

UKIAH VALLEY BASIN  
COMMUNICATION AND  
ENGAGEMENT  
PLAN UPDATE

PREPARED FOR:

Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability  
Agency

PREPARED BY:

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**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

§	Section
Basin	Ukiah Valley Basin
CA	California
C&E	Communication and Engagement
CASGEM	California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring
CCR	California Code of Regulations
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
FSS	Facilitation Support Services
GSA and UVBGS	(Ukiah Valley Basin) Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP and UVBGSP	(Ukiah Valley Basin) Groundwater Sustainability Plan
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
MLSTEP	Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma Tribal Environmental Programs
NCRP	North Coast Resource Partnership
NCRP Needs Assessment	North Coast Resource Partnership Disadvantaged Community & Tribal Water & Wastewater Service Providers Needs Assessment Summary
C&E Plan Update	Communication and Engagement Plan Update
Plan	Communication and Engagement Plan (originally submitted with the January 2022 GSP)
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014
Stantec	Stantec Consulting Services
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TBU	Tribal Beneficial Use
UC	University of California

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN UPDATE

### 1.1 Background

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on September 16, 2014. The legislation requires local public agencies to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA)—governing bodies with the authority needed to manage their region’s water resources in a manner compliant with the requirements of SGMA—in high- and medium-priority subbasins in California. These GSAs are then required to develop and implement Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP); update those plans every five years; and achieve long-term sustainable management of their groundwater resources within a 50-year horizon.

The Ukiah Valley Basin (referred to hereinafter as “UVB” or “Basin”) (Department of Water Resources [DWR] Bulletin 118 Basin Number 1-052), was designated by DWR as a non-critically overdrafted, medium-priority subbasin. This designation required the Ukiah Valley Basin GSA (referred to hereinafter as “UVBGSA”) to submit a GSP to DWR no later than January 31, 2022. The Ukiah Valley Basin GSP (referred to hereinafter as “UVBGSP” or simply “GSP”) was submitted to DWR on January 28, 2022 and was posted on the DWR website with a 75-day public comment period between February 14 and April 30, 2022. The UVBGSP and the public comment letters received in response to it can be found online in the DWR SGMA Portal (<https://sgma.ca.gov/portal/>).

### 1.2 The Communication and Engagement Plan

The UVBGSA prepared their GSP through a publicly engaged process in accordance with GSP Emergency Regulations (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 23, Waters Sections [§]350-§358.4). §354.10 states that each plan must include a summary of information relating to notification and communication by the GSA with other agencies and interested parties. The requirements set forth in §354.10 are documented in the Communication and Engagement (C&E) Plan (Appendix 1-A to the GSP), the Public Comment Responses (Appendix 1-D to the GSP), and in this C&E Plan Update. **Table 1**, below, delineates where each set of information can be located.

**Table 1. Communication and Engagement Requirements for Groundwater Sustainability Plans**

Requirements per California Code of Regulations Section 354.10	Location in GSP
<i>(a) A description of the beneficial uses and users of groundwater in the basin, including the land uses and property interests potentially affected by the use of groundwater in the basin, the types of parties representing those interests, and the nature of consultation with those parties.</i>	C&E Plan
<i>(b) A list of public meetings at which the plan was discussed or considered by the agency.</i>	Public Comment Summary
<i>(c) Comments regarding the plan received by the agency and a summary of any responses by the agency.</i>	Public Comment Summary
<i>(d) A communication section of the plan that includes the following:</i>	
<i>(1) An explanation of the agency’s decision-making process.</i>	C&E Plan
<i>(2) Identification of opportunities for public engagement and a discussion of how public input and response will be used.</i>	C&E Plan Update

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<i>(3) A description of how the agency encourages the active involvement of diverse social, cultural and economic elements of the population within the basin.</i>	C&E Plan and C&E Plan Update
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### 1.3 The Need for a Plan Update

The UVBGSA began implementation of the GSP following the submittal of the UVBGSP to DWR in January 2022. This shift to plan implementation marks an opportunity for the GSA to consider how communication and engagement with the public will evolve to meet the interests and needs of communities in the Basin over the course of the GSP’s 20-year implementation timeline.

