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Meeting Summary

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee Meeting #17 March 27, 2019, 5:00 – 8:30 pm

This meeting was the seventeenth convening of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Advisory Committee. It took place on March 27, 2019 from 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Simpkins Family Swim Center in Santa Cruz. This document summarizes key outcomes from Advisory Committee and staff discussions on the following topics: project updates; groundwater modeling results for sustainable strategies; staff proposals on sustainable management criteria for Seawater Intrusion (updated) and Groundwater Storage; MGA Board funding approach; and representative monitoring wells for all Sustainability Indicators. This document also provides an overview of public comment received. It is not intended to serve as a detailed transcript of the meeting.

Meeting Objectives

The primary objectives for the meeting were to:

- Discuss groundwater modeling results for various sustainability strategies, including for combined projects
- Discuss draft proposed Sustainable Management Criteria for “Groundwater Storage” Sustainability Indicator and updated Sustainable Management Criteria for “Seawater Intrusion” Sustainability Indicator
- Receive primer and share initial reflections on the topic of “who pays for what?”
- Review and confirm representative monitoring wells for each sustainability indicator

Action Items

Key action items from the meeting include the following:

1. Staff to provide the Advisory Committee with more details on the input process for the pertinent GSP sections before the July Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) Board meeting.
2. Staff to ensure inclusion of an item on the July MGA Board meeting agenda for the Advisory Committee to discuss their recommendations and deliberations on the pertinent GSP sections to the MGA Board.



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3. Sierra Ryan, County of Santa Cruz, to post details of the April 18 Water Use Forecasting enrichment session on the MGA website.
4. Technical staff to confirm the Santa Cruz Aquifer and Storage Recovery (ASR) project recharge average.

Meeting attendance

Committee members in attendance included:

1. Kate Anderton, Environmental Representative
2. John Bargetto, Agricultural Representative
3. David Baskin, City of Santa Cruz
4. Keith Gudger, At-Large Representative
5. Bruce Jaffe, Soquel Creek Water District
6. Dana Katofsky McCarthy, Water Utility Rate Payer
7. Jon Kennedy, Private Well Representative
8. Jonathan Lear, At-Large Representative
9. Allyson Violante, County of Santa Cruz
10. Thomas Wyner for Cabrillo College, Institutional Representative

Committee members who were absent included:

1. Rich Casale, Small Water System Management
2. Marco Romanini, Central Water District
3. Charlie Rous, At-Large Representative

Meeting Key Outcomes (linked to agenda items)

1. Introduction and Discussion of GSP Process Timeline and Project Updates

Ralph Bracamonte, Central Water District, opened the meeting and welcomed participants. Mr. Bracamonte asked the GSP Advisory Committee members, MGA Executive Team, and the consultant support team to introduce themselves. He also addressed members of the public in attendance and asked them for self-introductions.

Eric Poncelet, facilitator, reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives, and provided key updates to the project process for the remaining four months of the GSP Advisory Committee process as reflected on the updated timeline.

Committee members requested clarification on how staff plans for the Committee to provide input on the pertinent sections of the GSP to the Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) Board members and the plan for staff to address Committee GSP-related questions after the June meeting. Committee members offered the following suggestions to staff:



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- Develop a consolidated document containing the Committee's GSP-related input on the Sustainable Management Criteria for the Sustainability Indicators for the Committee's reference.
- Agendize discussion of Committee's recommendations/deliberations for the July MGA Board meeting.

Staff indicated that the opportunity for the Committee to provide additional input to the pertinent GSP sections would come at the July MGA Board meeting, but that the review of the full GSP was outside of its scope. Staff also indicated that it would provide the Advisory Committee with more details on the input process for the pertinent GSP sections before the July MGA Board meeting.

2. Oral Communications (for items *not* on the agenda)

Mr. Poncelet, facilitator, invited members of the public to make comments on any GSP-related issues not on the agenda.

One participant announced that an upcoming meeting of the City of Santa Cruz Water Commission will review progress to date on the Water Supply Advisory Committee's (WSAC) recommendations will be held at the City of Santa Cruz, on April 1 at 7 pm. The participant also gave an update on the legal action against Soquel Creek Water District regarding issues related to approval of the Pure Water Soquel (PWS) project.

