



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

## Meeting Summary

### **Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee Meeting #20 June 19, 2019, 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

This meeting was the twentieth and final convening of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Advisory Committee. It took place on June 19, 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: the GSP roll out plan; final Committee recommendations for the Sustainability Goal and Sustainable Management Criteria; and Committee member levels of support for the recommendations. 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 and refine final Advisory Committee recommendations for the Sustainability Goal and Sustainable Management Criteria.
- Identify level of support for Advisory Committee recommendations to the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) Board.
- Convey thanks and appreciation to Advisory Committee members.

#### **Action Items**

Key action items from the meeting include the following:

- Staff to consider including appropriate "triggers" in the GSP that would drive protective management actions with respect to groundwater levels, as a proxy for Seawater Intrusion.
- Kearns & West (K&W) to include in the conveyance memo to the MGA Board explicit acknowledgement and appreciation of staff support and commitment in the GSP Advisory Committee process.
- K&W to review and incorporate Tom Wyner's comments on the May meeting summary.
- Staff to continue keeping the Advisory Committee periodically apprised of progress of GSP.

#### **Meeting attendance**



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

---

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

Committee members in attendance included:

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

No Committee members were absent.

### **Meeting Key Outcomes (linked to agenda items)**

#### **1. Introduction and Review of GSP Process Timeline and GSP Roll Out Plan**

Ron Duncan, Soquel Creek Water District, opened the meeting and welcomed participants on behalf of Tom LaHue, MGA Board Chair. Mr. Duncan 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. As this was the last Committee meeting, Mr. Duncan thanked the Committee for their work on the GSP on behalf of the Executive Team.

Eric Poncelet, facilitator, reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives, and provided key updates to the project process for the remainder of 2019, including the Board activities and public open house process as reflected on the updated timeline.

Sierra Ryan, County of Santa Cruz, discussed the GSP rollout process. She described key events for the summer through the late November time frame, which will include a survey and GSP public Open House meetings on July 20 and 22, community drop-in hours on August 15, and a question and answer (Q&A) session on August 28 where members of the public will have the opportunity to speak with and ask questions about the GSP of MGA member agency staff; all these events are posted on the MGA's website calendar.



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

---

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

2. Sierra confirmed that a 60-day public comment period for the GSP will begin following the MGA Board meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup> and run through September 19<sup>th</sup>. The public comment period process and dates will be posted on the MGA website. Written comments will be accepted at outreach events and via email at the address listed on the website. Oral public comments will be accepted at a public hearing on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Staff then will have two months to review and incorporate public comments on the draft GSP into the final GSP. It is expected that the final GSP will be presented to Board at its November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, and upon approval, submitted to DWR. Once the Plan has been received, DWR has 20 days to post the Plan on the DWR website. Once posted, another 60-day public comment period will begin. **Oral Communications (for items *not* on the agenda)**

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

One participant thanked the Advisory Committee for all of their hard work. She reminded the group about the legal proceeding involving Pure Water Soquel and noted groundwater-related news on the website Maven's Notebook.

Another participant expressed appreciation for the GSP Advisory Committee process and offered to address any questions about comments he made at the May 16, 2019 joint MGA Board/Advisory Committee meeting.

### **3. Proposed Revisions to Advisory Committee Recommendations for the Sustainability Goal and Sustainable Management Criteria**

Mr. Poncelet explained the process for making final refinements to and finalizing the Sustainability Goal and Sustainable Management Criteria as a package of recommendations. He noted that the package would need to be viewed as final by all Committee members before they would vote on it.

Darcy Pruitt, Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF), reviewed the minor changes to the Sustainability Goal that were brought up at the May 16 MGA Board/Advisory Committee joint meeting and indicated that she will incorporate the one minor additional edit noted by a Committee member.

Georgina King, Montgomery & Associates, proceeded to review each of the Sustainable Management Criteria and noted key changes from the previous version based on comments received at the May 16 MGA Board/Advisory Committee joint meeting. Staff and the Committee discussed the following key points on the Sustainable Management Criteria.



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

---

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

- (1) Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels. Ms. King explained the rationale for using Minimum Thresholds not being allowed to exceed 30 feet below historic groundwater elevations. Ms. King indicated that Measurable Objectives had changed since the joint Board/Advisory Committee meeting and this value was now based on the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of historical groundwater elevations, which is a change from the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile used in the previous version of the Sustainable Management Criteria. A Committee member requested clarification regarding any risks to shallow wells.
  
