

**Siskiyou County Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Butte Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
SUMMARY**

Meeting date/time: June 24, 2021/ 3:00 – 6:00 pm

Location: Zoom Online Platform

Key contacts:

-Matt Parker, County Natural Resources Specialist, mparker@co.siskiyou.ca.us 530.842.8019

-Katie Duncan, Stantec Consulting – Facilitator. katie.duncan@stantec.com 916-418-8245

-Laura Foglia PhD, U.C. Davis Technical Team Lead, lfoglia@ucdavis.edu 530.219.5692

MEETING RECAP

Note: Meeting lost quorum at the final agenda item.

- **Public Comment:** No comment was provided at the outset of the meeting.
- **District Staff and Other Announcements:** Matt Parker provided an update of the GSP Schedule. DWR recapped the recent GSP initial assessments and highlighted the upcoming listening sessions on drinking water principles.
- **Approval of Past Meeting Summary.** The committee approved its May meeting summary for posting on the Siskiyou County Website, pending revision per Don Crawford’s comment.
- **Presentation on Updated Fee Study and Economic Analysis:** Josue Medellin-Azuara presented four modified land use scenarios economic. Discussion around crop representation in the model as well as potentially significant downstream economic impacts of land use change.
- **Discussion of GSP Content and Implementation:** Overview of revisions to PMAs in Chapter 4 and discussion of any lingering concerns or questions.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Status/Deadline</i>
Revise May Meeting Minutes to add Don Crawford’s comment on the use of diversion for flood control.	Facilitator	June
Josue will follow up with growers and ranchers – especially nurseries – to quantify the relationship between acreage of cultivated area and downstream economic impacts and to validate the Land IQ crop data used in the model.	Josue Medellin-Azuara	Ongoing

View [Siskiyou County’s groundwater website](#) for posted meeting materials.

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Call to Order, Agenda Review

The Facilitator thanked all for joining, reviewed the virtual meeting platform procedures, and called the meeting to order. She then reviewed the meeting agenda.

Review/Approval of Past Meeting Summary

Don Crawford commented on the use of diversion for flood control in previous meeting minutes. The Facilitator indicated that a note would be added to the meeting minutes. With this change, the Advisory Committee approved the Meeting Minutes from the May meeting to post to the website.

Review Action Items

The Facilitator reviewed action items and provided updates regarding progress toward their completion.

Public Comment

No comment was provided.

District Staff Updates and Other Announcements

Matt Parker shared an update on the schedule.

DWR has reviewed four submitted Critically Overdrafted Basins GSPs; their comments are posted on the [online portal](#). Letters were issued to the GSAs for whom the GSPs were not adopted; DWR is scheduling one-on-ones with them to bring them into alignment.

Presentation on Updated Fee Study and Economic Analysis

Josue Medellin-Azuara of UC Merced presented an economic analysis of the Scott, Shasta, and Butte Valleys for four land use change scenarios: 15%, 30%, and 60% retirement of alfalfa and pasture, as well as 33% reduction of alfalfa harvest (foregoing the third alfalfa cutting).

Patrick Graham asked whether the assessment includes impacts to the travel and/or recreation sectors, since the corridor gets a lot of through-traffic. The study focuses on the impact of fallowing ground, but what about the cascading effects?

Josue replied: some indirect cost analysis is built into the model, but it is related to the crop sector specifically. Economic impact to other sectors is not accounted for; the technical team would need to fine-tune the model to account for those broader impacts.

The group discussed representation of additional crops in the model. Richard Nelson asked why only alfalfa and pasture are fallowed in the model, while all other crops remain at static levels? He suggests adding garlic and onions to crop profile.

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Josue replied that adding crops wouldn't be a problem and that the model could be adjusted to maximize profits among the crops. He noted the tables already incorporate some level of balancing profitability with fallowing.

Spencer Cole, UC Merced, noted that the majority of onion and garlic crop growth occurs in the Tule Lake area and asked the Committee to weigh in, if there are any specific areas in Butte Valley the technical team should include.

