

Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area

Groundwater Management Area Committee Meeting Notes

October 28, 2010 8:00-10:00 AM

Harrisburg Old City Hall

ATTENDANCE:

Tim Bunnell (City Public Water Supply Operator)*, Lanny Zoeller (Realtor)*, Jerry Marguth*, George Pugh*, Roger Haffner (Wilbur-Ellis Co.)*, Rick Partipilo (Linn County)*, Pat Straube*, Audrey Eldridge (Department of Environmental Quality), Denise Kalakay (Lane Council of Governments), Jacob Callister (Lane Council of Governments), Bill Emminger (Benton County Environmental Health), Annabelle Jaramillo (Benton County Commissioner), Jack Arendt (DEQ), Donna Schmitz (Benton Soil and Water Conservation Service), Kevin Seifert (Linn Soil and Water Conservation Service), Ross Penhallegon (OSU Extension), Jackie Fern (DEQ--WQ), Shawn Stevenson (DHS Drinking Water Program), Betsy Parry (DHS Drinking Water Program), Terry Nelson (Resident), Chrissy Lucas (OSU Extension), Kevin Fenn (Oregon Department of Agriculture), Tucker Selco (OSU)

* denotes Committee member GWMA committee,

AGENDA

1. Announcements, Introductions, Adjustments to Agenda 8:00 - 8:05 AM

Lanny Zoeller, Chair

2. Public Comment 8:05 - 8:10 AM

None--

3. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes 8:10 - 8:15 AM

Motion to approve minutes in April – Motion passed –

Motion to approve January minutes (with a quorum) – Motion passed

4. Biofuels in the Southern Willamette Valley 8:15 – 8:35 AM

Jerry Marguth, GWMA Committee Member and Stephanie Page, Department of Agriculture, and other interested parties. Recently, there has been more than discussion regarding the potential of building a biofuels facility in the Southern Willamette Valley to help address agricultural waste from grass seed farmers. Hear what is going on with this – and maybe other issues too!

Stephanie Page not able to attend meeting. Jerry Marguth gave some brief updates and an overview. Key question is what to do with residue of grass seed crops. Millions of dollars spent on researching how to use this stuff (all over the country). Initial review shows that the materials are currently too costly and inefficient to bring to a central processing location. Jerry noted that the Executive Director of a local Grass Seed Council corresponded with Dept. of Interior about it – Michael McKenzie-Bar was a Lane County contact – matching funds were used to put together a pilot study. Jerry explained that George Pugh was at the initial meeting.

George Pugh reiterated the pressing question of how to use this material for energy production. In a no burning environment there is a need to figure out how to get rid of this straw. Pilot studies did take place. Current procedures : Coking – (charring). He noted that there is no possibility for room temperature conversion. Cellulose to energy is a huge effort right now. In rice country they are producing energy from rice straw (California). In the world of energy generation from cellulose it is mostly wood products involved. Dairy digesters are another big ag-energy push.

Pat Straube noted that she doesn't have a lot of details but Lochmead is currently working with a group out of New York on generating energy with manure. They have two large silos of manure (produced only by Lochmead). There have been some setbacks getting ready to start. It will be a year

round operation. It will be done completely with a computer out of New York. Permits have taken a long time. Also challenges related to finding someone who will take the power.

Jerry indicated that there is one other digester project in Lane County.

Lanny Zoeller asked Jerry if there has been a swing this year in grass vs. wheat production. Jerry noted that there has been no slow down. More wheat acres than other types. Typically wheat is grown on better drained soils. Rye grass usually grown on poorly drained soils. They can't put a harvester out on some fields that haven't drained by July.

Question - How widely distributed the raw bi-products are seems to be a problem. Are answers leading to localized solutions – farm or local specific?

Jerry - Farm based enterprises are being pursued. It costs $\frac{1}{4}$ million dollars in equipment to utilize your straw, another $\frac{1}{4}$ million dollars to turn it into a source of energy (1/2 million dollars total). It is really being investigating closely and intensely throughout the country. One study done by someone with a lot time on their hands noted that all of the bio-fuels in the world couldn't replace what oil currently generates. Something to consider.

Lanny – Can we get an update on this in the future?

Jerry noted that he would love to have Stephanie provide some insight – this is what she does. She has been looking at this question for a lot of years.

Lanny—we would like to hear from her next meeting.

George noted that the last iteration he was part of was suggesting that a facility would need to be closer to Portland to take advantage of other energy sources, but grass seed product is so heavy and low value, and not economic to move around at those distances. Not quit there yet...

5. What is Happening in the GWMA-Hood? 8:35 - 8:50 AM

Short updates on the GWMA news and what different groups and communities are doing or have experienced. Look forward to information on: the new Onsite initiatives; upcoming Agriculture BMP survey; and what has been happening in the GWMA education and outreach world, among other events.

Audrey Eldridge - Policy package going forward that is related to the time of transfer for pumping septic system and evaluation of treatment systems. It is focused on Coastal Zones – not Southern Willamette Valley (does not affect Linn, Lane or Benton Counties). Other really good news: trying to get access to state revolving funds (traditionally for big projects). Looking to get loans and grants for improving or replacing septic systems. Package going forward, needs legislative approval. This is something in the action plan (identifying funding for replacing septic systems). Next legislative session will be interesting.

Audrey noted that she wasn't sure but felt that the proposal might be happening because of the La Pine issues.

Rick Partipilo noted that it is related to civil penalty funds (the source of the funds)

Audrey confirmed and noted that Instead of penalty funds going directly to general funds they would be going to this state revolving fund.

Rick P. noted that this could provide a solution for issues that are very gnarly to solve like expensive repairs on failing septic systems. There is not much funding available now and demand is high. Good to have a good means – particularly for low to moderate incomes.

