

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

August 31, 2023, 3:00 – 6:00 P.M.
In-person at the Shasta Transit Station or online via Zoom

Action Items:

- Members of the Advisory Committee (at a regular meeting or in an ad hoc group) are to discuss and develop of a statement of locally supported agreements to submit to the State Water Board regarding the proposed instream flow process.

Attachments/Links:

- PowerPoint Presentation Slides (attached)

Attendees: see last page

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Matt Parker, Siskiyou County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) staff, welcomed attendees and Chair John Tannaci conducted a roll call to establish quorum. Marisa Perez-Reyes, Facilitator, reviewed the Agenda and called attention to virtual attendees. Attendance is provided on the last page.

2. Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Chair Tannaci presented the April 27, 2023 meeting summary for the Committee's approval. The date listed in the draft minutes was incorrect. Otherwise, the April Summary was approved to be posed on the website, following correction.

3. Public Comment Period on Non-Agenda Items

Members of the public and representatives from other agencies were invited to provide comments unrelated to meeting agenda items and updates from their agencies, respectively.

Ginger Sammito provided a public comment regarding an item from the previous meeting, saying that the price for meters on a domestic well are far below the value that was cited previously. She also provided an update on water trucked for illegal marijuana growth, which amounts to approximately 130,000 gallons of water per day. Additionally, a previously unknown chemical has been found in local soils which, in the case of a fire, could result in a toxic cloud. It could also be contaminating groundwater. The public should be aware of this risk. She mentioned an issue with the curtailments at Big Springs canal not being respected by water truckers and requested surveillance in the area. She also highlighted a discrepancy in how domestic well groundwater use is estimated by different groups as two acre-feet or 400 gallons per minute.

- Grant Johnson responded to Ginger's comment to clarify that the role of the Advisory Committee is to advise, not act, and wanted to make sure Ginger is directing her comments to the right governing body.

A member of the public who did not share their name requested an informational presentation on the Shasta Valley groundwater model in the near future so that the public can better understand the assumptions it builds from.

4. DWR Updates

The new California Department of Water Resources (DWR) point of contact, Alyse Briody, introduced themselves and provided the following updates:

- The Regional Coordinator position previously held by Pat Vellines has not been filled yet. Alyse is taking on Point of Contact duties.
- Draft awards for the DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Implementation Round 2 grant were announced in May. Final grant awards are anticipated to be announced in September. The process of executing the contract will begin in October.

5. District Staff Updates

Matt Parker noted the vacant seat on the Advisory Committee that they are hoping to fill.

7. Committee Discussion on Updated Draft Well Permitting Process (advanced on the Agenda)

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Rick Dean, Community Development Director at Siskiyou County Department of Environmental Health, and Matt provided an overview of the changes that are being made to Siskiyou County's draft well permitting process, including:

- Detailed description and clarification of “de minimus” domestic and/or stockwater wells,
- Updated definitions and clarification of replacement, emergency, and deepening wells,
- Evaluation matrices, including a table to evaluate impacts to “nearby” wells which correlate gallons per minute to distance from wells. Matrices also include mapping to show transmittal times for public trust.

The Board is still working on what to do about indemnifications, and there are discussions on a potential streamlined programmatic approach for the future. See PowerPoint slides for full details. Matt invited members of the Committee to provide feedback to the GSA Board.

The Committee reviewed the draft process dated February 2023 and received suggestions from the Committee:

- Edit to the stockwater well definition to clarify it should exclude use for irrigation.
- Some believe that full exemptions for public water systems and de minimus users won't stand up legally. Rick replied that those exemptions come from the Executive Order.
- Amend page 9 to add a clause requiring the certified hydrogeologist to find a new groundwater well wouldn't adversely impact interconnected surface waters or public trust doctrine. The group discussed the possibility for using the existing Shasta Valley groundwater model to support hydrogeologists' analyses, but acknowledged the model's current limitations.
- Set an upper limit on de minimus groundwater usage.
 - A question was asked of the technical team, wondering if they had estimates for how much water is used by de minimus – at this point, they have no idea and more information on this will be shared later.
 - Some were concerned that chasing the smallest water users takes a lot of money for what may not prove to be a benefit of corresponding magnitude.
 - Note that a higher rate of domestic water use (85%) filters back into the aquifer, as opposed to agricultural wells which have a lower rate of return.

Dave Webb, member of the public, suggested tightening up the language at the end of page 8 and top of page 9, to ensure that wells that allege to be used for public or community water systems are actually used for that purpose. Rick replied that those types of water systems submit applications for other permits to the County, and verification can be obtained that way.

