



Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area

Committee Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2012 8:00-10:00 AM
The Old Harrisburg City Hall
354 Smith Street

In Attendance:

Jerry Marguth* (Farmer), Lanny Zoeller* (Chair, Realtor), Tim Bunnell* (City Public Water Supply Operator), Rich Margerum* (University of Oregon), Roger Haffner* (Vice-Chair, Wilbur-Ellis Farm Supplements), Pat Straube* (Citizen and CAFO Representative), George Pugh* (Linn County Farmer), Dennis Boeger* (Boeger and Associates), Sarah Marshall (Resident), Mindi Thornton* (Farmer), Rick Partipilo* (Linn County), Jim Pendergrass* (Long Tom Watershed Council), Audrey Eldridge (Department of Environmental Quality), Jacob Callister (Lane Council of Governments), Shawn Stevenson (OHA Drinking Water Program) Jack Arendt (DEQ), Jacqueline Fern (Department of Environmental Quality), Thomas Snyder (NRCS), Ron Raney (NRCS), Alan Henning (EPA), Chrissy Lucas (OSU Extension Service), Tom Pattee (OHA Drinking Water Program); Kevin Fenn (ODA), Michael Mattick (Water Resource's Department), Shannon Williams (Water Resources Department), Heather Medina Saucedo (USDA-NRCS), Wade Peerman (DEQ), Donna Schmitz (Benton County Soil and Water Conservation Dist.), Chris Kelley (Washington State University), Jana Compton (EPA), Bill Emminger (Benton County Env. Health), John Cunningham (Civil Engineer), Charlie Hansen (Benton County Env. Health)

* denotes Committee Members

1. Announcements, Introductions, Adjustments to Agenda

Lanny Zoeller, Chair

Lanny Zoeller: Thanks to Kier Miller of Lane County. He had to resigned from the committee due to budgetary issues. Any suggestions to fill committee vacancies, please email Audrey.

Audrey Eldridge: There is a form going around seeking hours spent on GWMA. Please fill out hours that you have spent working, traveling or meeting on any GWMA issue. We can use these hours as match for a grant.

Lanny: Good to see such a variety of people at this meeting, once again

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Last Meetings Minutes

Minutes approved

4. What is Happening in the GWMA-Hood?

Short updates on the GWMA news

Lanny Zoeller: Jerry has something interesting to share:

Jerry Marguth: Fertilizer research funds that may be available. Jerry has had some involvement with a subcommittee concerning these research funds. Currently all commercial agriculture

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fertilizers are assessed 5 cents per ton at point of sale. In an average year that amounts to about \$70,000 dollars. These funds are consumed in administrative oversight. The Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA wanted to put a bill before short session of the legislature to self-assess an additional tax to provide research funds. The Umatilla Basin has a major problem regarding nitrate in groundwater, well above what we see in the Southern Willamette Valley, sometimes seeing 2-3 hundred parts per million nitrate. The Umatilla Basin GWMA was talked them out of that approach, many felt it sets a bad precedent. They were talked into pursuing fertilizer research funds instead. Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has the authority to raise the five cents per ton they are collecting now to ten cents, thus doubling the fund. ODA could also investigate raising it beyond ten cents.

Lanny Zoeller: Keep us posted on progress there Jerry

Chrissy Lucas: Teaching adults is like teaching kids - they just stand still longer. Last time we met there were four upcoming events: Daffodil Festival, nitrate screenings in Tangent, Junction City showcase, and we made 230 tasty edible aquifers. We were on TV news for a recent event. We have done about 100 nitrate screenings and continue to get requests daily. We were the Regional point of contact for flooding (related to water quality). And, we are on track with our grant. Rural Living Basics Classes are coming up, people are showing up daily for nitrate testing. The other day, people for from Harrisburg and Sweet Home came in with their water samples. Chrissy also did a special presentation at North Albany Middle School. Chrissy shared a selection of thank you cards from the students of North Albany Middle School [These were really special!] Students really enjoyed that day in the classroom. Some kids have come out on their own time. Lanny read some of the student's letter. One was from a girl who missed the presentation and wished she could have been there.

Audrey Eldridge: Interesting funding news on the horizon. A few things have come through and we are working on some things. EPA has funded Chris Kelley, a University of Washington Phd candidate. Chris will be working on a Fellowship to review the groundwater monitoring data and help us make some progress on this front. As Jerry mentioned, the ODA Fertilizer Research Fund grants are almost ready, and it looks like Benton SWCD will be sponsoring lysimeter monitoring, to be used in a nutrient tracking process.

5. Agricultural Working Group and Action Plan Updates

Kevin Fenn, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Members of the Agricultural Working Group
Kevin and others will share the latest information on the Agricultural Working Group review and critique of the revised Agricultural Section of the Action Plan.

Kevin Fenn: Ag subcommittee received two versions of what is being presented today. Kevin went over general concepts and was able to obtain feedback from committee on possible changes. The GWMA Committee is being asked to to approve changes or approve some portion of the changes.

[See PowerPoint:](#)

- Note the included references to regulatory components related to action plan.
- The Working Group asked "what should the goals really be?" And they included in their changes based on a review of statutes and rules)

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- A goal was to create as many avenues as possible for property owners to create good water quality.
- Rather than having a general objective for funding, funding was incorporated in to each element
- Surveys that were to be implemented in the Winter of 10/11 didn't go well, and there need. We want to get a different look at this. What are the practices that are currently being used? Try to get at these details at a geographic level.

Questions:

Lanny Zoeller: The idea is to get the plan updates approved. Report was sent out in advance with the intent to so that committee members could have any feedback prepared. This is just a piece of the update.

Kevin Fenn went through the track changes version with the group looking for suggestions/feedback. He noted that initial changes were primarily housekeeping updates, some website resource updates, new concepts, etc. He noted that some narrative changes were added to reflect/describe this update process. Some changes are added to emphasize that the GWMA committee does not expect this all to happen.

Michal Mattick: If I understand this correctly, there were items that once were the Oregon Dept of Agriculture's responsibility and now being farmed out to other organizations, and it's just being noted that they don't have the resources to do that work and that is ok? It seems that those responsibilities should stay with the Dept of Agriculture so that the buck is not being passed and left with folks who do not have resources to take care of it.

Kevin Fenn: All I mean is that the Department of Agriculture doesn't have the authority to tell anyone they have to do anything. So we have helped identify some of the pieces to accomplish these things. ODA will continue to work on these things, but other partners will and should contribute too.

Rich Margerum: I have a question about the section before Goal1 where it says that the "GWMA recommends the following:" I was wondering if this has gone through a reality check. Are these realistic? Do the listed partners have time and resources to actually work on it?

Kevin Fenn: Most is what is there appears to be "realistic," based on scopes of work that ODA worked through with NRCS, for example. Some items are in there from the original Action Plan. Those are actions that have not been done yet but still should be in there in (our opinion.) .

Rich Margerum: We have had updates on how many this and that have been done. It would be good to see that performance tracking continue. We can reorganize but let's not lose the documentation, let's try to stay seamless with the reporting. It's good to see what is happening. We can track what partners can and can't do.

Pat Straube: Are the other agencies comfortable with this? Are we just hanging out telling people what we want them to do.

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Kevin Fenn: The updated Action Plan has been sent out to numerous partners for review, including the SWDCs, OSU, DEQ, and NRCS. We tried to get as much outside input as possible but we not target specific individuals for input. The report also went to the Agriculture Working Group for feedback. The update has gone through a fairly lengthy process of input. CAFO program was vetted, and is realistic.

Lanny Zoeller: It looks thorough.

Pat Straube: I am sure it's thorough, I just want to make sure that it is understood and approved by these partners.

Heather Medina Saucedo: NRCS's focus area is not the GWMA.

Rick Partipilo: So Linn SWCD may be allocating resources to areas outside of the GWMA area?

Heather Medina Saucedo: Farm bill eligibility is an important question in Linn. Benton County does have a target for the GWMA however.

Rich Margerum: Has a question about Goal and Strategy relationship. General question: Is there a clearly delineated timeline to adopt this plan? Is there a regulatory deadline?

Audrey Eldridge: We do not have a deadline. Timing is almost always funding related. Denise Kalakay. has secured some funding for sections of the Action Plan that she is charged with, and we will complete these other sections as funding and resources allow.

Rick Partipilo: Work has been great. Is it possible to get some sort of endorsement from the involved agencies? Can we involve them in the review process more? If the priorities we establish are not priorities with other agencies, can we at least incorporate ongoing dialogue with agencies? This would strengthen the document. Can we have the agencies comment on the process?

Kevin Fenn: I can send it out again

Rick Partipilo: What about a statement of support for the entire plan? We need to make sure that we have the allied partner agencies endorsement. Everyone is on board, rather than hearing a lot of exceptions.

Lanny Zoeller: We don't need to send the whole thing. We can just send sections that apply, looking for support.

Rick Partipilo: It's an excellent document. What would finish it for me is having an endorsement, or a reason for non-endorsement. I would like to see some kind of commitment to include them in an ongoing dialogue.

Kevin Fenn: I think most of the partners are pretty involved in the GWMA. They aren't in there unless they are involved.