This C&E Plan Update does not replace the C&E Plan included in the GSP. Rather, this C&E Plan Update operates as an addendum, expanding upon the content in the original C&E Plan submitted with the GSP. Outreach and education in the implementation phase will build off the framework established in the C&E Plan and will take into consideration feedback received from various stakeholders and Tribal communities.

The purpose of the C&E Plan Update is to provide opportunities for further input, education, and engagement to address the needs and interests of beneficial users through the Basin. The C&E Plan Update provides a roadmap of potential communication and engagement activities that will support the GSA, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the consultant staff (technical or otherwise) with GSP implementation efforts.

Stantec Consulting Services Inc (Stantec) provides facilitation support to the UVBGSA through DWR’s Facilitation Support Services (FSS) Program, a publicly funded program that supports GSAs with outreach and engagement activities implemented under SGMA. This C&E Plan Update was developed by Stantec in coordination with the UVBGSA, with funding provided by the FSS Program.

## **2.0 BASIN SETTING AND OUTREACH DURING GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Groundwater Sustainability Agency Organization**

The UVBGSA was created by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to oversee GSP development and implementation within the Ukiah Valley Basin. The UVBGSA Board of Directors (referred to hereinafter as “UVBGSA Board” or simply “Board”) seeks to represent various interests within the Basin, and its membership consists of public, land use, and water agency officials along with Tribal and agricultural representatives. The TAC was convened to assist the GSA by providing input and recommendations on technical aspects of GSP implementation. Like the Board, TAC members represent a wide variety of water users within the Basin. The UVBGSA Board, with coordinated input from the TAC, serves as the decision-making body during GSP implementation.

The Board and the TAC intend to each conduct their own quarterly meetings throughout the GSP implementation process to facilitate decision-making; provide time for discussion on updates and progress on projects and management actions; and plan outreach, engagement, and education efforts. The decision-making process within the UVBGSA Board will continue to follow the process outlined in the “UVBGSA Decision-Making Process” section of the C&E Plan.

### **2.2 Beneficial Uses and Users**

See the “Stakeholders Involved in the Project” section of the C&E Plan for a full description of the beneficial uses and users of groundwater in the Ukiah Valley Basin. This C&E Plan Update identifies tools and activities to engage and consult the beneficial users of groundwater throughout the implementation of the UVBGSP. These activities are described in **Section 5**.

It is significant to note that Tribes differ from other stakeholders and beneficial users in the Basin given their sovereign government status and unique histories, rule-making procedures, and consultation policies. Tribes also have their own beneficial use category, termed “Tribal Beneficial Use” (TBU), which includes waters that support the cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, or traditional rights or life-ways of Tribes. TBUs include waters involving the non-commercial catching or gathering of natural aquatic resources for consumption by Tribal communities. The UVBGSA will bear this in mind when communicating and engaging with Tribes. Recommendations for Tribal engagement are included in **Section 4**.

### **2.3 Activities Identified in the Communications and Engagement Plan**

The “Communications Strategy” section of the C&E Plan identified a variety of potential activities and venues for engaging and soliciting input from stakeholders during the GSP development process, including:

- Public meetings of the GSA Board and Advisory Committee,
- Stakeholder interviews and/or work group meetings,
- Community or regional forums,
- Public workshops or briefings,
- On-line Zoom Meetings,
- Updates to the Mendocino County website,
- Emails and newsletters to the interested parties’ list and subscribers,
- Social media posts, and

- Mailing services such as informational brochures, advertisements, flyers, handouts, etc.

The UVBGSA also gave particular attention to the solicitation of and response to public comments throughout GSP development. Actions conducted in support this included the following efforts.

