

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin February 23, 2022

A regular meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Western Management Area (WMA) in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin was held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, this meeting occurred solely via teleconference as recommended by Santa Barbara County Public Health, as authorized by State Assembly Bill 361, and Resolution WMA-2021-001 (passed on 10/20/2021, reaffirmed 1/5/2022).

GSA Committee Directors Present: Jeremy Ball, Chris Brooks, Myron Heavin, and Steve Jordan

GSA Alternate Committee Directors Present: Ron Stassi, Kristin Worthley

Staff Present: Bill Buelow, Brad Hagemann, Kevin Walsh, and Matt Young

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Ken DaMako, John Fio (EKI), Karen Kistler, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), and Charlie Witt

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Chair Chris Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to call roll. A quorum was met with four Directors in attendance. Two Alternate Directors were also present.

II. Consider findings under Government Code section 54953(e)(3) to authorize continuing teleconference meetings under Resolution WMA-2021-001

Mr. Buelow explained that the reasonings for State Assembly Bill 361 and adoption of Resolution WMA-2021-001, passed on October 20, 2021, and reaffirmed on January 5, 2022, which authorized teleconference public meetings were still in effect. Discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION to authorize continuing teleconference meetings under Resolution WMA-2021-001. GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

III. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

No additions or deletions were made.

IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

V. Discuss and consider appointment of WMA GSA Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee Directors discussed assignment of Chair and Vice-Chair. GSA Director Myron Heavin made a MOTION for Chris Brooks to continue as Chair and to appoint Jeremy Ball as Vice-Chair. GSA Director Steve Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VI. Review and consider approval of meeting minutes of November 17, 2021, December 8, 2021, and January 5, 2022

The minutes of the GSA Committee meetings on November 17, 2021, December 8, 2021, and January 5, 2022, were presented for GSA Committee approval.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION to approve the minutes of November 17, 2021, December 8, 2021, and January 5, 2022, as presented. GSA Director Myron Heavin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VII. Review and consider approval of Financial Statements and Warrant List

The GSA Committee reviewed the financial reports of FY 2021-22 Periods 4 through 6 (through December 31, 2021) and the Warrant Lists for October, November, and December 2021. Discussion followed.

GSA Director Myron Heavin made a MOTION to approve the financial reports and the Warrant List for October, November, and December 2021 Warrant Lists (Nos. 1038-1046) totaling \$55,234.68, as presented. GSA Director Steve Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VIII. Review and consider approval of calendar of Regular GSA meetings for 2022 and location of Regular and Special Meetings

Mr. Buelow presented a list of Regular GSA meetings for the 2022 calendar year. He reported that the WMA GSA regularly meets on Wednesday morning of the fourth week in the second month of each quarter (February, May, August, and November) but the date in November could be difficult due to the Thanksgiving holiday. So, the November Regular meeting is proposed to be held one week earlier on November 16, 2022. Discussion followed. Directors provided unanimous consensus.

Mr. Buelow reminded everyone that WMA GSA meetings prior to the Covid-19 pandemic were held in person at the Lompoc Water Treatment Plant. He asked if that location would continue to work for the Committee once meetings are resumed to being held in person. GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks offered use of the Vandenberg Village Community Services District Conference Room as a back up location. Discussion

followed. Directors unanimously preferred to rotate the meeting location to available WMA GSA member agency sites.

IX. Consider approval of printing costs for public copies of the WMA GSP

Mr. Buelow reported the cost estimate to provide a color hard copy of the GSP which was submitted to DWR in January 2022 to the local public library (Lompoc Public Library and/or Vandenberg Village Public Library) is approximately \$500. Alternatively, at no-cost, a digital version can be shared with the public library and be available to the public at the library.

GSA Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION directing staff to wait on providing a printed copy of the current submitted version of the WMA GSP, with cost not to exceed \$500, until a specific request for a printed copy is received. GSA Director Chris Brooks seconded the motion. Discussion followed. GSA Director Steve Jordan withdrew the MOTION.

GSA Director Jeremy Ball made a MOTION directing staff to provide a printed copy of the current submitted version of the WMA GSP, with cost not to exceed \$500, at the Lompoc Public Library, with option to change location to the Vandenberg Village Public Library. GSA Director Chris Brooks seconded the motion and it passed 3-1-0 by roll call vote with GSA Director Myron Heavin voting NO.

