Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee Meeting

Draft Meeting Summary

Date/time: Monday, June 22, 2020; 3:00 pm-5:30 p.m.
Meeting Location: https://csus.zoom.us/j/99257323552
Contact: Andy Rodgers, Administrator, Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)
Email: arodgers@westyost.com I Phone: 707.508.3661

Next meeting: July 13, 2020, 3:00-5:30 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Call to Order

Sam Magill, Facilitator, Sacramento State University – Consensus and Collaboration Program, welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda and conducted roll call.

Bob Anderson welcomed the participants and thanked them for attending this additional meeting. He noted that Matt O'Connor was scheduled for expert witness testimony during this time so was unfortunately unable to attend this special Advisory Committee meeting.

General Public Comments

None.

Agenda and 2020 Meeting Schedule Review

Sam Magill reviewed the meeting agenda for the day and Andy Rodgers walked the meeting attendees through the 2020 meeting schedule. Rodgers said staff is already working on the agenda items for the July 13 meeting. He then asked if there were questions or comments.

Rosenblum – The biggest issue is timing. Please do not repeat what happened last Friday – we need more time to review material.

> Rodgers – Unfortunately, we had to change the agenda a few times, it took us up to the last minute to get ready. Your patience is appreciated. We will try to get the meeting materials ready as early as possible in future.

Updates

Objective: Provide relevant updates that inform the Advisory Committee to ask questions if needed.

Water Budget and Model

We are still working hard on development of draft documents on historical and current water budget and model. We were hoping to have it ready for this meeting, but we are still working on them; our goal is to have them to Advisory Committee in advance of the July meeting to make sure the Advisory Committee has enough time to review.

Projects and Management Actions

Informational documentation is included in the meeting packet – a three-page background preview of process and slides that provide additional information. On the first page of the document, there is a list of items to be included in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), not necessarily projects and management actions but actions that need to be covered in the GSP. There is no time on today's agenda to discuss in detail, but it will be an integral part of the GSP going forward and will be covered at our July meeting. If you have any input, please email Mr. Trotta.

Representative Monitoring Point Network (RMP)

We are working on text, maps and tables that will form the monitoring network section of the GSP. Both the RMP as well as the full monitoring network for the basin that will look at areas that are not considered RMP. Staff is hoping to have a draft to send out shortly after the July meeting.

Grants Update

We have signed agreements in place with DWR for the $1 million grant. Staff is conducting planning work to scope out locations for wells, access agreements with private landowners and infringement agreements for right of ways. Staff anticipates doing planning over the summer and the goal of getting the planning and environment planning work done by the end of this year in order to start construction of the four deep monitoring wells early next year. Staff is also looking at other aspects of the grant – Permit Sonoma is working on the well registration program.

Practitioner Workgroups

There are practitioner work groups to cover subject-specific issues in all three basins, including Rural Residential Outreach, Agricultural Water Demands Projections, and two Groundwater/Surface Water Interactions groups. The practitioners are technical subject matter experts including resource agencies with jurisdictional interests or involvements in some of the issues. These are areas that staff need help with specific activities where we don't have the knowledge or expertise. The work done by the practitioner work groups will be compiled by staff and brought to the Advisory Committees for review and discussion.

Two groups are to develop a 50-year planning horizon for the development of estimates of future groundwater demands:

1. Unincorporated groundwater demands for agriculture. This group will include the Agricultural Commissioner, two Resource Conservation Districts, UC Coop extension, and others, to look at the number of irrigated acreage and if there are any overarching trends within industry regarding crop types.

2. Unincorporated groundwater demands for non-agriculture. This group will be led by Pete Parkinson, former head of PRMD, now Permit Sonoma, along with land use planners, Transportation Authority, and Permit Sonoma.

The other two groups are related to groundwater dependent ecosystems and interconnected surface water depletion.

3. Groundwater dependent eco systems are required to identify and map related to surface water systems. This group will include Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, Resource agencies, Nature Conservancy, etc.
4. Interconnection of groundwater-surface water. This group will include Fish and Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, State Water Control Board, DWR, etc.

Questions/Comments Advisory Committee

Rosenblum – I have two issues with the practitioner groups. The Advisory Committee meets in public and the whole process needs to be transparent. I am concerned the group will be so selective to reinforce certain views. I would like some oversight on those meetings. I understood these groups weren't part of the grant but part of regular agency work time.

