

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, August 18, 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 5:05 PM 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)	✓	
Dave Cole	Yakima Health District		✓
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		✓
Stuart Crane	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 Jim Davenport called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM and asked the group to pause briefly
15 in a moment of silence. The members and guests then introduced themselves.

16 **III. Working Group Reports**

17 **RCIM Working Group:** No report presented.

18 **Irrigated Ag Working Group (IAWG):** No report presented.

19 **Data Working Group:** Melanie Redding updated the group on the status of the Ambient
20 Groundwater Monitoring Network (AMN). She pointed out that the GWAC has yet to
21 decide who would run the AMN program, who would analyze the data, and how it will be
22 funded long term. Melanie went on to say that the Data group had discussed other
23 previously identified monitoring options. The group's goal was to vote and prioritize their
24 top three choices, but had been unable to do so at the August meeting because of low
25 member turnout. The group also discussed other methods of useful monitoring networks.

26 In addition, Matt Bachmann from the USGS presented his Particle Tracking Model and the
27 group contemplated how it could be used with current and future GWMA initiatives.
28 Melanie gave an update on the Nitrogen Loading Assessment which she hoped would be to
29 the committees soon. Finally, Melanie provided information compiled from the Yakima
30 County and Department of Ecology websites on what other GWMA's were doing
31 (Washington, Oregon and California) as a source for other potential monitoring options.
32 Melanie reminded the GWAC committee that she and Ginny Stern would be presenting a
33 basic groundwater presentation one hour prior to the October 20 GWAC meeting. She is
34 working with EPO to coordinate outreach and Spanish translation.

35 **Livestock/CAFO:** The group's report was prepared by Chair David Bowen and given by Sage
36 Park. The major areas of discussion included meeting the GWAC timeline, anticipation of
37 receipt of the Nitrogen Loading Study, review, refining and prioritization of best management
38 practices (BMP's), regulatory framework, implementation funding, and the recent release of
39 Ecology's draft CAFO General Permit (the comment period for this has been extended to
40 August 31, 2016). The Regulatory Framework working group provided an overview of the
41 rules, laws, and voluntary programs at the group's August meeting. Next steps for the group
42 will be to identify any regulatory gaps and areas of improvement of potential regulatory
43 changes that could or should be implemented.

44 **Regulatory Framework Working Group:** Jean Mendoza handed out a copy of her report
45 which included directions to view videos of the 2016 GWAC and Regulatory Framework
46 meetings. Jean has also posted Regulatory Framework meeting summaries and supporting
47 documents to her website. In the last few months the Regulatory group heard a
48 presentation on the Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Program which is an effort to
49 provide solutions to protect water and preserve farm land. In addition, the group worked
50 on their presentations for the Livestock/CAFO, Irrigated Ag (IAWG) and RCIM working
51 groups. Jean provided an outline. The group presented to Livestock/CAFO in August and
52 hoped to present to Irrigated Ag and RCIM at their October meetings. The group had also
53 discussed both the application of fertilizers and manures to crop land and atmospheric
54 deposition. These sources will be presented to the IAWG for their consideration. Ginny
55 Prest asked that the information she had handed out to the GWAC (WSDA "Implementation
56 of Nutrient Management Training Program for Farmers") be included in the presentation.
57 Jean noted that she had raised the issue of doing a cost benefit analysis to the group,
58 however, the group was reluctant to take on the task and asked Jean to come back with
59 more specific proposals before considering the topic again. Vern clarified and said that
60 while he was interested in identifying the cost of each proposed strategy for
61 implementation, the difficulty lies in quantifying the benefits of subjective strategies.