- Draft deliverables reviewed by the TAC or Board were made available to the public in advance of the meetings.
- Preliminary Draft GSP chapters were made publicly available and discussed during TAC and Board meetings.
- The draft GSP was posted on the UVBGSA website for a 40-day public review and comment period.
- Public comments on the draft GSP were summarized in the Public Comment Summary, which was included in the GSP Appendix. The Public Comment Summary communicates how public comments were considered and/or incorporated into the revised GSP.

Stakeholders and Tribal members were asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of these outreach and engagement methods as part of the interview process described in **Section 3**.

### 3.0 STAKEHOLDER AND TRIBAL INTERVIEWS

Between November 2021 and February 2022, Stantec conducted interviews with stakeholders and Tribes in the Ukiah Valley Basin to understand which outreach strategies were successful during GSP development and identify how the UVBGSA can best approach communication and engagement activities during implementation of their GSP. **Table 2** lists the agencies, organizations, and Tribes that were interviewed as part of this process. Contact information for the Tribes, agencies, and organizations was provided by the GSA.

**Table 2. Interviewees**

Stakeholder Agencies/Organizations	Tribes
California Indian Environmental Alliance	Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians
California Land Stewardship Institute	Guidiville Rancheria
City of Ukiah	Hopland Band of Pomo Indians
County of Mendocino	Pinoleville Pomo Nation
Mendocino Cannabis Alliance	Potter Valley Rancheria
Mendocino County Farm Bureau	Redwood Valley Rancheria
Mendocino County Resource Conservation District	Yokayo Tribe
North Coast Resource Partnership	
Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Committee	
Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation	
Improvement District	
Russian Riverkeeper	
Sonoma County Water Agency	
Upper Russian River Water Agency	

Interviewees were asked to reflect on:

- Their Tribe or community’s level of familiarity with groundwater and SGMA,
- Their level of involvement in the UVBGSP development process,
- Any barriers to participation they encountered,
- Implementation activities of interest to the community or Tribe, and
- Existing communication platforms, public information campaigns, or local events the UVBGSA could use to share information about GSP implementation.

### 3.1 Reasons Engagement Falls Short

There was consensus among many interviewees that the UVBGSA made a good-faith effort to communicate and engage with the public during the development of the UVBGSP. Moving into GSP implementation, the UVBGSA may consider the following factors which interviewees listed as barriers to more meaningful engagement.

Stakeholder representatives reflected that their communities generally lack knowledge about the Ukiah Valley Basin’s regional water supply, SGMA, and impacts from other regional water efforts such as curtailments issued by the State Water Resources Control Board and changes to the Potter Valley Project surface flows. In addition to these knowledge gaps, many community members shared that the GSP-related materials were far too technical for them to understand. For many, the volume of material provided for review prior to meetings presented a barrier to participation. Related to the need for greater



context, members of the public shared that they did not have a clear idea of how implementing actions of the UVBGSP would impact their community's interests and water supplies.

Communities and Tribes have many competing demands on their time and limited capacity to engage. Many stakeholders noted that the UVBGSA Board and TAC meeting times and locations made it difficult for members of their community to participate. Meetings held during business hours limit the possibility of attendance from members of the community with full-time jobs that do not compensate their participation. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings were held in-person at physical locations that were not easily accessible or preferred by some communities or Tribes. The GSA can learn more about a community's preferred meeting spaces by partnering with local organizations or agencies who work closely with them (**Section 5.1.3**). During the COVID-19 pandemic, UVBGSA transitioned to holding virtual Board and TAC meetings via Zoom. Many stakeholders expressed that the transition to virtual meetings made it easier for them to attend and recommended that meetings continue with a virtual option.

