

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Central Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin October 25, 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, October 25, 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 CMA-2021-001 (passed on 10/20/2021).

GSA Committee Directors Present: Ed Andrisek and Art Hibbits

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Cynthia Allen and Meighan Diethofer

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

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Doug Circle, Sean Diggins, Larry Lahr, Deby Laranjo, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Sharyne Merritt, Steve Slack (CDFW), and Brett Stroud (Young Wooldridge)

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

CMA GSA Committee Director Ed Andrisek called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to do roll call. CMA GSA Committee Directors Andrisek and Hibbits were present in person. A quorum was met.

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 23, and October 20, 2021

The minutes of the GSA Committee meetings on August 23 and October 20, 2021 were presented for GSA Committee approval. There were no comments or discussion.

GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits made a MOTION to approve the minutes of August 23 and October 20, 2021, as presented. GSA Committee Director Ed Andrisek seconded the motion, and both sets of minutes passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Buelow introduced a comment 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.

CMA GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits disagreed with many comments in the letter and would Santa Ynez Water Group to provide supporting evidence for their statements. He requested that staff respond to the letter and advise the GSA Committee of the response.

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. There were no comments or discussion.

VIII. Receive update from Citizen Advisory Group meeting of October 8, 2021

Ms. Sharyne Merritt presented the CMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Memorandum dated October 8, 2021, which she prepared on behalf of the CMA CAG, regarding the CMA CAG's review and discussion of Public Draft CMA GSP and future governance. Discussion followed.

- Alternate CMA GSA Committee Director Meighan Dietenhofer asked Ms. Merritt to explain about other methods of water pumping measurement allowed by State other than meters. Ms. Merritt explained about some alternate methods using specific algorithms.
- CMA GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits asked Mr. Matt Young to verify if well logs reported to Santa Barbara County are available for use in SGMA. Mr. Young confirmed that Santa Barbara County Environmental Health and Safety keeps track of well construction information on wells since a specific date. However, construction details for older wells are not available.

- CMA GSA Committee Director Ed Andrisek asked about stream gauges. Mr. Curtis Lawler confirmed consultants have access to a stream gauge as water enters the CMA but does not have one measuring water as it flows from the CMA to the WMA. He said that staff and consultants discussed possibility of a new stream gauge to measure flow out of the CMA but explained the project could incur extensive costs, including annual maintenance costs. Mr. Buelow added that Committee Member direction would be needed to incur that type of expense.
- Mr. Larry Lahr recalled that the CMA CAG suggested that Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Sustainable Management Criteria levels should be the same levels as the Surface Water Depletion levels.
- Ms. Merritt recalled the CMA CAG discussed if wells located in river zone could be monitored for SGMA. Mr. Buelow clarified that some wells located in the river area (Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District's Zone A) may pull surface water from river alluvium while some wells are deeper and pump from groundwater. The wells pumping groundwater are subject to SGMA.
- Deby Laranjo and Sean Diggins, CMA CAG members, said the memo captured most of CMA CAG concerns and questions from the meeting.
- CMA GSA Committee Member Art Hibbits asked for clarification on when the CMA CAG memo mentioned adding monitoring wells, specifically if the CAG meant drill a monitoring well, at extreme expense, or add existing wells to the monitoring well network. Discussion followed. Mr. Lawler confirmed that a few landowners have volunteered use of their existing wells be added into the monitoring network. Data is being collected to determine if those wells are sufficient. He clarified that the preference and current plan is to add existing wells to the monitoring network.
- CMA GSA Committee Director Ed Andrisek asked if reports on stream gauges should add to agendas as a regular item. Mr. Buelow advised the updates will be brought to the committee regularly on quarterly basis or more often if needed. He added that stream gauge costs are being collected and will be presented to committee members for direction at a future meeting. Mr. Lawler explained costs of a new stream gauge plus the labor required for maintenance which can cost approximately \$20,000/year. CMA GSA Committee Member Art Hibbits expressed concerned with costs of adding a stream gauge if it is not placed on a main tributary.
 - Mr. Bryan Bondy agreed with CMA GSA Committee Member Art Hibbits and recommended the GSA Committee look at the overall budget before initiating one-off costs which can be considerable. He said a new stream gauge is a "would like" item not "must have" item.

