

# MEETING MINUTES

## Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin August 25, 2021

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, August 23, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency and Governor Newsom's Executive Orders to protect public health by issuing shelter-in-home standards, 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 and in accordance with the latest Santa Barbara County Health Officer Order.

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

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Art Hibbits

Staff Present: Joe Barget, Bill Buelow, Jerry Gruber, Amber Thompson, Kevin Walsh, Matt Young

Others Present: Mark Altshuler, Matt Brady, Kari Campbell-Bohard, Bryan Bondy, Ken Domako, John Fio (EKI), Karen Kistler, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Miles McCammon (Stetson), Derek McLeish, Anita Regmi (DWR), and Brett Stroud

### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to call roll. Two Committee Directors and two Acting Alternate Committee Directors were present providing a quorum. A third Committee Director, Myron Heavin, logged in later during the meeting.

### **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 including the GSP sections that have been previously reviewed during public workshops and meetings including today's presentations toward submitting a complete Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in January 2022. All documents are accessible on [SantaYnezWater.org](http://SantaYnezWater.org).

### **III. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

No additions or deletions were made.

**IV. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**V. Review and Approve Minutes**

The minutes of the GSA Committee meetings on May 26 and July 28, 2021 were presented for GSA Committee approval. GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks commented on the Minutes of July 28, 2021, Item VII regarding the connection between wastewater discharge and seawater intrusion in Lompoc and asked how Lompoc can recover and utilize more of the wastewater that is discharged.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION to approve the minutes of May 26 and July 28, 2021, as presented. GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks 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. Receive WMA GSA Financial Update and Consider Approval of WMA Warrant List**

Mr. Buelow presented the financial reports of FY 2020-21 Periods 1 through 12 (through June 30, 2021) and the Warrant Lists for April, May, and June 2021 for GSA Committee review. There were no comments.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION to approve the April, May, and June 2021 Warrant Lists (Nos. 1032-1035) totaling \$156,888.63 as presented. GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks seconded the motion and it passed 3-0-1 by roll call vote with the Mission Hills CSD representative being absent.

**VII. Receive update from Citizen Advisory Group on meeting regarding Draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Technical Memorandum**

WMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) member, Mr. Derek McLeish, presented the WMA CAG Memorandum dated July 28, 2021 regarding WMA CAG's review and discussion of Draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Technical Memorandum held on July 27, 2021. There were no questions or discussion. GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks thanked the WMA CAG members for their time and efforts.

**VIII. Receive Presentation from Stetson Team on "Summary and Overview of Draft GSP for the WMA"**

Mr. Curtis Lawler (Stetson) presented "August 25 2021, GSA 2021 Quarter 3 Meeting, Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan" for the WMA. Discussion followed.

- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan asked if riparian wells along Santa Rosa Road are registered with the State as riparian users. Mr. Lawler replied that they should be and advised the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has a website that shows who is reporting and is the agency responsible for following up on reporting or

lack of reporting. Mr. Buelow added reporting to SWRCB is required under SB88 and verified that member agency staff have been following up on wells located in the riparian area to confirm they are reporting surface water pumping or determine if they should be subject to SGMA.

- Mr. Walsh added that some enforcements at the state level seem to be lacking and asked the committee to consider, for the future, when determining management actions what enforcement methods may be available to the GSA after implementation.
- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan, with regards to seawater intrusion, stated that the Careaga Aquifer in the WMA does not reach the Pacific Ocean and asked about the depth of the main zone where it reaches the Pacific Ocean. Mr. Lawler confirmed the WMA's Careaga Aquifer does not reach the Pacific Ocean and estimated the bottom of the main zone when it reaches the Pacific Ocean to be about 200 feet below sea level. That depth will be verified with the SkyTEM AEM results.
- Mr. Joe Barget asked which 2020 water level will be used to establish the Minimum Threshold. Mr. Lawler confirmed that the Minimum Threshold levels will be only one number that correlates to the Spring 2020 levels.
  - GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked if the Spring 2020 levels refer to levels at a single well or a composite of several wells. Mr. Lawler replied that the Spring 2020 levels are measured and reported individually per well and will be used as Minimum Thresholds for those specific Representative Monitoring Wells.
- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked what source of money will pay for the implementation action to video wells. Mr. Lawler replied that the GSA will work with DWR to obtain grant funds for Technical Support Services to help fund the implementation action to video certain representative monitoring wells.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director Kristin Worthley advised that the City of Lompoc has comments on the draft GSP and they will be provided directly to consultants in next few days.
- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan asked if the State has established a model well metering system in which they state which type of meters are approved or recommended. Mr. Lawler replied that those details will be worked out next year as part of the GSA establishing the well metering program.
  - Mr. Kevin Walsh added technical standards should be established when creating a metering program.
  - GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits advised that the life span of meter batteries can be an issue, positioning of the meter in the well is important, and meters should have ability to be read remotely.

- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan agreed with GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits' comments.
- Mr. Young advised that Santa Barbara County is moving forward with a subsidy program to help defer some of the cost for installing meters on private wells. As more GSAs are requiring meters, it looks like metering requirement may become the standard in the State. Mr. Young agreed with complexity issues and advised that the GSA can rely on best practices to follow.
- Ms. Anita Regmi of DWR said requiring meters is a local level decision so the State has no comment.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks thanked consultants for all their work on producing this extensive GSP draft document.
- Mr. Matt Young commented that Stetson Engineers has done a very good job on preparing the Draft GSP.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks asked Ms. Anita Regmi of DWR if she has any additions. She commented consultants are doing a good job and appreciates that each section always starts by stating the SGMA regulations and shows the GSP is trying to follow the regulations.

**IX. Receive Presentation from Young Wooldridge on “SGMA Governance and Funding Options”**

Mr. Brett Stroud (Young Wooldridge) presented “Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin Governance and Funding Proposals”. Discussion followed.

- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan commented that GSA activity and daily involvement of staff will determine costs and may define governance.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director Kristin Worthley asked for examples of how the governance options really work. Mr. Stroud commented using the example of annual reports: who will do the work to create the report, who will approve the report, and who will submit the report to DWR.
  - Mr. Stroud also offered similar examples for funding with respect to different fee types.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks asked since one GSA may not want to inherit problems of the other GSAs how has that been approached when considering combining efforts. He also asked if consultants have discussed combining the CMA and WMA into one GSA since they are more similar than either is with the EMA to have only two GSAs in the Basin. Mr. Stroud explained the economy of scale benefits while still keeping separated and as presented with Governance Options 3 and 4.
- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked which governance options are more economically efficient. Mr. Stroud explained costs are truly unknown so the first step

needed, especially in terms of funding, would be to perform a fee study or engineers report that will include constructing a budget. He explained that Governance Option 1 would be the most expensive since the GSAs in the Basin will need to do everything three times while Option 2 would be the most economically efficient but may be politically undesirable. Therefore, some combination of Options 3 or 4 would be the most flexible while offering economies of scale to save on costs.

- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked if there is any history of these types of structures to learn from. Mr. Stroud advised it is conceivable to perform a fee study first then set governance structure. This could provide set budgets for the different governance options to compare the differences in costs. He suggested that since other GSAs are past this phase, we could look for ideas and draw from their experiences. He cautioned that those other basins are very different to this Basin but could offer ballpark ideas. Before consultants could begin working on this study, an ad-hoc cost share agreement would need to be implemented so the cost could be shared between all GSAs in the Basin.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director Meighan Dietenhofer asked if there are other basins with a similar structure to ours that we can look at for guidance and examples. Mr. Stroud said there are some rough analogous but nothing exact. He described the Kern Groundwater Authority as a JPA with some members being the GSA for their management area who have final approval over their chapter of the consolidated Groundwater Sustainability Plan.
  - Mr. Buelow added the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin is not the only basin with multiple GSAs but is the only basin submitting multiple GSPs. If the governance option to fully combine into one GSA is chosen, then the three GSPs would need to be revised and resubmitted as only one GSP for the Basin since DWR does not allow one GSA to submit or implement multiple GSPs.
- Mr. Jerry Gruber said fee studies are outdated by the time they are finished so creates and unknown variables for a fixed customer base and can never fully recoup all costs. Mr. Stroud suggested that consultants should be asked to factor in adjustments for inflation and contingencies which are appropriate under Prop 218.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks asked committee for opinions on conducting a fee study before establishing governance. The consensus of the WMA GSA Committee was do not perform a fee study before establishing governance.
  - GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan does not like this option because GSA has gone overbudget on consultant work already.
  - GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director Kristin Worthley said the documentation show that the Basin is fairly in balance so costs could be determined based on what we know needs to be done and on what is currently being done. Since this Basin is not severely overdraft, there should not be any big projects that would expect to have large costs. She asked what exact projects are needed that will need funds.

