

**Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)  
March 31, 2005 Committee Meeting – Harrisburg City Hall**

**Present:** Rich Margerum\*, Sarah Branson, Jerry Marguth\*, Tom Pattee, Mike Powers, Cliff Wooten\*, Gordon Kurtz, Dan Mumford, Annabelle Jaramillo\*, Tim Bunnell\*, Gary Whitney, Kathi Wiederhold, Audrey Eldridge, Judy Volta\*, Denise Kalakay, George Pugh\*, Pat Straube\*, Roger Haffner\*, Gail Andrews, John McEvoy, Frank Wright\*, Karen Strohmeier\*, Jacqueline Fern, Irene Rolston

**Absent:** Lanny Zoeller\*, Faye Stewart\*, Dennis Boeger\*, Travis Williams\*, Linda Modrell\*, Mike Warner\*

Chair Tim Bunnell began the meeting with brief announcements, committee and audience introductions, and a call for public comments. There were no public comments.

Tom Pattee of Oregon Department of Human Services, Denise Kalakay of Lane Council of Governments and Committee Chair Tim Bunnell of the City of Harrisburg provided a summary of work accomplished by the Public Water System Subcommittee. Tom Pattee described the subcommittee's goal to create a drinking water protection template that could be used to develop State certified drinking water protection plans. He discussed the importance of using nitrate as an indicator of other potential contaminants in drinking water, provided an overview of public drinking water suppliers in the GWMA, and discussed ongoing efforts by DHS and DEQ to conduct Source Water Assessments.

Denise Kalakay presented recent data on the top six sources of potential contaminants in GWMA public water supplies. These sources include non-irrigated cropland, wells, transportation, irrigated cropland, large capacity septic, and high-density housing. The top three high-risk contaminant sources were wells, large capacity septic, and car washes, gas stations, and repair shops.. Denise reported that there was good representation at the recent (2/3/05) public water system workshop attended by both public officials and public water system operators. The goal of the workshop was to determine priorities and develop a core strategy list that will be distributed to water systems in the GWMA. Subsequent meetings will continue this work. Initial discussions and prioritization scores were based on Scott Shine's research, which identified 11 main categories/themes related to public water systems, along with possible key strategies within each category. Denise reported that there would likely only be two or three more meetings of the public water system group due to time commitments.

Tim Bunnell described the public water system workshop as very productive. He said a common concern was how best to reach citizens in the GWMA with limited funds. Tim reviewed the results of the workshop prioritization of drinking water protection themes and strategies. The highest priority themes included: outreach and education, technical assistance and training, spill response procedures, recognition programs, and regulation and enforcement.

Kathi Wiederhold reviewed the agreed upon GWMA committee process of sub-committees meeting separately and then reporting to the larger committee on their ongoing activities and efforts. She asked for a show of hands indicating whether committee members felt the public water systems sub-committee was on track. She then opened the floor for questions and comments regarding the sub-committee report.

Linn County Commissioner Cliff Wooten asked why regulation and enforcement was not higher on the scoring of priority themes. Several others commented that regulation and enforcement, in some cases, may already be handled by existing policies and practices. Karen Strohmeier commented that larger areas are under Total Maximum Daily Load regulations, which may create some inherent inequity. Tim Bunnell reported that this issue would be discussed in detail at the next sub-committee meeting. George Pugh and Jerry Marguth raised the point that there may be considerable overlap between issues and concerns addressed by the agricultural sub-committee and public water system sub-committee. Jerry Marguth expressed some concern that there needs to be a clearer definition of irrigated and non-irrigated land. George Pugh suggested that the Agriculture Subcommittee may help resolve some of the PWS concerns with the agricultural "risk". Rich Margerum commented that only dealing with the top five strategy categories identified by the workshop prioritization exercise could cause useful strategies to be ignored. Denise Kalakay seconded Rich's comment. Roger Haffner suggested that certain strategies, such as the regulation of hazardous materials transport, may duplicate already existing state regulation. Tom Pattee suggested that it may still be effective to review these strategies so people involved know how an issue is being handled. Roger expressed concern that the wording presented did not say "review". Denise noted that this wording would be changed.

Mayor Volta commented that it would be important to find out what outreach and education tools and materials are already available. She also noted a need for balanced information. Pat Straube added that the coordination of information was important. For example, following a recent train derailment in the area, she noticed that many groups had action plans to handle the event, but the groups were unaware of each others' plans.

