

[Education and Public Outreach]

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Working Group Members

Andres Cervantes (GWAC-DOH), Jean Mendoza (GWAC-Friends of Toppenish Creek), Elizabeth Torres (Citizen), Gretchen Stewart (EPA), Patricia Newhouse (GWAC-Citizen Rep Position #2), Joye Redfield-Wilder (Ecology), Stuart Turner (GWAC-Turner & Co), Ignacio Marquez (AGR), Jessica Black (GWAC); Lisa Freund (Yakima County-Chair)

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 from 1:30 to 3:30 PM.

Participants

Lisa Freund (Chair-Yakima County), Patricia Newhouse (GWAC-Citizen Rep Position #2), Ignacio Marquez (AGR), Joye Redfield-Wilder (Ecology), Andres Cervantes (GWAC-DOH), Dave Cole (Yakima Health District) *Jessica Black (GWAC), *Gretchen Stewart (EPA). *Via phone

Key Discussion Points

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 PM. Lisa introduced Dave Cole from the Yakima Health District and reviewed the agenda. Lisa explained that Gretchen Stewart would attend the meeting by phone but was only available for a short while so the group would discuss the PEHSU Well Assessment Poster at that time. Lisa had several updates and also wanted to allow time for members to talk about the well testing/flooding in the Outlook area before proceeding with the agenda.

Updates: Lisa thanked Joye and Andy for the work they had done to draft and complete the four “What Can You Do” brochures which were previously approved. They are now on the GWMA website in English and Spanish and the brochure entitled “What you can do to protect well water” was distributed last Friday in Outlook.

Outlook/Flooding Response: Dave advised that many agencies were involved in responding to the flooding in Outlook. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) was reaching out to farms and the Department of Health was reaching out to community water systems, but because private wells are exempt there was no applicable government agency. Dave said that the Office of Emergency Management was going door-to-door to homeowners and the Yakima Health District (YHD) and Department of Ecology (Ecology) have had a presence. Some attorneys are getting involved in the situation now as well. The community water system

appeared to affect approximately 56 homes and there were about 50-60 private wells involved. The GWMA (through Yakima County) had provided YHD with the remainder of its nitrate testing strips on Friday. The EPO “What You Can do to Protect Well Water” flyer was passed out as well as the EPA studies. Two wells tested positive for nitrates but did not exceed acceptable amounts and also were not as high as the Dobbs property (outside Outlook) which tested at 10.0. It was noted that 10.0 is not considered to be above the state standard for nitrate.

Ignacio added that he had fielded calls from the Governor and Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA). State Senator Honeyford and U.S. Senator Patty Murray had reached out as well. Ignacio indicated that CHA was interested in the GWMA outreach and was not convinced that this had been done well previously. Ignacio responded citing the GWMA’s many outreach activities: 466 completed high risk well assessment surveys; mailings, live radio shows, flyers, PSA’s, agency presentations, presence at five community health fairs, “test your well” billboards currently up in Sunnyside (there are no billboards in Outlook) and the PEHSU Partnership – new mom flyers and clinician training. However, many people were still saying “why don’t we know.” Ignacio felt that this would be an opportune time to move forward with some specific outreach, education and testing – others agreed. Lisa reminded the group that \$90,000 had been budgeted to the EPO by the GWAC for promoting the work of the GWAC pre-plan and post-plan adoption.

The group discussed the value of offering free well testing. Lisa reminded everyone that the County had contracted with YHD previously; 466 wells in two rounds had been tested and surveys completed at a cost of \$100,000. Dave indicated that YHD was moving forward cautiously (not stepping out of their scope and/or jurisdiction) due to the potential of litigation in Outlook by providing educational instruction on health and safety. In the meantime the WSDA and Ecology are doing their own investigations. The group discussed how the GWMA could tie into what is going on to further educate the public and also noted that any outreach must involve the entire GWMA area not just Outlook.

After a lengthy discussion the group decided: 1) Ignacio and Andy will go on Radio KDNA with the GWMA message and open up the telephone call-in lines to answer any questions people might have; 2) the “What You Can do to Protect Well Water” flyer in English and Spanish will be added as an insert in the Daily Sun News and El Sol; 3) distribute the flyer at Sunnyside Fiesta Foods, Walmart and perhaps the library – the group will work with Jessica Black for a volunteer base to help with this project. Pat Newhouse will check in with these locations to gain their approval. The group agreed to look at March 25, 26, April 1 or 2 as possible outreach dates at Fiesta Foods and Walmart. Jessica asked that the group provide specific dates to her as soon as possible. Dave suggested that it would be good to have representatives of the GWMA present in addition to the volunteers. Ignacio felt he could volunteer at one date and the group agreed to ask Jessica Black if she could be present at one as well. Ignacio will contact KDNA to get radio dates. Lisa will contact KIT and see if perhaps Vern or a County Commissioner could be interviewed. Ignacio will also check to see if the Spanish television station in the area and KIMA could do local interviews.

