

**Siskiyou County Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
MEETING SUMMARY**

Meeting date/time: November 17, 2020/ 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

- **Approval of Past Meeting Summary.** The committee approved its October meeting summary for posting on the Siskiyou County SGMA website.
- **Public Comment:** No initial public comments.
- **District Staff and Other Announcements:** Matt Parker provided a review of overall GSP process and development and there was a brief update from the ad hoc committee.
- **Review of Draft GSP Chapter 3:** This discussion was postponed to prioritize and focus meeting time on the technical SMC discussion.
- **Presentation and Discussion of SMCs in Scott Valley:** Claire Kouba and Thomas Harter shared initial analysis and potential approach for defining stream depletion SMCs. The technical team fielded a range of comments and questions from both committee members and other meeting attendees.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Status/Deadline</i>
Technical team to follow-up in sourcing specific well information in adjudicated zone.	Technical Team	January
Technical team to follow-up with appropriate agencies to confirm existing flow guidelines and understand how those can be reasonably applied.	Technical	January
Technical team to look at functional flows and other flow indicators.	Technical Team	January

Next Meeting: January 26, 2021/ 3:00 – 6:00 pm. Due to current circumstances surrounding COVID -19 the meeting will again be held online with Zoom technology.

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda Review and Approval of Past Meeting Summary

The facilitator welcomed all participants and thanked attendees for their patience with ongoing use of Zoom as alternative meeting platform during the pandemic. She secured consent from committee members to post the October meeting summary on the county’s SGMA webpage. No committee members put forward questions or expressed concerns about the agenda at the

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outset of the meeting.

Public Comment Period

At the outset, members of the public may comment on items not on the consent agenda. The public is asked to wait until the appropriate item to comment on issues directly related the current meeting agenda. No comments were provided.

District Staff and Other Updates

- Matt Parker reviewed key GSP milestones and overall schedule. In the coming months it will be important for the Advisory Committee to come to consensus on a range of important GSP elements.
- The Scott Valley Irrigator ad hoc group met on November 6, 2020 and discussed irrigation practices and efficiencies.
- Matt Parker shared that the District posted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), to obtain outside legal counsel for review of the GSP's. The RFQ closes on December 22, 2020

Presentation and Discussion of SMCs in Scott Valley

The technical team expressed intentions to build off October Advisory Committee discussions. The conversations started with framing major questions that needed to be addressed when considering sustainable management criteria or SMCs. Those questions are:

- What flowrate reduction is attributable to groundwater pumping?
- When do fish need water in the fall?
- What is the legal authority of the GSA?
- What should the minimum threshold be based on or include: water year type, streamflow, groundwater levels, stream depletion due to groundwater pumping?

Claire Kouba opened the presentation by showing a new, *preliminary* bookend scenario intended to represent the maximum legal authority of the GSA. Claire prefaced the presentation of this scenario by stating that the SMC described is not necessarily feasible or even likely, it is just meant to show a bookend condition from which the AC can work from. In this scenario, pumping is turned off outside of the adjudicated zone and all previously irrigated land is modeled as having native vegetation only. The analysis does not look at specific wells (e.g. specific wells within the adjudicated zone) but quantifies water use by land area. The attribution between well and field were inferred. Years modeled were chosen to be representative of given year type. For example, 2014 was one of the driest years and was chosen as the representative dry year.

Advisory committee members processed scenario results and agreed that this is a good reference and bookend, but it would be valuable to dig deeper and run different scenarios, including the adjudication zone if possible and scenarios based on different pumping reductions and time periods.

The following represents discussions that occurred between advisory committee members, the

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public, and the technical team.

Comment: This simulation looks at completely shutting pumping off, instead of completely shutting off pumping can the timing of pumping be adjusted? Can you achieve the same effect with a shorter irrigation season?

Comment: How are wells in the adjudicated zone that are not under the Decree included? Need to confirm that only pumps that are allocated rights in adjudicated zone are part of that modeled area. Desire to see analysis based on specific pumps.

The group also discussed and clarified terms associated with irrigation and water type. Flood irrigation is an irrigation method and can be done with either surface water or groundwater. For example, pasture crops are often flood irrigated.

Dr. Thomas Harter then presented a new metric for the SMCs. He discussed the ideas of “days gained” above threshold flowrates. Dr. Harter showed average daily flows at the Fort Jones gauge for years 1990-2020. In the figures, the columns represent the years, and each row represents a single day (September 1 – December 31). The basecase shown best represents historical conditions and is compared to management actions and scenarios to show gains achieved. It was noted that the model tends to be drier than observed flows, especially in dry years due to the relatively small differences when you simulate the water budget for the entire valley. Flows may not be exact, but trends and patterns can be simulated well. The figures show gains in the driest of years.

Comment: Just because there is enough water at the gauge, does not mean fish are getting into the valley. The Forest Service has a 40 cfs water right, we should be looking at that.