The UVBGSA webpage hosted on the broader Mendocino County website was also identified as a barrier to engagement due to difficulties accessing and navigating it. Stakeholders shared that they were unsure how to use the website to sign up for the Interested Parties list and did not know how to navigate to find sections of the UVBGSP. Interviewees also noted a lack of public-facing, Spanish-translated materials available on the website and suggested that an executive summary of the UVBGSP be translated into Spanish and made accessible on the website.

### **3.2 Improving Engagement**

Based on the interview findings, the UVBGSA may consider several methods and strategies for improving outreach and engagement efforts during UVBGSP implementation. To increase accessibility to public meetings, the UVBGSA may consider conducting an additional survey for Tribes and community members to provide their preferred meetings times and venues. Tribes, in particular, expressed a desire for separate meetings amongst UVBGSA staff and Tribal representatives, particularly on topics that are considered to have an effect on traditional or cultural rights. The overly technical content of UVBGSA public meetings should be simplified and contextualized to connect SGMA and groundwater issues to topics that communities are familiar with (e.g., drought, water affordability, water access, etc.). Providing easily digestible summaries of UVBGSP documents and meeting materials can help increase stakeholder engagement in and understanding of UVBGSA activities. Additionally, increasing UVBGSA collaboration with other regional water efforts to better coordinate outreach and engagement activities can help stakeholders better understand the Basin's regional water supply and surface-groundwater interactions.

The UVBGSA may also consider further directly engaging with trusted community and Tribal outreach partners to help craft messaging and distribute information surrounding UVBGSP implementation activities (**Tables 3 and 5**). Specific to Tribal communities, the UVBGSA may wish to engage with Tribes via regional Tribal groups or through direct engagement with Tribal environmental staff to increase Tribal participation in UVBGSP implementation (**Section 5.1.5**).

## 4.0 EVALUATING TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

In addition to what is outlined in **Section 3.1**, Tribal representatives provided input on the UVBGSAs communication practices with Tribes during UVBGSP development, which they felt was lacking. Despite this, every single Tribe interviewed as part of the C&E Plan Update expressed an interest in being involved during the UVBGSP implementation phase. The following section provides detail on the disconnect between the GSA and the Tribes during UVBGSP development and includes recommendations for how engagement efforts by the GSA can improve to better meet the needs and interests of Tribal audiences.

### 4.1.1 Engagement During Groundwater Sustainability Plan Development

The UVBGSP development process identified six Tribal governments within the Ukiah Valley Basin with interests in local groundwater management (see **Table 2**). Under Article 7 Section 7.1.2 of the UVBGSAs JPA, these Tribal governments collectively selected a Tribal Stakeholder Representative and Alternate to represent their interests on the UVBGSAs Board. At a meeting of the Tribal Stakeholders held at the Redwood Valley Rancheria on February 5, 2019, Brandi Brown from the Redwood Valley Rancheria and Sonny Elliott Jr. of the Hopland Reservation were selected to serve two-year terms as Tribal Stakeholder Representative and Alternate, respectively, on the UVBGSAs Board. Eddie Nevarez from Redwood Valley Rancheria was subsequently selected to serve as the new Tribal Stakeholder Representative at the Redwood Valley Tribal Council Meeting held February 21, 2021. No Alternate Tribal Representative was selected to serve the second term.

Under Article 11 Section 11.3 of the JPA, a Tribal Stakeholder Representative served on the TAC. Javier Silva of the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, who became involved with the UVBGSP through his work with the Yokayo Tribe, served in this role on a volunteer basis.

Information on the desired level of involvement from Tribes was gathered through an initial interview with the selected Tribal representative and through a Tribal Outreach meeting hosted on September 29, 2020.

### 4.1.2 Findings from Tribal Interviews

Tribal interviews identified several key factors as to why engagement with Tribal communities did not meet their expectations during GSP development. Like the general stakeholder group interviewees, Tribal representatives and Tribal members found the UVBGSAs meetings times and locations (for those meetings which were held in-person) to be unfavorable. Between work, community, and Tribal commitments, representatives and members of Tribal communities lacked the time to seek out and engage with UVBGSAs activities. In addition, Tribal environmental staff face similar limits on their time and capacity to engage. Due to the unfavorable meeting times and locations, this impeded Tribal representatives and members to fully participate in UVBGSAs activities as was desired.