62 **Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Working Group:** Lisa Freund announced that the
63 outreach group had staffed five health fairs between May and August in the GWMA and
64 thanked all those who volunteered. The health fairs had allowed one-on-one contact with
65 approximately 250 Lower Valley residents. Volunteers passed out surveys, test strips and
66 brochures with other pertinent information. Their greatest take-away was that many people
67 still had not heard the GWAC's message and, therefore, the EPO group was proposing a
68 billboard campaign which would be outlined later on in the agenda. Lisa added that the group
69 had not been contacted by any of the working groups after the June GWAC call for legislative
70 proposals. A member asked what the EPO Working Group had done in the last three years
71 to educate the public about protection, prevention and participation. Lisa noted several
72 activities including the door-to-door campaign done by Heritage University, informational
73 posters and banners in the County Courthouse, television and radio ads, the well assessment
74 survey and the five health fairs in addition to the proposed billboard campaign. Lisa went on
75 to say that all of these endeavors provided the public with a contact phone number and
76 directions to the website so that individuals could get questions answered and obtain
77 additional information. The member (a participant in the EPO working group) stated that she
78 had several educational ideas and wanted to know how those should be presented. Both Lisa
79 and Jim Davenport responded that any recommendations for education should be brought to
80 the EPO. If the EPO working group felt they met the GWAC's goals the group would then
81 make recommendations to the GWAC. The member replied that they did not believe that
82 the GWAC approved EPO's presence at the health fairs; Lisa responded that approval had
83 been sought by the EPO and received at the April GWAC meeting and noted that she would
84 not disrespect the GWAC by not asking for their approval.

85 **IV. Don Stuart Presentation**

86 Jim Davenport reminded the group that this item had been tabled from the previous meeting.
87 Melanie stated that she had heard Don Stuart speak at a seminar and believed his
88 presentation would be beneficial to the group as they were deciding how to move forward
89 and thinking about how to work together. She recommended the members look at the
90 presentation which would be available soon on the County website or read the book Mr.
91 Stuart had written, "Barnyards and Birkenstocks – Why Farmers and Environmentalists Need
92 Each Other." Lucy Edmondson also believed it could cause agricultural and environmental
93 communities to think differently. A member objected, desiring additional background
94 information. A discussion ensued and the presentation was tabled until the next meeting as
95 the group could not reach a consensus.

96 **V. Working Groups' Requests to the Legislature**

97 Vern handed out a document entitled "GWMA Expenditures through July 31, 2016" which he
98 noted was a condensed version (like columns were combined) of a 50 page document. He
99 noted that the original Ecology grant was for \$2.3 million and to date \$1.4 million had been
100 spent which should be sufficient to fund activities through December 2017. Long-term
101 funding requests, i.e., ambient network monitoring and testing, however, would still need to
102 be sought. Vern spoke with David Bowen and requested that he put a placeholder for long-

103 term funding in the Ecology budget. Sage said she would double check on the placeholder.
104 A member asked about funding for the items remaining after December 2017, as she assumed
105 that the SEPA process and public meetings would take place after this deadline. Vern said he
106 hoped all of this would be done before the end of 2017 thus negating the need for additional
107 funding but stated that the group would continue until the Department of Ecology accepted
108 the program. The member was also concerned that there were only eight more GWAC
109 meetings and suggested the group return to meeting monthly. Vern felt the group could wait
110 until there were more substantive things to discuss; however, working groups might want to
111 consider meeting more frequently. A member desired an explanation of the column entitled
112 "equipment rental." Vern explained these charges were for County vehicles used to transport
113 staff and equipment to meetings and outreach events. Another member wanted to affirm
114 that if Rand went to the legislature for additional funding that the request would be approved
115 by the committee prior to Rand making the request.

