

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Eastern Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin December 10, 2020

A SPECIAL meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Eastern Management Area (EMA) in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin was held on Thursday, December 10, 2020. 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 Santa Barbara County Health Office Order 2020-12.11.

EMA GSA Committee Members Present: Meighan Diethofer (Acting as Alternate), Brad Joos, Brett Marymee, Karen Waite

Alternate GSA Committee Member Present: Cynthia Allen

Member Agency Staff Present: Bill Buelow, Paeter Garcia, Amber Thompson, Matt van der Linden, Kevin Walsh, Matt Young

Others Present: Steve Anderson, Jeff Barry (GSI Water Solutions), Bryan Bondy, Doug Circle, Sam Cohen, John Fio, Mary Heyden, Gaye Infanti, Stewart Johnston, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Madelyn Murray (Dudek), Matt Naftaly, Anna Olsen, Anita Regmi (DWR), Steve Slack, plus 6 other members of the public whose names were not registered.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Member Marymee called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked Mr. Buelow to call roll. Three GSA Committee Members were present, and GSA Committee Member Diethofer acted as Alternate for Supervisor Hartmann.

II. Introductions and Review of SGMA in Santa Ynez River Valley Basin

Mr. Buelow announced names of phone attendees.

Mr. Buelow reviewed history of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements and what has been completed so far in the Santa Ynez River Basin including the creation of the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Basin (CMA, EMA, WMA), securing Department of Water Resources (DWR) Prop. 1 Grant (Grant) funding, hiring Consultants, coordinating efforts between the eight agencies participating in the three GSAs, and establishing a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) to review and provide feedback on GSP components in each of the Management Areas of the Basin.

Mr. Buelow reported that the EMA GSA released sections of the Draft Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model including Groundwater Conditions for public review and comment through the end of January 2021. The document is accessible on SantaYnezWater.org.

He announced that a second SGMA Newsletter is being prepared for distribution through Member Agency utility and water bills.

III. Additions or Deletions, if any, to the Agenda

No additions or deletions were made.

IV. Public Comment

Mr. Doug Circle, on behalf of the Santa Ynez Water Group, spoke regarding their request for data which was formally submitted to the GSA via letter at the last EMA GSA Committee Meeting. Mr. Buelow responded that Member Agency staff and consultants are working on compiling requested data and will soon respond to the request.

V. Receive Presentation from GSI on “Sustainable Management Criteria”

Mr. Jeff Barry (GSI Water Solutions) presented information on “Sustainable Management Criteria” (SMC) in the EMA GSA. The presentation provided an overview of the SMC development process, sustainability goals, examples of undesirable results, examples of SMCs for groundwater levels, and potential approaches for other sustainability indicators. He reported that the next EMA GSA Committee Meeting will include another more specific SMC presentation.

Public comment, GSA Committee Member discussion, and input from Mr. Barry and staff followed the presentation.

- Committee Member Karen Waite expressed concern of setting minimum levels too low and asked if the State has a minimum. Mr. Barry responded that the Groundwater Model will assist in setting an appropriate minimum level. He advised that SGMA’s underlying requirement is to avoid undesirable results.
- Committee Member Brett Marymee requested an explanation of differences between Minimum Thresholds and Measurable Objectives and how the levels work together. Mr. Barry responded that the GSP can specify an elevation above absolute minimum to trigger action needed.
- Alternate Committee Member Meighan Diethofer asked if the sustainability goals for the entire Basin will be seamless with those established for each Management Area. Mr. Barry reported that the consultants for each Management Area are working closely together to address possible subsets, if needed, to assure seamlessness.
- Committee Member Brad Joos emphasized in order to set Minimum Thresholds, we need to know the amount of water that naturally leaves the Basin, not only pumping via wells. Mr. Barry replied that all available data is being pulled together to create the Water Budget to account for recharge and pumping, and that the Groundwater Flow

Model is a mathematical model to assist in setting the Minimum Thresholds and Measurable Objectives.

- Committee Member Brett Marymee asked for clarification about data collected from the SkyTEM survey and effects if extended drought or excess pumping occur. Mr. Barry explained that SkyTEM data measures the physical features and geometry of aquifers and will indicate where water can move, but not the actual water levels in the basin. Since physical features of the basin are unlikely to change, there is no need to repeat the SkyTEM survey in future.
- Matt van Der Linden asked for clarification about the brown line in the graphs on page 12 of the presentation. Mr. Barry clarified that the brown lines represent the ground level.
- Mary Heyden asked how basin stakeholders can participate in the discussion on SMCs, Minimum Thresholds, and Measurable Objectives. Mr. Barry responded that there will be multiple opportunities during the SGMA process to provide comments, including public comment at meetings and providing comments on various Technical Memoranda being prepared in support of the SMCs and the GSP.
- Mary Heyden asked if the data collected by the SkyTEM Survey will be available for public access. Mr. Barry responded that a report will be produced containing the information gathered and made available to the public.
- Gaye Infanti asked if the bottom of the groundwater basin as defined in HCM is the base of fresh water. Mr. Barry confirmed that is the case, and that bedrock also defines the bottom of the basin.
- Bryan Bondy expressed concern of whether early input can be provided on the SMC and asked how stakeholders can get their input to the consultants. Mr. Barry advised stakeholders to utilize the GCP comment feature on SantaYnezWater.org or to email comments to Bill Buelow (bbuelow@syrwcd.com). Mr. Bondy requested a technical workshop meeting with a more back and forth conversation format.
- Steve Slack suggested that CPT rigs could be installed as measuring devices without drilling a well.
- Mr. Buelow asked for Committee Member direction on Mr. Bondy's request for more technical discussions. Committee Members by consensus indicated that a CAG Workshop/Technical Roundtable should be scheduled in early January if possible, including a notice for public involvement being sent to the Interested Party list. Mr. Barry suggested that similar technical workshops could be held for the draft HCM, SMC, and Water Budget. Ms. Heyden reiterated that the CAG has always agreed that having open and robust conversations among stakeholders is essential to the development of the GSP and agreed that having roundtable discussions would be important.

VI. Next EMA GSA Meeting: Thursday, January 21, 2020, 6:30 PM, via Teleconference

GSA Committee Member Marymee announced that the next EMA GSA Committee Meeting will be a Special Meeting on Thursday, January 21, 2020, 6:30 PM. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it will be held via video and teleconference.

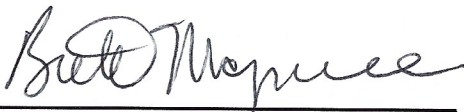
VII. EMA GSA Committee requests and comments

EMA GSA Committee Members thanked Mr. Jeff Barry for an excellent presentation.

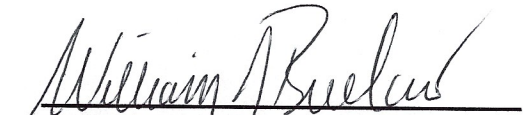
EMA GSA Committee Members thanked Committee Member Karen Waite for her service and dedication to the EMA GSA as this is her last meeting serving as the Committee Member representing the City of Solvang.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, GSA Committee Member Marymee adjourned the meeting at 7:59 PM.



Brett Marymee, Chairman



William J. Buelow, Secretary