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**Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Advisory Committee Meeting Packet**

September 11, 2023

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee Meeting – Agenda/Packet

Monday, September 11, 2023 | 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Location: Santa Rosa Utilities Field Office, 35 Stony Point Road, Santa Rosa

Contact: Andy Rodgers, Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Administrator,
arodgers@santarosaplaingroundwater.org, 707.243.8555

Time	Agenda Item	Materials
3:00	<p>Welcome and Call to Order – Roll Call and Introductions <i>Bob Anderson, Advisory Committee Chair</i> <i>Andy Rodgers, GSA Administrator</i></p>	N/A
3:05	<p>General Public Comments This time is reserved for the public to address the Committee about matters NOT on the agenda and within the jurisdiction of the Committee.</p>	N/A
3:10 (5 min presentation; 5 min discussion)	<p>Agenda Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Summary <i>Andy Rodgers, Administrator</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review May 22 Meeting Summary <p><i>Objective: Confirm agenda and approve May meeting summary</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda • May 22, 2023 Meeting Summary
3:20 (15 min presentation; 10 min discussion)	<p>City of Santa Rosa Water Supply Planning Update <i>Colin Close, City of Santa Rosa</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Water Future documents: www.srcity.org/3762/Our-Water-Future <p><i>Objective: Share updates on City’s water supply planning process with AC</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (separate)
3:45 (15 min presentation; 45 min discussion)	<p>Policy Options Study <i>Marcus Trotta, Plan Manager & Andy Rodgers, Administrator</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Potential Policy Options and Updates since May <p><i>Objective: Receive AC feedback on design of policy options study, including the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the phasing categories and groupings seem reasonable? • Do you agree that options under Continue or Initiate Implementation be considered at the October GSA Board meeting? • Do you have a recommended priority for the options grouped under Further Evaluate? • Do the recommended next steps seem appropriate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Report • AC Compiled Input • Presentation (separate)

<p>4:45 (15 min presentation; 15 min discussion)</p>	<p>Standing Item: GSP Implementation Updates <i>Marcus Trotta, Plan Manager</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Monitoring Program – Monitoring Subcommittee update • ISW/GDE Data Gap Program - Seepage Run program update • Sonoma Water’s Santa Rosa Plain Drought Resiliency Program update • General Statewide SGMA Updates <p><i>Objective: Provide AC with progress updates on GSP Implementation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Report • GSP 5-yr Implementation Schedule • Presentation (separate)
<p>5:15 (5 min presentation; 5 min discussion)</p>	<p>Standing Item: GSA Operational Updates <i>Andy Rodgers, Administrator</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFQs for GSP Implementation Technical and Outreach Services • Grant Updates <p><i>Objective: Provide progress updates on GSA administration and operations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (separate)
<p>5:25</p>	<p>Meeting Wrap Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC Chair Board summary • Summary of Action Items <p><i>Next GSA Board Meeting:</i> <i>Thursday, October 12, 2023, 1:00pm-3:30pm</i></p> <p><i>Next AC Meeting:</i> <i>Monday, February 26, 2024, 3:00pm-5:30pm</i></p>	
<p>5:30</p>	<p>Meeting Adjourns</p>	

Accessibility

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Andy Rodgers at 707.243.8555 or by email (arodgers@santarosaplaingroundwater.org). Notification of at least 48 hours prior to the meeting will assist staff in assuring that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility of the meeting.

Agenda Materials

Any documents provided at the meeting by staff will be available to the public. Any documents provided to the Advisory Committee during the meeting by the public will be available the next business day following the meeting. The agenda and agenda packet materials are available at the Santa Rosa Plain GSA website: www.santarosaplaingroundwater.org.

Public Comment

Members of the public may attend meetings of the Santa Rosa Plain GSA Advisory Committee and may comment before Advisory Committee consideration of individual agenda items, or during General Public Comment on any matter within the jurisdiction of the Advisory Committee. As needed, time limits may be placed on public comments to ensure the Advisory Committee is reasonably able to address all agenda items during the meeting.

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, May 22, 2023 | Draft Meeting Summary

Contact: Andy Rodgers, Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), Administrator
Email: arodgers@santarosaplainingroundwater.org | Phone: 707.508.3661

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Call to Order

Bill Keene, Administrator for Sonoma Valley GSA, replacing Andy Rodgers for the day, opened the meeting at 3:02 p.m. and Bob Anderson, Chair, welcomed the group.

General Public Comments

None.

Agenda Review, Approval of Previous Meeting Summary

Objective: Confirm agenda and approve February 13, 2023 meeting summary.

Bill Keene provided an overview of the agenda.

Arthur Deicke approved the previous meeting summary without changes, Matt O'Connor seconded, and the other members agreed. David Long abstained as he wasn't at the last meeting. The summary will be posted as written.

Keene said that DWR announced their preliminary grant awards: Santa Rosa Plain and Petaluma Valley both were recommended to receive their total grant requested; the grant includes four components. Unfortunately, Sonoma Valley was not recommended to receive any funds.

Bob Anderson – Why the difference in funding? Why \$5+ million instead of \$1.7 million?

Trotta – I think there were a lot of placeholders added since we discussed it at the October meeting.

Anderson – What is the timeframe?

Trotta – We have until March 2026.

Anderson – We are celebrating, should we?

Trotta – This is a draft recommendation, there is a two-week public comment period. It could be fall until everything is final.

Anderson – Statewide amount?

Trotta – I believe there were 80 applications and 31 were funded.

Keene – The basins that were awarded funds received the entire amount requested. We weren't expecting the full amount.

Anderson – Did Sonoma Valley get zero?

Keene – Yes. There is a 15-day review period to turn around comments for consideration before the final appeal. We are looking at other grant possibilities as well.

No public comment.

Spring Monitoring Update

Objective: Share initial data from Spring 2023 monitoring

Mitch Buttress, Technical staff provided an update on the current groundwater levels as measured from the voluntary and dedicated multi-level monitoring wells this spring. Total rainfall received in Santa Rosa Plain for Water Year 2022 (October 1 to present) is about 42 inches compared to 27 inches in Water Year 2022 and 13 inches in Water Year 2021. Groundwater levels are generally higher than normal spring conditions.

Questions/Comments

Matt O'Connor – Is there a way to query your water model to see what the model says groundwater levels would be with this year's rainfall?

Trotta – We haven't been running the model since completing the scenarios for the GSP. It could be something we look at and possibly start running scenarios. We are also waiting for an updated version from the USGS.

David Long – Is the deep well recovery an expected thing?

Buttress – The one in Rohnert Park could be due to less pumping rather than recharge.

Trotta – The deeper aquifer is generally more confined and pressurized; it is quicker to see results, and sometimes more dramatic, than in an unconfined aquifer.

Anderson – Five feet recovery at the Cotati well, is it because it is bigger than other numbers, or what?

Buttress – It is the same thing Marcus Trotta was saying about unconfined/confined aquifers. It is also a newly drilled well, but it is a little surprising.

Deicke – I was expecting more lag from the shallow to the medium to the deep aquifers. A confined aquifer, how is it getting water from the surface?

Buttress – I feel with the deeper ones, it is because of less pumping this year.

Deicke – There are lots of variables out there and we can't pin it on one thing.

David Noren – You have pressure transducers on these wells. How often are the readings?

Buttress – It is hourly data; I graph daily averages.

Noren – Do you have an opinion on the metering lag, do you think it is this year's response?

Trotta – I think when you plot this up with rainfall and stream flows, there is a big correlation and a connection between the shallow and deep aquifers.

Rue Furch – Historically, deeper aquifer takes a long time to replenish, the shallow takes less. How is it that deeper aquifers are experiencing recharge in one year?

Buttress – The spring measurements rebound to similar levels. The spring levels in deeper zones aren't much higher than normal, probably mostly due to more pumping.

Wayne Haydon – After the wells were installed, did you do a pump test on individual aquifers?

Buttress – Not on the monitoring wells.

Trotta – If we get the award funding, we have aquifer tests as part of our projects.

Anderson – I find the graphs limited in explaining to the public. It would be good to know how it compares to other years. I would also ask you to include changes to run-off, etc.

Indigo Bannister – The Outreach team created an Annual Report fact sheet, copies are available here at the meeting and online.

Trotta – We will have estimated amounts of water leaving/entering the basin from this data and data collected in the fall. For next year’s Annual Report, we need to report on the change in storage in the basin.

Furch – I second Bob Anderson’s request to get something more user friendly for the public to understand.

Ryan Crawford – I think the decade old hydrographs are more helpful than the one year ones.

Furch – This information would be very confusing. We say it takes decades to replenish deep aquifers, but the one-year data shows otherwise.

