

# MEETING MINUTES

## Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin May 26, 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 Monday, May 26, 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 Dietenhofer (Acting as Alternate), Myron Heavin, Steve Jordan, and Kristin Worthley (Acting as Alternate)

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Art Hibbits, and Katherine Stewart

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

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Doug Circle, John Fio (EKI), Trevor Jones (Dudek), Karen Kistler, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Matt Naftaly (Dudek), Anita Regmi (DWR), Steve Slack (CDFW), Scott Williams, and four (4) members of the public whose name were not registered.

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

GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to call roll. Three 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. There was no review of SGMA in Santa Ynez River Valley Basin.

### **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 February 24, April 14, April 28, and May 12, 2021 were presented for GSA Committee approval. There were no comments.

GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin made a MOTION to approve the minutes of February 24, April 14, April 28, and May 12, 2021, as presented. GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**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 9 (through March 31, 2021) and the Warrant Lists for January, February, and March 2021 for GSA Committee review. There were no comments.

GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a MOTION to approve the January, February, and March 2021 Warrant Lists as presented (Nos. 1025-1031 plus one wire transfer and associated bank fee) totaling \$132,045.76 and financial reports as submitted. GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

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

Mr. Bill Buelow presented the WMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Memorandum dated May 24, 2021 regarding WMA CAG's review and discussion of Draft Water Budget Technical Memorandum.

**VIII. Receive Presentation from Stetson Team on "Sustainable Management Criteria and Projects and Management Actions for the WMA"**

Mr. Trevor Jones (Dudek) presented "Sustainable Management Criteria and Projects and Management Actions for the WMA" dated May 26, 2021, a follow up to the presentation and discussion of May 12, 2021. Discussion occurred during the presentation.

- Acting Alternate GSA Committee Director Kristin Worthley asked for clarification on the two sustainability factors involving groundwater level in storage. Mr. Jones explained that the GSA needs to manage to the Measurable Objectives but if undesirable results are occurring then the GSA must take action. Mr. Lawler explained sustainability is defined as the absence of undesirable results which are tied to the minimum thresholds. Discussion continued.
- Regarding slide 29, GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan asked if a well located in the recharge zone should be used as representative well? Mr. Lawler explained the forebay of the Lompoc area (as in location of well 7N/34W-34F6) is very responsive to water flow in the river and it is important to have representative wells in this area because the City of Lompoc wells are located in the same area. He also recommended that the GSA Committee look at the historical low levels in the hydrographs and set minimum thresholds that are not too far below the historical low. Discussion continued.

- Alternate GSA Committee Director Katherine Stewart asked for clarification on setting minimum thresholds and the future options to change a minimum threshold, if needed. Mr. Lawler explained the importance of setting minimum thresholds. Mr. Buelow added that the GSA Committee can also set triggers for management actions prior to reaching an established minimum threshold. Discussion continued.
- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin commented that he does not see information in the well impact analysis accounts for new housing developments and the increased use of water by the City of Lompoc. Mr. Jones replied that the need is to establish what level indicates a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply based on well production ability.
  - Mr. Matt Naftaly (Dudek) added that population growth and water use analysis is included in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in Chapter 2 and will figure into other parts of the GSP.
- Mr. Barget asked for clarification on the individual hydrographs with all the marker lines comparing measurable objectives using 2011 while minimum threshold levels are shown below 2020 groundwater levels. Mr. Naftaly pointed out that the wavy vertical line on hydrograph indicates 2020. Mr. Lawler clarified the reasoning behind using the 2011 level for setting the measurable objective and the 2020 levels for setting the minimum threshold for groundwater in storage in both of the principal aquifers.
- Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits explained well data shown on hydrographs that the extreme lows could be due to the measurement being taken when the well was pumping or pumping by wells nearby causing interference due to density of wells in the WMA.
- Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits asked about the confidence levels of data and since consultants chose the specific wells to be included in the monitoring network, is it possible for that the GSA can be accused of being cherry-picking the data. Mr. Naftaly explained that the process used to select monitoring wells was driven by two key features: optimize aerial coverage of measurements to characterize conditions across the entire WMA and the availability of historical data thus not cherry-picked data.
- Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits expressed concern with the water level differences of the years chosen by consultants since 2011 was the last time Cachuma's Bradbury Dam spilled and 2020 is following an 11-year drought. Mr. Jones explained the use of historical range of data to determine at what level indicates a depletion of supply.
  - Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits advised that between 2011 and 2020, many wells in the WMA have needed to be deepened, acid treated or other treatment due to reduction in ability to provide supply. Mr. Jones stated that data has not been provided showing those treatments and impacted wells. Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits suggested consultants talk to the local major well drilling companies to see how many wells have been impacted due to lower water levels and have needed rehabilitation to be productive.

- Acting Alternate GSA Committee Director Kristin Worthley asked if the graph on slide 8 showing the total quantity of wells considers if new wells are being drilled to replace wells that are no longer productive due to insufficient groundwater levels in storage.
- Mr. Lawler explained that consultants showed and explained the historical data but the significant and unreasonable level is set by the GSA Committee and the confidence level in the data.
- Discussion continued regarding groundwater levels versus well production.
- Mr. Lawler stated consultants have given three set of data: Historical groundwater production data is stable, hydrographs show highs and lows of water levels, and well impact analysis. He explained plans can always benefit from more data no matter how much has been provided. Mr. Buelow explained that consultants today are looking for input to produce a draft document for the public to review and provide comment.
- GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin asked for clear suggested direction from consultants that the committee can provide reaction to.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks suggested the need to compare the farmer view versus municipal user view.
- A lengthy discussion continued regarding setting minimum thresholds, management objectives, and the well impact analysis.
- Regarding slide 30, Ms. Anita Regmi, DWR, asked what are kinds of impacts would be seen at the different levels proposed on the well impact analysis? Mr. Jones explained the well impact analysis shows static water level at or below top of screen could potentially cause aeration in well and reduce production capability. He also stated the information available does not tell if or how many wells can go dry unless we look at the bottom of screen.
- Mr. Bryan Bondy, on behalf the Santa Ynez Water Group stated that the group does not believe water levels at or below the top of screen cause impacts that are truly significant and unreasonable effect and requested that the GSP lay out a clear and deliberate process to take a closer look at what actual affects would be at different levels after GSP is adopted but before the first 5-year adjustment to the plan.
  - Mr. Kevin Walsh explained impacts if water level falls below of top of screen based on industry known air entrainment problems. Top of screen is good proxy for indication of possible impacts occurring.
  - GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan pointed out that water level can impact water quality especially in the Lompoc Plain. Mr. Buelow agreed that keeping water levels as high as possible in the Lompoc Plain is an important factor to help avoid water quality impacts as well as water production ability and explained the SGMA criteria which establishes minimum thresholds for each sustainability indicator.
  - Mr. Bryan Bondy commented on differences between theoretical well design and actual well design by individual well drillers in the field. In his experience of

reviewing wells, a lot of wells do not follow the theoretical design therefore the impacts can be caused by improper design. He agreed with Mr. Buelow's statement that everyone benefits from higher water levels but primary concern of Santa Ynez Water Group is at what costs or trade-offs are needed to achieve those higher water levels.