Ginger asked how members of the community could stay informed or weigh in on public or community water system development. Rick shared that large projects would go through the Planning Department's public process.

Matt shared details about the timeline, noting that the revised process will go before the Board on October 17.

6. Committee Discussion on the State Water Board's Process for Establishing Minimum Instream Flows for the Scott and Shasta Rivers

Matt provided information on the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) meeting on August 15 regarding the establishment of minimum instream flows for the Scott and Shasta Rivers and invited members of the Committee to advise the GSA Board on their role in that process. While the State Water Board has not formally asked for the GSA's involvement, Matt does coordinate with them.

A member of the Committee noted that from a data collection standpoint, it's unlikely that the State Water Board is missing anything that the GSA has access to, given that Dr. Harter is under contract with them for evaluation work in the Scott Valley. Some members expressed support for the GSA to have a role in the State Water Board's process because it's probable the requirement will affect groundwater. Another member contended that the instream flows being suggested by the State Water Board don't appear to be based on anything concrete and they suggested a role for the groundwater model to predict streamflow.

- Laura responded to this suggestion with a note about the model's shortcomings, relative to the Scott Valley model which benefited from State Water Board funding. With the new DWR grant award, they will be able to revamp the Shasta model to improve accuracy.
- The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) groundwater model is serving as a starting point for the Klamath Restoration work. LWA is coordinating with both USGS and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; both work from the same model and pass updates back and forth. The State Water Board is also involved in the Klamath work.
- LWA has developed a new geological model that incorporates new geophysical data from the airborne electromagnetic (AEM) surveys, which they plan to share at the October meeting. There may be some areas where they have better confidence in the model, and some areas where they'll have to make assumptions.

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One member of the Committee shared their belief that curtailments have already greatly impacted groundwater users, particularly those that rely on domestic wells, and that Big Springs Irrigation District was sustainable until the curtailments came along. A different member acknowledged that while resources have been tight in recent years, they disagree that water usage was ever sustainable in Shasta Valley, and that's why SGMA exists.

Another Committee Member highlighted the interdependencies of groundwater with surface water. It's likely that if there are limitations in the future, it would impact groundwater and the County should be interested and engaged on both sides of it. The issue has bearing for making decisions about which wells get shut-off in the event of a curtailment.

The group discussed the accessibility of information the State Water Board is working from, particularly any studies they generate. Grant shared that the Tuesday flows group is a good opportunity to engage. This week, Eric Ek Dahl asked about level of interest in workshops and other public input meetings. Blair clarified that he is curious whether there is a process similar to CEQA, in terms of studying cumulative impacts. He mentioned that public trust extends to shore birds. Grant replied that economic analysis is part of the process, and he thinks the State Water Board has been very supportive of input. Blair concluded with agreement that the minimum flow discussion needs to move out of an emergency space into something more established.

Matt shared about the Scott Valley Advisory Committee's approach, which includes further group discussion to develop a statement of locally supported agreements to submit to the State Water Board. Members of the Committee generally expressed support for taking a similar approach, though one member suggested focusing the Committee's energy on calls with the State Water Board. Laura added that a big point in Scott Valley was data sharing, and emphasized that improvements would be needed in Shasta Valley, too.

Blair posed a question to the group regarding how the TMDL process plays into the establishment of minimum instream flows.

8. Break

The Advisory Committee took a ten-minute break and reconvened at 4:45.

9. Presentation on Basin Conditions and the DWR SGM Round 2 Grant Award

Laura Foglia shared a presentation reviewing comments received on the basin's GSP determination, basin conditions, model updates, and the draft DWR SGM Round 2 grant award, and introduced a new team member, Olin Applegate. See attached PowerPoint.

- **The GSP has been approved.** The comments on the plan need to be addressed by 2027 in the next update. Laura noted that DWR's letter of approval is on their website. The main areas for improvement include:
 - Provide current water budget
 - Fill data gaps to better understand water quality and interconnected surface water (ISW)
 - Need to revisit sustainable management criteria (SMC) definitions on water quality and ISW
 - Coordinate and collaborate with other agencies to understand beneficial users
- **SGM Implementation Grant.** Shasta Valley received \$6.1 million in grant funds to spend through 2026, though this amount may be reduced in the final awards anticipated in September. Given the volume of work that needs to be accomplished, the technical team proposed convening ad hoc meetings to supplement the quarterly Advisory Committee schedule. Members of the Committee and the public were encouraged to sign up to participate in ad hoc groups, which would meet and then report out at full group meetings. See PowerPoint slides for more details. Projects include:
 - SGMA Compliance and GSP Updates
 - Fee study and economic analysis
 - Well inventory
 - GW/SW Connectivity Study
 - Recharge Feasibility Study
 - Grenada Irrigation District
 - Upland management

Laura noted that the Grenada Irrigation District project is similar to a consumptive use study. The upland management component is a proof-of-concept that doesn't fund actual removal. Blair noted that there is government-owned land on the eastern side of the valley with juniper that needs to be removed.