> Jasperse – The idea is to bring in practitioners to help staff develop subjects where we don't have the expertise – unincorporated land use and ag group, and the other two groups are to cover specific aspects of the GSP. The idea is for the workgroups to come up with options to bring to Advisory Committee. No decisions or policies will be developed. There will be meeting notes, and everything will be presented to the Advisory Committee and ultimately the Groundwater Sustainability Board. With regards to the second question, the practitioner work groups are part of the grant.
>
> Ann DuBay – Regarding the Prop 68 funding, looking back at the Advisory Committee meeting notes, Mr. Jasperse was referring to resources' agency staff 'volunteering' or spending time as part of their jobs on the work groups. The facilitation and technical work associated with the work groups is funded through Proposition 68.

Potter – Are we saying the Plan Manager and administrator team is augmenting staff through the practitioner work groups, and that work, technical in nature, would be reported out to the Advisory Committee and any conclusions or recommendations would be vetted through our public meetings?

> Jasperse – Yes, that is essentially correct.
>
> Potter – It sounds like an appropriate division of labor. The Advisory Committee is a clearing house for options so we can make recommendations to the Board on behalf of the agency.

Rosenblum – The practitioner work groups are conceptualizing, it is technical and important work, it is a public process and there should be an observation. The conceptualization phase is an important issue in every public process.

> Jasperse – I would like to reiterate that no decisions will be made. We could have done this with consultants, but we chose not to.

Magill– We will make sure we record the meeting so there is no perception that anything is being kept from the larger audience.

Public Outreach

Andrea Rodriguez, Outreach – There is a sample PowerPoint presentation for your stakeholder outreach groups. As you have meetings going forward, let Ms. Rodriguez know so she can help tailor presentations, or be on the call, etc., to assist. There is a consultant (pending Board approval) for rural residential outreach. There is a public workshop scheduled on Wednesday, July 29, mark your calendar!

Noren – Thank you for the information on outreach. I am acutely interested in rural well owners. Let me know if there is anything I can do. I appreciate the process being developed.

Gaffney – I was assigned to reach out to the Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce. I have been contacting them by email. They usually meet once a month but haven't met since the Covid-19 shutdown. They aren't using any online meeting formats. What is the timeline for making a presentation or should I just email the PDF of the slideshow?

Andrea – Let's see when they might come online but maybe we can host a meeting if that gets some attention. I will try to contact them.

Gaffney – If you get a response, let me know, so far, they haven't responded.

Andy Rodgers – The main actions items from the last Board meeting were looking ahead two years – there are amended contracts for administrator, facilitator, and legal contracts through June 30, 2022.

Ann DuBay –With regards to the public workshop on July 29, we will have breakout groups using Zoom. Each breakout will be identified by interest groups. We would like practical feedback especially around Sustainability Management Criteria. If you have any ideas, please send an email to Ann DuBay, Andrea Rodriguez or Andy Rodgers. We would like questions that elicit conversation in the breakout groups.

Sustainable Management Criteria Proposals

Objective: Review and discuss SMC proposals and discuss additional considerations and next steps

Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels

Marcus Trotta gave an update/status report of the sustainability indicator "chronic lowering of groundwater".

Key points and considerations:

- SGMA Definition: Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply if continued over the 50-year planning and implementation horizon.

- Groundwater levels will be measured using a Representative Monitoring Point network of wells throughout the basin; this network is a subset of the entire GSA well monitoring network.

Main Themes from previous AC Input Reflected in preliminary SMCs:

- For areas with stable trends, maintain groundwater levels within or near historical conditions while accounting for future droughts and climate variability.
- For areas with declining trends, protect beneficial users that could be impacted by the declining groundwater levels and stabilize and reverse the declining trends.

Questions/Comments Advisory Committee

Furch – Averaging seems problematic. We need seasonal variations, high and low.

Trotta – Yes, I agree, the descriptions would include seasonal variations.

Noren – There are a wide range of domestic well types in the basin. They are one of the hardest group of wells to develop this type of criteria. I joined the Advisory Committee a little later than others. Such a range of type and use of well, seems the rural well owner is the hardest to corral. I would be interested in your thoughts and how to develop the criteria.

Trotta – Yes, I would be happy to speak with you offline to get you up to speed. With respect to rural domestic wells, I agree it is the largest number of wells and biggest variety.

Noren – Some of the domestic wells are marginal in construction, production and age, and location. They offer an opportunity to be a bell weather for what is going on in these basins. I would be interested to talk further in a group or offline.

Gaffney – Future conditions need to include projected population growth. Between human nature (people keep having babies) and the State Dept of Finance, we can expect population growth to occur in the unincorporated area during the life of the GSP. If "reasonable" includes population growth, we'll be OK.

Trotta – Practitioner workgroups are looking at population growth, it is something that needs to be incorporated in future projections.

Furch – I agree with Mr. Gaffney and would add we need to consider intensification of uses on the land.

Close – I have been paying a lot of attention to population data recently. The Dept. of Finance has projections by county going out to 2060. These projections show a decline in population all the way out. ABAG projections (report due soon) also expects a steady population decline in Sonoma and Marin counties. Dept. of Finance projections are already online, when I get further information from ABAG, I can send it to Andy Rodgers.

Trotta – Another component of the projections will be on the urban side. For that we will be relying on the ongoing urban water management planning process that Mr. Close just described.

Furch – ABAG is a good source but hasn't always been accurately predictive.

Water Quality Degradation

Marcus Trotta then gave an update/status report of the sustainability indicator "water quality degradation."

- Unlike most other undesirable results, degraded water quality is the subject of robust federal, state and local regulatory regimes carried out by different entities.
- GSAs are not responsible for enforcing existing water quality standards or collecting data to support existing water quality programs.
- However, they are responsible for avoiding "significant and unreasonable" degradation of water quality in their basins.

Questions/Comments Advisory Committee

Martin – Direction to the Advisory Committee was "look at the statement and provide feedback". I am curious if staff received feedback.

> Trotta – Yes, we had six guiding questions and received four to five persons' feedback related to water quality. We are in the process of compiling the comments and addressing them; we can report at the next meeting.

Furch – Do we know how many negative water quality impacts are produced from outside the basin?

> Trotta – In addition to the Representative Monitoring Point network we would have other wells tracking water quality. We have already been working on compiling the existing water quality data sets that we are aware of into one single database. So, we would have separate wells tracking water quality. It would be one way to track future change conditions. Just like we are planning to track groundwater levels along or adjacent to the basin boundaries, we plan to track water quality along the basin boundaries as well.

Furch – Will we be looking at hot spots for water quality impacts?

> Trotta – We will be looking at the distribution of places of concern throughout the basin and communications with the Regional Board, if they have any specific areas for monitoring more closely, that would be a good opportunity to incorporate any hot spots.
> Furch – I am basically thinking of specific areas that I know have quality impacts now. If we look at everything in general terms, we might miss specific areas. I hope we aren't going to take a sweeping view of the basin and we miss concentrations of existing problems.

Martin – We had quite a conversation last time, we need to be careful when we characterize these groundwater quality issues, that are perhaps results that are identified from mismanagement of groundwater management, etc.

Close – Urban landscape water use demand has decreased due to Model Landscape Ordinances and turf replacement programs throughout the region.

If Advisory Committee members have additional input, please send it to Mr. Trotta so it can be incorporated and included at the July meeting.

Land Surface Subsidence

Marcus Trotta gave a status report on the SMC "land surface subsidence".

- GSAs are only responsible for managing inelastic (or unrecoverable) subsidence caused by groundwater pumping, not responsible for elastic (recoverable) subsidence nor for subsidence caused by anything other than groundwater pumping
- Available datasets do not indicate the occurrence of historical *inelastic* land surface subsidence due to groundwater pumping within the Subbasin.
- Proposed management of groundwater-levels within or above historical ranges through Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels Sustainability Indicator, makes future inelastic subsidence due to groundwater pumping unlikely.

Following Mr. Trotta's presentation, he opened the meeting up to discuss remaining questions and issues related to land surface subsidence:

- Further assess methodology and develop process for how to determine whether any potential future observed subsidence is due to groundwater pumping or other factors
- Develop range of options for establishing Undesirable Results for Board consideration with AC input

Questions/Comments Advisory Committee

Martin – I am starting to feel a little more comfortable with the proposals. Is there an inch level sensitivity this data can provide? How often would we be monitoring it to establish a trend? Is it heat sensitive? If so, the measurements should be done at a similar time each year.