- (2) Reduction in Groundwater Storage. Ms. King explained the rationale for grouping aquifers into three major aquifers; she indicated that production wells are screened through multiple aquifers, and it is not easy to determine how much water individual aquifers contribute to each well. She noted that the Minimum Threshold and the Measurable Objectives have not changed since the May 16 meeting. To a Committee member question regarding the timing for determining the sustainable yield, Ms. King responded that it will be determined in the next two weeks. Other Committee members asked whether the explanatory text in the current version of the Sustainable Management Criteria document (meeting material 3.2) will be included in the GSP as part of the Sustainable Management Criteria or as part of the rationale. Mr. Poncelet and Ms. King clarified that the red text in the current document (meeting material 3.2) was meant to provide justification for the current Sustainable Management Criteria and will not be included as part of the specific Sustainable Management Criteria text to be part of the July Board meeting, but it will be incorporated as rationale into the GSP.
  
- (3) Seawater Intrusion. Ms. King provided several points of rationale for using a five-year average for groundwater levels to calculate protective elevations for coastal monitoring wells. A Committee member asked if adding water from freshwater supply projects can change chloride concentrations if there is a natural presence of chloride. Ms. King explained that there is no constant amount of chloride left in the sediments because it is highly soluble. Another Committee member asked if the GSP will include triggers to implement management actions for a scenario where there may be two consecutive years of below minimum threshold groundwater elevations that do not cause an Undesirable Result but are worthy of attention because they are below minimum thresholds. Ms. King confirmed that this is not required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to include triggers such as this, but similar to trigger concentrations for chloride, triggers for groundwater level proxies for seawater intrusion minimum thresholds will be included in the GSP. She further clarified that the reductions in groundwater levels need to be reported annually, and the Basin is trying to achieve sustainability before 2040. A Committee member emphasized that as Seawater Intrusion poses the greatest threat to the Basin, it would be



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

preferable to use a shorter average for groundwater levels; he suggested that if the five-year average is used, it would be more reassuring if an additional trigger is considered for management actions to protect against Seawater Intrusion. Staff agreed to include in its conveyance memo to the MGA Board the consideration of additional triggers in this respect.

- (4) Degraded Groundwater Quality. Ms. King reported that no changes had been made to this Sustainable Management Criterion since the May 16 MGA Board/Advisory Committee meeting. Advisory Committee members did not recommend any further changes.
- (5) Land Subsidence. Ms. King reported that no changes had been made to this Sustainable Management Criterion since the May 16 MGA Board/Advisory Committee meeting and that it is still not an applicable sustainability indicator. Advisory Committee members did not recommend any further changes.
- (6) Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water. Ms. King reported that no changes had been made to this Sustainable Management Criterion since the May 16 MGA Board/Advisory Committee meeting. Advisory Committee members did not recommend any further changes.

#### **4. Public Comment**

Mr. Poncelet invited members of the public to comment on the updated Sustainability Goal text and final Sustainable Management Criteria recommendations.

One participant indicated support for inclusion of additional triggers for management actions to protect against Seawater Intrusion.

Another participant asked for clarification on the 2017 chloride levels for Moran Lake, which she believed were different from the levels reported in the Pure Water Soquel process. She also asked for clarification as to why 2013-2017 was chosen for the five-year average when the Basin is only responsible for groundwater levels starting in 2015 under SGMA, and she requested more information regarding the science behind DWR's determination that Basin was "critically over-drafted".

#### **5. Level of Support for Advisory Committee Recommendations to the MGA Board, Vote and Comments, Draft Conveyance Memo**

Mr. Poncelet reviewed the process, described in the Advisory Committee's adopted charter, by which the Committee would soon vote and indicate levels of support on its recommendation to the MGA. Mr. Poncelet indicated that the Committee will be asked to vote on a single package that will contain the Sustainability Goal and Sustainable Management Criteria for all of the Sustainability Indicators. He noted



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

that each Committee member, in turn, will be provided the opportunity to express their level of support for the package and to provide additional details and rationale behind their stated level of support. Mr. Poncelet stated that the three levels of support identified in the charter include: general support (“I like it”), qualified support (“I have some issues with it but can live with it”), and fundamental disagreement (“I don’t like it and cannot live with it”). He noted that any disagreements with the proposed recommendations will be shared with the MGA Board. Mr. Poncelet reminded the Committee that, while it is an agreement-seeking body, unanimity is not required to make a recommendation to the Board.

Before indicating their votes, the Committee members discussed a few points as follows:

- Confirmation that staff will include individual suggestions regarding triggers for management actions for Seawater Intrusion protective levels as part of their vote and rationale.
- Suggestion that the Committee be clear when voting about separating new suggestions from their vote on the specific set of recommendations.
- Clarification that the vote will be solely on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, and not the GSP itself.

Mr. Poncelet confirmed that the vote will be for the complete package of recommendations, which includes the Sustainability Goal and the Sustainable Management Criteria for the six Sustainability Indicators. The individual Committee member “levels of support” and additional comments or rationale provided are listed below.

1. *Jon Kennedy, Private Well Representative* indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He expressed lingering concerns about Seawater Intrusion and how the five-year average is calculated.
  - b. He stated that he supports the changes to the Sustainability Goal and Sustainable Management Criteria since the last meeting overall.
2. *Rich Casale, Small Water System Management representative*, indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He commended the group for its efforts and stated that he has no reservations voting for this package.
3. *John Bargetto, Agricultural Representative*, indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He stated that he supports the GSP and expressed gratitude to staff for their help and responsiveness, which made it possible for him to understand the complicated information involved in the process.



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

---

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

4. *David Baskin, City of Santa Cruz*, indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He perceives this GSP process as experimental.
  - b. He does not see the close of this Advisory Committee process to be conclusion of GSP planning for the Basin, but the beginning of a more long-term management effort.
5. *Charlie Rous, At-Large Representative*, indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He commented that the process involved a lot of hard work, but that it was also enjoyable and enlightening.
  - b. He thanked staff for making the process as easy to handle as possible.
  - c. He appreciated that even if he had minor concerns with the recommendations, that the GSP will be a living and flexible document for incorporating changes.
  - d. He stated that it was rewarding being part of a process that has contributed to water supply reliability for future generations.
6. *Kate Anderton, Environmental Representative*, indicated her **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. She appreciated being able to add her concerns about Seawater Intrusion and the flexibility that added triggers could provide to manage the Basin for long-term sustainability.
  - b. She asked that the conveyance memo express the Committee’s appreciation for all of the support provided by staff in this process.
  - c. She noted that the consistency of Committee member and staff attendance and participation are evidence of their commitment to the GSP process.
7. *Bruce Jaffe, Soquel Creek Water District*, indicated **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He expressed that he had a good experience being a part of the Committee and commended both the Committee and staff for their dedication to the GSP process.
  - b. He asked that the conveyance memo emphasize that the sentiment shared by the group was to protect the Basin and to go above and beyond what is required by SGMA.
  - c. He reiterated that he would like to specifically see additional, early triggers for management action to protect against Seawater Intrusion included in the GSP.
8. *Dana Katofsky McCarthy, Water Utility Rate Payer* indicated her **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. She thanked staff for its work through the GSP process.
  - b. She indicated support for the comment regarding inclusion of triggers for management actions to protect against Seawater Intrusion.
  - c. She requested that the MGA Board provide email communications to the Committee regarding any significant changes made to the Committee’s GSP recommendations.