The Facilitator noted that the Land IQ data represents crops grown in 2018 and suggested that less onion and garlic may have been grown that year.

Josue clarified that as long as the scale isn't too small (3-4 acres), it's not too difficult to incorporate new data. Spencer added that sometimes Land IQ doesn't properly categorize crops (i.e., miscellaneous or cross-listed in a different category). Josue and Spencer will connect with Richard via email to confirm or validate the numbers in the survey. Spencer noted that raspberries are identified in the survey. The technical team confirmed that Land IQ does not identify nursery crops. Josue noted that conversations such as this are important; the direct observations of local growers help groundtruth the survey.

The Facilitator added that when modeling exercises get too specific, they may lose accuracy. She reminded the group that the model is a tool to be used when considering cost/benefit feasibility. Getting the assumptions right is important, but eventually the Committee needs to decide how granular they want to get.

John Bennett noted the land analyzed here isn't owned by the same landowner. Some growers only grow a single crop. He asked how this analysis fits in with the big picture? He shared that he felt as though he were missing something.

Josue clarified that this fee study is a starting point. The model seeks to evaluate the costs on a programmatic level, not an individual level.

Patrick Graham reiterated that he also feels he is missing something.

Thomas clarified that the model allows the agency to have access to concrete costs associated with cutting back on groundwater pumping.

John shared that he is confused about why the model focuses solely on alfalfa and pasture land reduction scenarios, with no other crops adjustments shown. How does this model fit Siskiyou County/Butte Valley?

Thomas took credit for the decision to only model alfalfa and pasture. He acknowledged the limitation of the model and shared that it would only be included in the Appendix of the GSP. He requested that the Advisory Committee use this meeting as an opportunity to provide feedback for Josue.

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Don Crawford shared that he would like to see a scenario where 15% of all land is idled, not just alfalfa and pasture. He also indicated that for the fourth scenario (foregoing the third alfalfa cutting), the reduction is closer to 20% in Butte Valley, not 33%.

Richard reiterated the need to improve the model to be more representative of the crops grown in the Butte Valley.

Thomas asked whether there are additional revisions to the model the Advisory Committee would like to see the technical team incorporate, other than bringing other crops into the cost analysis?

Richard said all the crops grown in Butte Valley have significant downstream economic impacts. For example, alfalfa feeds cattle. An acre idled is not just a loss for Siskiyou County loss, but the State of California.

Josue decided to follow up with growers to obtain estimates of the relationship between acreage of a cultivated area and downstream effects.

John noted: "One size does not fit all valleys."

One attendee shared that without the berries grown in Siskiyou County, there would be no California strawberry industry. They stated: 80% of all the plants needed for the strawberry fruit industry are produced in Butte Valley. Richard shared that the same holds true for garlic, with Butte Valley's 400 acres of garlic accounts for 40% of garlic industry in the state.

Patrick asked whether the model only estimates economic loss to agriculture, in relation to GSP implementation and inquired about how impacts of GSP implementation to wildlife, domestic well users, and businesses would be accounted for.

Final considerations: Josue will need to contact growers and ranchers to do justice to the downstream effects. He would also like to have a deeper discussion with the nurseries.

Transition

Katie asked Pat Vellines to respond to a question from Howard by providing an update on the installation of a specific well in the Valley.

Pat shared details about the process of selecting a well location and installing a TSS Monitoring Well. She touched on the necessity of providing land which DWR can access in perpetuity and checking the site for CEQA compliance. Environmental scientists make inspections to conduct a species impact analysis. Cultural resources are evaluated, and a pedestrian field survey is conducted. Pat noted that DWR currently lacks the staff time to conduct these activities, but they may take this back up in the spring. Pat offered to provide a schedule to keep Howard in the loop.

Discussion of GSP Content and Implementation

The Facilitator provided an overview of revisions to PMAs in Chapter 4.