- GSA Committee Directors Myron Heavin and Chris Brooks agreed.

**X. Next "Special" WMA GSA Meeting: Wednesday, October 6, 2021, 10:00 AM**

Mr. Buelow announced the next proposed meeting for the WMA GSA Committee will be a Special Meeting on Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 10:00 am.

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

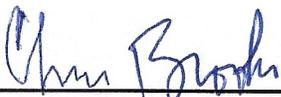
Mr. Buelow announced that the next WMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting will be on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 10:00 am, location to be determined. The meeting is being held one week earlier than normal 4<sup>th</sup> week to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday. There was no discussion.

**XII. WMA GSA Committee requests and comments**

GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin expressed general concern that the area has been categorized as currently being in a severe drought.

**XIII. Adjournment**

GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks adjourned the meeting at 12:22 pm.



Chris Brooks, Chairman



William J. Buelow, Secretary

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

**APRIL 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1032	04/08/21	Stetson Engineers	February 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #1 & AEM work)	\$ 25,601.89
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 25,601.89</b>

**MAY 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1033	05/13/21	Stetson Engineers	March 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #1 & AEM work)	\$ 27,328.10
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 27,328.10</b>

**JUNE 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1034	06/29/21	Stetson Engineers	April & May 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #1 & AEM work)	\$ 103,808.64
1035	06/29/21	Valley Bookkeeping	2021 2nd Quarter Bookkeeping (April, May, June 2021)	\$ 150.00
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 103,958.64</b>

<b>TOTAL THIS QUARTER: \$ 156,888.63</b>
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WESTERN MANAGEMENT AREA  
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP  
MEMORANDUM

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DATE: July 28, 2021

TO: WMA GSA Committee

FROM: WMA Citizen Advisory Group  
(Memo by Derek McLeish)

SUBJECT: Review and Discussion Draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Technical Memorandum

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

CAG Members in attendance: Charles Witt, Ken Domako 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 July 27, 2021. The purpose of the meetings was for the WMA CAG (CAG) to review the Draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Technical Memorandum. The Memorandum was prepared by the Stetson Engineer's team. A copy of the documents was made available to the CAG prior to the meeting at [www.SantaYnezWater.org](http://www.SantaYnezWater.org).

**CAG Comments on Draft Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network Technical Memorandum**

CAG members discussed some wording changes that they felt were more precise and accurate for the consultants to consider. The CAG also asked how long the rate of overdraft will take to reach the proposed minimum thresholds. There was further discussion between CAG members and consultants about the current rate of aquifer depletion and potential adverse conditions in 20 years or 50 years. Discussion followed.

The CAG discussed the flood of 1969, which dislodged a bridge, which was subsequently demolished and its effect on seawater intrusion. The consultants and CAG discussed the amount

of head required to maintain current conditions and prevent seawater intrusion. Five feet of head equals 200ft of encroachment protection. The CAG asked if maps of the bridge/seawall could be obtained.

The CAG discussed water quality and the issue of water softeners. Consultants reminded the CAG that water quality standards are set to levels in 2015.

There was a discussion of potential interties between the City of Lompoc and the Federal Prison and the availability of state water. Vandenberg is capable of banking state water in off years. There was also discussion of proposed desalination projects at Vandenberg Space Force Base. There was further discussion regarding current research of an offshore buoy desalinization plant, which could produce 800-900 acre-feet of water.

The CAG discussed the water use of cannabis and the impacts to the groundwater in storage. There was a discussion of the status of the WMA compared to other coastal groundwater basins and the importance of rainfall.