Rick Partipilo: Let's acknowledge that in the plan, show that that partnership exists so that a third party can see and be assured of the relationships. Third party could be a funder

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Audrey Eldridge: This is a great idea. But it applies to the whole plan. Perhaps we should save something for the whole final Action plan.

Rich Margerum: We may have to go back and change some things based on feedback. It will be important to anticipate that two-way process.

Tom Snyder (NRCS): It hasn't been a priority in Linn and Lane county because the problem is so big, and the ways to address it aren't clear. What should be done? Answering that question would be a better strategy. If the GWMA had a good strategy these organization would get more on board and make it a priority for their agency.

Alan Henning: Does an objective in this section to prevent nitrogen from agriculture mean that other areas will not be focused on?

Audrey Eldridge: The current review is just for the agriculture section. Other sections, when completed, will address other needs.

Lanny Zoeller: Are there any further comments or questions of Kevin?

All in favor of moving forward with this section, with Kevin gathering comments? Approved.

BREAK

6. Soil Water, Groundwater and a Washington State Study

Chris Kelly, Washington State University share his experiences with soil water, tile drain and groundwater analysis in a setting similar to the SWV GWMA. Chris will spend this summer reviewing the SWV GWMA data collected to date and explore ideas for appropriate lysimeter and other studies that could help address important questions for our area.

Chris Kelley's PowerPoint Presentation: [Applying Eastern Washington work to the Southern Willamette Valley](#)

Questions:

Rick Partipilo: How deep are the tiles?

Chris Kelley: About a meter, but we don't really know. We are hoping to find out better info on the tiles which were installed a long time ago.

George Pugh: Did you check surface water or just tile?

Chris Kelley: We checked both. There is only one land use and that made it much easier.

Rich Margerum: Were you able to separate manure and sewer impacts?

Chris Kelley: They are similar enough.

Roger Haffner: How is nitrogen applied?

Chris Kelley: All fall applied.

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Roger Haffner: Why?

Chris Kelley: Too muddy to get out there earlier.

Jerry Marguth: Are they doing mineralizable testing in the spring?

Chris Kelley: No, just looking at what's left behind.

Rick Partipilo: How deep is the basalt?

Chris Kelley: Basalt depth is variable.

Alan Henning: Can you go over your plan again?

Chris Kelley: I am looking through your data, asking: why are there decreases, increases, no change? How can nitrate be better managed? Can successful management strategies be taken and applied them to the entire basin?

Alan Henning: How do you define change?

Chris Kelley: Long term --- slow and steady vs flashy.

Alan Henning: Will you be able to look at no change with BMP practices applied.

Chris Kelley: Yes, taking geology, land use, etc. into account.

Kevin Fenn: Data for wells is enormous, and there is a lack of other data. How do you get to the "why?"

Chris Kelley: Some of the "why" will have to be answered in future studies. Existing data will only go so far. Field data will be gathered. I can come back in October if you'd like.

7. Two Small Schools and Focus Groups

Denise Kalakay, Lane Council of Governments, Audrey Eldridge, Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

A short summary of the *Focus Group* project planned for this year. The project will be designed to understand the barriers to protecting groundwater quality for those who live near these public water suppliers (the schools.) A cutting edge approach!

Audrey Eldridge: Audrey shared info about a newly funded focus group. There is funding to do a focus group, which is a social science project. Basically, we are trying to understand what it takes to get folks to overcome personal barriers to do something [x,y,or z]? (Like recycling as an example) Jacquie Fern had some ideas for an issue in Benton County. We started with thinking we would start with a survey, and then conduct a Focus Group. The participants for these focus groups will be selected randomly and we have to pay them to attend. We will do facilitated listening. What we want to learn is their basic understanding of barriers to protecting groundwater.

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Jacque Fern: We are working with these small public water supplies (Schools) that are up against some regulation. They are saying help! This will be the beginning of a process around these two schools in Benton County.

Audrey Eldridge: Hopefully we will come out of the process with something useful.

Lanny Zoeller: What's your timeline?

Audrey Eldridge: Survey should be done in June, and the Focus Group will have to wait until Fall, when people are around. This will be a good cross section of the residents of the area.

Rich Margerum: Will the survey be weighted to address different categories?

Audrey Eldridge: Yes, there will be balance of representation

8. Ditch Fish Video

A short clip from Oregon Field Guide was shared. It was related to fish being found in fields in the Willamette Valley. George Pugh was featured in the movie.

Lanny: George will be signing agendas.

9. Wrap-up and Suggestion for Future Meeting Topics

Lanny Zoeller, Chair

Email your meeting topics to Audrey. End of July meeting? Audrey will poll people to see if it's a good date?

Meeting Adjourned.