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

Mr. Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers) presented slides "October 25 2021, GSA 2021 Special Meeting, Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan" for the CMA and gave an

overview of components and efforts involved with creating the Public Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in the CMA as well as next steps of the process. Discussion followed.

- CMA GSA Committee Member Ed Andrisek asked if GSP submission deadlines have any flexibility, given the COVID pandemic. Mr. Buelow said deadlines were set by SGMA law and would require a legislative act to change which is not expected. Mr. Brett Stroud, Young Wooldridge, confirmed there is no pending legislation to change SGMA law or GSP due dates.
- Ms. Sharyne Merritt thanked Mr. Buelow and Mr. Matt Young for their presentation to the Santa Barbara County Agriculture Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Merritt asked if outreach was made to farm bureau and vintners. She requested that outreach efforts be made so that metering and fees are not a surprise to those stakeholders.
- Ms. Merritt asked if there will be consideration of additional directors for the CMA GSA Committee, including small water purveyors in the area, an environmental director, and an agricultural director.
- Ms. Merritt asked if implementation of SGMA GSP will impact installation of new wells and future growth of City of Buellton. Rose Hess clarified the Urban Growth Boundary restrictions for growth will expire in two years.
- CMA GSA Committee Member Art Hibbits asked if there are any examples of DWR responses to other submitted GSPs.
 - Mr. Matt Young reported that Cuyama received DWR comments on four areas needing revisions. He anticipated, by January, future revisions will be needed but the Basin will have 180 days to provide those revisions to DWR.
 - He added that consultants reviewed GSPs that were approved, denied, and had revisions required.
 - Mr. Young gave a brief update on the San Antonio Basin, as it is on the same due date track as the Santa Ynez Basin. He stated that GSI created their GSP and it is similar to the EMA GSP. However, San Antonio has numerous Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems unlike any in the management areas of the Santa Ynez Basin. Another difference is that San Antonio Basin independent irrigators formed a water district and there are no large urban areas, so the GSP is focused on agriculture versus urban interests.
 - Mr. Brett Stroud shared that DWR comments have some form of objective measurement as a theme.

- CMA GSA Committee Member Art Hibbits asked if other submitted GSPs require meters.
 - Mr. Young reported that Cuyama required meters because local growers preferred metering to using remote sensor data.
 - Mr. Buelow pointed out that the CMA has a lot of small, de minimis, pumpers that may be not required to install a meter although their aggregate pumping adds up to a significant amount. The GSA Committee will need to decide on a good alternative to metering for those de minimis pumpers.
 - He added that the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District's has been working on these alternative methods so there is no need to reinvent.

Mr. Brett Stroud (Young Wooldridge) discussed options from his presentation "Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin Governance and Funding Proposals" presented on August 23, 202. Discussion followed.

- Mr. Stroud explained that the CMA 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. He suggested that a Single JPA (3 GSAs fall under one umbrella to share some costs) seemed to be most popular option during the other management areas GSA meetings. He further explained the least favored option was having three separate JPAs where management areas in Basin would not share any costs.
- Mr. Buelow requested committee members for guidance to staff regarding future governance. He asked if there was anything else the committee would like worked on with other two management areas. He reported that member agency staff currently have governance meetings monthly.
 - CMA GSA Committee Member Art Hibbits asked what is the most effective cost method going forward? He said he preferred creating a JPA to share costs versus the CMA being alone. Mr. Buelow agreed that most thoughts were to keep governance simple and with modest cost.
- Mr. Buelow added that initiating metering requirement, completing a required rate study, and developing SGMA fees program, that SGMA independent funding could take a year. However, right now, the information needed is how will governance structure be done, how will the GSAs relate to other GSA in the Basin, establish budgets and determine where funds needed will come from in the meantime.
- CMA GSA Committee Member Ed Andrisek asked for clarification on whose voice should be listened to since there are so many differing opinions. Mr. Buelow explained that the SGMA law states that the GSA needs to consider all stakeholders

when creating the GSP, but that ultimate decision making is given to the GSA Committee as the governing body. CMA GSA Committee Member Ed Andrisek asked for template and example of pitfalls from other basins to learn from. He mentioned since SB-88 had a roll-out for required meters, we could follow that model as a template.

- Mr. Lawler added the GSP from Santa Cruz and Salinas were accepted by DWR and both GSPs required meters. He said that meters seemed to be the preferred method in order to have good records.
- Alternate CMA GSA Committee Director Meighan Dietenhofer preferred that future governance should be made as efficient as possible.
- There was no public comment.

X. Next Regular CMA GSA Meeting: Monday, November 15, 2021, 10:00 AM

Mr. Buelow announced the next CMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting will be Monday, November 15, 2021, 10:00 AM. The CMA GSA Committee Directors unanimously agreed to hold the meeting using the hybrid approach with in-person participation at the Buellton City Council Chambers and ZOOM video/teleconference available for public participation as well.

XI. CMA GSA Committee requests and comments

CMA GSA Director Art Hibbits requested staff responses to the three issues raised by Ms. Sharyne Merritt during this meeting and staff response to the letter received from the attorney representing the Santa Ynez Water Group.

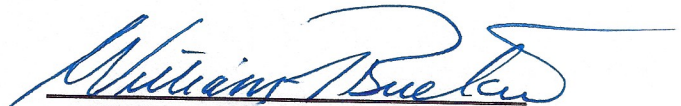
CMA GSA Committee Member Ed Andrisek requested a SantaYnezWater.org website visits report.

XII. Adjournment

CMA GSA Director Art Hibbits adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.



Ed Andrisek, Chairman



William J. Buelow, Secretary

CENTRAL MANAGMENT AREA
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP
MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 8, 2021

TO: CMA GSA Committee

FROM: CMA Citizen Advisory Group
(representative Sharyne Merritt)

SUBJECT: Workshop on Public Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and Future Governance

Attendees

CMA CAG Members in attendance: Sharyne Merritt, Cindy Douglas, Len Fleckenstein; Sean Diggins, and Larry Lahr

Staff in attendance: Bill Buelow and Kevin Walsh (SYRWCD), Matt Young (County Water Agency)

Consultants in attendance: Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers),

Purpose

The CMA GSA Committee requested staff for the GSA agencies to coordinate meetings of the CMA CAG. Through a coordinated effort, the CAG held a meeting via teleconference. The meeting was held on October 8, 2021. The purpose of the meetings was for the CMA CAG (CAG) to review the Public Draft of the GSP and future governance options. The GSP 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.

CAG Comments o

Each member of the CAG was given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments on the Public Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin. Discussion occurred with each question and comment by various members of the CAG, Staff and Consultants. Below is a summary of the comments and questions by topic.

Data gaps

- CAG members noted concern about monitoring the *Buellton Aquifer*. There are a number of places in the document where argument could be made that current monitoring is not adequate, but the document says it is adequate. Most of the acreage within the CMA is

unmonitored. The argument is stronger for getting more monitoring wells if the document says monitoring is currently inadequate.

- Consultant/Staff noted more monitoring wells are needed just to be on par with other areas. They acknowledge this is a data gap and it is desirable to add more monitoring wells
- Consultant/Staff noted there are 4 wells are in the *Buellton Aquifer*: two on the east are drilled through the in Santa Ynez River Alluvium into the *Buellton Aquifer* below. They are 500 feet below the surface; two additional wells are completed on the west and are in the highlands.
- CAG members suggested a need for a stream gauge within the CMA boundaries – there is one upstream of the CMA and one downstream of the CMA, but none within the CMA boundaries.
 - Consultant/staff noted the gauge at the eastern end is close to the boundary, so it supplies a good estimate of flow in that area. The next gauge is at Lompoc. The groundwater contribution to surface water is minimal. Surface water is affected by releases from Lake Cachuma, flows from tributaries, and pumping by diverters. The surface water is least impacted by groundwater, so it was decided to not put one at the western edge of the CMA.