3. Project Updates

Mr. Poncelet invited the following project updates:

- **Upcoming GSP Advisory Committee meeting schedule**

Darcy Pruitt, Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF) provided updates to the upcoming Advisory Committee meeting schedule verbally and on a handout, emphasizing the following:

- The May meeting will occur on May 16 as it is a joint meeting with the MGA Board.
- The June meeting will occur earlier, on June 19 in order to accommodate Committee members who had conflicts with the regular 4th Wednesday schedule, since this is the last official Committee meeting.

- **March 21 2019 DWR GSA Forum**

Ms. Ryan reported on the DWR-hosted GSA Forum at which she presented as a panelist on the topic of GSP-related stakeholder outreach and engagement. She indicated that the Forum was a



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good opportunity for the GSAs in Basins to share information on their stakeholder engagement efforts.

- **Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) Educational Series**

Ms. Ryan also provided an update on the last of the Santa Margarita informational meetings, at which the deputy director from the State Water Resources Control Board presented the state perspective on issues related to GSPs (e.g., climate change scenarios, projects). Local representatives discussed climate change impacts and possible projects that could be implemented in the Santa Margarita Basin. She added that all of the meetings in the series were recorded and available for viewing on the SMGWA website.

- **April 8 2019 Surface Water Working Group Meeting and Updated Approach for Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water**

Ms. Ryan explained that as surface water is a complex sustainability indicator, the working group is still working on finalizing the sustainable management criteria proposal and will be meeting again on April 8 to discuss it. Georgina King, Montgomery & Associates provided a brief update on the approach to linking groundwater elevation proxy with depletion of interconnected surface water.

- **April 18 2019 Enrichment Session: Forecasting Water Use from Land Use and Population**

Ms. Ryan announced that the enrichment session on the topic of forecasting water use from land use and population will occur on April 18 and she will post details of the session on the MGA website shortly.

4. Groundwater Modeling Results for Sustainability Strategies

Cameron Tana, Montgomery & Associates, discussed modeling results for a combination of projects, including Pure Water Soquel (PWS) and City ASR. He also described possible future iterations of the model, which would include reconfigured ASR, in-lieu compatible with PWS, redistribution of PWS pumping, and evaluating City ASR and combined projects using the Catalog Climate approach.

Following Mr. Tana's presentation, Committee members discussed the following key points with respect to the combined project groundwater modeling results:

- The strategy behind the PWS project is to conduct recharge in specific locations to protect groundwater levels in those areas, and have the benefits ultimately distributed to a larger area.



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- Currently, for City ASR pilot project, the only well used is the City Beltz 12 well. More reconfigured locations are being considered, including use of existing infrastructure, some of which will need rehabilitation before use.
- In structuring the process for the reconfigured City ASR that would meet the goal of addressing the City's water supply shortage, the technical team needs to determine factors such as the availability of water supply, capacity of wells, demand on particular wells, and other operational implications.
- Another key component of the projects is collaboration among all of the pumpers in the Basin, especially between the City and water districts to achieve sustainability.
- The technical team will confirm the City ASR average water injection amount, the current range of which is up to 1900 AFY.

5. Public Comment

Mr. Poncelet, facilitator, invited members of the public to comment on Mr. Tana's presentation on groundwater modeling results on sustainable strategies, the Advisory Committee's reflections on the presentation, and any other Advisory Committee work.

One participant asked staff to consider the effects of accumulation of salt from seawater inflows and outflows into the aquifers.

Another participant offered a number of comments on Mr. Tana's presentation and observed that recharge has primarily been used to increase surface streamflow, not to raise groundwater levels. The participant stated that this effect from the City ASR project reinforces that PWS is not needed.

A participant offered endorsement of the previous participant's comments and asked staff to consider incorporating the Lochquifer project.

6. Proposed Draft Sustainable Management Criteria for "Seawater Intrusion" and "Groundwater Storage" Sustainability Indicators

Georgina King, Montgomery & Associates, presented a staff proposal on updated Sustainability Management Criteria for the Seawater Intrusion Sustainability Indicator. This proposal contained updates to the proposal originally presented in May 2018 and included the addition of Representative Monitoring Wells for the Purisima AA/Tu units and their associated minimum thresholds, plus Measurable Objectives previously discussed in September 2018.