X. Receive update from WMA CAG Meeting of February 4, 2022

Ms. Karen Kistler presented a Memorandum dated February 4, 2022, which she prepared on behalf of the WMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG), summarizing the WMA CAG Workshop and Q & A on Future Governance Options held on February 4, 2022. Discussion followed.

Mr. Ken DaMako informed the GSA Committee about an offshore desalination plant option being researched for possible future installation by the Vandenberg Space Force Base as its primary water source and he offered to arrange a presentation by Seawell Water to the GSA Committee at a future meeting. Discussion followed.

XI. Receive cost update and presentation from Stetson on the First Annual Report for the WMA

Mr. Curtis Lawler, Stetson Engineers, reported that the WMA GSP was submitted to DWR in January and showed those present how to access and comment on the GSP through the DWR website.

He presented a summary of the Draft WMA First Annual Report for Water Year 2021, dated February 2022. The presentation provided an overview of the GSP chapters, Annual Report sections, and a schedule of tasks for the remainder of Water Year 2022. The scope of the Annual Report covers Water Year 2021, summarizing data collected October 2020 through September 2021. It describes the GSAs progress towards implementing the GSP and sustainability. It also complies with the SGMA statute to

provide groundwater elevation data, annual aggregated data identifying groundwater extraction for the preceding water year, surface water supply used for or available for use for groundwater recharge or in-lieu use, total water use, and change in groundwater storage. Mr. Lawler provided suggestions to address certain data gaps. Discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball asked for a prioritization of the WMA GSP Implementation Projects including designation as to which are required by the State for the GSA Committee to be cost effective. Mr. Lawler responded that the SGMA groundwater management is self-determined by the GSA but that the State can step in if they determine the GSA is not doing a good job. No action was taken.

XII. Update and discussion on future governance, JPA, future projects, and funding for WMA expenses

Mr. Buelow reported that staff and attorneys from all eight basin-wide member agencies recently participated in a meeting to discuss future governance that resulted in some good agreement on key ideals. There was agreement that decisions on implementing the GSPs should remain at the individual GSA level while, to the extent possible, utilize economies of scale for cost savings. County Counsel agreed to take the ideas discussed by the group and craft a future governance model for consideration and further discussion. The group agreed that the attorneys of the member agencies should meet separately to discuss legal details including migrating the current Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) structure that created the GSA to now form each GSA as an entity through a JPA and with possibly an umbrella JPA linking the three GSA entities together. More meetings of the groups are expected with intent to report back to the committees on the progress at a future meeting. Discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball asked staff to provide a process to define the cost projection of proposed future governance options, provide any GSP related tasks currently performed by one of the member agencies in lieu of customizing tasks, anticipation of constituent reception of a potential “pump tax”. He reported that the City of Lompoc has researched funding options and provided information that was gathered. Discussion followed.

XIII. Review possible change of GSA Financial Institution

Mr. Buelow informed the GSA Committee that WMA GSA banking account may be moved to a new bank. As the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (Parent District) owns the banking account for benefit of the WMA GSA at Mechanics Bank and the Parent District Board of Directors will be considering changing all of their owned accounts from Mechanics Bank to Five Star Bank at its upcoming March 9, 2022 meeting. Discussion followed. No action was taken.

XIV. Consider Special WMA GSA Meeting Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 10:00 A.M.

Mr. Buelow reported that a WMA GSA Special Meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, March 23, 2022, remote participation only, for the GSA Committee to review the final Annual Report and consider acceptance and submittal to DWR.

XV. Next Regular WMA GSA Meeting, Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 10:00 A.M.

Mr. Buelow announced the next regular WMA GSA meeting will be Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., via remote participation.

XVI. CMA GSA Committee requests and comments

Discussed in Item X, GSA Committee Directors, by consensus, requested that staff arrange for a 15-minute maximum presentation by Seawell Water be scheduled for a future meeting regarding a possible future installation of an offshore desalination plant by the Vandenberg Space Force Base.

GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked if there are any special reports by state grants funding available to all agencies for GSP implementation.

XVII. Adjournment

GSA Director Chris Brooks adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.



