

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, May 17, 2018 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Denny Blaine Boardroom
Sunnyside School District No. 201
810 E. Custer Ave
Sunnyside, WA 98944

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 PM by Jim Davenport, Facilitator.

Member	Seat	Present	Absent
Stuart Turner	Agronomist, Turner and Co.,		✓
Chelsea Durfey	Turner and Co. (alternate)		✓
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	✓	
Rodney Heit	South Yakima Conservation District (alternate)		✓
John Van Wingerden III	Port of Sunnyside	✓	
Rand Elliott	Yakima County Board of Commissioners	✓	
Vern Redifer	Yakima County Board of Commissioners (alternate)		✓
Myers, Holly	Yakima Health District		✓
Ryan Ibach	Yakima Health District (alternate)		✓
Dr. Troy Peters	WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center		✓
Lucy Edmondson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency		✓
Nick Peak	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (alternate)		✓
Elizabeth Sanchey	Yakama Nation		✓
Stuart Crane	Yakama Nation (alternate)		✓
Gary Bahr	WA Department of Agriculture	✓	
Perry Beale	WA Department of Agriculture (alternate)		✓
Andy Cervantes	WA Department of Health	✓	
Sheryl Howe	WA Department of Health (alternate)		✓
David Bowen	WA Department of Ecology	✓	
Sage Park	WA Department of Ecology (alternate)		✓
Lino Guerra	Hispanic Community Representative	✓	
Rick Perez	Hispanic Community Representative (alternate)		✓
Jessica Black	Heritage University	✓	
Alex Alexiades	Heritage University (alternate)		✓
Matt Bachmann	USGS		✓

15 **II. Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions:** Everyone introduced themselves. Jim
 16 reviewed the agenda – there were no additions. The group paused for a moment of silence.

17
 18 **III. Active GWAC Members:** At the May 3 meeting, after coming up short of a quorum,
 19 members had desired to discuss who was still an active member of the GWAC. David Bowen
 20 had reviewed the attendance list in accordance with the GWAC’s operating guidelines,
 21 which stated that if a member is not present for three consecutive meetings, the GWAC
 22 membership can ask that member to be replaced with another representative for their
 23 group, or removed from group membership altogether. As of the May 17 meeting, Dr. Troy
 24 Peters was in this position.

25

26 Jim asked the group how they wished to proceed. Group members stated that they
 27 appreciated Dr. Peters’ expertise and wanted him to remain a member of the group, but
 28 expressed concern that his absence was contributing to the GWAC being unable to take
 29 action on matters before it. A member proposed that Dr. Peters be kept on as a non-voting
 30 member. There was no objection from the group.

31

32 **IV. Action on Recommendations for Lead Agency:** Jim reintroduced the subject of who should
 33 assume the role of lead entity once the GWMA’s mandate had expired. In response to a
 34 member’s question at the last meeting regarding what WAC 173-100-100 said on the
 35 matter, David Bowen replied that the WAC does not specifically mandate a lead agency, but
 36 Section 6 does contain language that the GWMA’s work plan shall contain an
 37 implementation section containing a detailed work plan, a monitoring system, and a
 38 process for periodic review of the work plan, which strongly implies the presence of a lead
 39 entity in order to carry out that work.

40

41 A member asked if the new lead entity would be governed by the same rules of procedure
 42 in the WAC, or whether the group would operate according to its own rules. Jim’s
 43 interpretation was the latter. There were various scenarios for how a lead entity could
 44 operate, depending on who that entity was. If it was Yakima County, rules of procedure
 45 would likely be included in the resolution setting up such an entity. If a state agency were to
 46 become the lead entity, it would operate according to that agency’s guidelines.
 47 Commissioner Elliott had engaged in preliminary conversations with his fellow
 48 commissioners about taking on the role of lead entity, and discovered a willingness to do
 49 so, provided they understood what those responsibilities would entail. After some
 50 discussion, a motion was made to recommend Yakima County as the lead entity to
 51 implement the GWMA program. A vote was taken as follows:

52

53

Ayes (14)

54

Gary Bahr – WA Department of Agriculture

55

Dr. Jessica Black – Heritage University

56

David Bowen – WA Department of Ecology

57

Andy Cervantes – WA Department of Health

58

Ron Cowin – Roza-SVID Joint Board of Control

59

Laurie Crowe – South Yakima Conservation District

60

Jim Dyjak – Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation

61

Rand Elliott – Yakima County Commissioners

62 Lino Guerra – Latino Community Rep
63 Patricia Newhouse – Lower Valley Community Rep
64 Bud Rogers – Lower Valley Community Rep
65 Jason Sheehan – Yakima County Dairy Federation
66 Doug Simpson – Irrigated Ag Producer
67 John Van Wingerden – Port of Sunnyside
68