Deicke – Sonoma Water has good explanatory information and a fact sheet on Lake Sonoma. Simple and self-explanatory. We need something like that.

Haydon – Create graphs/maps and show the depth/elevation of the water; it is easier to grasp the idea.

Public Question/Comments

None.

Voluntary Monitoring Program Planning

Objective: Receive AC feedback on design of voluntary monitoring program, including the following questions:

- *What should the GSA consider when designing the voluntary monitoring programs?*
- *What should outreach look like for the voluntary monitoring programs?*

Mitch Buttress presented an overview of the existing volunteer well monitoring programs and initial ideas for the design and expansion of voluntary monitoring program planning in the Santa Rosa Plain.

Buttress presented areas of data gaps for focusing volunteer well monitoring outreach efforts. With the GSA’s limited funding and staff resources, it could make sense for the GSA to help organize and support community volunteer programs, provide outreach materials, and offer guidance on monitoring and data collection protocols for well owners to collect their own water-level measurements.

Permit Sonoma is setting up an online portal where well owners can input meter and water-level data. This portal could potentially be used for volunteer programs. Alternatively, the GSA could set up its own portal.

Marcus Trotta – We envision having some sort of monitoring sub-committee as we are monitoring all three basins.

Questions/Comments

Noren – I recently conducted a workshop with the Bennett Valley Grange providing training and information to help the group set up their own community water-level monitoring program. The information received is interesting and I believe it was a great outreach in Bennett Valley, there were approximately 30 attendees. I have a meter on my well which I installed eight years ago. We use 68 gallons a day in our home.

Furch – The information year to-year is a confidence builder because you see a trend. Spring and fall data monitoring data are mostly what people need; they are hungry for the information. You mentioned that Permit Sonoma is setting up an online portal. If they are interested in this data, we should set up a joint

portal with some of the funding we receive. Permit Sonoma is understaffed and unless they get special funding to do it, it won't get done. If the GSAs can collaborate with the planning department, it would be the best way to achieve 'knowing' anything in a shorter timeframe.

Trotta – With the revised well ordinance, there is an opportunity to get additional collaboration and coordination. If the funding comes to fruition, we could create a water data dashboard.

Furch – We need the information for planning purposes and the public needs to understand.

Noren – The standard operating procedures that you develop, it would be good if you could standardize it from this point moving forward. I would be willing to modify what I am doing so it is a standardized format. Anything that could be done to make it simple and easy to use, would be a benefit.

Furch – David Noren and I are volunteering to serve on your committee.

Crawford – It would be good to capture information over the years in spring and fall.

Noren – Maybe put in a transducer or two, they aren't that expensive. That would be great.

Anderson – Of DWRs monitoring wells, 13 are discontinued. If funding is received, maybe we can get a few back online. Will they provide the historic information, or will the gap mean you are starting over?

Buttress – A lot of them go back to the 70s's and 80's.

Crawford – The answer right now is 'no'. They argue that now the GSA is established, the GSA can do it.

Trotta – Mitch has been trying to do direct outreach to those well owners, maybe GSA can pick those up.

Deicke – David Noren says he uses 68 gallons/day. That is only 4% of the two acre-feet allocation/year. Can we look at a credit program or revise the allocation amount to something more realistic?

Trotta – That will be covered in the next presentation.

Deicke – I read that you will be requiring that wells be surveyed; that is expensive. David Noren mentioned transducers; they are only a few hundred dollars each.

Elizabeth Cargay – Thinking about the gap areas where we want the monitoring wells, I am wondering what the best way is to do that. Maybe send a postcard? In Windsor, we are trying to figure out where the arsenic is, so we sent a postcard. We received few responses. The Grange was a great idea. Transducers are a good idea as well.

Furch – There are at least three or four other granges that would be thrilled to host the training.

Noren – It is an easy sell, an easy investment.

Anderson – The GUIDE program asked who might be interested in volunteering well data and many people said yes.

Furch – Maybe we should look at that list and then follow up with the owners around the gap areas.

Trotta – We need to be strategic with how many wells to include.

O'Connor – We may even get too many. Active wells aren't ideal for monitoring.

Haydon – One slide shows data gap areas outside the basin.

Trotta – Included a boundary monitoring network in the GSP. Those are areas where a voluntary program might be a particularly good option because it would be more challenging for the GSA to expend resources on a \$100,000 multi-level well outside its jurisdiction.

Furch – Would it be possible to have maps with gap areas that include streets or major roads?

O'Connor – There is lots of information like this. There are simplified versions of GIS software that one can access online.

Haydon – It would be nice if there was a portal where we could access the data.

Bannister – We could make a web map with this information quite easily and make it available to you without too much trouble.

Furch – One of the roles of the Advisory Committee is to help with outreach communication.

Peter Martin – If there is a way to create companions or clusters? Property owners may drop out of long-term monitoring, for whatever reason.

Public Questions/Comments

None.

Policy Options Study Kickoff

Objective: Receive AC feedback on design of policy options study, including the following questions:

- *What policies are missing from the Policy Options Matrix that should be considered?*
- *Do you have concerns about any of the policies identified in the Policy Options Matrix?*
- *Do the initial implementation rankings in the Policy Options Matrix seem reasonable?*
- *What policies identified in the Policy Options Matrix do you think are the most important to implement first?*

Marcus Trotta gave an overview of the study including the process and scope of the study. The goal is to develop, prioritize, vet, and consider policies within the authorities of the GSA and local land use agencies that support and advance achieving the sustainability goal for the Subbasin.

There are a total of 16 policy options on the list grouped by primary benefits. This is a living list of options that will periodically be updated based on new information and GSA priorities.

Initial implementation Ranking

- 1a – Able to advance (funding available / 2 options)
- 1b – Able to advance (pending funding availability / 3 options)
- 2 – Able to advance pending consultation with adopting agency (3 options)
- 3 – Develop more information, reconsider later (5 options)
- 4 – Reconsider based on future potential need or additional information (3 options)

Trotta asked for input from the Advisory Committee on preliminary policy option approaches and implementation ranking.

Questions/Comments

Furch – On the Benefit Objectives, slide 35, add a bullet number 6 “Outreach”.

Trotta – It is currently in point 4 “Improve management of groundwater resources” but could be done differently.

Martin – It is hard to weigh in without understanding the magnitude of what some of the options could help offset. It would be an easier sell to undertake some of the more controversial things, if we knew it would result in a large benefit across the beneficial users.

Anderson – Did the three basins all look at the same 16 options to come up with the same number?

Trotta – Not necessarily, there may be differences. Sonoma Valley has more serious groundwater level declines occurring that other Boards might not consider moving forward with initially.
Keene – We need to be cognizant of how what happens in one basin affects all three basins.

O'Connor – When putting this together, were you able to access any state level best practices? Is there a state level resource for this? Everyone is re-inventing the wheel.

Trotta – I wouldn't say there is a 'go to' resource. But for policy options higher on the list, we will investigate if they have been done in other areas and then do some research.

Furch – Permit Sonoma has six months to create the Implementation Plan for the Well Ordinance. Is the GSA coordinating with Permit Sonoma?

Trotta – Yes, lots of work is related to the GSAs.

Furch – Anytime we can minimize duplication, would be good.

Anderson – The GSA doesn't have authority. The whole list needs to be re-thought. The Annual Report fact sheet says we have a sustainable yield of 24K acre-feet (AF) and under dry conditions we used 18,000 AF.

Trotta – Other areas the GSA could comment on are recommending monitoring needed for specific projects, and mitigation.

Anderson – We want to say that we are doing OK. We are monitoring, watching, and using less than our sustainable yield. Municipal hook-ups aren't going to happen with the GSA deciding.

Furch – Urban users are probably a little nervous because the surface water supply isn't guaranteed anymore either.

Crawford – I agree. What is the GSA going to say?

Haydon – We are not the agency making the decision, we are a reviewing body. I don't want to be doing something that someone is already doing/redundant.

O'Connor – We don't want to be redundant, but we want to coordinate and have similar standards to the county.

Furch – We need to ensure there is as much coordination as possible. Two things are easy: 1) to continue to maximize data collection and 2) public outreach to educate people on what they need to do to achieve conservation. Education should be included to decision-making policies; it my understanding that the GSAs don't have authority.

Noren – There is information available. Push the information that is already available. It should be a policy for this agency to promote and share information, especially on the water use side.

Furch – All the websites should have a Resource page.

Noren – The policy would be to promote resources that are available.

O'Connor – The purpose of this list is that you have a place to go when you run into a problem and hard decisions need to be made.

Furch – The data collection will fortify this.

Martin – In terms of policies that might be missing, maybe an opportunity for offsetting a well in another area. I have concerns about policies overlapping jurisdictions. The ranking of the list is great. The only policy we might be forced to prioritize is crediting for recharge, it may need to be moved up on the list.