Blair and Steve provided remarks regarding the well inventory. Blair said the cumulative impact of wells installed after the decree in the 1960s is significant. He supports the development of a comprehensive water budget, including installing meters on every well, regardless of type. Angelina Cook, public participant, expressed optimism about the level of

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participation in the inventory effort. Laura provided details about the early success they had in Butte Valley well survey, noting that the City of Dorris and Butte Valley Irrigation District sent out flyers.

- **Monitoring.** Laura provided a brief overview of the current groundwater level monitoring points.
- **Model updates** were brief, as an extensive update on the model will be presented at the October meeting.

Matt provided a brief update on the groundwater data platform.

10. Updates on Groundwater Related Projects

a. Karuk Fisheries and Restoration work – Toz Soto

Toz Soto, fisheries staff with the Karuk Tribe, provided an informational presentation on two projects underway using California emergency drought funding, one of which is a Coho supplementation project that uses remote site incubators in the Big Springs Complex. He noted that a similar project is happening on the McCloud River with winter run Chinook.

The second is a habitat project in Little Springs that includes preparation of a restoration plan to evaluate opportunities, conduct of a water assessment to understand surface and groundwater interactions and temperatures/depths, and bringing at least one concept to full design and implementation. The overarching goal for the area is to create slow, deep-water habitats for fish (particularly for spawning) and to resolve fish passage issues. The project is at very early stages and they welcome suggestions and input. See PowerPoint slide. Toz will have more information to share in about six months.

b. Siskiyou County Farm Bureau projects – Jim Morris

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

c. Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District – Rob/Ethan

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

11. Open Committee Member Discussion

Due to a shortage of time, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

12. Closing, Action Items, and Future Agenda Items

At the time of this meeting, the date for the next Shasta Valley Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for October 26. It was later updated to October 25. Items for the Agenda are anticipated to include:

- Update on Strategy Document and new facilitation support activities,
- Fee study,
- Presentation of the updated Shasta Valley groundwater model, and
- Updated information on water use for 2023.

13. Adjourn, Schedule Ad Hoc Groups

The meeting adjourned by 6:00 P.M. and Committee Members signed up to participate in ad hoc meetings on certain grant component-related topics. The following members volunteered for groups as follows:

- Data gaps and monitoring, including interconnected surface water
 - Gregg Werner
 - Dave Webb (keep informed)
 - Lisa Faris
 - Grant Johnson
- Groundwater Recharge Opportunities
 - Steve Mains
 - Dave Webb
 - Justin Sandahl
 - Lisa Faris
 - Grant Johnson (only if GID project is funded)
- Uplands Management
 - Tristan Allen, absent from this meeting, was volunteered for this ad hoc group
 - Grant Johnson

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MEETING PARTICIPANTS:

* online participant

Advisory Committee Members Present:

Blair Hart
Grant Johnson, Vice-Chair
Gregg Werner
John Tannaci, Chair
Justin Sandahl
Lisa Faris
Steve Mains

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Justin Holmes
Robert Moser
Tristan Allen

Agency Staff and Members of the Public:

Alyse Briody, California Department of Water Resources
Angelina Cook, Shasta Headwaters
Charlene Watkins, Big Springs
Dan Wessell, Department of Environmental Health, County of Siskiyou
Dave Webb, Friends of Shasta River
Ginger Sammito, Big Springs
Hailey Lang, Department of Environmental Health, County of Siskiyou
Janae Scruggs, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jess Harris
Kurt Bainbridge, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Linda Söller, UC Davis
Rick Dean, Community Development, Department of Environmental Health, County of Siskiyou
Toz Soto, Karuk Tribe Fisheries
*Adam Weinberg, Water Rights
*Ayn Perry, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District
*Carol Cupp
*Eli Scott, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
*Erin Ragazzi, State Water Board Resources Control Board
*Ethan Brown, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District
*Philip Cramer, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
*Shahab Araghinejad, State Water Resources Control Board
*Sheila

Project Team:

Matt Parker, GSA staff
Marisa Perez-Reyes, Stantec
Craig Moyle, Stantec
Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates
Kelsey McNeill, Larry Walker and Associates
Olin Applegate, Larry Walker and Associates