Chris Brooks, Chair



William J. Buelow, Secretary

**GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY FOR THE
WESTERN MANAGEMENT AREA (WMA)
IN THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN**

OCTOBER 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1038	10/15/21	Inklings	Public Draft WMA GSP printed (2 copies) (Public access to review GSP at Lompoc and Vandenberg Village Libraries)	\$ 189.23
1039	10/15/21	Santa Barbara News Press	Public Draft GSP advertisement (9/26/21: 1 of 2 run dates) (1/3 of total paid per GSA)	\$ 50.00
1040	10/15/21	Santa Maria Times	Public Draft GSP advertisement (9/28/21 SYV News and 9/29/21 Lompoc Record) (1/3 of total paid per GSA)	\$ 156.00
1041	10/15/21	Stetson Engineers	August 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #2 & AEM work)	\$ 22,817.66
1042	10/15/21	Valley Bookkeeping	2021 3rd Quarter Bookkeeping (July, August, September 2021)	\$ 150.00
MONTH TOTAL				\$ 23,362.89

NOVEMBER 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1043	11/15/21	Santa Barbara News Press	Public Draft GSP advertisement (10/3/21: 2 of 2 run dates) (1/3 of total paid per GSA)	\$ 50.00
1044	11/15/21	Stetson Engineers	September 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #1 & AEM work)	\$ 23,378.03
MONTH TOTAL				\$ 23,428.03

DECEMBER 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1045	12/14/21	Stetson Engineers	October 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #1)	\$ 8,293.76
1046	12/14/21	Valley Bookkeeping	2021 4th Quarter Bookkeeping (October, November, December 2021)	\$ 150.00
MONTH TOTAL				\$ 8,443.76

TOTAL THIS QUARTER: \$ 55,234.68

**WESTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: February 4, 2022
FROM: WMA Citizen Advisory Group
(Memo by Karen Kistler)
SUBJECT: Workshop and Q&A on Future Governance Options

Western Management Area (WMA) Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Members:

CAG Members in attendance: Charles Witt, Ken Domako, Karen Kistler and Derek McLeish.

Staff and Consultants in attendance: Mr. Bill Buelow (SYRWCD), Mr. Matt Young (County Water Agency), Ms. Kristin Worthley (City of Lompoc), Mr. John Fio (EKI, consultant for City of Lompoc), and Mr. Joe Barget (VVCSD).

Purpose

The WMA GSA Committee requested staff for the GSA agencies to coordinate meetings of the WMA CAG. Through a coordinated effort, the CAG held a meeting via teleconference. The meeting was held on February 4, 2022. The purpose of the meetings was for the WMA CAG (CAG) to discuss future governance options.

CAG Comments on Draft Western Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

The GSP was adopted on January 5, 2022. It was uploaded to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) site prior to the January 31, 2022 deadline. It is currently under an additional 75-day public review and comment period, which expires April 16, 2022. Each member of the CAG was given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. There were no comments recorded.

Future Governance of the WMA GSA

The WMA is required to conduct activities during the year that are indicative of maintaining groundwater sustainability. To this end, an annual report, submitted to the DWR in September, is required. A variety of expenditures may be necessary to collect the data needed for the annual reports. As the WMA is one entity within the wider Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin), the CAG is considering basic options for future governance: each GSA implements their own GSPs and no shared costs; and an umbrella Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with the three separate GSAs. Various governance scenarios have been discussed at previous CAG meetings.

Forming a JPA was explained to be an entity of legal entities. Concerns regarding this proposal included keeping the autonomy of each GSA, ensuring that costs and services provided under a JPA were equitably distributed, and future cost management. Potential upsides mentioned were integrated sustainability plans and data collection within the entire Basin, reduced redundancy which should reduce costs, and a uniformly directed plan from the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District.

Additional potential projects that may affect groundwater sustainability were then presented. The first was a desalination plant. Desalination can occur offshore via a buoy configuration. It is touted to be ocean friendly and would be powered by onshore renewable energy. Information about the company, Seawell (<https://www.seawellwater.com>), will be presented at a future date.

The second was the potential of cleaning/filtering water extracted from oil production wells to supplement large non-potable water users, such as golf courses. Currently, this water is reinjected into the substrate. This practice may cease due to environmental concerns, particularly groundwater contamination, and thus this water may be utilized. For more information regarding injection wells see:

(https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/general_information/Pages/class_injection_wells.aspx)

There was no further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned.