

Memorandum

May 19, 2005

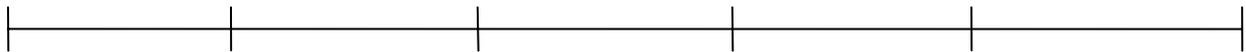
To: Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) Committee

From: Denise Kalakay, Senior Planner, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG)

Subject: Agenda Item 8: Action Plan Considerations

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), LCOG, and OSU Extension Service Well Water Program staff met on April 25th to discuss and clarify plan format and content of both the Action Plan and individual working group reports (see attached meeting notes). Out of that discussion, several issues and follow-up conversations emerged that we as staff decided it would be beneficial to get input and direction from the GWMA Committee prior to making any final decisions. Following is a brief description of the four considerations and a continuum to help visually represent the range that each consideration can take:

- 1) **Overarching goals** – The question or consideration for the Committee is: Does the GWMA Committee want to establish overarching goals or vision that provides overall guidance or leave decisions up to staff and each working group?



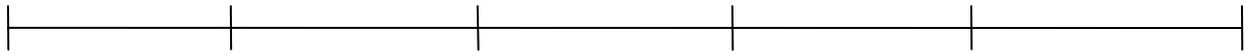
- Working group flexibility
- Not standardized
- React to what the working groups send

- GWMA Committee comes up with core, overarching goals/vision
- Working groups have some flexibility, but are given a general scope of information requested

- GWMA Committee provides strict guidance
- Working group recommendations must address overarching goals

2) **Level of detail/format** - Staff have had considerable discussion regarding both the format and level of detail that will be provided in the Action Plan. The core considerations for the GWMA Committee are:

- What is needed as an “end product” by the public and/or future users of the Action Plan?
- What does the GWMA Committee need in terms of written documentation to justify decisions/recommendations to the public, public officials, and the DEQ?



- Very in-depth
- Lots of background information (history, demographics)
- Very specific process and meeting documentation

- Keep plan concise, but make supporting documentation available to those interested
- Relevant background information incorporated as working groups see necessary to support recommendations

- Very concise
- Strictly explains the decisions made
- Broad reasons for decisions made, but very little supporting documentation

3) **“Voluntary” actions** – Questions and discussions have arisen several times lately in both staff and working group meetings about “what does voluntary mean?” Staff would like some input on this issue. Are voluntary actions strictly those that are solely up to the public or a jurisdiction to practice (or not)? Or can voluntary actions include recommending strategies that, for example, advise a more stringent “standard” be applied within the GWMA? This clarification on what the Committee desires may be important in how the working groups look at permitted facilities within the GWMA for example. Another example might include a desire for one or more of the local jurisdictions (counties and cities) to require a drinking water standard for nitrate for new development or the requirement of alternative treatment technology septic systems within the GWMA. Are these types of actions still voluntary since the local area has chosen that action?

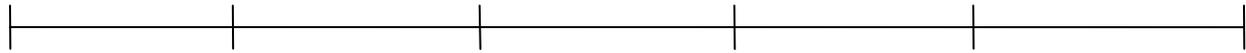


- Local areas are strongly encouraged to adopt new measures
- Strategy recommendations are focused on impacting policies
- Focus on permitted activities

- Focus on recommendations that have no obligations
- Include some policy-related recommendations as options for local areas and agencies
- Include some recommendations related to permitted activities

- No obligation for people, municipalities, or agencies to take any action
- Only what people choose to do
- No recommendations to agencies
- Does not include any recommendations related to already permitted activities

- 4) **Measuring effectiveness** – The Committee has agreed to use the strategy template which calls for each strategy to have an effectiveness measurement associated with it. The question remains as to what level of qualitative and/or quantitative measurement is applied to a specific strategy or goal. For example if the goal is to increase awareness about nitrate in groundwater and change behavior among residents within the GWMA, and the strategy is to create and mail pamphlets to homeowners, what is the appropriate level of measuring effectiveness:
- a. Measure the number of pamphlets mailed
 - b. Conduct a survey prior to mailing and after mailing to determine before and after levels of awareness and behavior changes. This assumes that awareness levels and behavior changes result in some reduction of nitrate levels
 - c. Conduct a scientific analysis, with scientific research backing, of how specific behavior changes would result in specific nitrate reduction, and use a logic model to deduct that if a given number of people change their behavior that the result will be that nitrate levels are reduced a specific amount.
 - d. Establish monitoring sites that are designed to measure nitrate reductions due to specific behavior changes.