Response: The technical team has identified that monitoring flows, stream connectivity, and fish access is a data gap. Currently using 20 cfs as an indicator or placeholder, are there better flow rates to reference? We have looked at the scenario with all surface water rights intact, all groundwater pumping off outside of the adjudicated zone, in a dry year and we don’t get 40 cfs. The GSA is responsible for surface water depletion due to groundwater pumping, not responsible for stream depletion due to other actions. The figures shown show the maximum difference that the GSA can make up.

Comment: Its exciting to see scenario results and the potential opportunity to increase instream flow with in-lieu recharge (ILR) or managed aquifer recharge (MAR). October is more and more dry and challenging chinook migration. For fish passage, 18-25 cfs is considered passable but is less than ideal. It is wise as a restoration community to advocated for higher volumes.

Comment: Meeting a minimum threshold does not mean that there is a healthy salmon migration. It is important to look at the habitat piece as well.

Comment: (In reference to figures) Looking at relative gains, makes me want to look again at possible management actions to affect changes in connectivity and flow.

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Comment: It is important to use best available science. How are CDFW recommendations being included?

Response: The groundwater model is the recommended tool to predict stream water depletion. Model results establish a bottom line to consider what is feasible.

Comment. What is the scope of the GSA? Does interconnectedness of surface water and groundwater play into adjudication?

Response: GSA does not have authority over anything in the adjudicated zone but can work with the adjudicated zone to establish operational agreements. There is an incentive to do augmentation (ILR/MAR) projects to get higher stream flows rather than limit groundwater pumping.

Comment: Has there been any investigation of wells to understand if they are covered under the adjudication decree? In model, can both surface water and groundwater be used to meet demand?

Response: Technical team would like to know where to find information on specific wells within the adjudication zone and whether or not they fall under the decree.

ACTION ITEM: Technical team to follow-up in sourcing specific well information in adjudicated zone.

Comment: Current numbers are referencing an October 1st date. We need to look at where the water is coming from in the system and set a minimum threshold for summer months too. The minimum threshold should be set-up for adaptive management throughout the year.

Comment: Setting the minimum threshold is setting a number to balance what is reasonable and achievable. The graphs shown indicate it is challenging to quantify impact, is that correct?

Response: For stream flow depletion SMC, the minimum threshold needs to be set so it is economically reasonable. The GSP needs to comply with ESA, TMDL, and all other regulations or policies that exist. No current regulation sets a hard and fast threshold.

Comment: We are in uncharted territory. What exactly can the GSP can do under SGMA? It is challenging to set and meet a watershed objective with only SGMA wells and exclude the adjudication zone. Need to look at GSA objectives, the watershed objectives, and the reasonable watershed outcomes.

Comment: Where did the original 20 cfs come from?

Response: The 20 cfs flow indicates when the river disconnects and reconnects. This flow provides some accessibility but may not translate to healthy habitat. May need a different number related to ecosystem requirements.

Comment: It concerns me to be using anecdotal information. CDFW has interim flow guidelines that can be applied. There are many experts that can be referenced - CDFW, NOAA, Tribal Fisheries.

ACTION ITEM: Technical team to look follow-up with appropriate agencies to confirm existing

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flow guidelines and understand how those can be reasonably applied.

Comment: Are we using multiple minimum thresholds? If so, can we use a minimum threshold that isolates impact of SGMA wells?

Response: Individual minimum thresholds can be set, for example based on water year types. The wells must be under the jurisdiction of the agency.

Comment: How do we set individual thresholds for each well? How do we make that correlation?

Response: Potentially we could create a ledger

Comment: It would be useful to have a technical presentation of functional flows to incorporate water year variability.

Comment: Fall migration is only one part of the salmon life cycle affected by stream flow. Summer rearing habitat is also important. How much of those life phases is affected by groundwater? We should not just look at one part of the hydrograph or one part of the life cycle.

Response: What flows at any monitoring locations should be used.

Comment: Karuk can help with this.

ACTION ITEM: Technical team to look at functional flows and other flow indicators.

Matt Parker provided closing comments and thanked everyone for their participation and thoughtful discussion.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Advisory Committee Members

Brandon Fawaz, Private pumper

Tom Jopson, Private Pumper

Tom Menne, Scott Valley Irrigation District

Crystal Robinson, Quartz Valley Tribe

Drew Braugh, CalTrout, Environmental/Conservation

Paul Sweezey, Member-at-Large

Michael Stapleton, Residential

Absent Committee Members

Bill Beckwith, Fort Jones, Municipal/City

Jason Finley, Private Pumper

District Staff

Matt Parker, County of Siskiyou Natural Resources Specialist

Technical Team

Dr. Laura Foglia, UC Davis/Larry Walker Associates

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Dr. Thomas Harter, UC Davis
Claire Kouba, UC Davis
Kelsey McNeill, UC Davis/Larry Walker Associates

Agency Staff

Bryan McFaddin, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Eli Scott, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Janae Scruggs, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jessica Boyt, Department of Water Resources

Facilitator

Katie Duncan, Stantec

Members of the public

Leah Easley
Jack Rice
Betsy Stapleton
Charnna Gilmore
Joshua Saxon
Giuliano Galdi
Susan Fricke
Bonny Nichols
Joe Croteau
Preston Harris