- A 5-minute break was taken from 12:03-12:08 pm.
- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan expressed concern about the average Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) levels since he has wells that he can no longer use due to low water quality. He explained that some farmers are reducing use or taking the wells producing low-quality water out of production, but they may not be listed as an inactive well, and that some farmers are using higher quality water produced from wells in other locations and trucking for use in the low-quality water areas. He prefers TDS to be 1,250 mg/L but is ok with TDS minimum threshold set at 1,600 mg/L.
- Regarding slide 37, GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan suggested that well #7N/34W-35K9 and other wells in that forebay area of Lompoc not be used as a representative monitoring well since they are in the recharge zone during water rights releases from Cachuma Reservoir. Otherwise, levels reflected by these wells may adversely affect water supply for City of Lompoc. He also suggested consultants consider the quality of the riparian habitat currently in the forebay region.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks in favor of proposed ongoing monitoring and setting minimum threshold of a half-foot of subsidence from 2015 elevation caused by groundwater extraction and interfering with land uses or infrastructure since land subsidence has not been an issue in the WMA.
- Mr. Trevor Jones presented a preliminary look at example projects and management actions for the WMA. Discussion followed.
  - GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin suggested maximizing recharge from wastewater treatment plant by relocating water to different locations in the WMA. He suggested two currently unused percolation ponds located at the south end of Rucker Road.
  - GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks mentioned gallery wells.
  - Alternate GSA Committee Director Kristin Worthley asked if recycle/reclaimed water could be used for farming. Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits advised one cannot use reclaimed water on edible crops.
  - GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan shared that Castroville area uses reclaimed water on golf courses but does not know if the use on edible crops in WMA is allowed.
  - Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits shared that the City of Montecito received a grant from the State of California for outreach to encourage private wells to be added to the monitoring network in a data gap area. He suggested staff and consultants follow up to see if there is a grant opportunity that can benefit the WMA.

- Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits spoke about a UC Berkley study about how surface water is interconnected with groundwater. He asked staff and consultants to review the study to determine if groundwater and surface water can operate independently thus be governed independently.
- Alternate GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits recommended the Sustainable Management Criteria for WMA GSA be set cautiously and be conservative with an early warning requirement as was done in the Sustainable Management Criteria section for the CMA GSA. Mr. Buelow announced the groundwater in storage minimum threshold levels, and trigger points for initial management actions that were set in the CMA and in the EMA.
- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks requested a consensus from the committee to instruct consultants to move forward with writing the Draft Sustainable Management Criteria section.
- Alternate GSA Committee Director Kristen Worthley asked for clarification about establishing projects and management actions. Mr. Jones verified projects and management action is in a different chapter and the topic will be addressed again before decisions will be made for that chapter.

**Guidance received:**

- GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks made a **MOTION** requesting staff to add to the Draft Sustainable Management Criteria a groundwater level Minimum Threshold for the Lompoc Plain set at 10 feet below 2020 groundwater water levels for the Upper Aquifer in the WMA and a Minimum Threshold of 20 foot below 2020 levels for the Lower Aquifer in the WMA. Discussion followed. The motion was seconded by GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin and passed unanimously by Roll Call vote 4-0.
- GSA Committee Director Steve Jordan made a **MOTION** requesting staff to add the following to the Draft Sustainable Management Criteria as proposed by Dudek in their presentation:
  - A Water Quality Measurable Objective set at:
    - Salinity as Total Dissolved Solids at the MCL of 1,250 mg/L in the Lompoc Plain, 600 mg/L in the Lompoc Upland, 750 mg/L in the Lompoc Terrace, and 1,500 mg/L in the Santa Rita Upland;
    - Chloride at the MCL of 250 mg/L in the Lompoc Plain, 150 mg/L in the Lompoc Upland, 210 mg/L in the Lompoc Terrace, and 150 mg/L in the Santa Rita Upland;
    - Sulfate at the MCL of 500 mg/L in the Lompoc Plain, 100 mg/L in the Lompoc Upland, 100 mg/L in the Lompoc Terrace, and 700 mg/L in the Santa Rita Upland;
    - Boron at the MCL of 0.5 mg/L in the Lompoc Plain, Lompoc Upland, and Santa Rita Upland, no level set for the Lompoc Terrace;

- Sodium at the MCL of 250 mg/L in the Lompoc Plain, 130 mg/L in the Lompoc Upland, 100 mg/L in the Lompoc Terrace, and 100 mg/L in the Santa Rita Upland;
- and Nitrate at the MCL of 2 mg/L in the Lompoc Plain and Lompoc Upland, and 1 mg/L in the Lompoc Terrace and Santa Rita Upland.
- Seawater Intrusion chloride concentration set at the 500 mg/L isocontour.
- Interconnected Surface Water set the groundwater elevations level near the Santa Ynez River at 83 feet (the historical low groundwater levels in the Upper Aquifer).
- Land Subsidence minimum threshold set at half-foot of subsidence from the 2015 elevation caused by groundwater extraction and interfering with land uses or infrastructure and continue monitoring of InSAR data, continuous GPS data and infrastructure condition as reported by relevant agencies.
- There was no discussion. The motion was seconded by GSA Committee Director Myron Heavin and passed unanimously by Roll Call vote 4-0.