Deicke – We don't address water quality, especially for shallow wells. We look at capacity and volume but not quality.

Trotta – Yes, it is something to think about. Maybe a voluntary water quality program.
Crawford – That is a tough one. The state is already heavy in regulating groundwater quality; California is the most stringent in the country.
Trotta – Water quality is one of the sustainability indicators the GSA is responsible for tracking. But there are other regulatory structures that are involved.
Cargay – It could be as simple as obtaining the information from different agencies and coordinating.
Noren – When we were doing early work for the GSP, I was hesitant to bring water quality issues into this agency because there is a Regional Board; it is a step too far for this agency.
Martin –The GSA and Regional Board overlap where the GSA activities potentially cause water quality issues. There needs to be a correlation of activities of the GSA and responsibilities of the Water Quality Board. There may be situations where water quality continues to decline. In that scenario you may offer treatment for the greater benefit of the basin.

Maureen Geary – How did you come up with the list?

Trotta – Many of them were examples in the GSP, some are what other GSAs are working on, and some came about through the well ordinance revisions.

Geary – Some of these may be litigated. Maybe it would be good to go over the list and cut it down to policies that are only possible for the GSA to achieve. Ask for Holly Roberson’s input on what is doable.

By September, will we have a sense of the funding available?

Trotta – Yes. Depending upon DRW’s schedule for finalizing awards, I think they will be finalizing recommendations in October. They will have a lot of comments.

Anderson – Between now and our next meeting there will be feedback on our comments and the Board’s comments on policy options. In September, we will review it one more time; please submit your input.

Public Questions/Comments

None.

Standing Item: GSA Operational Updates

Objective: Provide progress updates on GSA administration and operations

Bill Keene gave an update on miscellaneous items.

- John Nagle has been elected Board Vice Chair. Emily Sanborn replaces Pam Stafford.
- Santa Rosa Plain GSA grant application was recommended for full funding at \$5,383,730.
- The preliminary budget was approved at the March Board meeting.
- The groundwater sustainability fee will stay at \$40/acre-foot for the next fiscal year.
- The Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program (ICARP) will award \$125 million over multiple rounds in resilience efforts. The planning focus is on the first cycle, \$25 million is available in Round 1. Subsequent focus will be on implementation.
- Legislative Advocacy: We have a small work group with other GSAs in the state working to get additional funding for administrative costs, especially for small basins.

- Sonoma County Well Ordinance Updates were approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 4, 2023. Key components include 1) Level 1 water conservation requirements were added for all well permits; 2) established discretionary public trust review process for well permits in portions of the county. If within GSA, it will be referred to GSA for opportunity to review; 3) established water meter reporting for new wells using more than 2AFY and a voluntary program for existing and low water use wells; and 4) established monthly water level reporting for new wells using 5+ acre-feet pre year.

No questions or comments.

Closing

Bob Anderson thanked Bill Keene for filling in for Andy Rodgers.

Bill Keene thanked everyone for their attendance input and closed the meeting at 5:27 p.m.

The next Board meeting will take place Thursday, June 8, 1:00 – 3:30 pm and the next Advisory Committee will be Monday, September 11 from 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm.

Attendees:

Advisory Committee Members (present)

Agricultural representative, Bob Anderson
Agricultural representative, David Long, (departed 5:00)
Business representative, Arthur Deicke
City of Santa Rosa appointee, Peter Martin
City of Sebastopol appointee, Ryan Crawford
Environmental representative, Rue Furch
Gold Ridge RCD appointee, Matt O'Connor
Rural Residential representative, David Noren
Rural Residential representative, Marlene Soiland
Sonoma RCD appointee, Wayne Haydon
Town of Windsor appointee, Elizabeth Cargay
City of Rohnert Park appointee, Justin Brandt
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria representative, Maureen Geary (arrived 3:12)

Advisory Committee Members (absent and/or excused)

City of Cotati, Craig Scott
County of Sonoma appointee, Mark Grismer
Environmental representative, Shirley Johnson
Independent Water Systems appointee, Sarah Davis

Staff/Presenters

Bill Keene, Sonoma Valley GSA Administrator
Marcus Trotta, Sonoma Water, Technical Staff
Mitch Buttress, Sonoma Water, Technical Staff
Indigo Bannister, GSA staff
Simone Peters, GSA staff, *recording meeting summary*

Other Attendees

Colin Close, City of Santa Rosa Staff
Bill Pasqueretta, Member of Public

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency

TO: ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: Marcus Trotta, Plan Manager
SUBJECT: Policy and Program Options Study Update

Summary:

One of the management actions included in the GSP is GSA Board consideration of potential policy options and programs to implement near-term or sometime in the future. This management action focuses on advancing programs and actions to help achieve and maintain sustainable groundwater conditions within the Subbasin. The GSA is studying and planning both demand side and supply side measures and this staff report presents an initial description of potential policies and programs the GSA could consider developing to supplement supply side projects which are being pursued concurrently, such as large-scale recharge or recycled water projects, to help achieve and maintain sustainability.

For the Advisory Committee's May meeting, GSA staff developed and provided a preliminary draft inventory, assessment and a working draft implementation ranking of possible policies the GSA Board could consider adopting or recommending to other agencies. The list of potential policy options is intended to be broad and adaptive - a "living" list which can periodically be updated based on new information, changing groundwater conditions, stakeholder input, or future GSA Board priorities.

This staff report recommends a phased and "condition" based approach to considering and developing policies and programs with potential options grouped into the following categories:

- Continue or Initiate Planning/Implementation
- Further Evaluate
- Place On-hold, Pending Future Need or New Information

The following sections provide (1) a summary of AC input (2) an overview of ongoing work to further evaluate the benefits, costs and impacts of certain options and (3) a description of staff's recommended phasing and next steps for each option.

Advisory Committee Input

The Advisory Committee discussed the possible policies and programs during the May 2023 meeting and provided additional input in writing to GSA staff to guide refinement and prioritization of the options prior to bringing to the GSA Board for initial discussion and input in October 2023. Advisory committee members were asked to provide responses to the following questions:

- *What policies are missing from the Policy Options Matrix that should be considered?*
- *Do you have concerns about any of the policies identified in the Policy Options Matrix?*

- *Does the initial implementation ranking in the Policy Options Matrix seem reasonable?*
- *What policies identified in the Policy Options Matrix do you think are the most important to implement first?*

A compilation of Advisory Committee member input and comments for all three Sonoma County GSAs was provided to AC members, along with a written update on August 15, 2023. Some of the key themes from the input received include:

- Requests for additional information regarding the cost and benefit (e.g., estimated reduction in groundwater use) of the policies and programs.
- Recommendations for grouping or tying policies and programs to basin conditions, such as: geographic areas experiencing known or potential problems; estimated extraction in relation to sustainable yield; or occurrence of minimum threshold exceedances.
- Recommendations for including additional policies and programs, including supply-side (recycled water and recharge) projects, water quality programs for domestic well users, incentives for destruction of improperly abandoned wells, creating mitigation opportunities for needed projects, investigating “land repurposing” strategies.
- Caution in recommending policies or programs which may conflict with the policies or goals of other agencies.
- Caution in recommending policies or programs that could place GSA in position (or perceived position) as the “approving entity” for land use related permitting and preference for providing criteria or analysis to the permitting agency which the GSA would like considered during permitting process.
- Concern for increasing cost and timeline for permit reviews.
- Preference to defer to Permit Sonoma for more stringent or controversial policies and programs.
- Concern for potential to create inequities between different categories of groundwater users.
- Concern that voluntary measures will not be effective.
- Support for starting with “lower-hanging fruit” policies and programs, such as voluntary water-use-efficiency, voluntary metering, and groundwater user education and engagement. This information will be incorporated into the further evaluation of the policies and programs, as summarized in descriptions of associated options described below.

Recommended Approach to Planning and Implementing Policy and Program Options

This staff report recommends a phased and “condition” based approach to considering and developing policies and programs. Note that some of the options have been consolidated or renamed from the preliminary matrix of options to clarify and streamline the list of options where applicable. These revised potential options are grouped into the following categories:

Continue or Initiate Planning/Implementation

- Voluntary water-use efficiency (WUE) program (continue)
- Groundwater user education and engagement program (continue)
- Voluntary metering program (initiate)
- Encourage/incentivize recharge enhancement actions and projects (initiate)
- Consideration of GSP criteria for discretionary projects (initiate)

Further Evaluate

- Encourage/incentivize use of available alternative water sources
- Align requirements of the amended well ordinance throughout the entirety of GSA's jurisdiction
- Well permitting review/well construction recommendations
- Mitigation opportunities for projects (new)

Place On-hold, Pending Future Need or New Information

- Mandatory metering program for non-de-minimis users
- Groundwater allocation framework
- Mandatory extraction limitations
- Groundwater trading program
- Drinking water well mitigation program
- Permitting and accounting of water hauling
- Land repurposing strategies (new)

Details for each of the policies and programs are described below.

Continue or Initiate Implementation

Staff recommends the below programs be initiated or continued. These include activities (1) specifically proposed for implementation within the GSP, (2) have an existing or likely funding source, and/or (3) are not likely to be controversial. It is anticipated that continuation and initiation of these activities will be considered for direction by the GSA Board at their October 2023 meeting.

Voluntary water-use efficiency (WUE) program – Develop and fund a voluntary program to deliver conservation tools and incentives to groundwater users and monitor results of WUE measures.

- *Goal:* Reduce groundwater extraction through voluntary measures
- *Objectives:* Address or mitigate groundwater level declines and foster the adoption of practices which promote groundwater sustainability actions by groundwater users
- *Benefits:* ~1,800 AF in reduced groundwater extraction estimated in GSP. Reduction in groundwater use can support the maintenance or increase of groundwater levels and maintain groundwater extraction within the sustainable yield.
- *Costs to implement:* ~\$100K for assessment and up to \$600K for pilot program.
- *Other considerations:* Concerns that voluntary measures will not be effective or quantifiable.
- *Recommended next steps:* Solicitation and scope development for consultant services to assess groundwater user demand characteristics, existing levels of water-use efficiency,

and provide recommendations on preferred strategies for implementation, including measures to quantify benefits.

Groundwater user education and engagement program: - Develop program of general groundwater and water well education to share best practices for groundwater users and information on basin conditions.

- *Goal:* Broaden community awareness of groundwater to foster information sharing between GSA and groundwater users and encourage practices that improve monitoring and resiliency of groundwater resources.
- *Objectives:* Engage and share information with all groundwater users on the importance of proper well maintenance and groundwater monitoring. Promote and facilitate sharing of groundwater data with GSA that support filling of data gaps, such as groundwater-level, groundwater-use, and groundwater quality data.
- *Benefits:* Fill data gaps and improve protection and resiliency of groundwater resources.
- *Costs to implement:* Annual costs of \$30 to \$50K.
- *Other considerations:* Can be challenging to reach groundwater-users with messaging.
- *Recommended next steps:* Continue to develop program for general groundwater user education and engagement. Begin coordination with growers for integrating Farm Plans with GSP implementation. Advance ongoing voluntary groundwater level monitoring program.

Voluntary Metering Program - Develop and fund a voluntary program to provide flowmeters to interested groundwater-users, including installation assistance, training, and reporting.

- *Goal:* Obtain improved information on the distribution and volume of groundwater extraction and promote water-use efficiency efforts.
- *Objectives:* Support assessment of potential impacts to beneficial users, improving water budget and sustainable yield calculations. Provide information to promote and evaluate conservation efforts.
- *Benefits:* Fill data gaps, promote efficiency and improve ability to evaluate conservation efforts.
- *Costs to implement:* ~\$200K to \$250K.
- *Other considerations:* Concerns that voluntary nature of program will not produce representative data for groundwater use and will not capture larger users that may have largest conservation opportunities.
- *Recommended next steps:* Solicitation and scope development for consultant services to support development of voluntary metering program, including considerations for flowmeter guidelines/standards, data management and stakeholder coordination. Continued coordination with Permit Sonoma on recommended flowmeter guidelines and standards and evaluation of metered data required through revised well ordinance.

Encourage/Incentivize Recharge Enhancement Actions and Projects - Share best management practices for and develop incentives for actions that safely enhance groundwater recharge.

- *Goal:* Increase groundwater recharge throughout the Subbasin.
- *Objectives:* Increase knowledge and adoption of landowner practices that increase groundwater recharge.
- *Benefits:* Maintain or increase groundwater levels and support groundwater-dependent ecosystems through increased dispersed recharge of groundwater.

- *Costs to implement:* ~\$50K for program development.
- *Other considerations:* Need for metered data to quantify benefits for crediting of any recharge activities. Ensure best management practices are followed to avoid water quality or other potential impacts.
- *Recommended next steps:* Review other regulatory program requirements and best management practices for reducing runoff and encouraging infiltration. Develop or share recommended practices for landowner actions that enhance groundwater recharge. Initiate evaluation of recharge crediting program and development of objective standards, including quantitative metrics, in collaboration with Permit Sonoma's Well Ordinance implementation and Farm Plan coordination.

Consideration of GSP criteria for discretionary projects - Develop GSP consideration criteria for Permit Sonoma Staff to consider during their review of discretionary development projects to evaluate potential impacts to groundwater resources and the GSAs sustainability goal.

- *Goal:* Limit negative impacts to groundwater conditions from future development
- *Objectives:* Ensure the GSP sustainability goal, including SMC, are considered during future land-use determinations. Ensure future development projects incorporate appropriate features that enhance recharge, support monitoring, and mitigate potential negative impacts.
- *Benefits:* Foster coordination with land-use agencies, protect groundwater resources.
- *Costs to implement:* ~\$10K to develop criteria.
- *Other considerations:* Concerns with potential to add delays to permitting timeframes. Concerns with placing GSA in position (or perceived position) as the “approving entity” for land use related permitting.
- *Recommended next steps:* Develop criteria for Permit Sonoma staff to consider or require during project review and require of applicants. Utilize existing approved budget for GSA staff support and coordination with Permit Sonoma as needed during review process.

Further Evaluate

Staff recommends the below policies and programs be more fully evaluated prior to being considered for planning or implementation. Further evaluation is ongoing and includes continued information compilation, evaluation of potential benefits and impacts, and coordination with other agencies and interested parties. Staff is seeking input at the September 2023 AC and October 2023 Board meetings on the recommended next steps for evaluating these policies and programs, such that they could be further evaluated and discussed at the February/March 2024 AC and GSA Board meetings.

Encourage/incentivize use of available alternative water sources - Encourage and incentivize existing groundwater-users to develop or hook-up to alternative water sources. Actions could include incentivizing groundwater users within municipal service areas to hook-up and utilize municipal systems where and when sufficient municipal capacity is available or providing incentives for rainwater harvesting. Recommend that municipal purveyors/County limit the permitting and construction of new water wells for parcels with an existing service connection to a municipal water purveyor.

- *Goal:* Reduce groundwater extraction through voluntary measures
- *Objectives:* Promote and incentivize use of available and alternative water sources to

- reduce need for groundwater extraction.
- *Benefits:* Reduction in existing and future groundwater use can support the maintenance or increase of groundwater levels and maintain groundwater extraction within the sustainable yield.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain.
- *Other considerations/concerns:* Consider incentivizing well abandonments when connecting to alternative water sources. For alternative sources that include delivery of municipal supplies, ensure that the municipal supply is not primarily sourced from groundwater wells within the Subbasin. Consider consistency with existing building permitting process, coordinating with LAFCO, and overlaps and differences between jurisdictions. Hook-up costs could be prohibitively expensive. Concerns that now hook-ups to municipal supplies could be viewed as “growth-inducing”.
- *Recommended next steps:* Continue performing preliminary fact finding on benefits, costs and potential interest with municipal purveyors and groundwater users.

Align requirements of the amended well ordinance throughout the entirety of GSA's jurisdiction-
Require Level 2 Water Conservation Requirements of new well applications for "non-ministerial well classes" defined by Permit Sonoma.

- *Goal:* Align permitting requirements and promote groundwater conservation.
- *Objectives:* Provide consistent conservation requirements to well permit applicants throughout the GSA’s jurisdiction and increase conservation of future groundwater supplies.
- *Benefits:* Consistency for well permit applicants within GSA jurisdiction and adoption of groundwater conservation practices.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain, likely less than ~\$20K.
- *Other considerations?* Potential additional costs to future well applicants
- *Recommended next steps:* Continue performing preliminary fact finding on potential benefits, including an inventory and estimate of potential groundwater use for historical well permits issued within the GSAs jurisdiction and within the PTRAs portions of the GSAs jurisdiction.

Well permitting review/well construction recommendations - GSA staff review of well permits that meet certain criteria, such as planned usage or location. Make well construction and permitting recommendations to Permit Sonoma to consider.

- *Goal:* Incorporate GSA sustainability goal considerations in future land use decisions
- *Objectives:* Ensure the GSP sustainability goal, including SMC, are considered during future well permitting review. Assess potential future impacts to sensitive beneficial users and recommend mitigation or monitoring conditions in areas of interest
- *Benefits:* Promote avoidance of undesirable results and protection of sensitive groundwater users
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain, likely less than \$20K
- *Other considerations:* Concerns with regulatory overlap or duplication and potential additional permitting costs and timeframes.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold pending (1) estimate of historical number of “non- exempt” well permit applications and associated groundwater demands (2) issuance of the forthcoming DWR report on well permitting findings and

recommendations and (3) administrative draft well standards for the Statewide Model Well Ordinance.