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The Advisory Committee meeting lost quorum. Decisions cannot be made today. In this context, the Facilitator asked whether the remaining attendees have questions or comments related to the revised PMA Chapter.

Don Crawford is concerned that Siskiyou County has the ultimate deciding authority.

The Facilitator clarified that they're only going to be looking at PMAs that are included in Butte Valley's list. The mandatory fallowing of land is not something the Siskiyou County Board would consider. Things they would decide on might include, for example, incentive programs for voluntary participation.

Thomas shared a slide of entire Klamath Watershed region, of which the Siskiyou County subbasins are the south west corner. He shared his concern that the Tule Lake subbasin may have interconnected impacts on the eastern edge of Butte Valley, which will be coordinated later this summer. Richard noted that large wells installed by the state in the lower corner of the map have been "pumping constantly" and that the orange line shown ought not to be considered a static boundary, given that. Thomas asked whether the Advisory Committee would like to study whether the cone of depression in that area reaches Butte Valley's boundary?

The Facilitator asked whether this inter-basin coordination is something that would or could happen in the 5-year update. Thomas indicated that coordination could possibly happen in five years, depending on the priority level of the basins. Matt commented that the first five years is supposed to be focused on coordination, before drastic infrastructure changes are implemented. In terms of the GSP, the Committee needs to move forward with the known data. In our plan, we'll state our intention to work with Tule Lake and their technical teams to learn from each other. We'll also work with the Lower Klamath basin, to make sure we don't create conflicts between basins.

Groundwater SMC

The Facilitator provided a high-level overview of the Groundwater SMC section of the GSP.

Under SGMA, there are six sustainability indicators. The focus in Butte Valley has been on groundwater levels. Of the five indicators remaining: interconnected surface water and seawater intrusion don't apply; subsidence isn't a significant issue; groundwater storage is used as a proxy; and groundwater quality has been reviewed.

Thomas provided a high-level overview of how the minimum threshold has been set.

Jeff Volberg shared that he doesn't see any adverse impacts on wildlife from the SMC.

Richard asked what level of exceedance would initiate the implementation of mitigation measures? One well? Three wells? An average of all monitored wells?

An attendee shared their uncertainty around the implementation process. The Facilitator asked Laura to speak to how uncertainty will be addressed in the plan. Laura explained that the

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technical team is working on developing a road map which will be included in Chapter 5. The subbasin wouldn't want to be in a situation where half the wells are under the minimum threshold. The technical team is going to create a table and include language in Chapter 5.

Don Crawford requested Josue's contact information and slides be provided to the Advisory Committee before the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourns

The Facilitator thanked all for participating and adjourned the meeting.

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MEETING ATTENDEES

Advisory Committee Members

Melissa, City of Dorris [left early]
Patrick Graham, CDFW Butte Valley Wildlife Refuge
Richard Nelson, Private Pumper
Don Crawford, Private Pumper
Howard Wynant, Tribal Representative
Jeffrey Volberg, Environmental/Conservation

Absent Committee Members

Don Bowen, Residential
Steve Lutz, Butte Valley Irrigation District
Greg Herman, Private Pumper
Steve Albaugh, Private Pumper

District Staff

Matt Parker, County of Siskiyou Natural Resources Specialist

Technical Team

Dr. Laura Foglia, UC Davis/Larry Walker Associates
Dr. Thomas Harter, UC Davis
Bill Rice, UC Davis
Katrina Arredondo, LWA
Josue Medellin-Azuara, UC Merced
Spencer Cole, UC Merced

Agency Staff

Janae Scruggs, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jessica Boyt, Department of Water Resources
Pat Vellines, Department of Water Resources

Absent Agency Staff

Ethan Brown, Shasta Resource Conservation District
Bryan McFaddin, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Eli Scott, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Chris Watt, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Shari Whitmore, National Marine Fisheries Service

Facilitator

Katie Duncan, Stantec
Marisa Perez-Reyes, Stantec

Members of the public

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John Bennett