> Trotta – The resolution of the measurements at a vertical direction is down to about 1/8 of an inch. I can send DWR's report about estimated error, it works out to a little over an inch. DWR looked at continuous GPS readings collected through the state and correlated the data with the InSAR data collection. One of the things we would do, even if we didn't monitor, is look at the readings being recorded by the higher-level data with what the InSAR data is recording. In reporting out, we would be doing it on an annual basis. If we were to see something, it would trigger additional analyses in terms of examining groundwater levels and additional pumping in the vicinity of subsidence. This is all new and we will have opportunities for adjustments in five-year increments going forward. We would want to set it up, so it is adaptive going forward.

Gaffney – 0.05 ft = 0.6 inches, well within the range of precision for the measurement method.

> Trotta – It was taken into consideration when setting the threshold.

Scott – Do we have an estimate of the lost storage capacity versus one inch of inelastic subsidence?

> Trotta – Hard to develop, it's a relatively small subsidence. It is important to remember that loss of storage related to subsidence is coming out of the clay aquitards. In

comparison with the sand and gravel units in the basins, they don't yield as much water. The bulk of the water in the basin is in the sand and gravel units.

Lamb – I never dealt with InSAR data before. If your resolution is .1, it is going to pop up and you will always be chasing low numbers. If the threshold is at the sensitivity level, you will possibly get a lot of false positives. Wouldn't we rather work with trends rather than fixed numbers?

Trotta – The resolution is the measurement of about an eighth of an inch.

Lamb – But your measurement of error is .1, we don't know if it is real or not. Are you getting data every month?

Trotta – The exceedance would be anything exceeding the .1. In looking at the available data sets we have; we don't see anything even approaching the .1 rate in one single year. We don't anticipate seeing that on a frequent basis in the future.

Lamb – If you see a change of .08 you would have to add the .01 measurement?

Trotta – I don't believe we would be adding anything. We would look at trends. SGMA requires looking at rate of subsidence per year.

Lamb –You would look every month?

Trotta – There is data by month, but we would report on an annual basis.

Lamb – Some weird data point could stick out like a sore thumb.

Trotta – That is why we have other conditions in the options to address that – cumulative amount and/or spatial consideration of 25 contiguous acres.

Lamb – I like option 3.

Furch – Given the proposed reduction of Russian River flows, will we be able to monitor shifts in groundwater uses and respond to them in the relatively near future?

Long – Was there a measured amount of recovery from elastic subsidence when more imported (Russian River) water and increased recycled water use occurred?

Trotta –In the future, any changes in groundwater pumping patterns related to the Russian River, would be incorporated into future projected urban water demands.

Rosenblum – I am thankful for this technical discussion. I hope we will have enough time to think about it and then proceed. I have seen numerous studies, they use GPS stations as well, there are several types of data to balance the whole picture. What about other locations within the county, GPS stations that could be added to overcome some of the questions raised by Ms. Lamb? This whole discussion is about whether groundwater causes the subsidence. If that happens, the model needs to be flexible enough to provide the confidence there is correlation between groundwater and subsidence.

Trotta – To the extent there are periodic levelling surveys we can draw from and use for comparison; it is something we would likely build in. The other data set to leverage in the future is LIDAR, that is something that can be used in the future.

Magill– We are making every effort to get information out earlier. Please send input between meetings, it helps us better prepare. Send within 10 days or so for next meeting.

Sam Magill restated the following questions and asked for input from the Advisory Committee. **PLEASE NOTE:** The results of the polls below are not conclusive, and were intended only to gauge the approximate level of comfort with each option presented by staff.

	Question	AC response
For Option 1	Does the five continuous years of any total subsidence threshold seem too short, too long, or about right?	11 yes, 0 no
For Options 2 & 3	Does the cumulative minimum threshold of more than 0.2 feet seem too low, too high or about right?	6 yes, 3 no
For Option 3	Does 25 contiguous acres (equivalent to about 10 pixels of InSAR data) sound too small, too large or about right?	9 yes, 2 no
For Option 3	Does adding the condition that the 25 contiguous acres include "developed land or infrastructure" seem appropriate?	1 yes, 7 no
	Who is comfortable with Option 1?	6 yes, 2 no
	Who is comfortable with Option 2?	4 yes, 2 no
	Who is comfortable with Option 3?	2 yes, 3 no

Questions/Comments Advisory Committee

Long – It is important we establish a trend. I am looking for a threshold that is rather large before we say we are experiencing inelastic subsidence and have a problem.