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

- d. She stated that this has been a great process and amazing experience.
9. *Thomas Wyner for Cabrillo College, Institutional Representative* indicated his **“qualified support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He stated that it is difficult to make decisions within the limited framework of the GSP Advisory Committee without fully understanding future management actions and more information about potential projects, and that even determining triggers is difficult without understanding such management actions.
  - b. He expressed concerns about aquifer management and requested that every possible effort be made to use treated water before pumping it into an aquifer, with the exception of managing seawater intrusion.
  - c. He qualified his support because he supports these recommendations for the MGA Board to take action, and he clarified that the Committee’s recommendations do not constitute approval for the Board to do anything it wants with the aquifer.
  - d. He supports leaving the aquifers alone to whatever extent possible and acknowledged that there are limits to what we know about them.
  - e. He thanked the staff and Committee for their work.
10. *Marco Romanini, Central Water District*, indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He encouraged the MGA board to separate their work from DWR’s reporting requirements, as the Board has the discretion to set objectives that go above and beyond DWR’s “minimum requirements” for the GSP.
11. *Jonathan Lear, At-Large Representative*, indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He expressed concern regarding the degradation of Groundwater Quality over time.
  - b. He understands the rationale for including advanced treated water into the plan.
  - c. He stated that he has lived in Santa Cruz for 25 years and that it is great to work in a collaborative environment characterized by coordination among community members and water agencies.
12. *Allyson Violante, County of Santa Cruz*. indicated her **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. She thanked the Committee members for their dedication and stated that she has learned a lot serving with this body. She also thanked the staff and Executive Team.
13. *Keith Gudger, At-Large Representative*. indicated his **“general support”** for the recommendations package and shared the following rationale/comments:
  - a. He requested that staff continue to keep the Committee informed of the progress of the GSP.





*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

---

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

## **Conveyance Memo**

Mr. Poncelet noted that there was unanimous support for the package and no fundamental disagreement among the Committee members. He congratulated the Committee on their contributions to the GSP and service to the MGA Board. He then asked the Committee for any suggested changes or additions to the conveyance memo that will accompany the Committee's recommendations to the MGA Board.

Several Committee members re-emphasized that the Advisory Committee and staff commitment contributed greatly to the Committee's success with the GSP process and commended the MGA Board for their demonstrated commitment to include citizen input.

Other comments and concerns that Committee members wished to have included in the conveyance memo included:

- Suggested addition to the GSP of a groundwater level "goal" in addition to a "limit" that would function as an early warning trigger for management to take action against the threat of Seawater Intrusion.
- The MGA ultimately seeking to exceed the GSP requirements outlined by SGMA and DWR to protect the Basin.
- Acknowledge the extensive work and efforts by staff, the Executive Team, and consultants in making this process worthwhile for Committee members.
- Request that staff continue keeping the Committee apprised of the progress of the GSP.
- Recognize the dedication and commitment of the Committee members to the long-term sustainability and health of the Basin.

## **6. Public Comment**

During this final public comment session, Mr. Poncelet invited members of the public to provide comments on the draft GSP recommendations, the Advisory Committee vote, the conveyance memo, and any other aspect of Advisory Committee work.

One participant stated that she appreciated the effort put into making audio recordings available on the MGA website, setting up signage for the meetings, and providing educational materials for the public at these meetings. She asserted that the Advisory Committee may not fully represent community interests. She expressed frustration that members of the public were not included in the surface water working group technical staff/agency meetings and that individual emails for Committee representatives were not established earlier in the process.

Another participant appreciated the congeniality and expediency of the GSP process and the commitment of the Advisory Committee.



*Groundwater is a vital resource, together let's protect it.*

---

5180 Soquel Drive • Soquel, CA 95073 • (831) 454-3133 • [midcountygroundwater.org](http://midcountygroundwater.org)

A participant acknowledged Mr. Jaffe's efforts in mobilizing the MGA Board and the formation of the Advisory Committee.

Dane Mathis, California Department of Water Resources (DWR) thanked the Advisory Committee on behalf of the Department and expressed appreciation that DWR had been invited to be an integral part of the GSP process for the Mid-County Basin. He congratulated the Advisory Committee on its "inaugural" achievement toward a meaningful GSP.

#### **7. Confirm the April 24, 2019 and May 16, 2019 Joint MGA Board/Advisory Committee Meetings Summaries**

Mr. Poncelet asked the Committee to provide any comments on the April and May Advisory Committee meeting summaries before they are submitted to the Board. A Committee member requested that Mr. Poncelet incorporate edits to the May meeting summary that he had previously communicated via email; the comments concerns omission of some comments that he had made. Mr. Poncelet confirmed that the requested edits will be incorporated and the summaries will be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

#### **8. Next Steps, Commemoration**

In closing, Mr. Poncelet provided a recap of the GSP process timeline through the November 2019 MGA Board meeting, focusing on the GSP roll out plan, July 20 and 22 public workshops, and the additional August 28 "office hours" session.

Executive Team members closed the meeting by thanking the attendees for their participation, and then commemorated Advisory Committee contributions by sharing letters of thanks.