

MEETING MINUTES

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

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, March 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 2/23/2022).

GSA Committee Directors Present: Jeremy Ball, Chris Brooks, Myron Heavin, Steve Jordan, and Meighan Diethofer (Acting Alternate)

GSA Alternate Committee Directors Present: Art Hibbits, Ron Stassi, Kristin Worthley

Staff Present: Joe Barget, Bill Buelow, Marliez Diaz, Brad Hagemann, Amber Thompson, Kevin Walsh, and Matt Young

Others Present: Matt Brady, Doug Circle, John Fio (EKI), Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Miles McCammon (Stetson Engineers), and Derek McLeish

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 GSA Committee Directors in attendance plus one non-voting GSA Acting Alternate Director. Three Alternate Directors were also present.

Mr. Buelow welcomed and introduced Ms. Marliez Diaz, a new staff member with the Santa Barbara County Water Agency who was hired to assist with SGMA matters in the County.

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 February 23, 2022, which authorized teleconference public meetings were still in effect. Discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin 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. Receive Draft First Annual Report for the Western Management Area of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (WMA AR)

Mr. Curtis Lawler, Stetson Engineers, presented a summary of the Draft WMA First Annual Report for Water Year 2021, dated March 2022. The scope of the Annual Report covers Water Year 2021, summarizes data collected through September 2021, and describes progress towards implementing the GSP. Discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan expressed concern with interpretations of SGMA definitions and technicalities of brackish water versus seawater intrusion in the WMA. Discussion continued.

GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin made a MOTION to accept the First Annual Report, as presented or with non-substantive corrections, and submit the report to DWR. GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VI. Discuss and consider requesting staff to develop well registration and metering program for WMA

Mr. Buelow introduced the GSP implementation tasks of well registration and metering or alternative measurement programs. He emphasized the importance of consistency in technical meter and installation requirements across all three GSAs within the Basin and provide a clear, smooth transition with costs defrayed. He advised that the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (District) has a well registration program and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency staff offered to review the measure and meter requirements in California, and with approval from the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, developed the Well Monitoring Assistance Program (WMAAP) providing funding to offset up to \$500 of the equipment cost of qualifying water meters. Discussion followed.

Ms. Diaz explained the rebate program and the eligibility rules including that the GSA must encourage or require metering. Discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball made a MOTION directing staff to develop options for a well registration and either a metering program or other measurement options

for the Western Management Area GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VII. Update and discussion on future governance

Mr. Buelow reported that staff and attorneys in all three management areas from all eight basin-wide member agencies have participated together in a few meetings, attorneys from all eight member agencies have met separately and each GSA staff and attorney groups have also met together to discuss future governance. He reported that member agency staff together with respective legal counsel are working on a draft Joint Powers Agreement, concepts on interim cost sharing and comparison of costs for different future governance model options. The future governance model options take into consideration direction and suggestions received from the GSA Committee and CAGs including to keep away from top-heavy organization, keep costs low for the constituents, consider where costs can be shared among the three GSAs while maintain local control of implementation of the GSPs. Extensive discussion followed.

GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks asked about different future governance options that can be considered. GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball requested staff create line-item budget details on different future governance options to aid in decision making. Discussion continued.

VIII. 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, as requested by Committee.

IX. WMA GSA Committee requests and comments

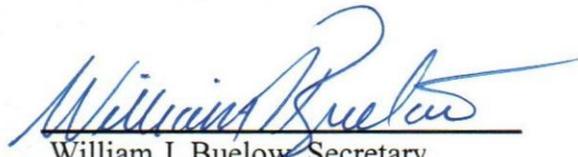
Mr. Buelow announced there is a press release regarding the Santa Ynez Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plans Approved written and submitted by County staff that was published in the March 15, 2022, edition Santa Ynez Star.

X. Adjournment

GSA Committee Chair Chris Brooks adjourned the meeting at 12:39 p.m.



Chris Brooks, Chair



William J. Buelow, Secretary