Mitigation opportunities for projects

- *Goal:* Mitigate the potential impacts to groundwater conditions of future projects.
- *Objectives:* Develop guidance and criteria for mitigating potential impacts of future projects.
- *Benefits:* Address potential for undesirable results to occur from future projects. Protect sensitive beneficial users.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain
- *Other considerations?:* Requires careful consideration to ensure that mitigation measures are commensurate with potential impacts. Uncertainty associated with potential impacts.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold pending consultation with other agencies and additional information on examples from other areas.

Place On-hold, Pending Future Need

Staff recommends the below policies and programs be placed on hold pending future need and groundwater conditions. These include activities that (1) require additional information or findings from other activities prior to being more fully considered (2) are more controversial and would require a clear and justified need to implement and/or (3) are significantly lacking available information needed to evaluate. While focused planning for these activities would be placed on hold, staff do recommend continued assessment and monitoring of statewide or other similar efforts being undertaken elsewhere. It is recommended that updates to their recommended status be prepared on a minimum bi-annual basis or as new information indicates more focused planning should be conducted.

Mandatory metering program for non-de-minimis users- Require metering and reporting of groundwater extraction for all users extracting more than 2 AFY.

- *Goal:* Obtain improved information on the distribution and volume of groundwater extraction and promote water-use efficiency efforts
- *Objectives:* Support assessment of potential impacts to beneficial users, improving water budget and sustainable yield calculations. Provide information to promote and evaluate conservation efforts.
- *Benefits:* Fill data gaps, promote efficiency and improve ability to evaluate conservation
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain.
- *Other considerations:* No existing budget, potential reluctance of funding agencies to fund. Costs for meter infrastructure and ongoing meter maintenance and data reporting/compilation, need for any enforcement. Potential resistance from groundwater users.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold, evaluate in the future as needed based on basin conditions and results of voluntary metering program.

Groundwater allocation framework- Develop a framework to allocate the average annual sustainable yield to groundwater users.

- *Goal:* Provide fair and equitable groundwater allocations to groundwater users.
- *Objectives:* Develop an allocation framework to fairly assign portions of the average annual sustainable yield to groundwater users that takes existing water rights into

consideration. Provide certainty to groundwater users on groundwater availability and achieve sustainable yield.

- *Benefits:* Maintain groundwater extraction within sustainable yield and avoid undesirable results.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain
- *Other considerations?* Metering program would be needed to verify compliance. Potential for economic impact or financial hardship to groundwater users.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold, evaluate in the future as-needed based on basin conditions and improved information on parcel-scale extraction.

Mandatory extraction limitations – Mandate limits on groundwater extraction to groundwater users.

- *Goal:* Reduce groundwater extraction
- *Objectives:* Mandate limits on groundwater extraction for potential situations where significant and unreasonable impacts to beneficial users (i.e., undesirable results) are occurring or are imminent and planned projects and management actions are not ready or are determined to be insufficient to reach and/or maintain sustainability.
- *Benefits:* Reduction in existing and future groundwater use can support the maintenance or increase of groundwater levels and maintain groundwater extraction within the sustainable yield.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain.
- *Other considerations:* Metering program would be needed to verify or enforce limitations. No existing budget, potential reluctance of funding agencies to fund. Potential for economic impact or financial hardship to groundwater users.
- *Recommended next steps:* Evaluate in the future as needed based on basin conditions, such as occurrence of undesirable results and results of voluntary WUE program.

Groundwater trading program- Develop a groundwater trading program or water market.

- *Goal:* Maintain groundwater extraction within sustainable yield
- *Objectives:* Establish rules and reporting mechanisms for groundwater users to share portions of their groundwater allocations.
- *Benefits:* Provide flexibility to groundwater users in maintaining extraction within sustainable yield and avoiding undesirable results.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain.
- *Other considerations:* Requires comprehensive monitoring and accounting framework.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold, evaluate in the future as needed should a groundwater allocation framework be established.

Drinking water well mitigation program- Develop a program to mitigate potential impacts to shallow drinking water wells.

- *Goal:* Protect sensitive beneficial users from impacts associated with groundwater level declines
- *Objectives:* Establish criteria to evaluate and mitigate potential impacts to shallow drinking water wells associated with any future undesirable results.
- *Benefits:* Protect beneficial users most sensitive to groundwater level declines
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain, likely high.
- *Other considerations:* Identification of areas where shallow drinking water wells may be

at risk. Challenges with determining whether well impacts are caused by groundwater level declines or other well maintenance or well failure issues.

- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold, evaluate in the future as needed based on basin conditions.

Permitting and accounting of water hauling – Require permitting, metering, and reporting for potable and non-potable water hauling sourced from groundwater wells within the GSA's jurisdiction.

- *Goal:* Obtain improved information on the distribution and volume of groundwater extraction
- *Objectives:* Provide improved information on amounts and locations of groundwater extraction and groundwater use, including groundwater that may be delivered outside of the basin/subbasin. Improve accuracy of groundwater sustainability fee assessments.
- *Benefits:* Fill data gaps
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain.
- *Other considerations:* Very limited information on locations and potential volume of groundwater extraction for water hauling purposes. Could be very challenging to enforce.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold pending additional information on potential volumes.

Land repurposing strategies -

- *Goal:* Reduce groundwater extraction and maintain or increase recharge
- *Objectives:* Identifying opportunities and funding strategies/partnerships for programs working with landowners interested in “land repurposing” strategies that are being explored by the state to reduce water use and improve recharge opportunities
- *Benefits:* Reduction in existing and future groundwater use and increase in groundwater recharge can support the maintenance or increase of groundwater levels and maintain groundwater extraction within the sustainable yield.
- *Costs to implement:* Uncertain.
- *Other considerations:* Landowner interest in such a program is unknown. Would require clear guidelines on allowed usage and funding for maintenance of repurposed lands.
- *Recommended next steps:* Place on hold pending additional information on potential volumes.

Attachments:

1. AC Input for Sonoma County GSAs on Policy Options Matrix from May 2023 meetings

Policy Options Study Kickoff

Advisory Committee Comments – May/June 2023

General Comments

SANTA ROSA PLAIN

Anderson

My approach is different: Five stages – A) 6,000, B) 4,000, C) 2,000, D) 0000 and E) minus 2,000.

- A) Is preferred. Current 6,000 AF cushion (18,000 AF use & 24,000 AF Sustained yield). Policies & Programs are watchful AND preventative. Monitoring AND recharge. Do both: Track demands and reward infiltration. Keep basin in good shape.*
- B) Be careful. Do more of what works to recharge.*
- C) Be concerned. Do more of what works to reduce.*
- D) Be worried. Double efforts on both fronts – hard push to reduce usage and expand recharge.*
- E) Be tough. Time for serious measures. First year – share allocation scheme. Adopt in 2nd year.*

The point is the policies/programs evolve from and respond to current conditions. Take advantage of the good times to get and keep the basin ready to meet next year's demands.

When conditions change, be ready to take the measures necessary.

The options vary and are designed (are predetermined) to take measure in response to distance basin is from the Sustained Yield.

May need a year or two to emerge from Stage E. SGMA offers a 50-year view.

- A) Education, Rainwater harvesting, recharge, tracking runoff, water use efficiency rebates, understanding fault lines / streams / contributing watersheds*
- B) Infiltration wells / ponds, ASR*
- C) Trading*
- D) Hauling*
- E) Allocation*

SONOMA VALLEY

Cornwall

- I can't compare these options very well in the absence of (coarse, relative) estimates of potential effect in terms of ac-ft/year benefit. For example, how substantial is the water used by potential new wells inside municipal service areas? If it's small, then no point pursuing this.*
- Please consider including in the matrix (or in the write-up supporting the matrix) all policy options that were recommended by the SVGMP, even if you explain why they are not worth pursuing. This demonstrates respect for those years of work, and continuity.*
- In general, I favor leaning on Permit Sonoma wherever possible. They already have a regulatory hammer that everyone is familiar with. Let them continue to be the bad guy as much as possible but make their operations more informed and effective by working with them.*

What policies are missing from the Policy Options Matrix that should be considered?

