

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin October 27, 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, October 27, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, this meeting occurred solely via teleconference in accordance with the latest Santa Barbara County Health Officer Order, as authorized by State Assembly Bill 361, and Resolution WMA-2021-001 (passed on 10/20/2021).

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

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Kristin Worthley

Staff Present: Joe Barget, Bill Buelow, Amber Thompson, Matt Young

Others Present: Jose Baer, Bryan Bondy, Matt Brady, Doug Circle, Ken Domako (VSFB), John Fio (EKI), Karen Kistler, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Steve Slack (CDFW), Brett Stroud, and Charles Witt

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

WMA GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to call roll. Three Committee Directors and one Acting Alternate were present providing a quorum.

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

Mr. Buelow announced names of phone and video attendees.

Mr. Buelow reviewed history of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements and Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development milestones in the Santa Ynez River 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. Review and consider approval of meeting minutes of August 25, and October 20, 2021

The minutes of the GSA Committee meetings on August 25 and October 20, 2021 were presented for GSA Committee approval. There were no comments or discussion.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION to approve the minutes of August 25 and October 20, 2021, as presented. GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball seconded the motion, and both sets of minutes passed 3-0-1 by roll call vote with the Mission Hills CSD representative being absent.

VI. Review comment letter from Santa Ynez Water Group legal counsel dated 09-21-2021

Mr. Buelow announced that public comment letters received on the Public Draft GSPs are posted to SantaYnezWater.org as well as a pdf document showing the downloaded public comments made via the portal.

He introduced a letter received from Joseph D. Hughes, attorney with Klein DeNatale Goldner, on behalf of the Santa Ynez Water Group, expressing concerns on landowner representation, implementation of Projects and Management Actions, and consideration of overlying groundwater rights. Discussion followed. Mr. Buelow advised that all public comments received will be addressed through the established comment response process.

VII. Receive update on SGMA Stakeholder Outreach

Mr. Buelow reviewed stakeholder outreach efforts made on behalf of the GSAs. Press Releases were sent out. Paid advertisements were placed in three local newspapers: Lompoc Record, Santa Barbara News Press and Santa Ynez Valley News. In addition, SGMA Newsletter Issue # 5, published in English and Spanish, was distributed by member agencies with utility billings. A request was made to KCLU, local public radio, to add GSPs public comment periods to the Community Calendar. Discussion followed.

VIII. Receive update from Citizen Advisory Group meeting of October 7, 2021

Mr. Jose Baer presented the WMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Memorandum dated October 7, 2021, which he prepared on behalf of the WMA CAG, regarding the WMA CAG's review and discussion of Draft Final (Public Draft) WMA GSP as well as governance options. Discussion followed.

- Alternate WMA GSA Committee Director Kristin Worthley requested a detailed line-item budget as well as budgets for the different governance options, including reasons for the costs, in order for City of Lompoc to decide on a governance option.
- Mr. Buelow reported that governance options meetings are currently being held by member agency staff and budget numbers are being worked on. Member agency staff requested guidance from GSA Directors.

- WMA GSA Committee Directors Steve Jordan and Chris Brooks both stated they prefer the governance approach of an overarching JPA with three management area specific decision-making bodies.
- WMA GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball was hesitant to decide on a governance option without detailed costs and reasons. He expressed concern about unknown data due to quite a few data gaps, as documented in the City of Lompoc's submitted comments to the Public Draft GSP. He requested WMA GSA Directors, member agency staff and consultants review and consider comments submitted by City of Lompoc on the Public Draft GSP for the WMA.

IX. Workshop and Q&A on Public Draft CMA GSP and Future Governance Options

Mr. Brett Stroud (Young Wooldridge) discussed options from his presentation "Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin Governance and Funding Proposals" presented on August 25, 2021. Discussion followed.

- Mr. Stroud explained that the WMA CAG memorandum supported a hybrid model of governance. He explained that forming a JPA could split coordinated costs affecting all three GSAs between the three GSAs. He emphasized that the Joint Exercise of Powers Act is very flexible so that all decision making could be left at local GSA level while certain costs can be shared.
- WMA GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball commented that the City of Lompoc is not willing to commit to a specific governance option at this point but is a willing partner in the SGMA efforts. The City of Lompoc requests more details for costs before making decision.
- Acting Alternate WMA GSA Committee Director Meighan Diethofer shared that the County of Santa Barbara, as a member of all three GSAs, would like to proceed with the most efficient path for governance. She advised that Supervisor Hartmann is planning to attend the EMA GSA meeting this week and can provide further comment then.
- Mr. Matt Young said the County of Santa Barbara supports collaboration across all three GSAs.

Mr. Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers) presented slides "October 27 2021, GSA 2021 Special Meeting, Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan" for the WMA and gave an overview of components and efforts involved with creating the Public Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in the WMA as well as next steps of the process. Discussion followed.

- Mr. Curtis Lawler explained that the GSP is a voluminous document as it is similar to seven reports wrapped into one document.

- WMA GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball asked that consultants look at specific issues highlighted in GSP comments by City of Lompoc especially regarding selectivity of data. He expressed concern with generalizing any Projects and Management Actions. He was concerned that if the baseline for water conservation resets as new for all water users, the City of Lompoc would lose credits for already existing conservation efforts made by City of Lompoc. In terms of population, the City of Lompoc represents the highest human per capita represented in the WMA GSA.
- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks, WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan, Alternate WMA GSA Committee Director Kristin Worthley, and Mr. Matt Young thanked Mr. Lawler for a very good recap.

X. Next Regular WMA GSA Meeting: Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 10:00 AM

Mr. Buelow announced the next WMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting will be Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 10:00 AM. The WMA GSA Committee Directors unanimously agreed to hold the meeting solely via ZOOM video/teleconference.

XI. WMA GSA Committee requests and comments

WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan apologized for missing the Special meeting of October 20, 2021 and asked if the WMA GSA Committee meetings will continue to be held via ZOOM. Mr. Buelow confirmed the next Regular meeting scheduled for November 17, 2021 will be solely via ZOOM. However, meetings in the future can be set-up as a hybrid format with in-person meeting at the City of Lompoc Water Treatment Plant and ZOOM available for public and/or Director participation as well.

WMA GSA Committee Director Jeremy Ball commented that the City of Lompoc is looking for the most equitable plan especially when looking at the effects on human impact.

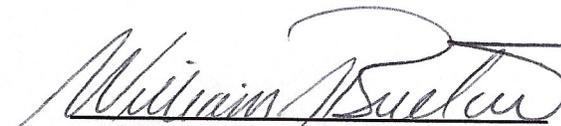
Acting Alternate WMA GSA Committee Director Meighan Dietenhofer complimented Mr. Bill Buelow and Mr. Matt Young on their outreach efforts by providing presentations to many different groups and agencies on behalf of the GSAs. She felt that stakeholder outreach has been extensive.

XII. Adjournment

WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.



Chris Brooks, Chairman



William J. Buelow, Secretary

WESTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP
MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 7th, 2021

FROM: WMA Citizen Advisory Group
(Memo by José Baer)

SUBJECT: Review and Discussion Draft Final WMA GSP as well as governance options

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

CAG Members in attendance: Charles Witt, Ken Domako, José Baer and Derek McLeish.

Staff and Consultants in attendance: Mr. Bill Buelow (SYRWCD), Mr. Curtis Lawlor (Stetson), Ms. Kristin Worthley (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 due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was held on October 7th, 2021. The purpose of the meetings was for the WMA CAG (CAG) to review the Draft Final WMA GSP. The Document was prepared by Stetson Engineers. A copy of the documents was made available to the CAG prior to the meeting at www.SantaYnezWater.org.

CAG Comments on Draft Western Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Each of the four CAG members present were asked to provide their comments on the GSP. All indicated that they had no further comments and that the current version did a good job incorporating their previous comments. The CAG recognized that much of what is in the current draft has been discussed in the past, but this was the first time that the CAG discussed project and future governance.

Mr. Ken Domako briefed the CAG on preliminary discussion currently occurring between the Federal Prison and Vandenburg Space Force Base (VSFB) regarding an water supply inter-tie between the City of Lompoc and the Federal Prison. The purpose of the inter-tie was to reduce the cost of water for the Prison by switching from VSFB provided water from CCWA (State water) to City of Lompoc (City) water. The CAG discussed the project which could potentially

add 700-800 acre feet per year of additional groundwater demand on the City. There was further discussion about how the treated wastewater back to Lompoc. They do not, instead it is treated and then added to the river. That amount is roughly 31,000 gal/day. Mr. Domako said that this proposal is in the early stages of discussion and no decisions have been made to date. The City of Lompoc has not been engaged in the proposal at this point.

CAG Comments on Future Governance

There was some discussion on the structure of fees which will be necessary to fund the GSA. Joe Barget asked for clarity on the fees discussed. He pointed out that VVCSD already charges fees. It was made clear that these fees would be in addition to those already being charged by various districts.

The CAG considered the three basic options for future governance. The options are: 1) three separate GSAs implementing their own Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) and no shared costs; 2) a single GSA with merging of the three GSPs into one GSP; and 3) an umbrella Joint Powers Authority with three separate GSA committees implementing their own GSPs within their own management area and providing their own funding to do so.

Some of the CAG members said it would be helpful to know the proposed budget for the GSAs before the CAG could give a preference between the three options. There was discussion about the operational budgets of other GSAs operating in other basins including Cuyama, and Ventura. It became clear that a baseline budget of roughly \$1M was likely necessary for the operation of a single GSA. If there are three separate GSAs, then the baseline budget before considering projects might be \$3M in sum. It was generally agreed that the governance structure that utilized an umbrella GSA with three separate sub-organizations for managing projects was probably a considerably less expensive option of the three. Furthermore, there are considerable differences in the number of acre feet withdrawn from each of the three areas while the baseline bureaucratic burden would probably be similar. There are significant advantages to the Eastern and Central areas to join with the larger Western area for that reason. With roughly 50,000 acre-feet withdrawn from all three areas, a baseline budget of \$1M/yr would result in fees of \$18/acre foot, considerably lower than the \$46-100/acre foot in neighboring GSAs. It was also pointed out that the state will administer a GSA for \$80/acre foot.

Many of the projects which would be undertaken in each of the three GSA's would probably be eligible for grant funding. The projects which would be undertaken in each of the three management areas are probably different in nature as the regions and subsequently plans are quite different. Cost matching will likely be required by DWR for the grant funding.

There was not further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned.