

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Central Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin August 23, 2021

A regular meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Central Management Area (CMA) in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin was held on Monday, August 23, 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: Art Hibbits, John Sanchez (Acting as Alternate)

GSA Committee Directors Absent: Ed Andrisek

Alternate GSA Committee Director Present: Cynthia Allen

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

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Len Fleckenstein, Larry Lahr, Deby Laranjo, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Miles McCammon (Stetson), Anita Regmi (DWR), Steve Slack (CDFW), and Brett Stroud (Young Wooldridge).

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. and asked Mr. Bill Buelow to do roll call. 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 including the GSP sections that have been previously reviewed during public workshops and meetings including today's presentations toward submitting a complete Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in January 2022. All documents are accessible on SantaYnezWater.org.

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 May 24 and July 26, 2021 were presented for GSA Committee approval. GSA Committee Director Hibbits pointed out a couple minor typographical corrections that were needed for the Minutes of July 26, 2021.

GSA Acting Alternate Committee Director John Sanchez made a MOTION to approve the minutes of May 24 and July 26, 2021, with corrections made for typographical errors. GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VI. Receive CMA GSA Financial Update and Consider approval of CMA Warrant List

Mr. Buelow presented the financial reports of FY 2020-21 Periods 1 through 12 (through June 30, 2021) and the Warrant Lists for April, May, and June 2021 for GSA Committee review. There were no comments.

GSA Acting Alternate Committee Director John Sanchez made a MOTION to approve the April, May, and June 2021 Warrant Lists as presented (Nos. 1033-1036) totaling \$164,309.62 and financial reports as submitted. GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

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

CMA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) member, Mr. Len Fleckenstein, presented the CMA CAG Memorandum dated July 26, 2021, prepared by representative Sharyne Merritt, regarding CMA CAG's review and discussion of Chapter 3: CMA Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network. Discussion followed. CMA CAG members Deby Laranjo and Larry Lahr agreed with Mr. Fleckenstein's review of the memorandum. GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits thanked the CMA CAG members for asking great questions.

VIII. Receive Presentation from Stetson Team on "Summary and Overview of Draft GSP for the CMA"

Mr. Curtis Lawler (Stetson) presented "August 23, 2021, GSA 2021 Quarter 3 Meeting, Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan" for the CMA". Discussion followed.

- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez, regarding Section 2c.4 Projected Water Budget, asked for clarification on temperature data. Mr. Lawler and Mr. McCammon of Stetson explained the change in temperature for the City of Buellton was calculated by using a climate change tool provided by DWR with data available as far back as 1948.

- Bryan Bondy, on behalf of SY Water Group, asked for clarification regarding slide 15 and the comment “perched groundwater is not administered under SGMA”. Did consultants find a statute, SGMA water code or regulations verifying that statement? If so, he suggested they state water code or regulations in the GSP that provides definitive answer with regard to the perched water tables in the Uplands areas.
 - Mr. Lawler clarified the statement is based on the definition of groundwater and explained the difference between the regional groundwater table and waters that recharge the groundwater table.
 - Ms. Anita Regmi (DWR) added that the answer depends on which aquifer is recognized by the GSA as a primary principal aquifer. There is no clear language in the regulations on which aquifers should be managed. Therefore, she understands that it is left for GSAs to decide.
- Deby Laranjo asked about the difference between a truck crop and field crop on slide 20, Uses and Users of Groundwater. Mr. Lawler said a truck crop is a different subset of crops. He clarified that the Active Agriculture Area map used on slide 20 is from 2016. Ms. Laranjo asked since the newer alternative crop sites are not shown, will cannabis be shown as a truck crop? Mr. McCammon verified cannabis crop sites are not shown on the 2016 map and explained that a field crop is wheat or similar crops while a truck crop is vegetables or fruit type crops. Therefore, cannabis would fall into the truck crop category since it has similar water demand and will be shown as such on future maps.
- Len Fleckenstein suggested that the Executive Summary should highlight key issues that will be addressed at a later date. He recalled that the CAG had advised that key issues, including data gaps to be addressed in the future should be included in the Executive Summary.
- Len Fleckenstein requested that the Executive Summary include the steps for public outreach and getting public input for the future. Discussion followed.
- Len Fleckenstein asked if CAG involvement was intended on all draft chapters in the GSP. Mr. Buelow replied that the timing of draft document releases and due dates did not allow for a separate CAG meeting to discuss the draft Projects and Management Actions section. However, that section will be reviewed and discussed by the CAG when it released as part of the entire Public Draft GSP. Mr. McCammon added the only sections that have not already been reviewed by the public and CMA CAG are Chapter 1 and the Projects and Management Actions Chapter.
- Len Fleckenstein asked if there is a reason the Basin is addressing each management area Groundwater Sustainability Plan separately versus just submitting one large basin plan. Mr. Lawler clarified there are physical geologic barriers as well as political reasons for establishing the three management areas thus three plans. Governance will be discussed in the next presentation during today’s meeting.