The group continued their discussions on additional well testing. Both Andy and Ignacio said that while the test strips had been useful there was a lot of variability; testing had to be done

precisely in accordance with the directions. Some members felt it was important to offer additional well testing as this would tie in with the radio presence. Lisa felt Vern could make the decision about spending additional funds on well testing. Lisa said the County would need to negotiate a contract with YHD to perform the tests and complete the surveys as was done in the past. Dave noted this would be difficult to do immediately as YHD was entering its busy season. Members believed that the radio time would be enhanced if free testing was made available. They also thought it was important to do it sooner rather than later as residents of the GWMA were focused on the health of their wells as a result of the flooding. The group agreed to have Lisa ask Vern to spend \$20,000 of the EPO budget for further well testing and \$5,000 for the flyer distribution and radio time referred to previously.

Dave suggested the group investigate YV Tech media and put together a demonstration video that could be posted on You Tube or various websites. Dave believed they had a grant for community outreach so the work may be free; they provide the equipment. The group thought the Groundwater Primer done prior to one of the GWAC meetings might be good option to pursue for this. Dave will check into this.

PEHSU Flyer: Gretchen explained the history and purpose of the flyer. Her inquiry of the committee was: 1) could the flyer be translated into Spanish; 2) would EPO provide a \$200 budget to print (although she may be able to procure this funding from the EPA); and, 3) can the flyer be put on the GWMA website? The group agreed to all of the requests and felt the flyer was timely. Lisa will provide the GWMA logo and website information to Gretchen; Gretchen's graphic artist will incorporate it. Dave suggested that she also include YHD contact information so that people could connect with them as well. Dave will email the information to Gretchen directly. Lisa will provide the Spanish translation of the flyer within the next week.

2017 Outreach - Working Groups: Lisa asked the group to refer to the Working Group Questionnaire Summary and explained that she had not received a response from the Data Collection Working Group but hoped it would be forthcoming. She thought the group might want to wait to discuss this agenda item at the next meeting and also pointed out that it might be important to wait and see what the Nitrogen Loading Assessment would say as well (it is due to the groups by the end of March with a Joint Working Group meeting currently scheduled for April 13). In the interim Lisa wanted the group to read the summary and: 1) identify immediate actions that the EPO could move forward with to inform the public about the GWAC and what it is doing; 2) identify long range/post adoption messages; 3) evaluate the groups' responses for overlap or similar ideas; and, 4) suggest venues for immediate outreach and distribution. The group also made a few suggestions about the format of the summary which would make it easier to review at the next meeting. Joye will send out an email to everyone not present letting them know what the group decided. Joye added that she has been publishing information directly to ancillary group's Facebook pages or other social media/website venues. This allows her to get information out directly to advocacy groups rather than expect that they will come to her for information. She thought this might be something the group could consider and will bring a list of the groups she works with next time. The group agreed that in the meantime meeting participants could work independently on the present outreach plan.

Next Meeting and Next Steps: The next EPO meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 1:30 PM, Yakima County Courthouse Room 419. The following items were suggested for the groups' agenda:

- Identify immediate, long-range and post-adoption outreach messages.
- Discuss where the "what you can do" flyers can be distributed and who the EPO might partner with. Dave suggested they could be made available at YHD. Pat is going to talk to the Sunnyside Community Hospital Foundation to find out if flyers could be posted there. She will also ask them for their ideas on the best way to get this information out to the community.
- Discuss other social media/website venues for distribution of these materials as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Resources Requested

Recommendations for GWAC

Deliverables/Products Status

The "What You Can Do" flyer series has been translated and posted to the website.

Proposed Next Steps (Summary of ACTION STEPS)

Ignacio: Contact KDNA about radio time; go on the radio with the GWMA message and answer questions. Distribute flyers on one occasion at either Walmart or Fiesta Foods in Sunnyside. Check to see if the Spanish television station in the area could do local interviews and also KIMA.

Andy: Join Ignacio on Radio KDNA.

Pat: Check with Walmart, Fiesta Foods and the library about distributing flyers either March 25, 26, April 1 or 2. Talk to the Sunnyside Community Hospital Foundation to find out if flyers could be distributed at their facility. Ask them for their ideas on the best way to get this information out to the community.

Joye: Send out an email to everyone not present at the meeting letting them know what the group decided. Bring a list of the groups you are working with via social media and website venues.

Lisa: Put the “What You Can do to Protect Well Water” flyer in English and Spanish as an insert in the Daily Sun and El Sol. Communicate outreach dates to Jessica Black. Talk to Vern/Commissioners about radio time on KIT to share the GWMA message. Contact KIT to see if they would be willing to interview them. Ask Vern to authorize \$20,000 of the EPO budget for additional well testing and \$5,000 for the flyer distribution and radio time. Get the PEHSU flyer translated into Spanish and return to Gretchen for graphic artist. Put the PEHSU flyer in English and Spanish on the GWMA website when completed.

Jessica: Recruit student volunteers to hand out flyers at Walmart and Fiesta Foods. Volunteer on one occasion at either location.

Gretchen: Finalize the PEHSU flyer with GWMA logo and website and YHD contact information.

Dave: Email Gretchen YHD contact information including helpline for PEHSU flyer. Check in with YV Tech about producing informational videos for the GWMA.

Group: Read the Working Group Questionnaire Summary and: 1) identify immediate actions that EPO could move forward with to inform the public about the GWAC and what it is doing; 2) identify long range/post adoption messages; 3) evaluate the groups’ responses for overlap or similar ideas; and, 4) suggest venues for immediate outreach and distribution.