**IX. Next “Special” WMA GSA Meeting: Wednesday, June 23, 2021, 10:00 AM**

Mr. Buelow announced the next proposed meeting for the WMA GSA Committee will be a Special Meeting on Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 10:00 am most likely via online video or phone conference until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

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

Mr. Buelow announced that the next WMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting will be on Wednesday, August 25, 2021, 10:00 am location to be determined. Due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions, it may be held via video/teleconference call.

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

There were no requests or comments.

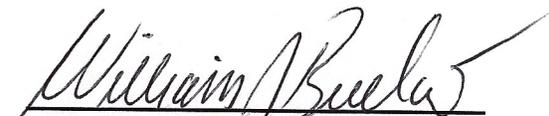
**XII. Adjournment**

GSA Committee Director Chris Brooks adjourned the meeting at 1:40 pm.




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Chris Brooks, Chairman




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William J. Buelow, Secretary

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

**JANUARY 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
WIRE TRANSFER	01/05/21	SkyTEM Canada (thru SYRWCD)	AEM Survey of CMA/WMA (50% of Inv #3 of 3)	\$ 18,312.00
BANK FEE	01/05/21	Mechanics Bank (thru SYRWCD)	50% of International Wire Transfer Bank Fee	\$ 15.00
1025	01/13/21	Bartlett, Pringle & Wolf	Consulting - Grant Financial	\$ 187.50
1026	01/13/21	Stetson Engineers	November 2020 Engineering Service (Task Order #1)	\$ 39,578.28
1027	01/13/21	Valley Bookkeeping	2020 4th Quarter Bookkeeping (October, November, December 2020)	\$ 150.00
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 58,242.78</b>

**FEBRUARY 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1028	02/16/21	Stetson Engineers	December 2020 Engineering Service (Task Order #1)	\$ 32,052.50
1029	02/16/21	Stetson Engineers	December 2020 Engineering Service (AEM work)	\$ 17,088.00
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 49,140.50</b>

**MARCH 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1030	03/31/21	Stetson Engineers	January 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #1 & AEM work)	\$ 24,512.48
1031	03/31/21	Valley Bookkeeping	2021 1st Quarter Bookkeeping (January, February, March 2021)	\$ 150.00
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 24,662.48</b>

<b>TOTAL THIS QUARTER: \$ 132,045.76</b>
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WESTERN MANAGEMENT AREA  
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP  
MEMORANDUM

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DATE: May 24, 2021  
TO: WMA GSA Committee  
FROM: WMA Citizen Advisory Group  
SUBJECT: Review and Discussion Draft Water Budget Technical Memorandum

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

CAG Members in attendance: Ms. Karen Kistler, and Mr. Charles Witt.

Staff and Consultants in attendance: Mr. Bill Buelow (SYRWCD), Mr. Curtis Lawlor (Stetson), Ms. Kristin Worthley (City of Lompoc), Mr Joe Barget (VVCSD), and Mr. Jerry Gruber (MHCSO).

There was two members of the public in attendance: Ms. Laurie Tamura and Mr. Bryan Bondy

**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 May 11, 2021. The purpose of the meetings was for the WMA CAG (CAG) to review the Draft Water Budget 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 Water Budget Technical Memorandum**

- The CAG members did not have specific comments on the Draft Water Budget.
- Mr. Karen Kistler did provide some comments on the recent presentation by Stetson on the Groundwater Model.

**Comments by the Public in Attendance:**

- Mr. Bryan Bondy of the Santa Ynez Water Group recommended reviewing calculation issues that were outlined to Curtis Lawler in an email and ET values, which may be

double counted. Discussion followed about specific examples of potential double counting.

- Mr. Steve Slack (CDFW) said that Stetson did a good job preparing the memo and it was a much more complicated surface water system than the EMA. Asked if approach by consultants was different.
  - Mr. Lawler said that the geology and surface geology are different between the two areas.