

**Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)
September 29, 2005 Committee Meeting – Harrisburg City Hall**

Present: Rich Margerum*, Mike Powers, Dennis Boeger*, Tim Bunnell*, Audrey Eldridge, Denise Kalakay, George Pugh*, Scott Shine, Roger Haffner*, Jerry Marguth*, Pat Straube*, Gail Andrews, John McEvoy, Lanny Zoeller*, Faye Stewart*, Karen Strohmeier*, Irene Rolston, Sue Lurie*, Judy Volta*, Linda Modrell*, Jeremy Craner, Glenn Mutti, Jacqueline Fern, Laura Moscovitz, Peter Jensen, Steve Hopkins

Chair Tim Bunnell opened the meeting with announcements and introductions. Jeremy Craner and Glenn Mutti from OSU Geosciences Department spoke briefly about their graduate research and potential benefits to GWMA efforts. Jeremy's goal, as a result of his groundwater modeling work, is to produce a user-friendly, web-page to help answer questions about groundwater movement and nitrate fate. Glenn will also be producing a user-friendly interface so the public can better understand how land-use changes might impact nitrate leaching. Both graduate students will likely be ready to provide a more detailed presentation to the committee during the December 2005 meeting.

Tim emphasized the need for committee members to attend meetings and to find a replacement if regular attendance is not possible.

During the announcements, Audrey Eldridge reminded the committee about the upcoming EPA 319 tour. It will take place on Thursday, October 6 and will consist of a 1 ½ hour tour of the Southern Willamette Valley projects currently funded with EPA 319 monies. Audrey also announced that there is now secure funding to conduct regular nitrate monitoring within the GWMA, as well as money for new monitoring wells. Gail Andrews introduced Laura Moscovitz, a new Water Resources graduate student at OSU. Laura and Gail will be working to set up a volunteer nitrate monitoring network within the GWMA.

Following announcements, Audrey thanked Kylee Dewis, GWMA volunteer and OSU graduate student, for her work in producing a draft groundwater management area brochure that was requested by the steering committee. Audrey asked committee members to send her all comments. One committee member recommended that the brochure begin with a simple explanation of "What is Nitrate."

Denise Kalakay solicited input and comments on the GWMA Committee's Overarching Goals. She explained that the draft goals originated from the committee's groundrules and also from committee member comments. One general comment was to reverse the sentence structure of the statements to better highlight the actual goals. For example, with this change the first goal would read: "To disseminate information about the project, solicit input, and encourage actions that will protect the groundwater resource by engaging and involving all groups and citizens concerned with GWMA plans or programs." A discussion ensued on how to assess whether we have reached our goals, particularly the goal of lowering nitrate levels to < 7 mg/l. Audrey suggested that the committee think about appropriate strategies (for example, should it be a statistical analysis) and recommended that there be an action plan explaining how to demonstrate achievement of the goals. Gail Andrews recommended reviewing criteria used to define the GWMA and Audrey noted that baseline data will be helpful in measuring success. Mayor Volta asked whether there were any national models for rescinding groundwater management area designations; Audrey will explore this further.

Scott Shine led a discussion on progress made by the Public Drinking Water Systems working group, focusing on the content of the recently disseminated draft report. Scott described the report as a stand-alone document that will still be tied closely to the action plan. He reviewed the report's organization and solicited input. Committee comments were as follows:

General

- Executive Summary is a good, concise description of the process and should be used in the Action Plan
- Working groups should coordinate to avoid duplication
- Question-Will working groups continue to meet as implementation begins?
- Emphasize that everyone is responsible and that protecting groundwater is a community effort
- Emphasize the health consequences of nitrate and other types of contamination
- A region-wide group responsible for implementation is a good idea--Should explore how to use existing county and city advisory committees/task forces in a coordinated effort
- Important to draw out which strategies are ongoing efforts that require continued coordination and which are one-time activities
- Establish network for ongoing implementation and to maintain momentum; recruit staff and resources from different partner entities

Drinking Water Specific

- Contact public works about the issues surrounding GWMA and drinking water protection signs
- Provide small tips in monthly utility bills along with brochures

Following a short break, Gail Andrews, Denise Kalakay, and Audrey Eldridge then checked in with steering committee members regarding logistics, meeting time and location, and meeting frequency. The group agreed that meeting every other month at 8 am in Harrisburg City Hall worked well. Audrey encouraged members to post to the GWMA discussion list in order to share ideas and comments.

Michael Powers of Oregon Department of Agriculture then updated the committee on progress by the agricultural working group. He said that a first draft from the group would be out in early October. This report will include a history of Southern Willamette Valley agriculture, a summary of nitrate literature focusing on agriculture, recent shifts in agricultural management and markets, changes that the agricultural community could still make, and strategies and actions. Mike shared with the committee that there has been a large-scale shift from vegetable crops to grass-seed in the valley due to the lack of processors. Questions from the committee included: at what point would acreage shifts lead to a new assessment of management strategies? How much nitrogen fertilizer is used by organic growers? What is the nitrate content in fertilizer?

Next, Audrey Eldridge presented progress by the Commercial and Industrial Working Group. The last meeting of the group was held on June 27. A copy of meeting highlights and commercial/industrial strategies were distributed to steering committee members. Strategies included a wide variety of research, outreach, promotion, financial assistance, and planning actions such as educating operators on the application of biosolids, supporting alternative sewage treatment technologies, establishing an overlay zone to help meet GWMA nitrate goals, and developing outreach materials for commercial/industrial facilities. Audrey said the group is now working to

determine which strategies are the most important. The group intends to use the Public Drinking Water System's format for presenting strategies in the final report.

Gail Andrews informed the group of nitrogen-based extension factsheets that will soon be available through web-site links.

Gail noted that the Residential Working Group was unable to meet during the summer, however, the goal this Fall is to schedule one-on-one meetings with working group members (Lanny, Rich, Annabelle, and Denny). An ad-hoc technical committee working behind the scenes has been discussing technical barriers, for example, installation approval for certain types of septic systems. A total of approximately 350 residents in the GWMA attended ongoing well-water clinics in Lane, Linn, and Benton Counties between May and September. Gail asked for input from the committee on effective ways to reach more GWMA residents. The group rejected the idea for a mass mailing due to expense, however, some committee members voiced their approval for targeting specific groups such as nurseries/garden stores with educational information (for example, a nitrate-related info sheet that accompanies each purchase). Gail also informed the committee that the GWMA web-site will soon be updated.

The next GWMA meeting will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2005 at 8:00 am in Harrisburg City Hall.