

**Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)  
November 8, 2007 Committee Meeting – Harrisburg City Hall**

**Present:** Tim Bunnell (City Public Water Supply Operator)\*, Sue Lurie (Natural Resources Representative)\*, Jerry Marguth (Farmer)\*, Judy Volta (Coburg Mayor)\*, Lanny Zoeller (Realtor)\*, Dennis Boeger (Engineering Consultant)\*, Annabelle Jaramillo (Benton County Commissioner)\*, Roger Haffner (Wilbur-Ellis Farm Supplements)\*, Audrey Eldridge (Department of Environmental Quality), Denise Kalakay (Lane Council of Governments), Nicholas Chambers (Department of Agriculture), Bill Emminger (Benton County Health), Rick Partipilo (Linn County Health); Alan Henning (Environmental Protection Agency), Jackie Fern (Department of Environmental Quality).

**Committee Members Absent:** Karen Strohmeier (Cascade Pacific RC&D), Rich Margerum (Long Tom Watershed Council), Mike Warner (Marathon Coach), Frank Wright (Citizen and Small Business Representative), Cliff Wooten (Linn County Commissioner), Pat Straube (Citizen and CAFO Representative), George Pugh (Linn County Farmer), Faye Stewart (Lane County Commissioner).

**Announcements, Introductions, Adjustments to Agenda**

Chair Tim Bunnell opened the meeting with announcements and introductions. The GWMA Committee and the audience introduced themselves. Audrey Eldridge informed the Committee that Melissa Fery of Benton Extension has taken the lead on the 319 grant that Gail Andrews obtained just before retirement. Audrey identified Alan Henning (EPA) as someone who has been very supportive in helping the GWMA staff explore opportunities and has provided valuable comments and critiques to the overall process.

There was not a quorum of Committee members present resulting in a need for the agenda to be adjusted. The election of the new Chair and Vice Chair will be postponed until the next GWMA Committee meeting.

**Public Comment**

None

**New and Replacement Committee Memberships**

Audrey Eldridge noted that although a quorum was expected, due to a recent illness, this meeting of the GWMA Committee did not reach a quorum, and therefore the Committee can not vote on a new Chair and Vice Chair. Although this is the first time a quorum has not been reached, Audrey suggested that it would be best to take actions to see that this does not occur in the future. This would include filling the seats of Committee members who have not been present for most meetings. The GWMA Committee was encouraged to recommend individuals to fill both the Large Industry and Residential seats.

Along those lines, Rick Partipilo has been recommended as a replacement for Commissioner Cliff Wooten. Commissioner Wooten resigned his Committee seat over a year ago due to complications within his agency. Rick has had many years of experience as the head of Linn County Environmental Health, and is also planning on being active in the GWMA Technical On-site Committee.

### **Retirements and New Faces**

Retirements include Mark Mintz (RARE student employed by LCOG) and in the near future Karen Strohmeier (Cascade Pacific RC&D.) Melissa Fery and her co-workers are conducting the Rural Living Basics classes, hosting well water screening events, coordinating the volunteer well water monitors, and taking calls from all over the state regarding private well issues. Paris Edwards (OSU Student) was introduced and the Committee was informed she has applied for a grant to conduct a survey of the GWMA residents, in accordance with the Action Plan strategies.

### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Since the Committee did not have a quorum, elections will be held at the next meeting. Denise Kalakay suggested to the Committee that it might be an opportune time to look at all the ground rules to see if there is anything the group would like to modify. Especially as a new Chair and new Committee members come on board. Tim Bunnell stated that he would like to see Lanny become the new Committee Chair person, building on his experience as Vice Chair.

### **Update on Action Plan Implementation**

*Nick Chamber, Agriculture:* The Department of Agriculture (ODA) sponsored a workshop and tour for the confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) operators in the GWMA. Nick reports that all eight CAFO operators are responsive to issues in the GWMA. Nick also reported on a DEQ 319 block grant that has been secured by the three GWMA Soil and Water Conservation Districts. These grants make money available to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for projects within their districts that implement GWMA Action Plan strategies. The grant provides relatively quick access to funds with minimal red tape for projects that protect both ground and surface waters. Nick also talked about the Action Plan strategy related to Nitrate Research. The plan is to draw together experts from OSU and other arenas and identify the priority research areas. A workshop will be held early next year to bring the experts and the ideas together.