116 **VI. Report on International Groundwater Conference (San Francisco)**

117 Rand Elliott, Ginny Prest and Ginny Stern attended this conference in June. Rand reported
118 hundreds of people attended with 60 countries represented. He came away with a clear
119 realization that the problem is not unique and there is no "one size fits all" solution. He was
120 reminded at the conference to look at the whole water picture and not get too focused on a
121 single aspect. Rand also noted the following points: 1) If there is no agriculture there is no
122 food. 2) There is a cost to everything – industry, farming, coming to the GWAC meeting in a
123 car – none of these things can be eliminated and actions create unintended consequences.
124 3) The group should be aware of septic sources and legacy nitrogen and answers must be
125 through science not emotions. 4) Farming can be a green renewable industry but nitrogen is
126 essential to produce crops and timing, rate, source, rainfall, soil types all must be considered
127 for proper nitrogen management. 5) Farmers need information and shared data if they are
128 going to change. 6) Who can do that? Perhaps an extension service but each group should
129 do what works, what is economical and education should be provided by someone they are
130 willing to listen to. 7) The conference also confirmed the need for soil testing and water
131 monitoring for measuring success and that fertilizer, manure and septic show up differently.
132 8) There are ways to measure, e.g., borax would indicate septic as it's in a lot of household
133 products. Iodine is attributable most likely to dairies as it is used as an antiseptic. In
134 conclusion, Rand reminded everyone of the importance to improve water quality and
135 preserve profitability – there needs to be a balance between economics and environment.
136 He added that there are many barriers to change: economic, cultural, demographics,
137 institutional and environmental. Each affects a farmer's decision to varying degrees, but only
138 one keeps a farmer from changing. Figure out that barrier and you could solve the problem.
139 Ginny Prest stated that she heard many times about legacy nitrates and the lag time between
140 making changes on the surface and the difference in the nitrate levels. Ginny was encouraged
141 by Rand's attendance and desire to listen and learn as it reinforced to her that the GWAC had
142 good leadership. A member asked if the members would have access to the materials from
143 the conference. Ginny said all had been recorded and that she would advise as soon as the

144 presentations were posted to the web. The member appreciated Rand's comments on the
145 need for data noting that people were reluctant to share soil sampling results. Rand
146 responded that there continued to be barriers to publicly putting this information on the
147 internet but ultimately the GWAC would decide this issue. Rand also felt that there was
148 already lots of data out there for education that the industry could use.

149 **EPO Recommendation to the GWAC: "Test Your Well" Billboard Campaign**

150 Lisa Freund asked the members to look at the billboard proposals. She explained that EPO
151 suggested three billboards (five sides) in three locations in the heart of the GWMA. Lisa also
152 provided mock-ups and pointed out that the actual ad would include the website and phone
153 number and two of the five would be in Spanish. Lisa advised that member Pat Newhouse
154 knew of a family with two sons (ages 2 and 3) that reflect the demographics and are willing
155 to appear in the ads and sign a release. Another member noted that these kids were not in
156 the age group at risk. A member wondered if the well tests would be part of the GWMA cost
157 – Lisa said no but that the County still had a number of test strips that could be mailed out.
158 A member suggested that the ad read: "Test your private well." Jim Davenport asked the
159 group if anyone objected to the proposal. A member stated that she thought the work should
160 be done by the Department of Health. Another member believed that a significant number
161 of people were not aware of the GWMA's message and the billboards provided a continual
162 presence. Another member noted that he was supportive of the effort, felt that the
163 location/area targeted was appropriate and that people impacted by nitrates would drive by
164 the sign day after day allowing the message to sink in. The objecting member withdrew her
165 objection and approval of the billboard proposal was unanimous.

166 **VII. Committee Business**

167 After confirmation that a quorum was present the committee approved the June 16, 2016,
168 meeting summary as presented.

169 **VIII. Public Comment**

170 None. Jim Davenport announced that he would be leaving for England to visit family and
171 would be travelling indefinitely through the fall. Therefore, he was going off-contract with
172 the County and did not anticipate attending the October 2016, GWAC meeting. He and Vern
173 would be in touch to work out a plan for the future. A member wondered who would be
174 doing the writing for the GWAC (documents summarizing the rules and regulations and the
175 characterization in Jim's absence). Vern said he would work that out with Jim Davenport,
176 Rand and David Bowen. The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.

177 **IX. Next Meeting**

178 Thursday, October 20, 2016, 5:00-7:00 PM, Location: *Denny Blaine Boardroom, 810 East*
179 *Custer Ave., Sunnyside, WA.*

180 **X. Next Steps**

181 Meeting summary approved by the GWAC on November 17, 2016.