

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin May 12, 2021

A SPECIAL meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Western Management Area (WMA) in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin was held on Wednesday, 12 May 2021. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency and Governor Newsom's Executive Orders to protect public health by limiting public gatherings, and requiring social distancing, this meeting occurred solely via teleconference as authorized by and in furtherance of Executive Order Nos. N-29-20 and N-33-20.

GSA Committee Directors Present: Chris Brooks, Meighan Diethofer (Acting as Alternate), Myron Heavin, Steve Jordan, Kristin Worthley (Acting as Alternate)

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Katherine Stewart

Staff Present: Mr. Joe Barget, Mr. Bill Buelow, Ms. Amber Thompson

Others Present: Mr. Bryan Bondy, Mr. Matt Brady, Mr. Doug Circle, Mr. John Fio (EKI), Mr. Trevor Jones (Dudek), Ms. Karen Kistler, Mr. Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Mr. Matt Naftaly (Dudek), Mr. Steve Slack (CDFW), Mr. Scott Williams, plus 3 other members of the public whose names were not registered.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Director Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and asked Mr. Buelow to call roll. Three Committee Directors and two Acting Alternate Directors were present providing a quorum.

II. Introductions and Review of SGMA in Santa Ynez River Valley Basin

Mr. Buelow announced names of phone attendees.

Mr. Buelow reviewed history of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements and Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development milestones completed so far in the Santa Ynez River Basin. The WMA GSA Committee released a Draft Water Budget Technical Memo, opened it for public comment and has received public comments and WMA CAG input during the open comment period. At this time, the WMA GSA is beginning discussion on Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs).

He advised that all although current public comment periods are closed, previously released documents can still be located on SantaYnezWater.org. He reminded everyone

of at least two more additional public comment periods to be opened for the documents in the future. He also directed attendees to the newsletters on SantaYnezWater.org for more information on SGMA in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin.

III. Additions or Deletions, if any, to the Agenda

No additions or deletions were made.

IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

V. Receive Presentation from Stetson Team on “Sustainable management Criteria for the WMA”

Mr. Trevor Jones (Dudek) presented Sustainable Management Criteria for the WMA dated May 12, 2021.

There was public comment, GSA Committee Member, consultant, and staff discussion following the presentation.

- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin expressed concern with salt and nutrient concentrations exceeding Water Quality Objectives (slide 9) and asked if there is a way to restrict use of water softener salts in area as this is a regional problem and both MHCS and VVCSD have resolutions restricting use of water softener salt systems in their jurisdictions, but water softeners are still being installed and used plus salts are still sold locally. Discussion followed.
- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan questioned the possibility of Sea Water Intrusion in the WMA per the “20H rule” since freshwater weighs less than seawater and the area near the ocean does have wells with pressure head to keep seawater out. Mr. Jones explained about existing estuaries and SGMA rules that seawater intrusion must be addressed even though there is no historical evidence of seawater intrusion. Discussion continued.
 - GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan pointed out that there are other sources of chloride in the area than from seawater.
 - Mr. Bill Buelow stated Stetson Engineers has analyzed chloride concentration data to determine different causes of increases in sodium levels. He also advised that estuaries did extend further east than they do now so there may be pockets of brackish seawater still remaining and is reflected in the Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model.
 - GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan asked about the elevation of the lagoon and if that has been considered. Mr. Jones stated it is currently at 7-8 feet above sea level. Mr. Buelow added there is also a sand dam that can affect water flow and lagoon elevation especially in winter.

- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan suggested interconnected surface water between the upper and lower aquifers be further evaluated as previous modelers have shown there to be very little connectivity between upper and lower aquifers therefore pumping of groundwater may not actually create the depletion of interconnected surface water.
- GSA Committee Alternate Director Katherine Stewart and Mr. Joe Barget both asked for clarifications on well impact analysis (slide 6) per user types. Mr. Jones explained the well impact analysis further.
- GSA Committee Alternate Ms. Meighan Diethofer asked on slide 3 why groundwater elevations in the lower aquifer exhibit declining groundwater levels while groundwater elevations in upper aquifer remain relatively stable. Mr. Jones estimates the lower aquifer has higher water use than recharge amounts while upper aquifer water-use and recharge are more balanced.
 - Myron Heavin asked if the declining trend of groundwater elevations in lower aquifer hydrograph means City of Lompoc's current water use is not sustainable for continued growth and pumping. Mr. Jones explained it shows the current trend and the need to define a level that will be considered undesirable.
- GSA Committee Alternate Ms. Meighan Diethofer asked if WMA received any feedback on the Draft Water Budget from NOAA addressing GDE with respects to steelhead. Mr. Buelow confirmed NOAA submitted a letter as comments on the Draft Water Budget which will be submitted with other public comments to consultants.
- Bryan Bondy made the following comments:
 - Costs for water pre-treatment to reduce water hardness as alternative to increased chloride levels from home water softener may fall on Ag pumpers who do not have any hard water issues and does not recommend pursuing.
 - Groundwater levels for Sustainable Management Criteria set at top of screen should be reevaluated. He recommends answering the question "what level is the level where people cannot produce water to support their basic needs". Since levels of top of screen vary then choosing that is an arbitrary depth and feels should be reevaluated.
 - Concerned with setting level at 500 mg/l chloride in water as it is not good for Ag use.
 - Water Quality proposed objective is to meet RWCB standards, but WMA is already not meeting those objectives. Therefore, why set a goal that cannot be achieve. Consider that water quality may not be due to groundwater pumping.
- GSA Committee Alternate Ms. Meighan Diethofer commented that although setting groundwater level at top of screen seems abstract there are real world impacts for water users.

- Mr. Bill Buelow recommended Committee Directors review approach outlined in the presentation today, have conversations with staff and consultants and be prepared to give direction to staff and consultants at next meeting.
- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked if consultants know how much water flowing through WMA goes out to the ocean versus how much groundwater is actually pumped. Mr. Jones was not sure of the percentages.

VI. Next Regular WMA GSA Meeting: Wednesday, May 26, 2021, 10:00 AM

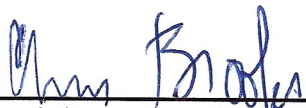
Mr. Buelow announced that the next WMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting to include conducting quarterly business will be Wednesday, May 26, 2021, 10:00 AM, via video/teleconference.

VII. WMA GSA Committee requests and comments

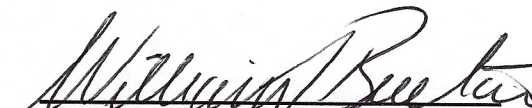
There were no requests or comments.

VIII. Adjournment

GSA Committee Director Brooks adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.



Chris Brooks, Chairman



William J. Buelow, Secretary