PETALUMA VALLEY

Strain

- *I'm not sure this is a policy, but focusing on general water user education seems to be important and necessary.*

SANTA ROSA PLAIN

Deicke

- *Well abandonments when connecting to muni (incentives, grants).*

Haydon

- *Increase use of Recycled Water and reuse for GW recharge or other uses like irrigation.*
- *Increase Storm Water Capture and reuse for GW recharge or other uses like irrigation.*

Martin

- *This would be a later phase idea only to be addressed after low hanging fruit is completed:*
 - *I'd like to explore the possibility of creating mitigation opportunities where there may be projects that must go through that will impact the basin. If there is a possibility of the project proponent contributing financially or otherwise to a "greater good" project where the basin is not meeting objectives or there remain obstacles for implementation.*
- *Identifying opportunities funding strategies/partnerships for programs working with landowners interested in "land repurposing" strategies that are being explored by the state to reduce water use and improve recharge opportunities.*
- *Not giving this a recommendation, but this may be something to explore beyond the permitting of water haulers: Expanding to larger policies and parameters around exporting of groundwater and hauling water outside of basin. There may be projects in the future that will need to do this and finding something that is just and doesn't harm adjacent basins will be critical. (would still be Permit Sonoma project). Not sure of the magnitude or possibility of this even occurring (export).*

O'Connor

- *Include a placeholder policy option acknowledging that technical options could be revealed through ongoing data collection and groundwater model improvements.*

SONOMA VALLEY

Allebach

- *SV GSA make de-minimis .5 AFY instead of 2 AFY.*
- *Assess existing well impacts on Public Trust and the ISW SMC.*
- *Create formal depletion area maps with defined boundaries to proscribe these problem areas for other policy and PMA actions.*
- *Tune into County General Plan Land Use Element and Water Resources Element processes to see where GSP interest may intersect; find out what staff to connect with to stay plugged in.*
- *A friendly adjudicated basin where major GW stakeholders take GSP into their own hands and arrive at certainty of GW allocation on a faster time scale.*

- *Establish a deal-making table where major GW stakeholders can try and hammer out fair use policy and fees.*

Bundschu

- *There is a missing policy option which needs addressing to have an accurate water budget; that is, what is the figure to be used in the budget's line item for AF required by our Basin's environment? All other entities are accounted for.*
- *Recycled water policies.*
- *A lack of mention in any policy presented so far- there is fresh unused water available in the basin flowing into SF bay from both Sonoma Creek and Arroyo Secco. Thousands of AF annually. Consider by 2030 we determine none of our Sustainability projects have yet reached our goals. Then what?*

Carr

- *The priority for policy development and implementation should be the recovery of deep aquifer declines in the two problem areas. While this option will take time to carry out, it needs to be initiated and sustained from the outset. Other (easier) options can be carried out in parallel, but those options, even if funded and popular, should not be allowed to detract from this priority.*
- *While its tempting to prioritize the funded and easy stuff, we need to do what we can to avoid worsening conditions in the deep aquifer. Most importantly, we should avoid the tendency to wait for more complete and accurate data before initiating the necessary work based upon our current understanding of the boundaries and other conditions.*

Cornwall

- *Suggest a new "program" (not a policy): plain-language reporting to local newspapers every summer on findings from wells that Permit Sonoma has monitoring data from. Like with the recent report.*

King

- *Community awareness about groundwater. Metrics and basin performance can be summarized on GSA home page. Perhaps other stakeholders have a role in helping to raise awareness?*

Lieber

- *This is a very well-thought-out document and for the most part I fully agree with it. I thin #2 under Benefit 4 should be changed from M to H under potential stakeholder support as from what I heard at the meeting; this might be a big source of water loss. Secondly, under Benefit 5 this should probably be a higher priority as this seems to be a health and safety issue.*

Do you have concerns about any of the policies identified in the Policy Options Matrix?

PETALUMA VALLEY

Engstrom

- *Well review timeframe and delays.*

Ng

- *Mandatory extraction limits will be difficult to enforce.*
- *Mandatory metering for non-de-minimis users – let Permit Sonoma do that with the use permits and share their information.*
- *Permitting and accounting of water hauling needs to be done but it seems difficult.*

Strain

- *I think crediting for recharge can only occur if that property owner has meter on their wells. No point in giving them benefits that may be entirely outweighed by their current water use*

SANTA ROSA PLAIN

Deicke

- *Water quality of domestic well evaluation should be high*

Haydon

- *Voluntary water-use efficiency: add Sonoma Water as Partner*
- *Voluntary hook-ups: Add to description, muni systems not using GW, or else we are still using GW.*
- *Limitations on new private well: In description, my question is, Do the Purveyors have the authority the limit well construction? Or do we mean limit Purveyors from installing additional wells?*
- *GSA review of discretionary projects: the GSA is not a Permitting Agency, so we can provide comments only, to be applied by permitting agency,*
- *GSA review of well permits: I recommend we leave this to Permit Sonoma and coordinate with that agency to assure the GSA interests are considered.*
- *Well construction and Permitting recommendations: I recommend Ranking this as a 2. Could do this Immediately after creating type and scope of recommendations. And is Short to Mid Term.*
- *Develop groundwater allocation framework; I recommend Ranking this as 4. Does Not appear to be critical in this basin now.*

Martin

- *My municipality is going to have a hard time supporting anything that dictates groundwater users are required to hookup to services within their jurisdiction. Not saying it can't be done – but there are sensitivities about consistency with existing building permitting process, coordinating with LAFCO, and overlaps and differences between jurisdictions.*
 - *Also concerns about ensuring that existing connection fees/demand are paid in full – this could be prohibitively expensive compared to drilling a well.*

- *Would need parameters for when this would be feasible (how far is a reasonable distance required to extend services?)*
- *Worry that some of these policies may create inequity and harm long-term surface water availability to apply a band aid to expanding groundwater use as was projected in the plan. Urban suppliers already pay for surface water, why should they be required to transitioning existing groundwater users to meet the growth demands of rural areas?*
 - *Should the surface water contractors and suppliers be expected to expand their service areas so that rural/ag groundwater use can be expanded elsewhere?*

O'Connor

- *Is there a potential benefit to developing policy options from the perspective of solving hypothetical problems as specific "violations of SMC, including geographic locations? Would that possibly produce some other policy options?*

SONOMA VALLEY

Allebach

- *See each policy item below for comments. I am concerned that voluntary measures will not work and not have a large enough effect; I realize the GSA has to give voluntary measures a chance, but let's not waste time if we see they are not working. No more than a year. Supply may not go up, demand management is the stick if supply and voluntary conservation options don't work.*
- *Municipal water letting in adjacent out-of-service area wells is a great idea, however municipal parochialism is likely to foil this idea. How can we incentive this? Give municipal water purveyors a decent break on their ASR aqueduct water prices? We can all edge towards One Water.*
- *I'm also concerned that in the dual nature of GW, private property rights will trump common pool resource rights, and that the GSA may play more to the property rights side. Like the way this agenda item was written, staff should not be scared to lay out a common pool-resource-centered road map that covers sustainable yield for all beneficial GW users. This segues into the real need for universal, basin, non-de-minimis metering to provide true accountability. I'm concerned true accountability will put off as long as possible.*
- *For policy options, a deal-making table should be set up where the principal stakeholders can figure out how to allocate GW and still meet sustainable yield.*
- *For protecting shallow well owners, how will the GSA know if there are issues? There have been shallow well issues in the 8th East/ Napa St East area. Seems like GSA well spacing authority may need to be sued for any new wells.*
- *The least effective, least painful policies will maybe have the highest public support. Seems like the more an option costs, the more I like it bc investment means seriousness and I want to be effective and get GW sustainability done. Bottom line, if voluntary measures don't work and projects/ funds take too much time and supply is not increased, then mandatory measures will be needed. Kudos to staff for pretty much saying this.*

Cornwall

- *"Voluntary WUE program": where is the evidence that this would work in the absence of incentives? Or is the proposal to use incentives?*
- *"Voluntary hookups to municipal water service" New hookups have historically been fiercely*

resisted by environmental or anti-growth interests because it's seen as promoting growth/sprawl (as in the movie Chinatown). I bet that same reaction would occur with this proposal. So, politically it would be good to consider freezing the existing development intensity of the parcel (or something like that), simultaneous with hooking up the parcel. Or you'd have to do some messaging to show how the program does not increase development potential, does not change underlying zoning, is not happening at the edges of developed areas, or similar.

