

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Shasta Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

January 26, 2023, 3:00 – 5:00 P.M.
Held online via Zoom

Action Items:

- Matt Parker and Laura Foglia will follow up with Justin Holmes about the potential for leveraging efficiencies with the Safe Harbor projects.
- Matt will facilitate an email connection between Angelina Cook and Justin Holmes, so that Angelina can follow up with Justin offline.
- Laura will follow up with Grant Johnson about conducting model runs to compare against recently observed conditions.
- Anyone interested in having monitoring instrumentation installed at their projects should reach out to Eli Scott at the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Attachments/Links:

- PowerPoint Presentation Slides (attached)

Attendees: see last page

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. Call to Order, Introductions, Agenda Review, and Virtual Meeting Structure

Facilitator Emily Finnegan reviewed virtual meeting guidelines. Chair John Tannaci convened the meeting and conducted a roll call of Advisory Committee (AC) Members, establishing quorum (see Attendance on last page). John also reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. Approval of Past Meeting Summary, Notice of 2023 Meeting Schedule and Formats

John noted that the meeting location should read “Montague,” not “Montgomery.”

Robert Moser motioned to accept the previous meeting minutes and Grant Johnson seconded. The September 2022 Meeting Summary was approved and will be posted to the [Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\) Website](#).

Facilitator Marisa Perez-Reyes shared the dates and format for Shasta Valley Advisory Committee meetings anticipated to be held in 2023 which include:

- April 27 – in person only
- July 27 – online only
- October 26 – in person only

Marisa explained that the reason for the alternating in-person/virtual format is to save on staff budget and reduce travel time for AC members. John solicited input from the Committee about their preferred format:

- Steve Mains and Robert Moser prefer having the hybrid option. Steve, specifically, has regular meetings that start at 5pm, so if meetings are fully in person he would need to leave 20 minutes early.

District staff will take Committee responses into consideration when planning the April meeting.

3. Public Comment Period

Members of the public were invited to provide comments unrelated to meeting agenda items. No public comments were shared.

4. District Staff Updates

Matt Parker shared updates:

- Advisory Committee Terms and Roles:
 - The Private Pumper seat is currently vacant. The application period will be open between February 15 and March 15. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the GSA Board in early April.
 - Chair and Vice-Chairs will be playing a more active role in conducting these meetings, moving forward. Both roles will be confirmed at the April meeting. Chairs will be given the opportunity to continue in their role, otherwise they will go through a nomination process.

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- The Board will review a draft well permitting guidelines at their February 7 meeting.
 - This will be the first time that members of the public as well as the Advisory Committee will have the opportunity to weigh in. Depending on the feedback received during that meeting, the Board may direct the Advisory Committee and GSA staff to review the guidelines and provide feedback.
 - Matt will send the Board materials to the SGMA email list on the Friday preceding the Board meeting.
- DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Implementation Grant
 - Matt provided an overview of the components which were included in the DWR SGM implementation grant application.
 - John Tannaci asked for additional information about Component 8, the Grenada Irrigation District project.
 - Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates (LWA), added details about the idea behind the project, which is in response to a number of shallow, domestic wells going dry. She noted that Steve Mains was involved in helping to get the project started.
 - Pat Vellines, Department of Water Resources (DWR), shared information about the applications that DWR received for the grant funds:
 - There were 82 applicants of the potential 94 basins that could have applied, one of which was deemed ineligible. \$200 million is currently available and \$780 million was requested. DWR is hoping that SB 170 could add an additional \$60 million to the total amount available, therefore, they will wait until the end of the legislative session when the state budget is approved to list the final awards (possibly August or September).
 - There are at least 4 rounds of review conducted internally, including review by DWR's Financial Assistance Branch in April. Draft grant awards won't be released until June. There will be a public comment period on the draft awards. Following that, internal notifications occur and the final awards won't be released until at least October 2023.
 - This round prioritized funding for non-critically overdrafted basins, which includes Siskiyou.
 - Angelina asked about the lack of funding for conservation efforts under the irrigation efficiency project. She also asked for details about who will be implementing the well inventory program.
 - Matt replied that Component 6, the Ranch Assessment project, does include funding for conservation education, it's just not included in the summarized bullet-point list.
 - Matt provided information about the well inventory program, which will be entirely voluntary. He shared information about Tehama County's mandatory, fee-based approach, which he anticipates wouldn't be well-received in Siskiyou County for a variety of reasons. More information about the Tehama program can be found at: <https://tehamacountywater.org/gsa/well-registration-form/>
 - Justin Holmes asked for clarification about how Component 6 differs from Safe Harbor projects.
 - Matt replied that they could likely integrate those efforts.
 - The Park's Creek and Shasta River diversion points of the China Ditch could be combined or incorporated with the SGMA effort. Justin also mentioned an additional groundwater recharge study that the Edson-Foulke Ditch Company volunteered for, which this effort could tie into.
 - Justin volunteered to follow up with Matt and Laura about the safe harbor projects. Angelina Cook also requested follow-up with Justin to learn more about the projects mentioned.
 - Laura added that even though not all the components will be funded, the process of creating the project descriptions has been useful. They can continue to flesh out the descriptions and join forces with others to apply for projects that don't get funded.
 - Gregg Werner asked whether the GSA would have the opportunity to weigh in on how funds are distributed if DWR does not fund the full award.
 - Matt replied that they contacted DWR before grant submittal to see if they could work with them after the fact on making funding decisions, but the answer was no. Pat added that this is why the Components are ranked in the application.

5. Update on Preparations for the Annual Report

Laura Foglia (LWA) shared updates on preparations for the Annual Report to be submitted in April 2023 and provided an overview of hydrological conditions and basin modeling efforts. See attached PowerPoint slides. Highlights included:

- Overview of contents of Annual Report, which include:
 - GSA progress in GSP implementation (including AC meetings)
 - Data collected from the monitoring network
 - Groundwater extractions, surface water supply, total water use and changes in groundwater storage
- Hydrographs showing groundwater elevations through September 2022. The hydrographs include the upper and lower measurable objectives, soft triggers, and minimum threshold metrics.

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- Some wells are already hitting the trigger points and minimum thresholds. Laura advised the Committee that they should take a closer look at the problematic wells and make a preliminary plan.
- Some wells are fairly stable, and others are highly variable across years. Recharge in the winter season is not happening as much as it did in the past.
 - Justin Holmes pointed out that the wells in the Gazelle area were impacted because Willow Creek (the primary source of groundwater in the area) was completely dry. The variation is likely a result of that, and the curtailments.
 - Laura confirmed this and suggested the group think about the ditches more seriously. Particularly, the ditches that are dry in winter on the west side. They need to look at the bigger picture. There are talks about submitting a different grant application to fund leaky ditch studies.
- Grant Johnson recommended including annual snow water equivalents from SNOTEL.
- Laura reflected that if there isn't enough recharge in winter, the groundwater levels in the summer may continue to decline. She noted that the data available suggests that management actions may not be functioning in the way it was perhaps intended. It's time to think about possible solutions and ways forward.

Members of the Committee asked questions on the presentation:

- Grant asked when the continuous monitoring data would be incorporated into the GSP.
 - Laura replied that the continuous data will be incorporated in the Five-Year (2027) GSP Update. She shared her screen with preliminary results of the continuous data. The advantage of the continuous data is being able to see reactions to recent storms on a more localized temporal scale. It tells them which areas of the aquifer are highly responsive to recharge and which don't react as much. Some QA/QC is still needed for some of the data.
 - They will share a summary of the continuous data, once they're done with the Annual Report. She sees the data as critical for better understanding the dynamics in the system.
 - Grant suggested pairing these data with CASGEM, if possible. Laura shared that they will pair these with wells that are nearby. She'll also compare it against precipitation.
 - Grant reflected on the importance of this data in avoiding investments in recharge projects in areas that aren't conducive to recharge or aren't connected to the surface water system. Laura affirmed this statement, and noted that this data will help to make preliminary decisions on priority areas for recharge. She noted that in some wells, it's not that the recharge isn't arriving, but there's a big difference in timing. Recharge that occurs in December may not show up until much later in some wells.
- John asked if the technical team is confident that rising water levels are due to precipitation events rather than reduced pumping.
 - Laura replied that the increases appear in the hydrographs after October, so yes. Specifically, they show responses to the big storm at the end of December.
- Angelina asked about additional water quality information and Laura replied that it's already included in the GSP.

A draft version of the Annual Report will be distributed to the Advisory Committee for comments by the end of February. The final version will be submitted by April 1.

6. Committee Member Updates and Discussion

John shared that only two pivots blew over in Gazelle during the storms. He asked if anyone knew about any others and there was no response.

John highlighted the relevance of the Annual Report to Committee discussions and suggested that the presentation on the Annual Report in April might represent an opportunity for the AC to recommend actions.

