

# Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

**Scope:** Regional/Watershed

**Location:** Washington

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Caitlin McConkey  
[caim461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:caim461@ecy.wa.gov)

Mark Peterschmidt  
Watershed Unit Manager,  
Washington State Department of Ecology, Central Region  
[mape461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:mape461@ecy.wa.gov)

### Websites:

Yakima County: [http://yakimacounty.us/GWMa\\_SWebContacts@co.yakima.wa.us](http://yakimacounty.us/GWMa_SWebContacts@co.yakima.wa.us)

Washington Department of Ecology: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-quality/Groundwater/Protecting-aquifers/Lower-Yakima-Valley-groundwater>

## SCOPE:

- Yakima River basin in Washington State
- Established in 2011
- Groundwater Management Area is a tool used by the Washington Department of Ecology to promote groundwater management programs to protect groundwater quality, assure groundwater quantity, and provide for efficient management of water resources for meeting future needs while recognizing existing water rights. The intent is to forge a partnership between a diversity of local, state, tribal and federal interests in cooperatively protecting the state's groundwater resources
- Members include local business owners, residents, and both state and federal government officials

## COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- The Collaborative was created out of WAC.173.090 with statutory authority from the Revised Code of Washington, Section 90.44.400.
- Designed to oversee the development of the groundwater management program with representation from ground water user groups, planning agencies, and citizens as well as local, state, tribal, and federal agencies.

## MEMBERS:

- Yakima County Board of Commissioners
- Turner and Co. & Agronomist
- Community Association for Restoration of the Environment (CARE)
- Hispanic Community Representative
- Friends of Toppenish Creek
- Concerned Citizens of the Yakaman Reservation
- Yakima County Farm Bureau
- Yakima Dairy Federation

- Sunnyside Roza Joint Board of Control
- South Yakima Conservation District
- Port of Sunnyside
- Yakima County Health District
- Washington State University Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center
- USEPA
- Yakima Nation
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Washington Department of Agriculture
- Washington Department of Health
- Washington Department of Ecology

## WATER CONCERNS:

- Nitrate contamination of groundwater drinking source

## STRATEGIES:

### Objectives:

- Reduce nitrate contamination in groundwater below state drinking water standards.
- Households where sampling results indicate drinking water is contaminated will be provided with options and assistance on how to prevent exposure to the contaminants.

Sustainable funding source to carry out its mission. Ongoing, culturally-appropriate education and outreach on the public health risks of drinking water contaminants and how to prevent exposure.

- Focus Areas (Workgroups):
  - [Livestock / CaFo](#)
  - [Irrigated agriculture](#)
  - [Residential, Commercial and industrial](#)
  - [Data Collection, Characterization, Monitoring](#)
  - [Regulatory Framework](#)
  - [Education & Public outreach](#)
  - [Funding](#)

## RESULTS:

- June 2011 Request for Identification of Lower Yakima Valley as Groundwater Management Area. Created June 2010 “Vital Elements of a Groundwater Protection Body,” as a basis for working together
- February 2010 “Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Quality - Preliminary Assessment and Recommendations Document” (factsheet available at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/grndwtr/lowerYak-gw.html>)
  - A final draft of the proposed Program was approved by the advisory committee to be moved forward to public review in December 2018
  - An Ambient Well Monitoring System installation was completed in February 2019
  - SEPA and public comment periods with a joint Ecology/Yakima County public meeting were conducted from January through April 2019. Edits were made to the Program based on public comment
  - June 2019 the advisory approved forwarding the final Program to Ecology for certification, with 64 recommendations from the community-based effort.
  - July 2019 Ecology certified the Program’s consistency with the legislative intent
  - Fall 2019 an Implementation Committee was formed
  - Spring 2020 legislative appropriations in the amount of \$403,000 were secured for implementation
  - Early implementation is being led by the South Yakima Conservation District
  - Sustainable dedicated funding for implementation is the major challenge; stakeholders are still engaged and actively doing what they can with existing budgets

**Information current as of November 2020. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative’s [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)**