



UKIAH VALLEY BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

340 Lake Mendocino Dr. ♦ Ukiah ♦ California 95482 ♦ (707)463-4363 ♦ fax (707)463-5474

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

1:00 P.M. – Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Mendocino County Department of Transportation
340 Lake Mendocino Drive, Ukiah CA, 95482
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Supporting Documents:

- October 20, 2021 Agenda
- October 13, 2021 Minutes Summary

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

TAC Members Present: Elizabeth Salomone, Ken Todd, James Linderman, Sean White, Mike Webster, Don Seymour, Stephen Maples, Ken Todd

Absent: Laurel Marcus, Javier Silvia, Levi Paulin

All Others Present: Michael Harrigan, Amir Mani, Devon Jones, Amber Fisette, Deborah Edelman, Dominic Guterrez, Jared Walker, Laura Foglia

Meeting Called to order at 1:04 PM

2. Approval of Meeting Summary from the October 13, 2021 Meeting

Committee Action: Motion to table approval of the minutes from the October 13, 2021 TAC Meeting until edits are incorporated. Motion carries unanimously.

3. The TAC Committee will Discuss Public Comments on the Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Groundwater Sustainability Plan and Provide Feedback Regarding Comments and the Technical Team's Proposed Responses.

Presenter(s): Laura, Amir

- Amir: Several public comments regarding how GDEs are removed incorrectly based on having access to GW for more than 50% of the time; if they have access to groundwater at any time they should be determined as GDEs or as "potential GDEs"
 - Discussed the proposed response: provide a better explanation of the reasoning. Technical team used the period of 2015-2020 to map GW elevations during Spring and Fall. Connection of GDEs to groundwater at least 50% of the time means that they should be connected at Springtime (normally growing season). This will be clarified and written differently. Whatever vegetation is only partially connected at Springtime will be classified



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as “potential GDEs” that will be “ground-truthed” as GDEs during the first five years of implementation.

- Amir: several comments regarding insufficient data are available to describe groundwater conditions within or near polygons from the NC dataset, include those polygons as “Potential GDEs” in the GSP until data gaps are reconciled in the monitoring network
 - Beth: discusses monthly vs quarterly groundwater elevation monitoring (to be conducted by the MCRCD)-monthly readings would go further along to address data gaps in monitoring network.
 - Laura: agrees that a monthly monitoring regiment would address data gaps better than a quarterly monitoring regiment. Mentions that a potential hurdle to more frequent well monitoring are financial considerations-suggests putting together a side-by-side annual budget for monthly and quarterly monitoring.
 - Beth: why would we not advise the GSA board to conduct monthly monitoring; invites other TAC members to comment.
 - Mike Webster: will all these monitoring wells be equipped with data loggers? If so then would that not cut back on the cost of data collection (less need for an individual to go to each site to collect data). If they had data loggers than could you not cut back to every other month or every 3 months?
 - Laura: the only wells with data loggers will be the TSS monitoring wells installed by the DWR. Plus a couple of other wells that they installed data loggers in last spring. The wells the TAC is discussing are not equipped with data loggers.
 - Beth: Board should consider cost efficiency of data loggers.
 - Amir: one roadblock to installing data loggers-well owners may or may not agree to their installation.
 - James Linderman: funding limitations aside, I think a higher resolution of data would help the model in general and in the identification of GDEs. The big picture is that we have a lack of data-by increasing our collection of data we’re fast-tracking the model where it should be and increasing our confidence in relying on the model to make decisions.
 - Beth proposes as a recommendation to the Board that they consider conducting monthly groundwater elevation readings.
 - Deborah: important to note that MCRCD only has a contract to conduct monthly readings until December then bi-annual readings following December (as part of the CASGEM program)-the MCRCD would need a new contract.
 - Amber: the County would need to amend their current contract-additionally would need a recommendation to do so from the UVBGSA Board. The County would possibly need to draft a new contract since additional monitoring would push the County cost over \$50k.
 - Beth: suggest that it might make more sense for MCRCD to contract with Russian River Flood Control. Suggests taking this conversation offline with Amber to come up with a recommendation on how to proceed.
 - James: returns to discussion to GDEs-need to determine on how to establish “dependency.” Doesn’t think that if vegetation has at one point had a single interaction with groundwater that is not grounds to establish it as a “GDE”. We need a way to establish vegetation as having a “realistic” dependence on groundwater. Is it necessary for us to look at if the current level of pumping is having an effect on GDEs-like whether pumping is removing certain groups of vegetation interaction with groundwater?



