

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Central Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin May 10, 2021

A SPECIAL meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Central Management Area (CMA) in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin was held on Monday, May 10, 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 Members Present: Councilman Ed Andrisek, Director Art Hibbits

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Director Cynthia Allen

Staff Present: Bill Buelow, Rose Hess, Amber Thompson, Matt Young

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Antonio Buell, Doug Circle, Len Fleckenstein, Larry Lahr, Deby Laranjo, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Matt Naftaly (Dudek), Steve Slack (CDFW), plus 3 other members of the public whose names were not registered.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Director Ed Andrisek called the meeting to order at 10:04 am Mr. Buelow called roll. A quorum was met.

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 CMA GSA Committee released a Draft Water Budget Technical Memo for public comment and held a CMA CAG meeting. Now the CMA GSA will be discussing Sustainable Management Criteria.

He advised that all although current public comment periods are closed, previously released documents can still be located on SantaYnezWater.org. He reminded everyone there will be two more additional public comment periods for the previously released draft sections in the future. He also directed attendees to the SGMA newsletters located at SantaYnezWater.org. The newsletters present 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 CMA”

Mr. Matt Naftaly (Dudek) gave a presentation on the approach to Sustainable Management Criteria in the CMA.

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

- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits stated the presentation was not easy to read. He proposed slide images be full screen with wording put on separate page and page numbers included for all slides. He expressed concern that this presentation does not encourage public input. Mr. Buelow advised that the presentation outlined the approach and there would be opportunity for public input throughout the process. Mr. Buelow said he will work with consultants on those issues to get a revised draft with images to be larger and easier to read.
- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits said that the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Quality TDS Objective says 1,500 mg/L but he believes it should be 1,000 mg/L, which is the level for Ag use. He requested plan be consistent for all users.
 - Mr. Naftaly confirmed there is a range of values and that 1,500 mg/L is the upper-level standard; the lowest being 1,000 mg/L.
 - Len Fleckenstein asked if there will be periodic re-evaluations, monitoring and reporting plans with regards to water quality changes over time. Mr. Naftaly confirmed that SGMA allows for adaptive management.
 - Mr. Buelow reminded all that water quality is under jurisdiction of other agencies not under scope of SGMA in GSPs.
 - Bryan Bondy asked if there is a proposed minimum threshold for water quality? Mr. Naftaly pointed out that will be discussed during the upcoming meetings.
 - Bryan Bondy stated he does not recall if the HCM reflected a nexus of water quality and groundwater pumping. Mr. Naftaly replied this could be a data gap since there has not been much indication that there is a correlative effect.

- Bryan Bondy commented that “groundwater level dropping below screen causing a well to not function ideally” is not criteria should be using for SGMA. He suggested based on SGMA rules, the plan focus on “depletion of supply” and at what level will wells struggle to supply. He stated that from an Ag user perspective, the water level should be allowed to go as low as possible without causing a problem for all beneficial users.
- Bryan Bondy asked why the water quality section of the presentation is addressing River Alluvium when River Alluvium is not subject to SGMA. Mr. Naftaly clarified that water quality only applies to Buellton Upland not River Alluvium.
- Bryan Bondy asked if purple area of Interconnected Surface Water is located in Buellton Upland or River Alluvium? Mr. Lawler confirmed it is located in Buellton Upland. Bryan Bondy cautioned committee to avoid setting objectives and thresholds for the entire basin specifically based on that one very small GDE area versus consideration for all areas of GDE in the basin. He asked if there are any critical threatened species to consider in that one area.
- Steve Slack (CDFW) asked for clarification of Potential GDE on Interconnected Surface Water slide. Mr. Lawler stated the area is on Santa Rosa Creek and it will be explained in more detail in GSP.
- Deby Loranjo asked why a small portion of land on maps are excluded from SGMA in CMA. Mr. Buelow advised that area was not mapped as a Groundwater Basin by DWR’s Bulletin 118.
- Anita Regmi (DWR) asked regarding Slide 6, how the minimum threshold set at top of screen for specific wells compares to 2015 groundwater levels and the historical lows. She asked for further clarification on setting of minimum thresholds. Mr. Lawler and Mr. Naftaly stated the analysis is still ongoing. Mr. Buelow explained why top of screen should be an indicator of possible undesirable result.
- Larry Lahr commented since older wells (20+ years old) are typically drilled shallower and have shallower top of screen perforations should possibly be weighted differently or after a certain age should not be included in analysis. Mr. Naftaly explained data sets on existing wells are being collected in order to assist the analysis.
- Doug Circle expressed concern with top of screen being used as a level indicator due to inconsistency since the top of screen is set by personal choice of well drillers and landowners and may not be best choice.
 - Mr. Buelow replied that is a conversation which needs to happen since there are many reasons that could cause groundwater levels to be at top of screen today versus day well was drilled.

- Doug Circle added using top of screen for some wells may cause an indicator but be due to poor well design not due to significant lowering of groundwater levels.
- Bryan Bondy further added that the plan needs maximum flexibility and make a very informed decision on levels by considering depth of wells, historical water level trends, what model says about future groundwater levels.
- Mr. Lawler asked for opinions on looking at bottom perforations of wells versus top of screen. Bryan Bondy recommended somewhere in between those two levels. He recommended plotting the elevation of both top and bottom of wells along with showing the water table at historical low for better visual picture.
- Len Fleckenstein asked if CMA CAG will get to review SMC at the scheduled meeting for this week. Mr. Buelow replied the CMA CAG will be looking at only the water budget this week. He explained this presentation is an introduction to the topic of SMC. The CMA CAG will be asked to review the draft document at a later date.
- Len Fleckenstein asked regarding declining groundwater levels and loss of storage, will there be different criteria set for different well users. Mr. Naftaly commented that water levels could be used for both.
- Len Fleckenstein asked if municipal wells referenced are pumping from upland or river alluvium areas. Mr. Lawler confirmed one municipal well is pumping from the upland and one is pumping from the lower aquifer in alluvium area.
- Mr. Buelow added Sustainable Management Criteria topic will be moving forward with input received during the presentation today. Committee will be asked for direction to set the levels at meetings soon.

VI. Next Regular CMA GSA Meeting: Monday, May 24, 2021, 10:00 AM

Mr. Buelow announced that the next CMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting to include conducting quarterly business will be Monday, May 24, 2021, 10:00 AM, via video/teleconference.

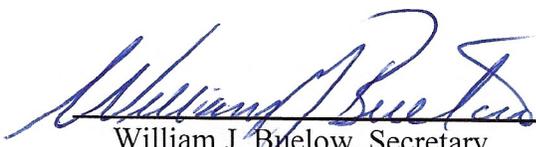
VII. CMA GSA Committee requests and comments

There were no requests or comments.

VIII. Adjournment

GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits adjourned the meeting at 11:20 p.m.


 Ed Andrisek, Chairman


 William J. Buelow, Secretary