- *“GSA review of discretionary projects” and “GSA review of well permits” could maybe be combined. A middle ground on this might be the GSA providing a standard set of questions that have to be answered by project proponents, that Permit Sonoma and/or BZA asks. Or a decision tree. Maybe combine these with revising or eliminating Permit Sonoma’s groundwater availability areas.*
- *“Limit new wells inside municipal service areas”: Maybe, in locations with groundwater decline, there’s a public benefit legal argument to justify the infringement on property rights.*
- *“Align requirements”—yes!!*
- *“Develop drinking water well mitigation program”: suggest renaming to “protect vulnerable drinking water wells” and adding a means-testing component so that public funds are spent on people who need that help.*
- *Combine “voluntary conservation” and “well owner education” programs. Maybe say explicitly that these programs are low cost, and likely have only a small short-term effect, but could create social acceptability for more intense or mandatory programs or policies later. I’m not clear how this is different from “voluntary WUE program”.*

King

- *A flow meter program should consider the local supply-chain of pump and irrigation companies. A standardized flow meter is likely not feasible.*

Lieber

- *I think this is a good document and plan.*

Does the initial implementation ranking in the Policy Options Matrix seem reasonable?

PETALUMA VALLEY

Ng

- Yes

Strain

- *Yes, most policies build on each other in a sustainable way and are well-rounded in their approach to water community management.*

SANTA ROSA PLAIN

Deicke

- *Volunteering metering program should be prioritized highest of ???*

Haydon

- *I agree with Ranking as presented, with the exceptions noted above.*

Martin

- *Yes, priority should be on establishing voluntary measures, filling data gaps, and establishing conservation and water use management programs. The rankings are appropriate.*
- *The only one I would potentially elevate is developing a framework for crediting recharge projects. I feel like in our outreach and comments received from the ag community during development of the GSP this was communicated to the GSA often.*

SONOMA VALLEY

Allebach

- *Mostly, see each policy item below for specific comments.*

King

- Yes.

Lieber

- *Other than the item in Benefit 5, I think the ranking is very appropriate.*

What policies identified in the Policy Options Matrix do you think are the most important to implement first?

PETALUMA VALLEY

Engstrom

- *Recharge possibilities would be very important*

Ng

- *Voluntary water-use efficiency*
- *Voluntary metering program*
- *Groundwater user education and engagement program*

Strain

- *Voluntary metering program*
- *Mandatory metering for non-de-minimis users – maybe start at a higher threshold (5 AFY?)*
- *Groundwater user education – while our efforts are great, they are not 100% effective. Some members of the public are still confused why we are doing this!*

SANTA ROSA PLAIN

Deicke

- *Voluntary metering, groundwater trading program, hook-ups to muni, education/outreach*

Martin

- *1a and 1b are “no brainers”.*

SONOMA VALLEY

Allebach

- **4 WUE #14 overall**

Thumbs down: rank 0; I don't like it, not effective, don't spend much time and \$ on this because payoff will be low. This may work better for some rural residential (RR) users but not for ag.

Voluntary measures w/out being able to see what others are doing makes little incentive to avoid free riding, there's no penalty; those who conserve get the sucker's payoff while unknown users free ride with BAU GW use. Most people won't sacrifice if they see others are not, basic Game Theory. Individual/household sacrifice only works in a community where all are known and publicly accountable.

- **3 Voluntary hook-up to municipal water #5 overall (if GSA can get the City and VOMWD to stand down.)** *Thumbs down: I like this option a lot but see it as infeasible. I agree with staff's rank of 2; I see this also as a rank 3; too many existing draconian out-of-service area requirements and costs; will meet strong resistance from City and VOMWD. This would be good if City and VOMWD could be reasonable and generous basin team players, but we need to have a sense of a basin team first, not a collection of competing interests that is not at a deal-making table. Stakeholders could make deals like this policy option but there is no context to do it.*

Getting an out-of-service area hook-up is now seriously hard and cumbersome. "When sufficient capacity is available" is already about never because City and VOMWD have circled their wagons to protect existing users.

VOMWD wants a LAFCO sphere study and \$20,000 to hook-up one guy with a problem shallow well, not a good sign. The property I live on is surrounded by City water, but the City has every reason in the world why not to hook it up and my landlord had to pay \$60,000 for a new well with arsenic and we can't drink the well water.

- **2 Limit new private wells in municipal service areas #7 overall**
Thumbs up: agree with staff's rank 2; municipal residents should not be able to double down on two water sources while shallow well owners adjacent to service areas can't even get on municipal water. This is worth the risk infringing on property rights bc there are common pool resource rights too, people who double down on two water sources are infringing on the common pool. The GSA needs some spine to stand up for the common pool resource side of GW.
- **1 Mandatory extraction limits #2 overall**
Double thumbs up: Disagree with staff rank of 4, I would rank as 3. This is what needs to happen in depletion areas especially. Users may be happier knowing what they can use rather than an endless technical process where GW use deal making, and fee scales are not on the table.

Fill Data Gaps

- **2 Voluntary metering (for all wells) #16 overall**
Thumbs down: Disagree with staff rank of 1b, to me this is 0 or a 3, shift gears to prep for incipient mandatory metering. Same critique as WUE, it won't work, low pay off. In Game Theory, this is the Tragedy of the Commons option; why should I meter and be open to inspection or save water when others are not and use my water savings for their own benefit on turf, pools, golf, extra vineyard irrigation? This is the sucker's payoff. Time for this option would be better spent prepping for mandatory metering of all non-de-minimis wells.

This option could be of benefit if reframed to target RR/ de-minimis wells; however, wealthy RR users have no incentive to cut back up to their 2 AFY.

- **1 Mandatory metering for non-de-minimis wells #1 overall**
Thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 3. Without mandatory metering and a fair RMP network, there will only be a race to the bottom. Without all ag wells (the large bulk of basin GW use at 65%) being metered, there will be no accountability to the whole basin sustainability. If voluntary clearly won't work for the biggest users, at least shorten the time frame before mandatory will be on the table. If we can see the GSA Board will not take hard steps to hold ag more accountable, staff must lead the way by setting the management regime table for them.

Policy Alignment and Agency Coordination

- **1 GSA review of discretionary projects #6 overall**
Thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 1a. This can't just be staff review; send discretionary projects to the AC for an opinion; discretionary projects are likely going to be higher in AFY, the GSA should have oversight and the opportunity for a veto. Not taking legit oversight powers granted by the State

abdicates the GSA's experienced voice. Charge the applicant for staff time, AC review, and GSA Board decision.

- **3 Align amended SoCo well ordinance with entire GSA jurisdiction #9 overall**
Thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 1a. Consider pushing for de-minimis being .5 AFY. GSA can take a stand, can't get to sustainability with BAU GW use precepts; conservation means cutting back, not figuring out how to keep BAU supply in a future where CA BAU GW use is clearly not on the table. (Lake Sonoma was the lowest it has been, Sonoma Water lucked out with a wet year.) I would also look at taking up more well ordinance recommendations in the amended well ordinance letter sent to the BOS by Rue Furch and Co, for example address that the bulk of GW/ ISW impact is coming from existing wells, and this is where GSAs need to step in. New wells' impacts on PT resources will be a pittance compared to existing wells.
- **4 GW user education and engagement program #13 overall**
Thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 1b
- **2 GSA review of well permits #8 overall**
Thumbs up: Disagree with staff rank of 3, I rank 2. This is important because GSA people know Sonoma basin, some oversight on Permit Sonoma is called for.

Improve GW Resource Management

- **2 Permitting and accounting for water hauling #10 overall**
Thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 2. Do it ASAP, this is an easy one.
- **3 Well construction and permitting recommendations #12 overall**
Thumbs up: Staff's rank of 3 is OK. This could be ranked as 2, as ongoing monitoring and adjustments to Sonoma County well ordinance are probably called for. To the extent that the new PT well ordinance can be seen as weak tea by environmental beneficial use, avenues should be left open for GSA recommended adjustments.
- **5 Crediting for recharge enhancement projects #15 overall**
Thumbs down: Agree with staff rank of 3. Exactly what SMC will benefit needs to be clarified. This seems like it would not apply to RR wells. Need metering of ag wells to do this, otherwise how to account? Most certainly need objective standards and quantitative metrics. Credit for surface recharge can't be given for deep depletion. If surface aquifer is already sustainable as is and we are in a wet year, why buy the cow when it's already in the barn? Credit should only be for ISW and deep depletion areas, but local recharge projects will not be able to deliver water to the deep system. This should maybe mainly be aimed at the ISW SMC and the surface aquifer system. May need to have this be more applicable in dry years when recharge will make more of a difference.
- **1 GW allocation framework #3 overall**
Double thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 3. However, this needs to get on the table and deals need to be made. Don't wait for future litigations; smart, pragmatic actors should be able to divvy up a common pie and make a deal. Certainty counts for a lot; the current management regime is full of uncertainty and actors have not really been put up against having to make a

deal. Engage the consensus institute group that has been in from the start, staff set the table for making a deal on ag sustainable use.

- **4 Develop GW trading program #11 overall**
Thumbs up: Agree with staff rank of 4. This will need comprehensive monitoring, metering, and thorough accounting.