- Matt confirmed that the GSA has authority to take action to prevent pumping, though they would want to have procedures in place and the GSA Board would not be supportive of enacting this authority.
- Laura elaborated on the value of the Annual Report as an opportunity for the GSA to course-correct, or to investigate certain results. She noted that there are some areas where domestic wells are going dry.

Grant asked if there are plans to conduct model runs against the conditions that were observed.

- Laura replied that they have done this, in part, with grant funds from Lawrence Livermore. Laura suggested that something they could do with the model is set an objective and run the simulation to identify what is needed to protect those areas. Grant expressed support for the way Laura is proposing to use the model. Laura will send information to Grant after the meeting.

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Justin Holmes noted that right now data is tracked by calendar year, but the rainy season starts in November. He asked if it would be possible to shift that, in the future.

- Laura expressed agreement and said they would share several options for precipitation analysis. Those improvements could be made with the idea that it'd help people better track the data and make decisions accordingly.

John Tannaci asked if there's any funding left in the pot for installing continuous well monitors.

- Matt shared that there is no funding left, though additional funding could be pursued.

7. Other Agency Updates

Erin Ragazzi, State Water Board, shared there are no curtailments currently in effect. The State Water Board had temporarily suspended the regulations which prevented diversions for filling stockwater ditches. Those suspensions are back in place now, but it is possible that those drought emergency regulations will be reinstated.

- John Tannaci asked about whether ditches may be filled for the purpose of fire protection. Erin suggested that those who plan to do so should coordinate with the State Water Board, but noted that they did not closely track or enforce restrictions on using ditches for fire protection last year.

Pat Vellines shared an update about the GSP review period. Four determinations came out today, from the North-Central regions of the state and anyone can view those online. As reviews are finished, they will be posted. She noted that unless a plan has significant issues that warrant an incomplete determination, DWR is likely to provide conditional approvals, with corrections to be made in the Five-Year Updates.

Janae Scruggs, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), shared that they've hired a Water Rights Coordinator for the region: Philip Cramer. He will be the lead for the Department's comments on the basin. Others such as herself will still be involved.

Chris Watt, Regional Water Quality Control Board, shared updates including:

- Their office is planning to do a short-term renewal of waivers for land use activities.
- The Regional Board readopted the low threat waiver of discharge permits.
- The Regional Board will provide monitoring instruments to support the collection of data for a variety of projects (for example, they provided pressure transducers for a ditch project). He suggested that those who are interested in having instrumentation installed for any projects should reach out to Eli Scott.

8. Closing, Next Steps

Marisa shared about the Board Workshop on Strategic Planning for SGMA, to be held on February 7. The meeting will be in person at the Board of Supervisors Chambers in Yreka with the option to join virtually. The Workshop will seek direction from the GSA Board on the development of a Multi-Basin Management Strategy Document, including discussion of results from stakeholder assessment interviews and the draft Strategy Document vision statement, goals, and strategies. There will be a second workshop to discuss specific tactics or actions.

The next AC meeting will be held in person on Thursday April 27. Additional information (including whether a virtual option will be offered) will be distributed closer to the date. Topics for future meetings include:

- Discussion on potentially problematic wells and what the data suggest for management actions the AC should consider taking.

9. Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned early, at 4:30 P.M.

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MEETING PARTICIPANTS:

Advisory Committee Members Present:

John Tannaci, Chair
Lisa Faris
Gregg Werner
Steve Mains
Grant Johnson, Vice-Chair
Robert Moser
Justin Sandahl
Justin Holmes
Blair Hart
Tristan Allen

No Advisory Committee members were absent.

Agency Staff and Members of the Public:

Adam Weinberg, SWRCB
Angelina Cook
Bill Hirt
Andrew Caldwerwood
Ayn Perry SVRCD
Benjamin McCovery, Division of Water Rights
Chris Watt, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Eli Scott, Regional Board
Erin Ragazzi, State Water Board
Janae Scruggs, CDFW
John Clements
Leah Grassman, Scott-Shasta Watermaster District
Pat Vellines, DWR
Philip Cramer, CDFW
Rebecca Smith
Sydnie S
Zack Zwahlen
Bill Sliker

Project Team:

Matt Parker, GSA staff
Marisa Perez-Reyes, Stantec
Emily Finnegan, Stantec
Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates
Bill Rice, Larry Walker and Associates
Katrina Arredondo, Larry Walker and Associates
Helen Zhou, Larry Walker and Associates