

**Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)
November 9, 2006 Committee Meeting – Harrisburg City Hall**

Present: Tim Bunnell*, Sue Lurie*, Jerry Marguth*, Rich Margerum*, George Pugh*, Pat Straube*, Judy Volta*, Lanny Zoeller*, Audrey Eldridge, Denise Kalakay, Laura Moscowitz, Nicholas Chambers, Gail Andrews, Kathi Wiederhold, Bill Emminger, Daniel Marino, Ross Penhallegon, Dennis Boeger*

Committee Members Absent: Annabelle Jaramillo*, Linda Modrell*, Mike Warner*, Cliff Wooten*, Frank Wright* Faye Stewart*

Announcements, Introductions, Adjustments to Agenda

Chair Tim Bunnell opened the meeting with announcements and introductions.

Public Comment

Bill Emminger, Benton County Environmental Health, commented that the Action Plan does not mention the term “environmental health”. He would like it to acknowledge this concept/terminology.

Ross Penhallegon, OSU Extension Service commended the Committee on its work and commented that he hoped the plan would be funded and implemented as written.

Wrap Up on Final Action Plan

Public and Public Official Meetings

Denise Kalakay reviewed recent GWMA activities including the five public open houses and the work sessions with public officials from all three counties and three cities in the Groundwater Management Area (GWMA). She noted that attendance at the open houses ranged from about 10 people to 50 people at each event. Although there were fewer attendees than at the open houses prior to the declaration, this is probably due to more people already being aware of the groundwater issues and comfortable with the processes to address the problems. Ms. Kalakay also noted that there was a great deal of press and publicity about the meetings and the Action Plan being completed with articles in all the major newspapers, radio interviews with three stations, and articles in several newsletters.

Public Comments

Audrey Eldridge distributed a summary of public comments received during the Action Plan Public Review and Comment period. A total of 6 people submitted written comments on the Action Plan primarily with positive comments or clarification types of comments. The Committee reviewed the handout which included comments in support, clarifications, typos, etc. types of comments, suggestions for minor changes to the Action Plan, and staff recommendations for dealing with each comment. Kathi Wiederhold, facilitator, asked the Committee if the staff recommended changes were agreeable to the Committee. Since there were no major suggested changes to the May Draft of the Action Plan, the Committee accepted the staff recommended responses to the Action Plan comments by consensus. Ms. Kalakay said that the few minor changes based on public comment would not take very long and that the Action Plan would be ready to submit to the Department of Environmental Quality for approval within a couple of weeks.

Draft Paragraph to Allow for Future Opportunities

Denise Kalakay noted that sometimes there are potential opportunities for additional activities to be funded that are outside of the strategies identified in the Action Plan, in that they fall within the “spirit” of the Action Plan. Denise proposed to the Committee that they include a paragraph in the Action Plan that would allow for currently unforeseen opportunities/projects/strategies to be funded. There was considerable discussion among Committee members about who the lead agency would be for the GWMA. Some members such as Pat Straube expressed a desire for specific language or a provision identifying the DEQ as the lead agency. If the lead agency was to be changed, then Committee members felt strongly that they should be allowed input on that proposed change.

A handout of proposed language regarding allowing for strategies that are not explicitly identified in the Action Plan to be implemented was reviewed and discussed. There was concern over the perceived lack of clarity of the language. Committee members expressed concern for giving any one member sole authority to change implementing strategies without their consent. The Committee agreed that they do not need a formal approval process but rather an informal “heads up” on these types of matters. The subject of grant opportunities was used as an example of when this informal process could be used. Members decided by consensus that in a case of a grant opportunity a summary of the proposed project for which the funding would be used shall be sent to Members for their review and comment. Committee members agreed on the following paragraph to be added to the Action Plan to both allow for additional types of projects and to provide an informal review mechanism.

“The GWMA Committee recognizes that future opportunities may arise to implement innovative voluntary actions to restore and protect groundwater in the GWMA. These opportunities may include implementing strategies that are not specifically identified in the Action Plan. In some cases lessons learned from early activities may change the focus of later activities. The Committee supports other initiatives that maintain the spirit of the Action Plan as expressed in the goals of the Action Plan. Those initiatives should be voluntary in nature, strive to reduce nitrate in groundwater below the 7mg/L threshold, reduce potential risks to the drinking water aquifers, and maintain and support traditional land uses. The Committee requests that organizations applying for grant funding inform the Committee of the proposal and provide Committee members with a summary of the proposal.”

Next Steps

Audrey Eldridge explained next steps. Lane Council of Governments needed a few weeks to compile information needed to finalize the Action Plan and submit it to the DEQ for approval. Members requested that a list of acronyms be included in the final document. By unanimous consent, the Committee recommended DEQ approval of the Action Plan.

Frequency of Future GWMA Meetings

The Committee discussed when future meetings should occur. The Committee agrees on quarterly email updates and at least two formal meetings over the next year with the first one occurring on May 24th.