Ms. King asked the Committee for feedback on the staff recommendation to use five-year (versus 10-year previously proposed) average groundwater elevations relative to protective groundwater elevations in coastal monitoring wells for any coastal monitoring well by which undesirable results would be evaluated.



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Key input from the Committee on the five-year average for groundwater elevations include:

- If any average is to be used in evaluating undesirable results for Seawater Intrusion, the following needs to be addressed:
 - The problem needs to be clearly stated.
 - Provide an estimate of how much Seawater Intrusion is being underestimated if it falls below the average and what the impact on sustainability will be.

Ms. King also requested Committee feedback on staff's proposal for the Measurable Objective isocontour to be the same as the Minimum Threshold isocontour, but reduced concentration from 250 mg/L (Minimum Threshold) to 100 mg/L (Measurable Objective).

Committee members provided feedback on this proposal as follows:

- The 250 mg/L chloride minimum threshold standard is too high; 150 mg/l would be a more reasonable level. This level needs to be monitored very closely.
- As there are areas (e.g., Moran Lake) that register higher chloride levels than 100 mg/L, it is necessary to explain these higher levels in the GSP.
- Include levels in the GSP that would ensure against undesirable results, requiring State intervention.

In the second part of this agenda item, Ms. King presented a proposal on Groundwater Storage and requested that the Committee provide feedback on proposed theoretical approach to Sustainability Management Criteria, and representative monitoring points used to measure the Minimum Threshold and Measurable Objective metrics.

Key discussion points on Ms. King's proposal on Groundwater Storage included:

- With respect to Significant and Unreasonable Conditions, Committee members suggested that staff should consider water budget figures and changing the language regarding the volume of water "escaped" or "extracted" rather than "pumped."
- Regarding the proposed Undesirable Results, Committee members requested that staff consider all variables to come up with the most efficient way to maximize sustainability and keep in mind other Undesirable Results the basin would want to avoid.
- On Minimum Threshold, the Committee generally supported using the sustainable yield, but also recommended dividing up the data by aquifer and doing more than the regulations require.
- With respect to the proposed Measurable Objective, the Committee discussed the following:
 - The maximum pumping number can be recalculated and varied every five years, if needed.



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- The Measurable Objective levels are not enforceable, whereas the Minimum Threshold levels are enforceable. Sustainability should still be evaluated based on the Measurable Objective, taking into account the previous five years.
- Regarding the Representative Monitoring Points, staff clarified that leakage is included in the Sustainable Yield figure.

7. Santa Cruz MGA Ongoing Funding

The MGA will require ongoing funding to implement its Groundwater Sustainability Plan once it has been accepted by the State. Ms. Ryan presented on considerations and approaches on the potential Santa Cruz MGA ongoing funding and next steps. She requested initial reflections from the Committee.

The Committee's discussion on the funding considerations focused on the following key points:

- There are pros and cons to metering and charging a fee to *de minimus* pumpers. The Board should continue to monitor and analyze evaluation methods.
- The MGA Board is exploring metering for large volume water users.
- The rate of development in rural parts of the basin very minimal currently. Therefore, trend data for well installations has not been assessed.

8. Representative Monitoring Wells for Each Sustainability Indicator

Ms. King presented on the representative monitoring wells proposed for each sustainability indicator, including a discussion of data gaps for each indicator. The Committee requested that staff share this information again once the analysis for the Sustainability Indicators are finalized. Ms. King indicated that information on representative monitoring wells will be included in the appropriate chapter of the GSP.

9. Public Comment

During this final public comment session, Mr. Poncelet invited members of the public to provide comments on the Committee's discussion of Seawater Intrusion and Groundwater Storage technical staff proposals, the proposed funding approach, representative monitoring wells, and any other aspect of Advisory Committee work.

One participant provided general comments on various sections of the presentation under agenda items 7 and 8 and encouraged the MGA staff to hold public meetings regarding its decision to assess fees under Proposition 26 and Proposition 218.

Another participant encouraged staff to consider projects other than ASR and PWS for the Basin.



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10. Confirm the February 27, 2019 Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

This item was deferred to the next meeting on April 24, 2019.

11. Next Steps

In closing, Mr. Poncelet provided a recap of the GSP process timeline for April through July 2019, focusing on objectives for the April enrichment session, the April, May and June meetings.

Executive Team members closed the meeting by thanking the attendees for their participation.