- Anita Regmi asked if there is a date set for a public hearing prior to adoption of Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and advised that the public hearing needs to be held 90 days after giving notice to city and county. Mr. Buelow advised that the December 15, 2021 GSA Special Meeting will include a public hearing and that notices were sent to the City of Buellton and the County of Santa Barbara at the beginning of August 2021. He also added there will be at least two more CMA GSA public meetings and CMA CAG meetings to discuss the GSP during the public comment period and prior to the planned public hearing and adoption meeting.
- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits said he felt that using a 2016 crop map for a 2021 report is not acceptable as so much land use has changed in the last 5-6 years. Mr. Lawler replied that the 2016 map is similar to the 2018 land use map. Mr. McCammon and Mr. Lawler advised that work on the GSP began two years ago when the 2018 land use map was the latest map available. Because there will be opportunities for changes in the required annual reports and every five-year re-evaluation, the consultants decided to keep that chapter with the 2016 map especially since current land use trends have been reviewed and show the footprints of land use have not changed much. Consultants confirmed that they are aware of the new crops, particularly cannabis, being introduced in the CMA over the last year or two and advised that it appears most of the permits in the area for cannabis crops are using surface water which is administered by the State Water Resources Control Board. Discussion continued.
- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits emphasized the need for well meters to assure accurate reporting of groundwater pumping. Mr. Lawler advised that installation of well meters is identified in Project and Management Action chapter to be implemented as soon as possible after GSP submission.

IX. Receive Presentation from Young Wooldridge on “SGMA Governance and Funding Options”

Mr. Brett Stroud (Young Wooldridge) presented “Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin Governance and Funding Proposals”. Discussion followed.

- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits asked if the presented options will go to the CMA CAG for review and comment. Mr. Buelow advised the individual member agencies that form the three GSAs need to form conclusions on their own. GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits recommended that public input and thorough discussion happen before a decision is made.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez asked if the City of Buellton would be charged SGMA fees if a funding option involved acre-feet or extraction fees. Mr. Stroud explained the funding options for whoever pumps groundwater will pay for the groundwater pumped. Mr. Buelow verified the City of Buellton currently provides funding for the GSA through a cost share agreement and that a future plan is needed to fund the GSA after GSP submittal. Discussion continued.

- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits asked if meters are required, who will pay for meters, meter installation, meter maintenance and meter readings. He expressed concern that the SGMA process creates another bureaucracy without designating who will pay for it. Since the State of California mandated SGMA but all the required studies and meters are all very costly, he feels the State should help fund the implementation, so the costs are not forced on the City of Buellton or the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District. Mr. Stroud explained economies of scale options. Mr. Bulow spoke about a possible rebate expected to be offered by the County of Santa Barbara to support required metering efforts. Discussion continued.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez asked for clarification on project discussed of taking videos of wells. Mr. Buelow advised that construction details for wells to be used in the monitoring network is needed. Not all wells would be videoed only those potential monitoring wells where construction is unknown.
- Mr. Buelow added, to help support the GSAs financially, DWR offers technical support services that we can apply for to complete videos of wells as well as we will be eligible for another round of DWR grants for implementation funds once GSP is submitted. Three sources of future funding for GSAs is planned to be fees collected from individual groundwater pumpers, contributions from member agencies and grants through the State.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez asked for clarification on when the State of California will advise if the submitted GSP is accepted or will they come in and take over. Mr. Buelow spoke about DWR's SGMA process, implementation timeline and possible course of action if GSP is not submitted or accepted.
- Mr. Bryan Bondy asked how the GSA plans to continue outreach to stakeholders. He recommended significant outreach and engagement of landowners regarding the governance and finance proposals.
 - Len Fleckenstein added that outreach to various sectors in the region as well as inter-agency communications will increase costs and should be considered in the future funding needed.
- Deby Laranjo asked since surface water is not administered under SGMA, where do surface water diverters fit in to the potential SGMA fee schedule? Mr. Stroud commented that surface water diverters would typically not be charged a SGMA fee unless they are also a groundwater extractor as well. Mr. Buelow clarified that surface water diverters would still pay their pumping fees to SYRWCD and report also to the State Water Resources Control Board, as they do now. Now the State is mandating groundwater pumpers be subject to similar reporting.
- Len Fleckenstein asked if a JPA can charge fees or assessments or do fees need to be established through a city or county. Mr. Stroud advised that the SGMA law directly grants the GSA authority to implement funds. Since the GSAs would be signatory to the JPA, the GSAs can delegate their power to the JPA. Inclusion of the County as a

JPA member can be valuable since SGMA allows use of certain enforcement mechanisms for funding that come from the original statute that formed the individual member agency which is chosen to be the JPA procedure agency especially since the County already has an efficient system in place.

- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez wants to discuss future governance and funding with City of Buellton staff before making a decision.
- GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits asked Mr. Buelow about addressing comments received regarding direct landowner/stakeholder engagement for the governance and funding proposals.
 - Mr. Buelow suggested having a CAG meeting and possibly another CMA GSA meeting specifically about future governance and funding topics. He confirmed all three GSA meetings this month will include this same presentation on governance and funding proposals.
 - GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits suggested having a joint GSA meeting with all three GSA Committees at one time to discuss future governance and funding.
 - Mr. Buelow asked the GSA Committee to consider the size of the CMA versus costs of required reports and work. Since the producers in the CMA pump less acre-feet of water per year than those in either of the other GSAs but the costs of required reports and work for each GSA are relatively the same, a fee per acre-foot will be a lot higher to the producers in the CMA if the CMA GSA chose to be stand-alone as a GSA and not combine with the other GSAs.
- GSA Committee Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez asked, with respect to stakeholder engagement, how large landowners were represented in this process. Mr. Buelow said that large landowners outside the City of Buellton limits have been represented by Director Hibbits as the representative from Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD); various farmers and farming entity representatives are members of the CMA CAG; some landowners in CMA are part of an ad-hoc group called the Santa Ynez Water Group to coordinate and work with GSAs; individuals are able to provide input on their own and not required to be part of any entity. Citizens and landowners in the City of Buellton are represented by City of Buellton representatives, Council Members Ed Andrisek and John Sanchez. Citizens and landowners outside the jurisdiction of SYRWCD or the City of Buellton are represented by the Supervisor Joan Hartmann or her alternate, Meighan Diethofer, representatives to the CMA GSA for the County of Santa Barbara.

X. Next “Special” CMA GSA Meeting: Monday, October 4, 2021, 10:00 AM

Mr. Buelow announced the next proposed meeting for the CMA GSA Committee will be a Special Meeting on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 10:00 am.

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

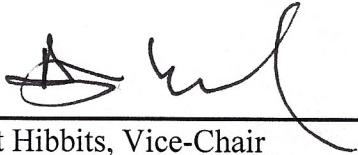
Mr. Buelow announced that the next CMA GSA Committee Regular Meeting will be on Monday, November 15, 2021, 10:00 am, location to be determined. The meeting is being held one week earlier than normal 4th week to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday.

XII. CMA GSA Committee requests and comments

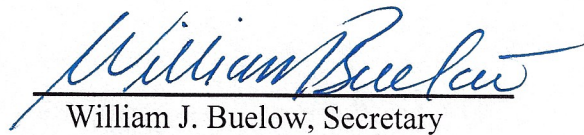
There were no requests or comments.

XIII. Adjournment

GSA Committee Director Art Hibbits adjourned the meeting at 12:46 pm.



Art Hibbits, Vice-Chair



William J. Buelow, Secretary

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

APRIL 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1033	04/08/21	Stetson Engineers	February 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #2 & AEM Work)	\$ 27,935.18
MONTH TOTAL				\$ 27,935.18

MAY 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1034	05/13/21	Stetson Engineers	March 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #2 & AEM work)	\$ 31,696.92
MONTH TOTAL				\$ 31,696.92

JUNE 2021 WARRANT LIST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1035	06/29/21	Stetson Engineers	April and May 2021 Engineering Service (Task Order #2 & AEM work)	\$ 104,527.52
1036	06/29/21	Valley Bookkeeping	2021 2nd Quarter Bookkeeping (April, May, June 2021)	\$ 150.00
MONTH TOTAL				\$ 104,677.52

TOTAL THIS QUARTER: \$ 164,309.62

CENTRAL MANAGMENT AREA
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 26, 2021

TO: CMA GSA Committee

FROM: CMA Citizen Advisory Group
(Representative Sharyne Merritt)

SUBJECT: Review and Discussion of Chapter 3: Central Management Area Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network

Attendees

CMA CAG Members in attendance: Sharyne Merritt, Larry Lahr, Len Fleckenstein, and Jeff Newton

Staff in attendance: Bill Buelow (SYRWCD)

Consultants in attendance: Jean Moran and 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 due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was held on July 26, 2021. The purpose of the meeting was for the CMA CAG (CAG) to review the Chapter 3 of the GSP: Central Management Area Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network. The Memorandum was prepared by the Stetson Engineer's team. A copy of the document was made available to the CAG prior to the meeting at www.SantaYnezWater.org.