Protect beneficial users

- **1 Protect shallow well owners drinking water rights #4 overall**
Double thumbs up: I agree with staff rank of 3 and provisionally will say this needs some urgency, don't just put off to a later date, make it a date certain. Shallow well owners can't be hung out to dry by larger users with deep pockets that are, through well competition, drawing down a common resource.

King

1. *Community awareness.*
2. *Voluntary flow reporting.*

Lieber

- *I believe getting as much metering in place is important so we can reduce assumptions and replace them with actual data. Getting a grant to provide meters should help with this.*
- *The other priority should be reducing waste of water, especially in ag and landscaping applications as these are where most of the water is going. It might be beneficial to look at areas of the world that have severe water scarcities and how they are improving their use of water in these areas. Israel comes to mind.*

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency

TO: ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: Marcus Trotta, Plan Manager
SUBJECT: Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation Update

Summary: The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was submitted on January 29, 2022 by the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and implementation activities began upon submission of the GSP. On January 26, 2023, DWR issued its approval of the GSP for the Subbasin. This update provides a summary of in-progress and near-term planned activities for the following implementation components: addressing data gaps for interconnected surface water, GDEs, and groundwater levels, and initial planning for projects and management actions.

Background

Section 7 of the Santa Rosa Plain GSP provides the implementation plan which describes the scope and schedule for activities needed to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and achieve sustainability by 2042. A Five-Year schedule for the primary tasks and activities associated with implementing the GSP has been developed and included as an attachment.

Summary of In-Progress and Near-Term Planned Implementation Activities (with existing GSA funding)

The attached 5-Year GSP Schedule identifies the completed, in-progress and planned activities related to GSP implementation. While awaiting DWR's final recommendations on SGMA Implementation Grant funding awards (anticipated to occur in Fall 2023), GSA staff has been working on the following GSP implementation components with available budgeted funds: addressing data gaps for interconnected surface water and GDEs, addressing data gaps for groundwater levels, and initial planning for projects and management actions.

Addressing Data Gaps for ISW/GDEs

- GSA staff and subconsultant Montgomery & Associates (M&A) have developed an initial draft memorandum for improving the characterization and monitoring of ISW and GDEs within the Subbasin. The memorandum summarizes the existing approach from the GSP, review of previous comments submitted to the GSA related to ISW and GDEs, review of DWR's recommended corrective actions, review of work completed or proposed related to characterizing ISW and GDEs by other GSAs in similar basins, review of adaptive management portion of the recently adopted Sonoma County Well Ordinance, and initial recommendations for studies and collection of new data. The draft memorandum will be circulated to AC members this fall and shared with interested members of the ISW and GDE practitioner work groups to help prioritize and scope activities to address the ISW and GDE data gaps identified in the GSP.

Addressing Data Gaps for Groundwater Levels

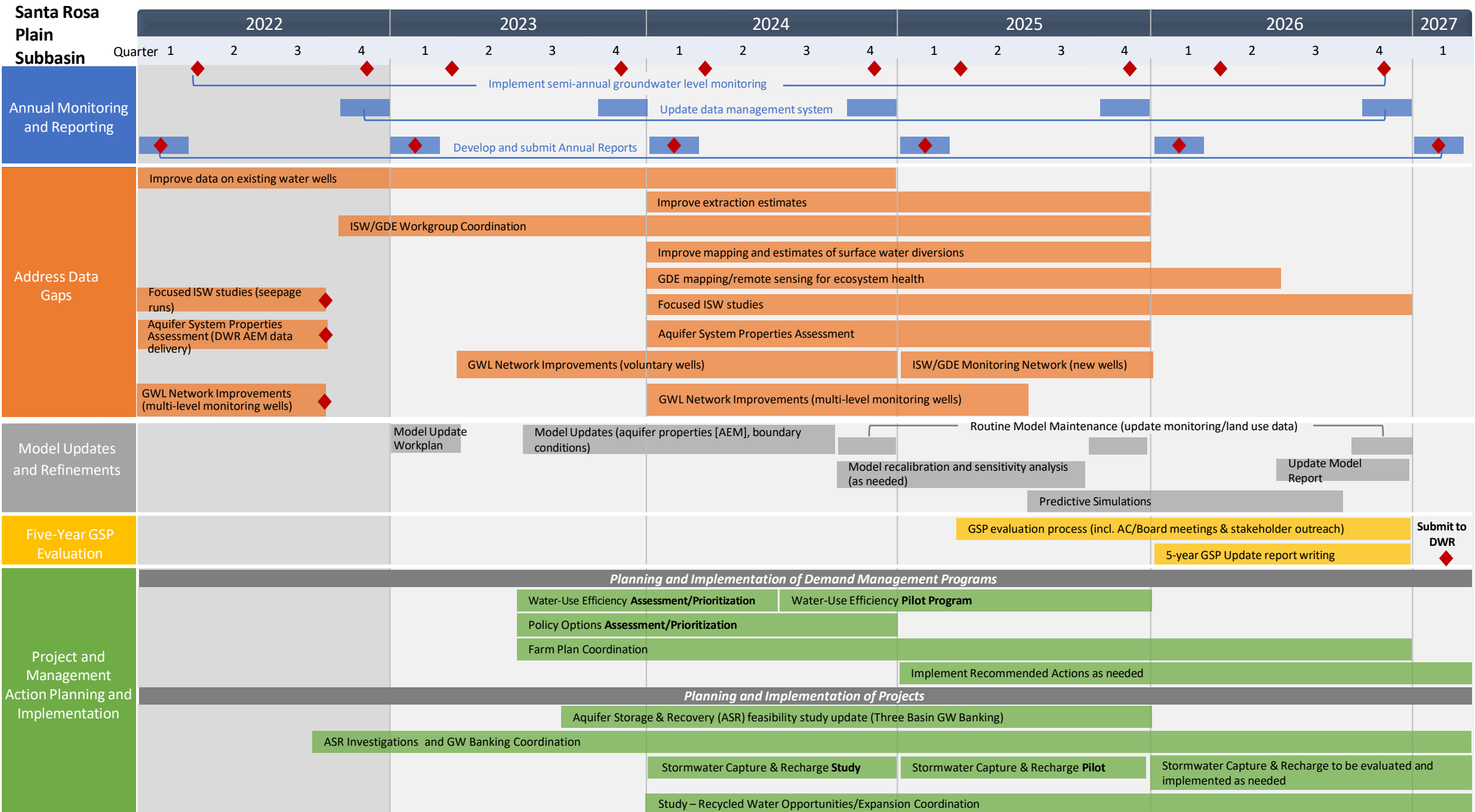
- *Voluntary Groundwater Level Monitoring Program (VGLMP)* The GSA staff has formed a groundwater monitoring subcommittee comprised of representatives from three GSA Advisory Committees within Sonoma County, along with staff from Permit Sonoma, Sonoma and Gold Ridge RCDs, Sebastopol Water Information Group, and the Sonoma Ecology Center, to further prioritize data gap areas, discuss data collection, reporting, management, and quality control, and assist in developing an outreach program. The initial meeting is being held on September 5, 2023, and will include discussion and review of the goals and objectives, data gap areas, monitoring approaches, data reporting and management, data sharing and display, monitoring protocols, and outreach approaches.

Initial Planning for Projects and Management Actions

- *Policy Options Study*: The status of this management action is described in the separate staff report prepared for this topic.
- *Water-Use Efficiency Assessment*: Following completion of the RFQ solicitation for technical consultants, the GSA and selected consultant will scope an assessment of conservation and groundwater-use efficiency opportunities. This project would include an assessment of groundwater- use characteristics, existing levels of water-use efficiency, and recommendations on preferred tools and strategies for implementation.
- *Aquifer storage and recovery (ASR)*: Planning continues to advance through the planning and design of the ASR aspects of Sonoma Water’s Santa Rosa Plain Drought Resiliency Project funded through DWR’s Urban and Multi-benefit Drought Relief Program. The GSA is coordinating with Sonoma Water throughout the planning and design phase, and it is anticipated that ASR permitting and pilot studies will be conducted in 2024 and 2025. Notable upcoming activities include the drilling and construction of a replacement well at Sonoma Water’s Occidental Road well facility and issuance of bidding documents for the construction needed to complete the upgrades at the Sebastopol Road well facility.

Attachments

1. Santa Rosa Plain GSP 5-Year Implementation Schedule



◆ Milestone/Document Submittal
 AC: Advisory Committee
 AEM: Airborne Electromagnetic
 ASR: Aquifer Storage and Recovery
 GDE: Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems
 GWL: Groundwater Level
 ISW: Interconnected Surface Water
 SWI: Seawater Intrusion