Mayor Judy Volta suggested that it might be time to provide the small cities in the GWMA with 5-10 minute updates about GWMA activities.

Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo highlighted a recent venture that Benton County has initiated of looking at water resources comprehensively. The County is looking at both quantity and quality issues related to both ground and surface waters. The work could result in new ordinances or other measures that protect the water resource.

*Jackie Fern, Residential:* Jackie talked about a desire to bring drinking water protection into the classroom. She would like to start making a K-12 push in local schools but is uncertain about receptivity and how to get started making inroads to the schools. The Future Farmers of America Program has been very successful locally and Kathy Smith of Junction City may be helpful. Jackie also told the Committee that she will be teaching some “Environmental Friendly” gardening classes in the coming year. To help address residential issues, Jackie looks forward to the Onsite Technical Team getting together to explore onsite issues and how they might be addressed to reduce potential contamination from septic systems.

*Audrey Eldridge, Commercial/ Industrial/Municipal:* Audrey briefly explained that there are many types of water quality permits, and only a few of these have a potential for needing groundwater protection requirements. In addition to agreeing with the permit writers on which permits need to be evaluated, the Department of Environmental Quality has established a GWMA-specific review for the Water Quality permits that have been identified as possible contributors to nitrate loading of the groundwater. This process will ensure that future permits are reviewed by a department Hydrogeologist, who will identify when groundwater protection requirements must be added. However, as with many new procedures, we identified an area for improvement when a Water Quality permit was issued without adequately incorporating the appropriate groundwater protection requirements.

Judy Volta and Craig Gibbons (City of Coburg) explained the exciting happenings regarding funding for their wastewater treatment system. Within a few weeks, they will be receiving over 8 million dollars in grants and loans to start the construction of their treatment facility and collection system. Progress should really happen quickly. The City is designing and will be starting construction at the same time they are applying for a wastewater facility permit.

Finally, the Technical On-Site Team preliminary meeting is scheduled for December, 2007. This meeting will identify the work items for the full Technical Group to focus on.

*Denise Kalakay, Public Water Systems:* Denise highlighted actions taken regarding public water systems in the GWMA. She noted that many of the County emergency response planners have been notified of locations of the Drinking Water Source Areas but there is still need to follow up with making sure that information is used. Denise stated that at a recent workshop of public water systems operators, when asked if they feel comfortable with being notified in the case of a spill, all said that they either do not get notified or it is late in the process after a spill event. The workshop/meeting was held in Lane County for public water systems to identify and prioritize county-wide mechanisms that would protect multiple water systems. The list of prioritize items will be presented to the Lane County Board of County Commissioners for consideration in December.

Denise also updated the Committee on the “nitrate budget” reminding the group that the budget is an estimation of the nitrogen/nitrate contributed by the different land use groups in the GWMA. One stumbling block of completing the budget is that Lane

Council of Governments and the ODA have been waiting for updated crop type data from the Farm Services Agency. The existing data is from the year 2000 and crops are consistently rotated. The ODA reviewed the existing data layer comparing it with aerial photography but it is difficult to update.

### **Monitoring Results**

Audrey Eldridge provided information on the last five sets of groundwater monitoring results, and LCOG prepared a map depicting the monitoring locations. The data indicate that, as a group, the groundwater monitoring wells have nitrate averages that range from 4.9 to 5.9 mg/L; while the domestic well nitrate averages between 3.3 and 4.7 mg/L. There were a number of wells that were not contaminated with nitrate, and there were also a number of wells that were over 10 mg/L nitrate in both sets of data.

### **Funding Opportunities**

Denise Kalakay has submitted a grant to the Governors Fund, which would allow for the collection of Legacy Pesticides in Linn and Benton Counties. This would follow the same plan as the last very successful collection event in Lane County. The preliminary proposal has been accepted and LCOG is now preparing the final proposal.

LCOG is also preparing a grant proposal for the 319 (Clean Water) funds. This proposal would include the planning Action Kit for the local jurisdictions.

A mention was already made regarding OSU application to Institute of Water and Watersheds to complete a survey of the GWMA residents.

### **Next Meeting Dates**

Lanny indicated that he would like to see the GWMA Committee meet more often, and suggested that the Committee start meeting on a quarterly basis. The other Committee members agreed that additional meetings to stay informed in a more timely fashion would be a plus. The Committee can discuss quarterly meetings at the next meeting and agree (or not) by consensus). The Committee set the next two meeting dates: January 24 and April 24