During UVBGSP development, the UVBGSAs primarily solicited Tribal input by directly engaging the Tribal Stakeholder Representatives on the TAC and Board and through outreach conducted at broader stakeholder meetings. It was identified that the Tribal Stakeholder Representative may not have the capacity or water-specific expertise to engagement on GSP topics. For this reason, Tribes suggested a new method for the UVBGSAs to seek Tribal input through one-on-one engagement and direct correspondence with Tribal environmental staff who are subject-matter experts. Additionally, Tribal members identified a need for Tribe-to-Tribe communication with other Tribes in the Basin to discuss shared concerns or impacts surrounding UVBGSAs activities.

### **4.1.3 North Coast Resource Partnership Needs Assessment**

Stantec facilitation staff also consulted the North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) staff and reviewed the Disadvantaged Community & Tribal Water & Wastewater Service Providers Needs Assessment Summary (NCRP Needs Assessment) to identify additional considerations for Tribal engagement. The NCRP Needs Assessment surveyed water suppliers and treatment operators in both Tribal and disadvantaged communities to identify needs associated with the capacity and quality of water service providers and Tribal-run water systems across California's North Coast. While the results of the NCRP effort represent insights from the broader set of North Coast communities, findings from the Ukiah Valley Basin area and findings relevant to groundwater issues are summarized below.

In relation to groundwater, findings from the NCRP Needs Assessment focus on toxicant and contaminant issues which may impact Tribal Federal, State, and Fee lands. The NCRP Needs Assessment references several North Coast Tribes which are unable to utilize Tribal groundwater wells due to pollution from adjacent landfills and industry sites. The contaminant issues referenced were similarly heard from Tribal members within the Ukiah Valley Basin through the C&E Plan Update interviews. Tribal members also expressed interest with regards to groundwater well monitoring as a form of Tribal involvement in GSP implementation. To address toxicant and contaminant issues experienced by Tribes and to meet the desire of Tribal members to be involved in monitoring efforts, the UVBGSAs may prioritize coordinating with and soliciting input from Tribes when considering projects and management actions that relate to groundwater monitoring within the Basin.

## **5.0 COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

GSP implementation consists of management and administration activities, continued groundwater monitoring and implementation of projects and management actions, and outreach and education efforts. Per California Water Code §10728 and §10733.8, respectively, GSAs are expected to submit annual reports to DWR depicting their progress toward achieving sustainability using their GSP(s) as a road map and must make updates to their GSP(s) every five years according to that progress. DWR will review the five-year GSP updates to assess the GSA's implementation of their GSPs thus far as well as their measurable progress towards achieving the sustainability goals defined in the GSP. Outreach activities outlined in the UVBGSP include:

- Maintenance of the UVBGSA webpage,
- Continued online and social media presence,
- Community meetings,
- Workshops,
- Public events,
- Electronic newsletters,
- Informational surveys,
- Coordinated outreach to diverse communities in the Basin, and
- Development of brochures and print materials.

This section draws on the findings of the interviews to provide tools, activities, and strategies the UVBGSA may employ to establish and maintain awareness and understanding of SGMA and the UVBGSP implementation process among specific stakeholder groups. Many of the methods and tactics described in this section can be made successful by utilizing and leveraging partnerships with trusted Tribal and community-based organizations. These partnerships can provide access to communication outlets and events which can enhance the stakeholder communication and engagement process during GSP implementation.