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- Laura: most of our groundwater data are measurements from fall and spring-use spring levels to determine GDE status. Lack of data makes it difficult. More generally, we should incorporate more language about how the GSA will reevaluate GDEs during 5-year implementation period.
 - Beth: are there any drawbacks to classifying GDEs as potential?
 - Sean White: vegetation that “gets its toes’ wet” every 5 years hardly makes the case for it being groundwater dependent.
 - Amir: the technical team is being conservative when classifying vegetation as groundwater dependent.
- Amir: comments regarding minimum thresholds for Interconnected Surface Waters-how minimum thresholds and lowest groundwater elevations on record (recent drought 2012-2016) would likely create historically high streamflow depletion rates,
 - Mike Webster: asks whether Amir suggested that after 5-year period the GSA will cease data collection and just rely on the model.
 - Amir: no-data collection will not cease after 5-year period; monitoring will take place over 20 years; minimum thresholds for ISW will rely on the model after the model has incorporated additional data from the 5-year implementation period.
 - James Linderman: agrees with technical team’s approach; GSA needs to determine depletion caused by groundwater pumping.
 - Beth: steers discussion back to comment regarding GSP states how drought conditions from 2014-2016 were considerable but not unreasonable.
 - Amir: 2014 and 2015 were not unreasonable based on their discussion-the reason we were not clear was because data is qualitative not quantitative. May be worth considering removal.
 - Beth: requested clarification on whether “unreasonable” is defined by DWR.
 - Amir: no-determine by UVBGSA.
 - Laura: more conscious with our language about considerable vs unreasonable-might be worth removing comment entirely.
 - Beth: doesn’t know if we have enough data to establish what’s unreasonable. Suggests removing the line from the GSP.
 - Sean White: unclear whether or not GSP understates or overstates groundwater conditions. Not sure if comments should be removed from GSP-states 14-15 does not have any lasting effects. States that GSA does not need to be reactive to every comment.
 - Beth: she shares commenters concerns-suggestion is not a reaction to comment.
 - Amir: agrees wording might be troublesome but that they are submitting the minimum threshold based on that period (2014-2016); minimum threshold has to be set during data period GSA working with (2014-2019).
 - Stephen Maples: comments that Sonoma Water has a similar approach-using groundwater levels as a proxy for minimum threshold for interconnected surface water. Their model has preliminarily shown a relationship with groundwater levels.
 - Beth: concerned if the GSP is going state something isn’t significant then how will we prove it.
- Amir: Comments from NGO consortium letter regarding additional monitoring of groundwater dependent ecosystems.



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- Proposed response: Biological monitoring is not identified in the plan. We need your direction if it needs to be included. It can be added as a PMA, this was the suggestion DWR provided.
- Beth: clarifies that the proposed response states that a PMA will be developed if significant declining trends are observed. Wants to know how the GSA will define significant declining trends especially if the GSA is infrequently monitoring groundwater levels.
- Amir: more frequent monitoring is better but the GSA can still determine declining trends with infrequent (quarterly, for example) monitoring. The proposed response is not suggesting that the GSA not include this into the monitoring network but incorporate it as a PMA.
- Beth: if we do a PMA for groundwater monitoring with a focus on groundwater dependent ecosystems how will the GSA pay for it if the Board does not apply for funds.
- TAC action: keep proposed response as is.
- Amir: PMA related comments-“GSP puts heavy emphasis on supply augmentation. It needs to realize and explain climate change impacts and future competition for flood and surface water and physical and storage limits of that water to be captured[...] Due to the increasing issues surrounding future supply replenishment, it is vital that demand reductions be fully considered and given a higher priority throughout this GSP. Demand reduction methods that need to be considered include the feasibility of land fallowing, increased urban conservation, pumping restrictions through local government policies, fees for groundwater pumping, and irrigation reductions [...] Without demand reduction and knowledge of how groundwater is used, the Ukiah Basin will not obtain long-term sustainability. Analysis of demand management must occur within this initial five-year period so that later decisions are well-informed.”
 - Proposed Response: We will add more explanations to cover the difficulties of supply augmentation in the future. These PMAs are contingent upon grant funding, and we cannot provide implementation or a timeline for them. We need direction on a demand reduction PMA. Based on previous discussions, stakeholders indicated such a PMA is unnecessary and probably beyond the jurisdiction of GSA. Historical conditions and preliminary future results do not show demand reduction to be necessary, rather well designed PMAs can keep the basin sustainable. PMAs on agricultural and urban conservation are already included in the GSP.
 - Beth: two points of concern when you say the GSA doesn't really need groundwater pumping reduction-haven't seen a drought year quite like this one and the Eel River diversions through the Potter Valley Project are uncertain. With the possibility of minimum or no Eel River diversion to Russian River does the GSA need to reconsider groundwater pumping reduction?
 - Laura: LWA developed GSPs for other GSAs before current drought conditions. Worth considering adding something into the GSP about the unique conditions of our current drought and how those special conditions may suggest that possible other needs into the basins might be added into the GSA list of PMAs.
 - Sean White: has no issue with discussing this year in the GSP but this is what 5-year reviews are for-hard to predict what the weather will be next spring.
 - Laura: proposed response-adding something about how the special conditions of this drought will be considered in future PMAs. Reminds TAC members that the GSP can be amended at any time should the need arise.
 - Beth: would like TAC members to consider adding a development/feasibility PMA. Mentions the SWCRB is supporting voluntary conservation agreements-such a PMA