Surface water (River and River Alluvium) - Ground water interconnectivity, and GDE's

- CAG members asked if SGMA has an obligation to keep surface water contribution at current level
 - Consultant/staff responded that 15-feet below the surface of the river in the alluvium is the root level for riparian trees. Consultant stated that these were groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDE) though this was questioned by the CAG – see below.
- CAG members asked if there is interconnectivity between ground water and the River Alluvium. Pointing to Table 2b.6-2, which shows 11-acres of potential GDE Associated within a Principal Aquifer [*Buellton Aquifer*], 1,223-acres of potential riparian areas not subject to SGMA, 501-acres not likely to be affected by groundwater management, and 807-acres of riparian vegetation that according to the text “may have some influence from the *Buellton Aquifer* water levels”
 - Consultant/staff responded that interconnectivity between ground water and Alluvium was unknown currently
- CAG members asked how the 15-feet below the surface water threshold was derived.
 - Consultant/staff responded that they wanted to monitor undesirable results related to flux.
 - Consultants further explained: The surface water of the Santa Ynez River flows on top of the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium* and within the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium*. Water flowing beneath the surface of the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium* is also referred to as the “underflow” and “subflow”. Below the *Santa Ynez River*

Alluvium is the *Buellton Aquifer*. Riparian vegetation has its roots in the first 15-feet of the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium*. *Santa Ynez River Alluvium* is between 0 to 150-feet deep.

- CAG members observed that there were likely few if any acres of the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium* that were less than 15-feet deep allowing the *Buellton Aquifer* to be within 15 feet of the surface. It would therefore be unlikely for the Santa Ynez River riparian ecosystem to be groundwater dependent.
- CAG members noted that it is not likely observed water level decreases in the *Buellton Aquifer* will affect the surface water or habitat for riparian vegetation. The CAG noted that in the CMA, riparian vegetation is better classified as Surface water Dependent Ecosystems (SDE) rather than Groundwater Depend Ecosystems (GDE).
- A member of the public commented that there should be explicit and strong caveats explaining that riparian vegetation primarily relies on the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium*. There is virtually no way the *Buellton Aquifer* would be a materially contributing cause to riparian vegetation; SGMA was not intended to manage surface water

Management

- CAG members asked about the trigger of two consecutive non-drought years for Minimum Thresholds, noting there may not be two consecutive non-drought years in the future.
 - Consultant/Staff said this was the best route to go at this time however these thresholds could change, if needed. Further, sustainable yield will be updated during revisions to the GSP.
 - Sustainable yield refers to the difference between inflow and outflow. There is uncertainty in the water budget due to some estimated parameters. Consultants will corroborate the model with groundwater levels to refine the budget in the future.
- CAG members asked when Group 1 Management Actions will begin; who determines timing of metering and amounts of fees; who pays for the meters; given delays experienced by well companies, how long will this take?
 - Consultant/Staff offered that Group 1 Management Actions will begin immediately. Timing of metering and amounts of fees will be determined by GSA. It will take a lot of time to initiate all of these actions.
 - Other basins have left paying for meters up to the owner; Santa Barbara County supervisors are looking at some sort of defrayment of cost; up to \$500 or \$600 per well; The GSA will have to come up for standards for calibration; must be installed by certified person. CAG members suggested that the GSA look at SB88 for lessons learned.
- CAG members suggested that since Surface Water users have to report use to the State using State approved techniques, CMA should allow use of any techniques approved by the State.

- Consultants/Staff reviewed the GSP timeline: the GSP gets adopted and uploaded in December 2021 and January 2022; then DWR has 2 years to approve it; GSA will continue to meet quarterly with annual reporting; The GSAs need to figure how we are going to fund implementation.
- The CAG discussed how will the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District will relate to GSA.
 - Consultant/Staff if GSA's want the District to continue supporting SGMA, it will.
 - Consultant/Staff said it is possible the GSA will monitor wells in the *Santa Ynez River Alluvium*.
- A member of public noted that on other GSA boards there are stakeholder directors, for example, an environmental director and an agriculture director.

There was no further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned.