jim Davenport's spreadsheet of applicable statutes for each source as its starting point.

93
94 **Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Working Group – Lisa Freund:** The High Risk Well
95 Assessment Phase II survey closed with 290 participants exceeding the group's 200 survey
96 goal. Yakima County amended the original contract twice and stayed under budget. A results
97 summary will be shared at the next GWAC meeting and results letters with educational
98 materials are being sent to participants. High demand and excellent media coverage

99 (newspapers, TV interviews, and a Radio KDNA interview) attributed to overall public
100 awareness of the GWMA and its work. Lisa also reported that the GWMA website community
101 survey in English and Spanish which went live in March and can be found at
102 <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Door2Door> en. Its purpose is to measure the public's
103 awareness of the GWAC, the GWMA and nitrate issues. It is identical to the survey conducted
104 in the 2013 by Heritage University students. EPO will now shift its focus to new messaging
105 regarding well testing and prevention campaigns and are currently measuring volunteer
106 interest in staffing community events to help pass out flyers on a variety of topics. The group
107 desired to know if anyone from the GWAC had an interest in participating at the events. Lisa
108 distributed a sign-up sheet to solicit GWAC member participation and encouraged everyone
109 to consider signing up. Based on the GWAC response the EPO may come back in June and
110 make a presentation requesting approval for a traveling display.

111

112 IV. **Area Characterization: - Yakima County GIS:** Vern introduced GIS Director Mike Martian.
113 Mike explained that he was present to discuss area characterization as defined within WAC
114 173.100.100. Mike reviewed the provisions of WAC, which require that the group put
115 together a “. . . program for each groundwater management area (that) will be tailored to the
116 specific conditions of the area. The following guidelines on program content are intended to
117 serve as a general framework for the program, to be adapted to the particular needs of each
118 area. Each program shall include, as appropriate, the following: (1) An area characterization
119 section. . . .” Mike defined characterization as the description of the qualities or peculiarities
120 of a person, place or thing. He went on to say that in this case it is designed to answer the
121 questions: “what do we know and what more do we need to know?”

122

123 Mike then presented a series of GIS overlay maps that illustrated some of the readily-
124 available information that can be used to complete the area characterization: GWMA
125 boundaries and city limits, zoning by type, critical aquifer recharge areas, irrigation district
126 boundaries, public ownership by group, topography, soil types, soil infiltration loading rates,
127 geology types, depth to groundwater, groundwater flow directions, well locations, cropping
128 patterns and inventory, large on-site sewer systems, municipal underground injection
129 control devices, on-site sewer systems, map estimating private well locations, septic tank
130 density per square mile, soil infiltration rates with total nitrogen loading, bio-solids with
131 “2015 acres actually applied” in each section, estimated hobby farms, residential lawns in
132 towns and nitrogen application, large, medium and small dairies in 2014, ponds, lagoons
133 and corrals, climate summaries, 2010 population density per square mile, and a summary of
134 the Census Bureau information for the GWMA.

135

136 Following Mike's presentation, Jim Davenport queried the group for additional information
137 they would like GIS to map to complete the area characterization. The group asked for a
138 compilation of maps for the following: creeks, designated wetlands, overlay of nitrogen

139 hotspots, seasonality: well samples by quarter, decade-by-decade maps of land use,
140 quarterly summaries of load, impervious surfaces, amount of water delivered to parcel(s)
141 (Note: Ron Cowin observed that delivery and acres assigned to that delivery is not always
142 accurate), irrigation water – amount of return flow, trends – how has the amount of water
143 delivered changed over time?
144

145 **V. Committee Business**

146 The committee approved the February 18, 2016 meeting summary as presented.
147

148 **VI. Next Meeting**

149 Thursday, June 16, 2016, 5:00 PM

150 Location: *Radio KDNA Conference Rooms 1 & 2, 121 Sunnyside Avenue, Granger, WA*
151

152 **VII. Next Steps**

153 The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

154 Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on June 16, 2016.

155 Continued work on the “What More Do We Need to Know” list in Section 4 above.