

Irrigated Ag Working Group

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Working Group Members

Dr. Kefy Desta (WSU), Dr. Troy Peters (WSU) Elizabeth Sanchez (Yakama Nation), Jean Mendoza (Friends of Toppenish Creek), Jim Trull (Roza-Sunnyside Joint Board of Control), John Van Wingerden (Port of Sunnyside), Lonna Frans (U.S. Geological Survey), Ralph Fisher (EPA), Ron Cowin (SVID), Stuart Turner (Turner & Co.), Thomas Tebb (Department of Ecology), Ginny Prest (Dept of Ag), Laurie Crowe (South Yakima Conservation District), Scott Stephen (Citizen), Mike Shuttleworth (Citizen), Chelsea Durfey (Citizen), Lino Guerra (Citizen), Doug Simpson (Farmer)

Meetings/Calls Dates

Conference Call: 3:00 PM – 3:55 PM Thursday, October 3, 2013

Call: (509) 574-2353, PIN 2353#

Participants

Dave Fraser, Don Jameson, Frank Lyall, Ginny Prest, Jim Trull, Don Gatchalian (Yakima County staff support), Troy Ross-Havens (Yakima County staff support)

Key Discussion Points

During the beginning of the meeting, the Chair pointed out that the GWAC advised the working groups to review and report on the GWMA Goals and Objectives document. For the most part, the group decided to leave it alone as there were just a few stylistic issues with the document, and that the goals and objectives of the GWMA are thought to be dynamic and subject to change as data and observations are collected through time. The group moved on to reviewing the newest version of the draft Deep Soil Sampling Plan. At this point, the document has undergone several revisions from different working groups and GWAC members, which left only a few issues of concern for the group to discuss; grower protection and potential property damages. The group expressed concern regarding confidentiality of grower information to protect them from lawsuits, and cited this as a critical piece of the plan to create productive grower participation, and to maintain trust between growers and the involved entities. Public disclosure laws cited in RCW 89.08.560 and RCW 42.56.270 will aid in protecting growers, and assist the GWMA with language to clearly show how the growers will be protected from lawsuits and grower specific information leaks before grower participation documents are signed. It was also suggested that field data be shown by matrix attributes (crop type, irrigation type, soil type, soil leaching index, etc.), instead of spatially (latitude, longitude, parcel number) to prevent data displays from being made that show where samples were taken in the GWMA and associated nutrient concentrations, further protecting grower confidentiality.

The group spent time on the topic of property damage and how the SYCD, growers, GWAC, and sampling consultants will follow a liability plan. Discussion followed regarding who will be responsible for particular property damages, such as damage to subterranean pipes, which may occur during the sampling process if particular precautions are ignored or mistakes are made. The meeting was adjourned after looking through the Deep Soil Sampling Plan draft cost estimate. The members felt that the draft cost estimate shows how the decision of sampling down to 6-feet instead of 10-feet will give them a lot more, “bang for their buck.” It was mentioned that PGG has been working closely with the SYCD to develop the cost estimate, and that the cost estimate should be fairly accurate. An agreement is suggested between the GWAC and SYCD to deem the cost estimate appropriate.

Resources Requested

None at this time.

Recommendations for GWAC

None at this time.