

## **Introduction**

The following outreach plan will help guide the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC) carry out its public involvement efforts during the development of the GWMA program. The two-year outreach plan will educate audiences about the risk of nitrates in groundwater, invite participation in the GWAC's work, and solicit feedback in the GWMA development. It will also set the stage for future outreach efforts following implementation of the GWMA program.

The plan was developed by the GWAC's Education and Outreach (EPO) subcommittee, which was comprised of GWAC members, GWAC agency affiliates and citizen volunteers. The list is included as Appendix (A).

The subcommittee worked over several months to develop the strategy; key to this effort was ensuring that the plan will allow flexibility over the two years that the GWMA program itself is developed. That separate and concurrent effort will likely offer new data, program feedback and other variables that will require a dynamic and flexible outreach plan.

Following the subcommittee's creation of the draft plan, it was reviewed and approved by the GWAC committee on December 12, 2012.

## **GWAC and EPO Goals and Objectives**

The Outreach Plan will support the GWAC's goal, *The purpose of the GWMA is to reduce nitrate contamination concentrations in groundwater below state drinking water standards.*

In addition, the EPO developed its own goal statement: *The GWMA Education and Public Outreach Plan will inform and educate the public about nitrate groundwater contamination and its health and environmental impacts, promote GWMA activities, and encourage engagement in the process by the community and key stakeholders.*

### ***Overarching Objectives***

The overarching objectives developed to carry out the plan goals include:

1. Educating at-risk audiences about the risks of elevated nitrate to human health and how to protect themselves from that risk;
2. Informing audiences about the GWAC planning process; and
3. Inviting participation in the development of the GWMA program

## ***Target Audiences***

The EPO plan will target four larger audiences, each with its own diverse audience subsets:

1. Internal audiences
  - a. Agency Leadership
  - b. Policymakers & Legislative Staff
  - c. Yakama Nation Leadership
2. General Public
  - a. Private well users and at risk-populations in the GWMA
  - b. Other residents within the GWMA
  - c. Media
3. Underserved/English as a Second Language Residents
  - a. Private well users and at-risk populations in the GWMA
  - b. Other residents within the GWMA
  - c. Spanish-Language Media
4. Special Interests
  - a. Large employers in the GWMA
  - b. Environmental & Ag Industry Associations
  - c. Social Justice Organizations

The detailed list of the target audiences is included as Appendix (B).

## **Strategy**

The plan will address the specific needs of the diverse target audiences by responding to 1) the information and/or educational needs of each audience; 2) providing bilingual (English and Spanish) information and 3) using audience-specific outreach tools to convey key messages. This will be accomplished through a coordinated outreach campaign using a variety of English/Spanish outreach tools: a project website, interagency networking and coordination, print materials and mailings, local media, public events and festivals.

### ***Underserved/English As a Second Language (ESL) Audiences***

The EPO will directly reach out to the underserved and ESL audiences, especially those at high risk from nitrate contamination using targeted media and outreach work. Key "messengers" include Spanish language media, large employers, women's groups, the faith community, University of Washington Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (PNASH), El Proyecto Bienestar, and others in the GWMA program area. They will be provided English/Spanish outreach materials and will be invited to spread the word about the program.

The EPO will seek outreach opportunities such as Cinco de Mayo festivals, Hispanic Awareness Month activities, Tribal Housing Summits, and local health care community events.

Yakama Nation and Spanish-language radio and TV will be invited to participate in outreach through public radio talk shows, PSA's and commercial ad spots.

### ***Role of the GWAC Members in the EPO***

GWAC members will also play a central role in education and outreach efforts. Members are expected to provide regular GWAC updates to their constituencies, identify and help coordinate outreach opportunities within their own organizations, and convey feedback to the EPO. They will also be invited to participate in, and to help solicit volunteers for, outreach efforts.

As the oversight body of the EPO, the GWAC will also provide ongoing guidance to the EPO through recommendations, feedback and course corrections during the development of the GWMA program.

### ***Outreach Tools***

The following is a highlight of recommended outreach tools; a comprehensive list is included as Appendix (B).

### **GWMA Website**

The GWMA website will serve as the central clearinghouse for the GWAC and the GWMA development. It will invite audience participation in the process, offer access to educational and self-help materials, provide information exchange between the GWAC and the public, and solicit feedback on the outreach strategy and the GWMA development.

Outreach materials (correspondence, fact sheets, flyers) will direct audiences to the website, and provide an additional means for audiences to access resources and to receive updates. The website may be viewed at [www.yakimacounty.us/gwma](http://www.yakimacounty.us/gwma).

### **Bilingual educational and outreach materials**

Outreach materials (flyers, posters, mailings, survey instruments) will be made available in both English and Spanish. Based on feedback from previous outreach efforts, materials will convey the plan's key messages in a simple, easy to read format.

## **Evaluation Measures**

A consistent survey instrument will be developed and used with each audience contact (through the website, at events, etc.). The purpose will be to solicit feedback on outreach efforts and their effectiveness, and to evaluate participants' current understanding of the issues, their awareness of the GWAC and their degree of involvement with the GWMA development.

A detailed list of evaluation measures is included as Appendix (B).

## ***Key Milestones: 2013-2014***

The key milestones for the outreach plan reflect an ongoing cycle of preparation and outreach, followed by review and evaluation and a subsequent report back to the GWAC. This dynamic approach allows the strategy to remain relevant over time and under changing conditions. It also ensures that the GWAC has sufficient information to provide meaningful input, or to make course corrections or suggestions as it develops the GWMA program.

The EPO Milestones are included as Appendix (C).

## **Appendix A**

### **GWAC**

#### **Public Involvement & Outreach Plan Contributors**

Andres Cervantes, GWAC Member

Tom Tebb, GWAC Member

Jean Mendoza, GWAC Member

Wendell Hannigan, GWAC alternate

Rachel Little, Benton Conservation District

Gretchen Stewart, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Nieves Negrete, Citizen Volunteer

Patricia Newhouse, Citizen Volunteer

Elizabeth Torres, Radio KDNA

<b>(B1) Internal Audiences- Agency Leadership</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>OUTREACH TOOLS</b>	<b>EVALUATION MEASURES</b>
<p>Yakima County &amp; Benton County Health Districts</p> <p>Benton County Planning, Permitting, Surface Water Conservation Districts</p> <p>Department of Agriculture</p> <p>Department of Health</p> <p>Department of Ecology</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>Public Water Systems</p> <p>Cities &amp; Towns</p> <p>Yakima Valley Conference of Governments</p>	<p>Communicate with agencies about the GWAC planning process; inform and educate stakeholders regarding nitrate contamination and its effects.</p> <p>Coordinate outreach efforts with other agencies to maximize effectiveness and distribution.</p>	<p>GWAC Agency representatives are expected to report regularly back to their respective leadership, using face-to-face meetings, fact sheets, talking points, or informal presentations on a "need to know" basis.</p> <p>Use internal agency venues (brown bag lunches, Ed meetings, etc.) to announce program and provide periodic updates.</p> <p>Frequency: semi-annually or as dictated by agency opportunities.</p> <p>Use agencies' existing outreach (newsletters, website, Facebook, tweets, etc.) to announce GWAC's work and to provide updates.</p> <p>Use e-mail distribution list for general updates.</p> <p>Offer presentations and/or displays at professional conferences, annual meetings, etc.</p> <p>Frequency: semiannually or as dictated by agency and conference opportunities</p>	<p>Number of new participating agencies</p> <p>Number of face-to-face meetings</p> <p>Number of fact sheets developed</p> <p>Number of talking points/presentations developed</p> <p>Number of outreach recommendations received &amp; implemented</p> <p>Amount/character of audience feedback</p> <p>Number of e-mail contacts received</p> <p>Number of updates sent via e-mail list</p> <p>Number and character of comments, questions, suggestions and praise.</p> <p>Number of agency/organization requests to be involved in GWMA</p> <p>Structured interviews with key stakeholders to measure understanding of issues, degree of involvement with GWMA</p>

<b>(B2) Internal Audiences- Policymakers &amp; Legislative Staff</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>OUTREACH TOOLS</b>	<b>EVALUATION MEASURES</b>
<p>County Commissions (Benton &amp; Yakima)  Governor's Office  13, 14, 15 &amp; 16 Legislative District Leadership  State Agency Heads (AG, Ecology, Health)  Fourth Congressional District (Doc Hastings)</p>	<p>Keep policymakers apprised of GWAC efforts and its relevance to public health  Obtain political support for GWMA at multiple leadership levels and across affiliations  Cultivate policymaker support as a vehicle to obtain additional funding  Develop and maintain a reputation as an effective, science-based collaborative effort to protect human health</p>	<p>Send introduction letters to policymakers announcing the GWAC, the GWMA program and to invite participation in the effort.  Frequency: once; followed by periodic "red letter" updates, e-mails, etc.  Brief leadership and/or legislative staff using face-to-face meetings supplemented with support materials (fact sheets, links to website, etc.)  Frequency: once; followed by periodic updates</p>	<p>Number of mailings  Number of e-mails  Number of inquiries, or follow-up contacts initiated by policymaker or legislative staff  Structured interviews with key stakeholders to measure understanding of issues, degree of involvement with GWMA  Amount/quality of direct support (funding, legislative action) received</p>

<b>(B3) Internal Audiences- Tribal Leadership</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>OUTREACH TOOLS</b>	<b>EVALUATION MEASURES</b>
<p>Yakama Nation General Council  Yakima Nation Tribal Council</p>	<p>Keep tribal leadership apprised of the GWAC's efforts  Seek to develop a collaborative outreach program between the Lower Valley GWMA and the Yakama Nation's efforts.</p>	<p>Provide similar policymaker outreach tools (introduction letter/fact sheet, offer to make presentations to leaderships, etc.) to Nation's GWAC representative.  Frequency: as guided by Nation's GWAC representative.  Provide materials and presence of the Tribal Housing Summit, Treaties, and other community events.  Frequency: semiannually, or as invited to participate.  Offer to provide presentations and/or materials to schools. Frequency: as invited to participate.</p>	<p>Similar to policymaker outreach - focus on counting and documenting outreach efforts.  Number/type of invitations from tribal leadership to engage in collaborative outreach.</p>

<b>(B4) Target Audience- General Public</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>OUTREACH TOOLS</b>	<b>EVALUATION MEASURES</b>
<p>Residents served by private wells in the GWMA. Benton and Yakima County Residents (general public) Media Healthcare Providers School Districts Higher Education</p>	<p>Provide information to private well users on nitrate self-help and groundwater quality protection measures. Educate public audiences about groundwater, risks of elevated nitrate to human health and the GWAC and GWMA program. Invite participation in the development of the GWMA program. Develop and maintain a reputation as an effective, science-based, non-regulatory effort to protect human health</p>	<p>Involve area media in events and GWAC updates using news releases, fact sheets and invitations to events. Host community water testing and education events in various target neighborhoods most likely to have high nitrate in drinking water. Frequency: 2-4 times annually. Direct mailings. Bilingual door-to-door campaign in the GWMA. Create and maintain a "groundwater message hotline" for resource and referral purposes. Create posters, fliers and table tents for distribution throughout the community and at key community events.</p>	<p>Amount and character of media coverage Number of community events Number of participants at events Number of drinking water samples processed Number of resident requests for assistance or follow-up Number of households contacted Number of residents requesting additional information Structured interviews with key stakeholders to measure understanding of issues, protection measures taken, degree of awareness of GWAC and/or GWMA.</p>



<b>(B5) Target Audience- Underserved/English As Second Language</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>OUTREACH TOOLS</b>	<b>EVALUATION MEASURES</b>
<p>Residents served by private wells in the GWMA.</p> <p>Benton and Yakima County Residents (general public)</p> <p>Spanish-language Media</p> <p>Healthcare &amp; Social Service Providers</p> <p>School Districts</p> <p>Higher Education</p>	<p>Reach out to non-English speakers to educate and involve them in the GWAC planning efforts.</p> <p>Provide education on the health risks of nitrates and self-help measure's to non-English speakers through targeted media, large employers and healthcare and social service providers.</p> <p>Invite participation in the development of the GWMA program.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a reputation as an effective, science-based, non-regulatory effort to protect human health</p>	<p>Involve Spanish-area media in events and outreach using paid ads, PSAs, and radio talk shows.</p> <p>Coordinate with healthcare and social service providers, churches, U of W and Proyecto Bienestar to provide education and to evaluate communication measures.</p> <p>Offer targeted educational outreach and community water testing at Cinco de Mayo, Hispanic awareness month festivals etc. in neighborhoods most likely to have high nitrate in drinking water. Frequency: 2-4 times annually.</p> <p>Direct mailings.</p> <p>Bilingual door-to-door campaign in the GWMA.</p> <p>Create and maintain a "groundwater message hotline" for resource and referral purposes.</p> <p>Create posters, fliers and table tents for distribution at large employers in the GWMA and throughout the community.</p>	<p>Amount and character of media coverage</p> <p>Number of community events</p> <p>Number of participants at events</p> <p>Number of drinking water samples processed</p> <p>Number of resident requests for assistance or follow-up</p> <p>Number of households contacted</p> <p>Number of residents requesting additional information</p> <p>Structured interviews with key stakeholders to measure understanding of issues, protection measures taken, degree of awareness of GWAC and/or GWMA.</p>

