

# MEETING MINUTES

## Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin July 28, 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 Monday, July 28, 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 Directors Present: Chris Brooks, Meighan Dietenhofer (Acting as Alternate), Steve Jordan, and Kristin Worthley (Acting as Alternate)

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Katherine Stewart

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

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Ken Domako (VSFB), John Fio (EKI), Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Anita Regmi (DWR), Steve Slack (CDFW), and one (1) member of the public whose name was not registered.

### I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to call roll. Two Committee Directors and two Acting Alternates 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 completed so far in the Santa Ynez River Basin. The WMA GSA Committee released a Draft Sustainable Management Criteria GSP section for public comment which recently ended and held one WMA CAG meeting to discuss that section. A memorandum of comments will be presented at the WMA GSA meeting in August.

He advised that all although current public comment periods are closed, previously released documents can still be located on [SantaYnezWater.org](http://SantaYnezWater.org). He reminded everyone

there will be additional public comment periods for final draft GSP and the final submitted GSP.

**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 update on GSP comments and correspondence received**

Mr. Buelow introduced and reviewed three public comment letters that were received in addition to many individual comments received via the online groundwater communication portal regarding draft sections of the draft GSP document. Two of the letters were written to the EMA GSA Committee but he wanted to share the information with the WMA GSA Committee as well.

A letter received from U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) commented on the draft SMC section of the draft GSP and is being reviewed by consultants and member agency staff.

A letter to the EMA GSA was received from Doug Circle, on behalf of the Santa Ynez Water Group, expressed disappointment with the short amount of time recently allotted for public comment on the draft SMC section of the draft GSP. Mr. Buelow explained the public comment process in place for draft sections, assured everyone that the full draft GSP document will be available for public review and comment for six weeks before submittal of the final document to DWR followed by DWR posting the submitted final document for a 60-day comment period.

A letter to the EMA GSA was received from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board requested coordination between the EMA GSA and the newly formed Los Olivos Community Services District (LOCSA). Mr. Buelow contacted Lisa Palmer, President of the LOCSA, and signed her up as an Interested Party to receive all future EMA notices and communications.

There was no discussion and no action taken.

**VI. Receive update from Citizen Advisory Group on Draft Water Budget**

Mr. Bill Buelow presented the WMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Memorandum dated July 28, 2021, which he prepared on behalf of the WMA CAG, regarding the WMA CAG's review and discussion of Draft Numeric Groundwater Model Technical Memorandum.

There was no discussion and no action taken.

**VII. Receive Presentation from Stetson Team on “Projects and Management Actions and GSP Implementation for the WMA” and review remaining GSP schedule**

Mr. Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers) gave a presentation on the projects and management actions and implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in the WMA to receive direction from the Committee for the consultant team to complete the section for the draft GSP. The proposed projects and management actions (PMA) were organized into the following groups: General Management PMAs (Group 1), Early Warning PMAs (Group 2), Minimum Threshold PMAs (Group 3), and Other PMAs (Group 4). The purpose of PMAs is to improve groundwater levels. The purpose of implementation actions related to the PMAs is to monitor groundwater levels.

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

- WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan asked why wastewater reclamation is not considered for Group 1. Mr. Lawler advised that wastewater reclamation is listed in Group 4 because the wastewater return flow from the Lompoc wastewater treatment plant already has a good use and plays an important role to prevent seawater intrusion.
- WMA GSA Alternate Director Katherine Stewart asked for clarification on imported water program listed in Group 1. Mr. Lawler explained that Group 1 projects are to be implemented in the first year. Supplemental Imported Water Program is listed in Group 1 not to be fully implemented in first year but to begin next steps including setting up a fund to be ready if the GSA chooses to pursue in the future.
  - WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks advised that the Lompoc Valley residents voted against importing state water due to the high cost and lack of need at the time. He stated that Vandenberg Village Community Services District believes an imported water program is not a good option to pursue for Lompoc.
  - WMA GSA Acting Alternate Director Kristin Worthley agreed but is not opposed to leaving imported water program as an option for future but advised the project could be very difficult to implement as the Lompoc Valley residents have not been very receptive in the past.
  - WMA GSA Acting Alternate Director Meighan Diethofer asked how supplemental imported water will be funded. Mr. Lawler said the funding source is unknown at this time but possibly funded through groundwater extraction fees or potential grants.
  - After extensive discussion, the consensus of the WMA GSA Committee was to move supplemental imported state water from the Group 1 list to Group 4.

- WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan said that he believes there is still additional recharge water available from the Lompoc wastewater treatment plant that should be considered as a PMA. He is also interested in establishing a metering program.
- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks asked about securing a monitoring well located on the edge of the aquifer near Vandenberg Village CSD and Mission Hills CSD to measure hydrocarbons from the petroleum preserve especially if oil production in the area resumes. Mr. Lawler agreed with that location for monitoring of a potential data gap.
- Discussion occurred regarding a potential PMA in Group 1 to ban water softeners in the WMA GSA to maintain water quality of groundwater.
  - WMA GSA Acting Alternate Director Kristin Worthley agreed with including a ban on water softeners. She said that the City of Lompoc already has an ordinance in place to phase out the use of water softeners in the area.
  - WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks agreed with a ban on water softeners and said Vandenberg Village CSD currently bans the installation of new water softeners.
  - Discussion continued about how all water agencies in the WMA GSA can achieve this project and communicate with entire Lompoc valley community. WMA GSA Acting Alternate Director Kristin Worthley offered to explore how to move forward on this potential PMA.
  - After extensive discussion about a ban on water softeners, the consensus of the WMA GSA Committee was to keep this potential PMA in Group 1 as it is written.
- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks suggested considering the Mission Hills CSD ponds for storage of stormwater but may be currently used by Mission Hills CSD for wastewater overflow.
- WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan suggested a need to modernize the stormwater collection as recharge process in the Lompoc area similar to a reclamation project developed in Salinas and systems used in other basins.
- WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan asked if allocation triggers discussed in potential PMA 11 (Agricultural Land/Pumping Allowance) are to be set per aquifer or basin wide. Mr. Lawler confirmed triggers and allocations will be set per aquifer.
- The consensus of the WMA GSA Committee was to move PMA 12 (Recycled Non-Potable Reuse Water) from Group 4 to Group 1 to be more quickly addressed.
- WMA GSA Acting Alternate Director Meighan Diethofer summarized some of the potential PMAs that were discussed at the CMA WMA meeting.

- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks asked WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan about concerns with a metering concern from a farmer standpoint. WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan said meter maintenance and installation could cause issues. He advised that metering and reporting of riparian water use is currently being done monthly.
- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks asked about a potential Santa Barbara County plan of funds for metering program. Mr. Matt Young spoke about a program being developed, applicable county-wide, to subsidize costs of new meter installation as a reimbursement program which is expected to roll out this fall or winter. Discussion followed.
- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks mentioned that cannabis is a new land use in the WMA and there are concerns that some farms are not reporting water use. He asked how we can make sure that everyone is reporting and paying their fair share. Mr. Buelow reported that the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) has implemented new procedures to track proposed and current cannabis operations located in the SYRWCD including following up with Santa Barbara County staff. The new procedures are proving successful in getting new well producers registered and reporting all groundwater pumping.
- WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan commented that if one does not report water use then they will not have water rights.
- Acting Alternate GSA Committee Director Meighan Dietenhofer expressed concern about PMA 8a (Deepen Existing Wells) as an assistance funding project to deepen existing wells with water supply issues being in Group 3. After discussion, the consensus of the WMA GSA Committee was to move PMA 8a (Deepen Existing Wells) from Group 3 to Group 4.
- WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks asked about funding for potential PMAs and if grants are actively being pursued. Mr. Bill Buelow reported that a basin wide member agency staff meeting was recently held to discuss post GSP governance options, including funding. Brett Stroud of Young Wooldridge, legal counsel for Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, provided a presentation to member agency staff at that meeting. Mr. Stroud will provide a similar presentation on governance options during all three GSA Committee regular meetings in August. He mentioned potential DWR Proposition 1 or Proposition 68 grant funding opportunities for GSA to implement different projects.
- WMA GSA Director Steve Jordan asked for clarification on the length of comment periods for the draft GSP. Mr. Buelow advised that SGMA regulations do not require any specific length for comment periods on draft documents. Due to the limited time available before the final GSP submittal deadline, the comment period for the draft GSP document will be set for six weeks. Then, once the completed GSP document

has been submitted to DWR, within 20-days, DWR will post the final GSP for a 60-day public comment period through the DWR SGMA site.

**VIII. Next Regular WMA GSA Meeting: Wednesday, August 25, 2021, 10:00 AM**

Mr. Buelow announced that the next WMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting to include conducting quarterly business will be Wednesday, August 25, 2021, 10:00 AM, via video/teleconference.

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

There were no requests or comments.

**X. Adjournment**

WMA GSA Director Chris Brooks adjourned the meeting at 12:21 p.m.



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Chris Brooks, Chairman



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William J. Buelow, Secretary

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.