69 **Nays (1)**

70 Jean Mendoza – Friends of Toppenish Creek
71

72 **Present (1)**

73 Frank Lyall – Yakima County Farm Bureau
74

75 A member asked how long it would take for the Board of County Commissioners to get an
76 answer back to the GWAC as to whether it accepted the group's recommendation.
77 Commissioner Elliott replied that it would take a week.
78

79 **V. Results on Polling on Draft Recommendations:** At the May 3 meeting, Jim had asked
80 members to rank the list of recommendations. Members' votes had been tabulated into a
81 spreadsheet, with most items scoring positive, and a few garnering negative scores.
82 Nineteen members had responded total. In two cases, both the main representative of a
83 group and their alternate had cast votes. Only the votes of the main representative were
84 counted, leading to 17 votes total. The handouts provided at the meeting listed only the
85 grand totals. Some members expressed a desire to see the individual votes, and it was
86 eventually decided to supply the list. (See attached appendix.) The group also decided that
87 votes cast at the meeting would be recorded in the meeting summary.
88

89 Discussion ensued as to the reasons individual members had for casting votes. In some
90 cases, members had voted negative because they disagreed with the way the
91 recommendation was written, or because the recommended activities were already being
92 done. One example was the recommendation to distribute educational materials about
93 cleaning septic systems, which are already posted online by the Yakima Health District and
94 the Washington Department of Health. Other members believed that a more aggressive
95 outreach campaign was in fact necessary, since many families on septic systems in rural
96 areas don't have internet access, or the knowledge of where to look for this information.
97

98 There was further discussion on which positive-scored items the group should recommend.
 99 Some members felt that everything with a positive score should be recommended, and
 100 prioritized according to their scores. Other members felt that low-scoring positive items did
 101 not enjoy consensus, and should be dropped from the list, with only high-scoring positive
 102 items recommended. A motion was eventually made to recommend all positive-scored
 103 items, prioritized according to their scores. The vote was as follows:

104
 105 **Ayes (12)**

- 106 Gary Bahr – WA Department of Agriculture
- 107 Dr. Jessica Black – Heritage University
- 108 Andy Cervantes – WA Department of Health
- 109 Ron Cowin – Roza-SVID Joint Board of Control
- 110 Laurie Crowe – South Yakima Conservation District
- 111 Rand Elliott – Yakima County Commissioners
- 112 Lino Guerra – Latino Community Rep
- 113 Patricia Newhouse – Lower Valley Community Rep
- 114 Bud Rogers – Lower Valley Community Rep
- 115 Jason Sheehan – Yakima County Dairy Federation
- 116 Doug Simpson – Irrigated Ag Producer
- 117 John Van Wingerden – Port of Sunnyside

118
 119 **Nays (3)**

- 120 Jim Dyjak – Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation
- 121 Frank Lyall – Yakima County Farm Bureau
- 122 Jean Mendoza – Friends of Toppenish Creek

123
 124 **Present (1)**

- 125 David Bowen – WA Department of Ecology

126
 127 **VI. Reasonable Annual Groundwater Recharge Estimates:** At the May 3 meeting, Jim had
 128 distributed a map of the GWMA showing the mean annual recharge of water based on
 129 numbers contained in a 2007 USGS report. Some members felt the map exaggerated the
 130 amount of water going into the ground. The Joint Board of Control figures showed that the
 131 average farmer was using 3.5 acre-feet of water per-year. In correspondence between Jim
 132 and Matt Bachmann, Matt had agreed that there were a number of variables that could
 133 impact the recharge numbers – for example, changing crop types, irrigation practices and

134 climate conditions – and felt that an updated study might be a worthwhile project,
135 assuming the GWMA was willing to spend the time or funds on it. A couple of members
136 expressed a desire to follow up on an updated report. Other members were reluctant to
137 make a recommendation on the spot.

138

139 **Committee Business:** The May 3, 2018 meeting summary was approved as presented.

140

141 **VII. Public Comment:** There was no public comment, although a group member distributed an
142 analysis he had performed comparing the storage capacity of septic systems vs. lagoons and
143 settling ponds by gallons of liquid fecal matter. He felt that the septic and point-source
144 maps distributed at the May 3 meeting should attempt to display the difference in volume.

145

146 **VIII. Next Meeting:** June 21, 2018.

147

148 **IX. Next Steps:** 1) Rand Elliott will present his fellow commissioners with the GWAC's
149 recommendation that Yakima County should assume the role of lead entity, with the
150 responsibility of implementing the GWMA's work plan. 2) Jim Davenport will continue to
151 work on the GWMA program, with discussion planned for June 21.

152

153 **X. Meeting Summary** approved by the GWAC on _____.