<b>(B6) Target Audience-Special Interests</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>OUTREACH TOOLS</b>	<b>EVALUATION MEASURES</b>
<p>Agricultural Groups (Dairy Federation, Farm Bureau, Fertilizer Groups, Hop Growers, Mint Growers, Irrigated Ag Producers)</p> <p>Centers for Disease Control (CDC)</p> <p>Center for Environmental Law &amp; Policy</p> <p>Faith-based Groups</p> <p>Farm Workers Clinic</p> <p>Large Employers</p> <p>Environmental &amp; Social Justice Organizations</p> <p>Women's Groups</p> <p>Yakama Nation</p>	<p>Inform targeted special interest groups of the GWAC planning process and programs.</p> <p>Educate targeted special interest groups about relevant measures to protect groundwater from nitrate levels that exceed drinking water standards.</p> <p>Provide education to targeted special interest groups on the health risks of nitrates and self-help measures.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a reputation as an effective, science-based, non-regulatory effort to protect human health</p>	<p>Distribute outreach materials (posters, fliers) to special interest groups.</p> <p>Offer speaker presentations at regularly scheduled meetings.</p> <p>Develop and maintain social media sites, e- newsletters etc. targeting special interest audiences.</p> <p>Network with regional dairy women and other industry representatives.</p>	<p>Number of materials requested and/or distributed</p> <p>Number of presentations requested</p> <p>Number of participants at events</p> <p>Amount/character of audience feedback</p> <p>Number of e- social media contacts received</p> <p>Number of updates sent via e-mail list</p> <p>Number and character of comments, questions, and praise.</p> <p>Structured interviews with key stakeholders to measure understanding of issues, degree of awareness of the GWMA and its purpose</p>

		2013					2014																			
Education & Public Outreach (EPO) Key Milestones		Q1					Q2					Q3					Q4									
		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December													
<p>Q1 – Launch Public Outreach Portion of Website</p> <p>Q1 – Launch Public Outreach Program</p> <p>Q1 – Develop data, tracking, and reporting requirements</p> <p>Q1 – Analyze need and proposal for designated FTE</p> <p>Q2 – Launch initial public meetings</p>		<p>Q1 – Initial report of Outreach Program with findings and proposed improvements</p> <p>Q1 – Review proposed improvements from final report</p> <p>Q1 – Evaluate previous outreach programs</p> <p>Q2 – Launch public meetings</p> <p>Q4 – Final report of Outreach Program with findings and proposed improvements</p>																								
<p>Review website for content</p> <p>Request for presentations and FAQs</p> <p>Target and prepare for Q2 events</p> <p>Develop media contacts and marketing program for GWMA and Public Outreach</p> <p>Develop talking points and printed materials – simplified for easy translation.</p> <p>Develop data, tracking, and reporting requirements</p>		<p>Formally announce GWAC &amp; GWMA program (program introduction packet to policy makers and healthcare providers, media release)</p> <p>Identify Local Festivals within the GWMA; dates, deadlines, and booth options</p> <p>Target / solicit and prepare for Q3 presentations</p> <p>Review feedback – stakeholders, public, etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage public participation</p> <p>Analyze need and proposal for designated FTE</p>					<p>Review Q2 presentations, feedback, participation, comments, etc.</p> <p>Target / solicit and prepare for Q4 presentations</p> <p>Review feedback – stakeholders, public, etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage public participation</p> <p>Provide proposal for staff needs</p>					<p>Review Q3 presentations, feedback, participation, comments, etc.</p> <p>Target / solicit and prepare for Q1-(2014) presentations</p> <p>Review feedback – stakeholders, public, etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage public participation</p> <p>Provide an initial report of Outreach Program with findings and proposed improvements</p>														

		2013					2014																			
Education & Public Outreach (EPO) Key Milestones		Q1					Q2					Q3					Q4									
		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December													
<p>Review website for content</p> <p>Target and prepare for Q2 events</p> <p>Renew - Media contacts and marketing program for GWMA and Public Outreach</p> <p>Review data, tracking, and reporting requirements</p> <p>Review initial report of Outreach Program with findings and proposed improvements</p>		<p>Local Festivals within the GWMA; dates, deadlines, and booth options</p> <p>Target / solicit and prepare for Q3 presentations</p> <p>Review feedback – stakeholders, public, etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage public participation</p>					<p>Review Q2 presentations, feedback, participation, comments, etc.</p> <p>Target / solicit and prepare for Q4 presentations</p> <p>Review feedback – stakeholders, public, etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage public participation</p> <p>Prepare final report of Outreach Program - findings and improvements</p>					<p>Review Q3 presentations, feedback, participation, comments, etc.</p> <p>Review feedback – stakeholders, public, etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage public participation</p> <p>Complete final report of Outreach Program with findings and proposed improvements</p>														