CAG Comments on the Central Management Area Sustainable Management Criteria and Monitoring Network. Each member of the CAG was given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments on the

Draft Technical Memo. 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:

Sustainability Management Criteria

- CAG members noted that the wording "absence of undesirable effects" is a double negative and therefore difficult to read

- Consultant indicated that is the wording in SGMA. The outlook for SGMA is to avoid causing undesirable results
- CAG members expressed need for greater clarity regarding the Buellton (Upland) Aquifer and the Santa Ynez River Alluvium and their connectivity. CAG members requested map to show where upland aquifer is below the alluvium and where it is not. Consultant noted that the Buellton Aquifer fades in and out; there is a section of the Buellton Aquifer from the CMA eastern boundary of the Buellton Bend
- CAG members noted that contrary to statement on p 2, the storage within the Santa Ynez River Alluvium Subarea fluctuates in response to not only existing water rights and environmental regulations but also in response to pumping, releases, and precipitation.
- Consultant noted ground water model will calculate flux and seasonal changes.
- The consultant noted that the Buellton Aquifer is made up of older material with lower permeability; there is low groundwater flux from Buellton Aquifer to the Santa Ynez Alluvium.
- CAG members asked if there a basic definition of groundwater: does it flow both down from alluvium and up (springs that bubble up).
 - Consultant: Yes, ground water is defined in SGMA as water beneath surface of the earth, when a zone below the water table is completely saturated. This does not include water that flows in known and definite channels, it is a subterranean stream. Spring is where groundwater intersects the land surface.
- CAG members asked if the list of well owners a data gap. Do we know who has wells and where they are?
 - Consultant: We have a list of well owners and update as new permits are issued, though perhaps we want to update and refresh our well registration. The GSA may require well owners to install meters.
 - Consultant: We will request information on depth of wells when we update the data base.
- CAG members asked if “Chronic lowering” is identified as an undesirable result. Does this not happen on a recurring basis? It might it be clearer to note that groundwater levels decrease during dry periods but recover in wet years. The document notes that there has not been a loss in groundwater storage in the last 49 years. This could be interpreted as saying it has never gone down. It would be clearer to say it has lowered but has recovered during wet years
 - Consultant: Yes, that might be clearer; there needs more description of what happens and what that means
- CAG members asked if future water budget forecasts will include increasing CO2?
 - Consultant: Climate change will be included in future water budget. SGMA requires taking climate change into consideration.
- CAG members asked that when we are talking about groundwater levels is there any reason to distinguish upper aquifer from deep aquifer under river?

- Consultant: Currently there are only four wells that have long term historic data; two in Santa Rosa creek, two in the Santa Ynez River Alluvium. The consultant said that groundwater is very localized, and conditions change from place to place.
- CAG members said that more clarity is needed on the depletion of interconnected surface water; The CAG further questioned how alluvium is interconnected with the deeper Buellton Aquifer? Can the Buellton Aquifer can in fact influence the Santa Ynez River water?
 - Consultant: There is no groundwater basin west of the Buellton Bend, therefore there is no interconnection between the Buellton Aquifer and the River Alluvium. East of the Buellton Bend, the Buellton Aquifer is connected to the Santa Ynez River Alluvium. The issue of connection between groundwater, river alluvium and the river are clarified in the Water Budget.
- CAG members asked why the minimum threshold was set as 15-feet below 2020 water levels instead of 20 feet below; is there a different impact?
 - Consultant: There is no difference in impact. The GSA committee wanted to be conservative
- The CAG discussed section 3.6.2, which clarifies distinction between the river alluvium and underlying aquifers, and all agreed this discussion should be up front in document. A CAG member asked if the first page of each chapter have map and definition of terms?
- CAG asked if the State Water Project data are relevant to project?
 - I Consultant: State Water is considered surface water and is added to the basin; therefore, it is part of surface water budget.
- CAG members expressed concern using impacted well screens to establish water level minimum thresholds and water storage minimum thresholds. CAG members said that older wells were installed in with as much screen as they could get away with; now screens are lower to avoid cascading water. Wells that are very old should not be considered.
- CAG members discussed there is little difference between a 15-foot and 20-foot below 2020 water levels for minimum thresholds.
 - Consultant: there is a second reason 15 ft was chosen: Referencing the recent historic low water level. The consultant explained that the Basin conditions should not be allowed to get too much lower than the historic-low water level. SGMA says “don’t make it worse than 2015”. Don’t go too far below historic low.

There were no further comments.