Potter – I want to echo what others said. I would rather put resources toward tracking real most urgent problems rather than small things that aren't trends long term.

Rosenblum – I agree with Ms. Lamb's point.

Lamb – The reason I like 0.2 feet, we know it has gone up/down 0.2 feet, that it was elastic. We know we can work with it. Not happy with .1 feet.

Scott – 25 acres seems on the small side as we would potentially be designating the entire basin to not meet the sustainability criteria for one small area. We may want to consider several areas, say 200 to 400 acres each, meeting the criteria to see a trend more representative of the entire basin.

Close – I am comfortable with option 1, typically to see trends you need about 5 years. It seems like a nice middle ground.

Long – Not comfortable with any of the options because of the thresholds we have been talking about.

Rosenblum – I haven't had enough time to think about it.

Anderson – Accuracy question.

Lamb – I think it would be useful to pinpoint problems at a smaller scale.

Sam Magill asked if there were additional modifications or other options for defining Undesirable Results the Advisory Committee think should be considered?

Questions/Comments Advisory Committee

Rosenblum – It is a question of correlation. Correlation to groundwater; not just InSAR data, what other data can we get from the ground level sources? What about damage, correlating subsidence to damage? Any damage such as trees falling, pipes breaking, etc.

> Magill – Are you saying even if there is subsidence that does occur, we need to determine whether real damage is occurring as a result?
> Rosenblum – I want to see damage added to the criteria.

Noren – One question related to Rohnert Park, at what point would Rohnert Park have showed subsidence with the criteria proposed? Is this an adequate tool, could we have predicted it or done something sooner?

> Magill – Great question, applying it to real-world examples.
> Trotta – With respect to damage, I am not sure with the .2 elastic subsidence, there is any damage that occurred. We believe the .2 is in the elastic range. We will need to make it clear that this is adaptive, and we will be getting more data as we analyze the InSAR data going forward, along with other conditions in the basin. Looking back could also be somewhat constructive.

Potter – Even though we go deep in the details on subsidence, we need to remember we are using five indicators at the same time. Reminder to the group, that we don't only want to look at one indicator but all of them and the interaction between all of them and prioritize resources.

Review Meeting Action Items and Discuss July Meeting Agenda

Sam Magill restated the action items and said staff would like to hear from all Advisory Committee members regarding the questions for the Community meetings.

Marcus Trotta said he would like continued feedback for the questions asked at the May Advisory Committee meeting. Send feedback to Trotta within one week to ten days after getting material from staff. Keep eye out for water draft docs before July meeting.

If there is any feedback on how to better the virtual meetings, send ideas to Sam Magill.

Furch – Great job, thank you. This is difficult material, conversations are educational.
Anderson – Appreciate your efforts, look forward to receiving information for the July meeting well in advance.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Advisory Committee Members (present)

Agricultural representative, Bob Anderson
Agricultural representative, David Long
Business representative, Joe Gaffney
City of Cotati appointee, Craig Scott
City of Santa Rosa appointee, Peter Martin
City of Sebastopol appointee, Henry Mikus
Environmental representative, Beth Lamb
Environmental representative, Rue Furch
Independent Water Systems appointee, John Rosenblum
Rural Residential representative, Marlene Soiland
Rural Residential representative, David Noren
Sonoma RCD appointee, Wayne Haydon
Town of Windsor appointee, Sandi Potter

Advisory Committee Members (absent)

City of Rohnert Park appointee, Mary Grace Pawson
County of Sonoma appointee, Mark Grismer
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria representative, Maureen Geary
Gold Ridge RCD appointee, Matt O'Connor
Sonoma County Water Agency appointee, Carolyn Dixon

Staff/Presenters

Andy Rodgers, SRP GSA Administrator
Marcus Trotta, Sonoma Water, Technical Staff
Jay Jasperse, Plan Manager
Ann DuBay, Sonoma Water
Andrea Rodriguez, Sonoma Water
Simone Peters, GSA Administrative Aide, (recorder of meeting notes)

Facilitator

Sam Magill, Sacramento State University – Consensus and Collaboration Program

Other Attendees

Elizabeth Cargay, Town of Windsor
Colin Close, City of Santa Rosa
Christopher Watt
Gina Lisa Tamayo, Jackson Family Wines
Noelle Johnson, Gold Ridge RCD