

**Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)  
December 1, 2005 Committee Meeting – Harrisburg City Hall**

**Present:** Tim Bunnell\*, Roger Haffner\*, Sue Lurie\*, Rich Margerum\*, Jerry Marguth\*, George Pugh\*, Pat Straube\*, Judy Volta\*, Cliff Wooten\*, Lanny Zoeller\*, Gail Andrews, Jeremy Craner, Audrey Eldridge, Jacqueline Fern, Peter Jensen, Denise Kalakay, Mike Mattick, Glenn Mutti, Mike Powers, Irene Rolston, Scott Shine, Kathi Wiederhold, Michaela Lindahl, Paul Measeles, Dennis Nelson

**Absent:** Faye Stewart\*, Dennis Boeger\*, Mike Warner\*, Karen Strohmeyer\*, Annabelle Jaramillo\*, Linda Modrell\*

Chair Tim Bunnell began the meeting with a call for agenda additions and public comment. No additions or comments were made.

Kathi Wiederhold gave a brief introduction describing the three Oregon State University (OSU) graduate student presentations and noted that there would be an opportunity for committee comments afterwards. Student presentations and background documents are accessible on the GWMA web-site.

Irene Rolston, graduate student in cultural anthropology, described her research of farmers' perceptions of best management practices (BMPs), economic impacts, and risk associated with nitrate in their drinking water. This information was collected by means of informal interviews with eight farmers in the GWMA. Irene recommended that the GWMA Committee focus on increasing farmers' awareness of the risks associated with high nitrate levels. Committee members then offered comments, impressions, and suggestions following a request that future agendas allot time when roundtable comments are planned. Several committee members mentioned the importance of clearly defining what is meant by BMPs. Mr. Haffner noted that farmers do not perceive a risk associated with fertilizer use since they are around it frequently and are comfortable handling it. This may impact how they perceive risks associated with nitrate in the drinking water. Mr. Margerum suggested that the Committee explore alternative ways of reaching people in the GWMA. He thought it would be effective to look beyond traditional outlets, such as OSU Extension, and reach people through families and community organizations. Mrs. Straube expressed her concern about regulatory approaches which might be perceived as 'big government'. She said that mistrust is real and the Committee would not be as effective if they took a regulatory approach. Mr. Pugh thought it was important to make the threat more obvious to those living in the GWMA and relay practical information to the farmers on how they can resolve the problem.

Mike Powers of ODA provided a brief overview of the Draft Agricultural Action Plan. The working group has identified thirty-eight actions, thus far, and is still in the process of reviewing and refining these. Mr. Powers said that he welcomes comments on the draft plan. His contact information is on the website. Audrey Eldridge noted that she would like to have the GWMA Action Plan finalized by May 2006. Gail Andrews asked about funding sources and Rich Margerum noted that listing multiple agencies as responsible parties in action plans could be problematic. Mike informed the group that some funding sources had already been identified and that the working group is interested in pursuing research money. Agricultural action plan outreach efforts will target the Soil and Water Conservation Districts since these groups currently have primary responsibility for SB1010 Area Plans.

Jeremy Craner, OSU graduate student in geology, discussed his groundwater flow model that can be used to better understand flow direction, time of movement, groundwater/surface water interactions, and nitrate origins within the GWMA. Mr. Margerum asked how much flow rates varied in different hydrogeologic units and asked if it was appropriate to split the GWMA into subsections. Jeremy answered that flow rates near the river are nearly four times faster due to more porous hydrogeologic units and there are generally high nitrate levels in this unit. Mr. Nelson clarified that the age of samples is the average, which means that there could be a very young portion of the sample and a very old portion of the sample reflected as medium age after averaging.

This presentation was followed by Glenn Mutti, graduate student in geology, who described his research of temporal variability in groundwater nitrate levels in the GWMA. His conclusions included recommendations on the times of year to sample. The best-case scenario (lowest nitrate, most consistent) would be during the summer months. The worst-case scenario (highest nitrate, highest variability) would be during the winter months when precipitation rates are high. Rich asked if the DEQ had provided any guidance on what data to use. He asked if outliers were included or if it was best to use median levels.

Audrey handed out a short document outlining facts about the GWMA and potential outreach methods. She asked for feedback from the Committee and told them she would be sending out a survey soon. Gail mentioned that the Residential working group met and is working on their report. The minutes are available on the website.

Audrey announced a water sampling workshop in early February.

The next GWMA committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, from 8 - 10 am in Harrisburg City Hall.