Kathi Wiederhold asked for general consensus from the GWMA committee regarding the direction of the public water system sub-committee's work. The GWMA Committee approved of the progress and course of the public water supply subcommittee work.

Following the public water system sub-committee report, Gary Whitney from Oregon Economic and Community Development gave a presentation on public water systems financing. Gary discussed the definition of "eligible entity" and described two key programs, the Special Public Works Fund and the Safe Drinking Water Financing Program, which may be available to those eligible. A grant of up to \$20,000 for technical assistance (including preliminary engineering and construction phase activities) is offered with each fund, however, the funds do not cover administrative costs. While all eligible entities listed are public, Gary informed the committee that the Safe Drinking Water fund could provide improvements for some private entities via public agency involvement.

Audrey Eldridge of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality noted that in Coos County, private septic system improvements were funded through the State revolving funds. Coos County obtained the money and then provided loans to private citizens. Gary Wright commented that this type of project would be possible in the GWMA, as long as the project itself is municipally owned. He also informed the committee that technical assistance grant money could be used for cost assessment studies and required no matching of funds.

Following a break, Michael Powers of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and George Pugh a local agricultural producer provided a report from the agricultural sub-committee.

George Pugh presented key contributions of agricultural sub-committee members. He also discussed the role of agricultural water quality plans required by Senate Bill 1010 in providing best management practices. A number of the agricultural water quality plans fall within the GWMA boundary. George noted that measuring and monitoring will likely be the most difficult aspect of the committee's work.

Mike Powers presented the subcommittee's proposed process of collecting agricultural-related information (already completed), drafting an agricultural plan, obtaining comments on the plan, and finalizing the plan with the committee and DEQ. He provided details of the proposed agricultural plan outline (based on the GWMA Committee-approved template) including a description of Southern Willamette Valley agriculture and recent changes in agricultural practices; potential best management practices; goals, strategies, and actions for achieving improvements; challenges to achieving goals; and regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to implementing the plan. Mike informed the committee that the infrastructure is in place to address key agricultural issues because there are already 3 local Advisory Committees whose Agricultural Water Quality Management Areas overlap with the GWMA. (Note: these local advisory committees were formed in the GWMA for the 1010 rule implementation.)

Annabelle Jaramillo expressed concern over small operations, including confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Mike Powers responded that when there is the potential for manure to enter the waters of the state, then the activity falls into ODA's jurisdiction. Denise Kalakay noted that small acreages may not be permitted by they are regulated. . George Pugh added that some of these concerns are covered in SB 1010. Mike noted that SB 1010 includes regulations for surface water quality (for example, temperature and bacteria) but not for groundwater.

Rich Margerum confirmed that Long Tom Watershed Council comments on the agricultural plan should go to Mike Powers who will then forward comments to the subcommittee.

Kathi Wiederhold obtained consensus from the GWMA committee in support of agricultural subcommittee work.

Following the agricultural subcommittee presentation, Gail Andrews of Oregon State University Extension Service informed the committee of Linn County's affordable housing

grant to repair wells and septic systems of low-income homes within the GWMA. The total grant is \$400K, a portion of which is dedicated to improvements within the GWMA. Sarah Branson, project manager, noted that sums per household range from \$23K to \$25K. Gail informed the committee of the LaPine demonstration site featuring new technologies in septic systems. She asked whether there was any interest by the committee in visiting the site. Interested members may be able to join ongoing tours occurring in mid-April and early May.

Gail then briefly discussed the nature of a collaborative USDA Section 406 grant proposal submitted in mid-March. The proposal is for a joint effort involving OSU, OSU Extension, University of Oregon, LCOG, and DEQ in research, education, and outreach to address GWMA water quality issues. USDA will determine grant recipients sometime in July 2005. Gail also summarized an OSU student (Irene Rolston's) project to interview farmers within the GWMA and determine the best management practices they are using, what motivated them to use these practices, and barriers and challenges they face. More information on this project will be provided during the spring committee meeting.

Gail asked committee members to contact her with suggestions for outreach events within the GWMA. Committee members noted the possibility of 4th of July events and fairs.

The next GWMA Committee meeting will take place at Harrisburg City Hall on 4/26/05 at 8:00 am.

Audrey Eldridge informed the group that the next Commercial and Industrial Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for 4 pm on 4/18/05 at Marathon in Coburg, OR.