Bill E. - Can funds be utilized to help folks just outside of City Limits (in Corvallis for example) get connected to city sewer?

Audrey – Not certain

Benton County Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo noted that the state budget is in disarray, and raised questions about whether we will actually see this funding happen. We should be careful about setting expectations too high.

Rick P. - Some ideas are also being discussed that are outside of the general fund realm. Historically, the State Revolving Loan Fund has been used for funding municipal wastewater treatment facilities and improvements. It may be possible to use a portion of those funds for individual septic system repairs.

Kevin Fenn: (ODA Update)

Noted work that was being completed including moving forward with priority research needs from the research group meeting that was held in February. Some groups have been going forward with this research – fertilization guides, etc. Kevin noted that there is a meeting today to follow up on the February research ideas.

Tucker (OSU graduate student) gave an introduction to some of the work that he has been doing on a BMP Survey to be distributed to landowners (Ag) in the GWMA. This is an action plan item (Goal 4). Tucker working as contractor to complete the work (as graduate student). SWCDs are helping. Two goals of survey: Find out what they are doing on the ground, Find ways to better effect Best Management Practices. Tucker made available an advanced draft of the survey, but he noted that he is still eager for comments.

Jerry asked Tucker about how he plans to get landowners to take the survey?

Tucker - Mailing in late January – follow up of postcards, additional mailing of a full survey a few weeks later. Hoping for a good response, but we'll work with every response we get. Target area is the GWMA.

Question - Can field visits be an opportunity for doing an interview?

Tucker - We will look into it – seems like a good idea. Confidentiality should not be a concern.

Roger Haffner: I don't see questions dealing with succeeding crops. Crop rotation doesn't seem to be well represented in the survey.

Jerry - Smart to do personal contact. Throwing in the second mailing may only improve minimally. There is a misconception that farmers are waiting around to fill out surveys. It is going to be a challenge to get them to fill these out.

Farmers (and others) in the committee showed skepticism about a huge mail-return response.

Jerry - There needs to be some knowledge conveyed that this is really important. Incentives may be a real good idea. (Money, scotch, a tractor?)

Tucker - We have addresses and numbers and we could call folks.

Betty Parry - Maybe some volunteers could help hit it hard. They don't respond to paper nearly as well as face to face.

Jerry - Make it as quick and painless as possible. Contact during business hours.

Ross Penhallegon - Acreage we know a lot about – fertilization, etc. There is so much info, how do we drill it down? It's going to be hard, very difficult.

Chrissy Lucas OSU Extension update –

See Powerpoint: [Link to Outreach and Education presentation](#)

Points:

Living on the Land - Alpine Community Center – 28 people 5 part series

Nitrate Screenings - 11 dates 415 samples screened. Junction City was the busiest. Water tower market.

Rural Living Basics: Sept 23rd. 25 participants, 19 samples screened

Kids Day for Conservation - October 9th, attendance of 1800, Benton County Fairgrounds, 575 edible aquifers were created. 100 more than last year

Education – 4 local Groundwater protection classroom lessons high schools (Monroe, Harrisburg, North Albany High School). Student leadership project.

Audrey noted that the Kids Conservation event was an incredible success – Chrissy got a bunch of volunteers for her kids event and it went really well.

Other updates:

Audrey - Junction City Public Works Director found radon in the water source. Treatment for Radon is aeration, and they can incorporate that. Break down product of Uranium. Sort of a surprise... where did this radon come from. It is very unexpected.

Denise K - Lane County floodplain ordinance --- River 200 foot setback. Potential positive effects on GWMA.

Pat S. -This is a serious issue and we will impacted. Some of it is ridiculous

Audrey - There are some good elements for source water protection.

Benton County Commissioner - Nov. 4th Benton County meeting with Corps of Engineers related to water release dynamics after dam repair.

5. GWMA Chair and Vice Chair Nominations 8:50 - 9:00 AM

Lanny Zoeller, Chair, will solicit nominations for these two positions, and elections will be held at the next GWMA Committee meeting.

Nomination of Lanny Zoeller as Chair and Roger Haffner as Vice Chair (existing leadership Committee member - "lets just call it good"

(it is noted that there was no official vote taken)

BREAK 9:00 - 9:10 AM

6. Groundwater Monitoring Results 9:10 - 9:45 AM

Audrey Eldridge, Department of Environmental Quality, will lead a forum regarding the data collected over the last year, and discuss possible implications that may arise from this information.

See Powerpoint: [October 2010 Monitoring Results](#) (warning – this is a large file and will take a little time to download.)

Also – link to the [Notebook of Results](#) (also a very large file)

Questions:

Have we done anything meetings or trainings to encourage residents to reduce the nitrate they are using?

Audrey - Living on the land series perhaps. Invited those on those streets to a meeting related to nitrate stuff. Can we do something in the next year to see if we can influence this?

Pat suggested more focused group meetings.

7. Review SWV GWMA Action Plan Strategies – an update 9:45 - 9:55 AM

Denise Kalakay and Jacob Callister, Lane Council of Governments, Update on the project that will help the Committee decide if sufficient progress is being made and if the Action Plan needs to be revised.

Feedback on GWMA Action Plan evaluation:

Jerry - There was a lot of effort put into the action plan. We are in the beginning phases of data gathering. We should be careful to change things too much or give up certain sections. Work in the subgroups to make some priorities and assess new information.

Rick P. – With limited resources available an emphasis should be on priorities. We should involve the committee in the process of establishing priorities of strategies.

8. Wrap-up and Suggestion for Future Meeting Topics

9:55 -10:00 AM

Lanny Zoeller, Chair

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