- Measure if tasks are accomplished
- Qualitative data
- Not very detailed
- Short-term

- Different levels of indicators included
- Some broad, long-term, science-based
- Some qualitative, task completion measurements

- Very science-based and quantitative
- High levels of detail

We don't expect to get everything resolved regarding these considerations at this month's meeting. Rather, you will be asked how you want to go about resolving each of the four considerations including:

1. Give to staff to come back to the Committee with a recommendation
2. Form a sub-committee to develop a recommendation and come back to the Committee
3. Discuss and decide the issue as a full Committee agenda item
4. Other?

ATTACHMENT – AGENDA ITEM 8

APRIL 25TH MEETING ON THE GWMA ACTION PLAN FORMAT

Goal:

Clarify plan format and content of both the Action Plan and individual working group reports.

Content and General Consensus:

There was a review of the GWMA-related events during the past few months, including Homework Plus at Coburg Elementary School and the last Committee meeting.

Denise started the meeting by explaining that Michael Powers, Agriculture Working Group lead staff person, asked for some clarity on what the main committee was looking for from the individual working groups. The main reason for calling the meeting was to establish some consensus on the format and content of the GWMA Action Plan and the information desired from the working groups. It will be better to establish some consistency from the beginning of the process rather than waiting until working group reports are underway.

After reviewing a number of reports similar to the soon-to-be drafted GWMA Action Plan, the following recommendations were made:

- The simplicity of the EWEB plan was enticing. The use of near term, medium term and perhaps far-term action items seems to be appropriate for the GWMA.
- The Junction City checklist was also thought to be a useful tool.
- The style of the LUB GWMA report does not seem to suit the SWV GWMA needs.
- There needs to be a consistent approach to defining Goals, Strategies and Actions/Activities. Although there seems to be general agreement on the structure of strategy recommendations (Goal→Strategy→Action/Activity), clarification is necessary. This could be a discussion item at a GWMA Committee meeting.
- The current template for individual activities needs to add a “Who’s Responsible”. Currently, our template includes Land Use Group; Goals; Strategy; Specific Activities; Timeline; and Steps to Evaluate Effectiveness/Fulfillment.

While it is important to keep the plan concise and straightforward, it is important to have supporting documentation. The purpose of the supporting documentation is to educate the GWMA Committee on why decisions were made and help the committee evaluate the feasibility of the recommendations. It will also serve to show the readers of the Action Plan that the working groups understood the influential factors within each population of interest. This documentation will vary from group to group, but the following suggestions for data gathering were offered:

- Demographics
- Relevant research performed
- Planned research
- Research gaps
- Recognition of barriers to behavior change

- Stakeholders
- Land use, cultural, or economic trends
- Examination of historical activities and changes with regards to nitrate loading
- A snapshot of the current situation
- Procedures used to come up with recommendations
- Documentation of strategies that were considered but not included and why
- Cost of new investments (i.e., tractor, Advanced Treatment Technology)
- Identification of professional organizations that maybe interested in assisting
- How different groups are contributing and will contribute in the future

Overall, this should be an account of what the working group learned and thought was important to consider as they developed management practice recommendations.

Different people need information presented in various styles. To facilitate the needs of as many individuals as possible, we will be drafting written reports, one summarized and one detailed, as well as creating an electronic version. The electronic report will make it possible for people to read as much or as little as they want while easily accessing specific information that is important to them. Supporting documentation will be available for those interested through hyperlinks to various sub-topics and details in the electronic version and/or in the appendix section of the written Action Plan. The summarized version of the Action Plan will be very concise. It will include a short introduction and synopses of the supporting documentation, but it will be focused on:

- management practice recommendations (Goal→Strategy→Action)
- timeframes
- implementation details
- indicators of progress and goal achievement

There was some discussion on differentiating between procedural benchmarks and actual water quality improvements. The 'logic model' was discussed and how it used to estimate goal attainment. It is used often to translate easily quantifiable goals, i.e. number of people installing efficient septic systems, into scientifically valid improvements, i.e. a decrease in groundwater nitrate levels. It seemed like there was agreement that some water quality goals must be established, but there also must be less scientifically rigorous, more qualitative benchmarks that indicate progress in implementing recommended strategies. There may need to be further discussion among the GWMA Committee on how they want to differentiate among these types of evaluation methods.