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should only be included only if the GSA does studies/defines need/parameters of demand reduction. PMA would assess what demand reduction would be useful.

- Devon Jones: Is the GSA trying to put in place a groundwater limitation PMA premised off of a lack of surface water.
- Beth: no, PMA could be a study to show relationship between groundwater and surface water.
- Laura: PMA would help planning in future drought.
- Devon Jones: concerned PMA will commit us to groundwater reduction.
- Amir: understands concern; states PMA doesn't commit to any action that would reduce groundwater
- Beth: doesn't commit to groundwater reduction but acknowledges the concerns from the public comment.
- Deborah: supports proposed PMA. Further adds that demand reduction is a quicker and cheaper way to deal with special drought conditions than supply augmentation and that this PMA would give the GSA a better understanding on how to/where to apply demand reduction if the need arises.
- Stephen Maples: supports proposed PMA. States that this just gives the GSA another tool in its tool box.
- Devon Jones: states if the basin does get into a drought emergency situation that agriculture will bear the bulk of demand reduction.
- Beth: states she would not support a reduction in agriculture water use without considering an equitable reduction in community water systems.
- Laura: the goal of the GSP is also to maintain the economy of the basin. The proposed PMA could have an economic evaluation of potential reduction measures.
- Beth: who is writing these PMAs? Who is providing input? How is the GSA flushing out these PMAs?
 - Laura: for the GSP as it is now, the GSA doesn't need any more help flushing out more PMAs (the technical team can add proposed PMAs from this meeting into the GSP). What we need more than defining the specifics the PMAs is a prioritization of what PMA implementation during GSP implementation.
 - Beth: is the TAC best body to tackle this?
 - James: thinks the most immediate need for the GSA is monitoring and filling data gaps so the GSA can rely more on their model-throughout our GSP the GSA has acknowledged data gaps. The GSA should discuss which PMAs the GSA needs to take up or if they should just focus on monitoring. If special circumstances arrive, the GSA should look at the PMA toolbox and apply when necessary. Does not think PMAs should be our main priority-thinks the comment is in regards to PMA diversity.
 - Amir: PMAs do not have to be "shovel ready"; details can be worked out after implementation. It's about choosing which PMAs the GSA would want to commit to right now-for example, well inventory would be necessary for implementation.
 - Beth: so what we're looking at is implementation plan development-which PMAs to include in implementation.
- Beth: where are we on the implementation plan so far?
 - Laura: have drafted something; making changes to draft after reading some GSP draft comments. Her suggestion is first priority is to setup everything to address data gaps. Then the GSA could setup a PMA working group and the hypothetically



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- suggest three PMAs to evaluate after roughly a year of working towards filling in data gaps.
- Beth: would we setup a working group before or after a GSP implementation; why wouldn't it just be the TAC?
 - Laura: it could be the TAC.
 - Beth: wants to remind the TAC that upcoming GSA board meeting has an agenda item proposing an RFP for a GSA administrator.
 - Beth: steers discussion about what's next for GSA timeline-when is the board going to meet and when are they planning to discuss the GSP?
 - Amber: planning to have a GSA board meeting in November to discuss comments; final Board approval will likely happen on the December 15th meeting.
 - Kirsten: Stantec will give short presentation at tomorrow's board meeting regarding comment response process; will discuss comment responses and any larger changes to propose to the GSP at November's meeting. Will release revised GSP to Board members in mid-November for board members to review; Board will take it up at December's meeting.
 - Amir: confirms the technical team will have a final revised GSP by mid-November; will send to Board and TAC members via email. Wants to receive comments from members by December 3 so the technical team has a chance to review comments before the December 15th Board meeting.

4. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

This time is reserved for the public to address the Committee about matters not on the agenda and within the jurisdiction of the Advisory Committee. Persons wishing to speak on specific agenda items should do so at the time specified for those items.

No one from the public indicated an interest in speaking.

5. Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 3:05 PM