### **5.1 Outreach Activities**

The C&E Plan details a variety of public outreach activities which may be continued during UVBGSP implementation to inform, engage, and respond to stakeholders and other interested parties. Additionally, the interviews provide valuable insight on adjustments to current outreach activities and venues for new outreach activities which may enhance stakeholder engagement. These activities can promote interaction between UVBGSA staff, community, and Tribal members to assist in collecting information important to GSP implementation. Possible outreach venues identified in the C&E Plan include public meetings with UVBGSA staff, stakeholder interviews and workgroups, community or regional forums, public workshops and briefings, digital venues, and mailing services. In addition to these venues, stakeholders identified various local organizations, communication platforms, and local events which the UVBGSA may utilize as pathways for sharing information related to UVBGSP implementation. These activities and venues are further described below.

Communication and engagement activities may be promoted through the outreach tools listed in **Section 5.2**. Some stakeholders and interested parties may require specific engagement activities and outreach efforts, as described in **Section 5.3**. Engagement strategies specific to Tribal communities have been identified in **Section 3.2**.

### **5.1.1 Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee Meetings**

UVBGSA Board and TAC members intend to meet quarterly throughout the UVBGSP implementation process. Similar to the meeting structure during UVBGSP development, these meetings will be open to the public and are designed to encourage participation and questions from community members on UVBGSP implementation activities. Meeting minutes and agendas will be posted on the UVBGSA website to maintain Ralph M. Brown Act public noticing requirements. Board and TAC quarterly meetings are an important engagement activity outlined in the UVBGSP and provide regular opportunities for UVBGSA staff and technical consultants to share progress and solicit stakeholder feedback on projects and management actions.

Per feedback shared during the interviews, the UVBGSA may consider changing the times and/or locations of meetings to ensure that meetings are accessible to a larger audience. Stakeholders indicated that meetings held during business hours were particularly difficult to attend due to work-related obligations. Additionally, certain meeting venues such as county buildings were not preferred by some community members. Holding meetings at convenient times and in “neutral” spaces or facilities that are already familiar to community or Tribal members can encourage attendance and participation in UVBGSA activities.

### **5.1.2 Public Workshops and Forums**

Public workshops and forums are identified in UVBGSP as important communication and engagement activities during implementation. The UVBGSA intends to hold at least one public workshop per year to provide updates and gather input on topics such as the Annual Report, monitoring activities, and project implementation.

Stakeholders and Tribal members expressed their limited capacity for engagement in all GSP related activities. The UVBGSA may consider holding targeted public workshops that are either specific to a particular region or community or focused on a localized project or management action. With a more tailored approach, the UVBGSA can maximize engagement on the activities of greatest interest and impact to communities and Tribes, which include:

- Interconnected surface waters,
- Monitoring efforts and efforts to address data gaps,
- Fees or rate increases,
- Prioritization of projects and management actions,
- Tribal beneficial uses of groundwater, and
- Impacts of water availability and permitting restrictions on housing and economic development, particularly for Tribes.

The format of each workshop may be adapted according to the workshop content, feedback from stakeholders, and changing conditions in the Basin. During periods when state and local ordinances limit or prohibit in-person gatherings, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, workshops may be held using virtual collaboration platforms (e.g., Zoom, GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar, Microsoft Teams; to date, Zoom has been the virtual platform used for Board and TAC meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic). The UVBGSA has the option and has been in recent times recording virtual and in-person workshops and meetings and posting the recordings on the UVBGSA website and the Mendocino County YouTube page for public viewing. This tactic allows those unable to attend—either due to scheduling conflicts or health

and safety concerns—to have the ability to stay informed about UVBGSP implementation activities.

### **5.1.3 Partnerships with Local Organizations and Tribes**

The UVBGSA may partner with trusted local community organizations and Tribal partners to facilitate communication and engagement efforts throughout the Basin and to broaden the scope of stakeholder engagement and dissemination of SGMA and UVBGSP information. Organizations and Tribes can partner with the UVBGSA to distribute information about public meetings, plan community or Tribal meetings on projects and management actions, share UVBGSP-related materials online or in newsletters, and assist with review of outreach and educational materials.

During GSP development, the UVBGSA partnered with the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (RCD) and Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District on topics of drought and other regional water issues. These partnerships included the shared distribution of drought-related resources and educational materials. The UVBGSA has also worked with the Farm Bureau to conduct outreach to farmers. Members of the UVBGSA Board have similarly engaged with the Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Committee on drought matters.

**Table 3** lists organizations which have been identified by stakeholders and Tribal members as potential partners which may facilitate connections between the UVBGSA and community and Tribal members within the Basin. Of these, the Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District, RCD, Farm Bureau, Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Committee, Cannabis Alliance, Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma Tribal Environmental Programs (MLSTEP), and NCRP have all expressed interest in partnering with the GSA on engagement.

**Table 3. Potential Partnering Organizations**

California Human Development Corporation	North Coast Resource Partnership*
Catholic Charities USA	Redwood Valley Elementary School
California Land Stewardship Institute Fish	environmental education program
Friendly Farming Program	Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory
Climate Action Mendocino	Committee
Community colleges' water conservation,	Redwood Valley County Water District Board
landscaping, sustainability courses and	Rotary Club of Ukiah
faculty	Russian River Drought Response Group
Consolidated Tribal Health Project*	Russian River Flood Control & Water
Clear Lake Environmental Research Center*	Conservation Improvement District
Homeless service providers	University of California (UC) Climate
Indian Health Center*	Stewards through UC California Naturalist
Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory	Program
Committee	UC Master Gardeners Program through UC
Mendocino County Resource Conservation	Cooperative Extension
District	Ukiah High School MESA program and
Mendocino Cannabis Alliance	Environmental Club
Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma Tribal	Upper Russian River Water Managers Group
Environmental Programs*	Vecinos en Accion

*\*Specific to Tribal engagement*

By initiating and leveraging partnerships with these organizations, the UVBGSA can build trust and rapport with communities and Tribes. The UVBGSA may identify additional partners for engagement throughout the course of UVBGSP implementation and with feedback from community and Tribal members.

### **5.1.4 Existing Community Events**

The interview process also yielded recommendations for local events, **Table 4**, which the UVBGSA should consider engaging with. These events can serve as opportunities to disseminate information on SGMA, groundwater, and UVBGSP implementation news and activities while also thoughtfully engaging with Tribal and community members in venues familiar to them.

**Table 4. Local Events**

Annual Big Time* hosted by local Tribes	Inter-Tribal Environmental Youth Campout*
Cannabis industry events	Kids in the Creek hosted by Hopland
Car races	Rancheria*
Earth Day celebrations	Pumpkin Fest in downtown Ukiah
Fry Bread Cookoff at Alex Thomas Plaza in Ukiah*	River clean-ups hosted by Russian Riverkeeper and Pacific Outfitters
Hopland Tribal Health Fair*	Rodeos
Ice rink	Ukiah farmers markets

*\*Specific to Tribal engagement*

Multiple Tribes mentioned partnering with the UVBGSA to share information about the UVBGSP at the Annual Big Time. Additional events may be identified throughout the UVBGSP implementation process with feedback from stakeholders and other interested parties.

### **5.1.5 Tribal Environmental Staff**

One key finding specific to Tribal engagement was the preference by some Tribes for outreach to be directed towards and facilitated through Tribal environmental departments and staff; although, it is important to note that not all Tribes have the ability to be engaged this way and their capacities vary. UVBGSA staff seeking Tribal input on matters related to the UVBGSP should connect, first and foremost, with Tribal EPA Directors and Water Resource Managers. Tribal staff are connected to Tribal decision-makers as well as Tribal communities and also possess technical knowledge related to groundwater management. Developing relationships with Tribal staff can enhance overall Tribal knowledge on GSA activities and improve GSA communication and engagement efforts. Through the interview process, a more robust and updated Tribal contact list was developed. The UVBGSA may want to maintain this list similar to the interested parties database and use the Tribal contact list as a way to share information with Tribes more regularly.

The UVBGSA staff may collaborate with Tribal environmental staff to help disseminate information surrounding SGMA, groundwater, GSA implementation activities, and notices of upcoming meetings and workshops. Additionally, the UVBGSA may wish to participate in MLSTEP meetings where Tribal environmental staff from across the region meet monthly to share resources and receive information on environmental topics affecting Tribal communities within Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma Counties.

High-level findings from the interviews were presented to Tribal members for feedback at the MLSTEP meeting on May 24, 2022. During this meeting, Tribal members expressed that the review of relevant GSA documents by one Tribal representative on the UVBGSA Board and TAC was insufficient to fully represent Tribal interests. Tribal members indicated a desire for more thorough involvement of Tribal members in the review of UVBGSP documents and UVBGSP implementation activities that are considered to have an effect on traditional or cultural resources. The UVBGSA may build additional steps into the UVBGSP implementation outreach process to provide updates more regularly to MLSTEP and address and incorporate the feedback shared by Tribes.

## **5.2 Outreach Tools**

This section describes the suite of tools the UVBGSA has developed, plans to develop, or may develop to disseminate information to the public and engage stakeholders in implementation of the GSP. The UVBGSA intends to utilize a combination of these tools to engage with and inform an array of stakeholders and Tribes on SGMA and groundwater topics. The materials discussed in this section may be translated into non-English languages, especially Spanish, on an as-needed basis to ensure that information is accessible to all stakeholders.

The stakeholder interviews found that many members of the community had difficulty tracking the volume of information distributed. The UVBGSA may consider focusing outreach efforts to provide material that is most relevant to Tribal and community member interests, such as:

- Impacts of proposed GSP actions,
- Interconnectivity of surface and groundwater,
- Education on SGMA and regional water supply (e.g., Russian River flow depletions and Potter Valley Project),
- Groundwater management in the context of climate change and extended drought, and
- Groundwater and surface water impacts from cannabis growing.

The UVBGSA can leverage existing outreach channels to distribute this information. See **Tables 4 and 5** for communication platforms and local events suggested by interviewees as pathways for sharing information.

### **5.2.1 Website and Social Media Outlets**

The GSP Plan Implementation section outlines the GSA website and social media outreach as important communication and engagement activities. The UVBGSA has developed and maintains a website with the purpose of informing stakeholders and other interested parties on GSP development and implementation. The website (<https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/affiliated-agencies/ukiah-valley-basin-gsa>) provides an overview of the UVBGSA and contains relevant meeting materials and GSP information. Using the website, interested parties can subscribe to the UVBGSA e-notification system to receive important updates on upcoming TAC and Board meetings and GSP implementation activities.

During interviews, stakeholders and Tribal members shared concerns surrounding the accessibility of the GSA website. Many stakeholders and Tribes noted that the SGMA and GSA materials were difficult to access from the Mendocino County website and recommended the development of a separate website specific to the GSA and SGMA.

To better engage with community and Tribal members across a wide variety of platforms, the GSA may also develop materials and posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube.



Social media content can be another form of promoting SGMA and groundwater education within the Basin and serve as another venue for public communication and engagement. In addition to leveraging the UVBGSA website and UVBGSA social media, the GSA may consider distributing materials to trusted outreach partners who can share information on their organization's social media platforms.

### **5.2.2 Interested Parties List**

California Water Code §10723.8 requires GSAs to “establish and maintain a list of persons interested in receiving notices regarding plan preparation, meeting announcements, and availability of draft plans, maps, and other relevant documents.” As part of initial GSP development, the UVBGSA developed an interested parties list comprised of individuals, organizations, agencies, and Tribes which have expressed interest or may express interest in GSP development and groundwater management within the Ukiah Valley Basin. The interested parties list is utilized for the purpose of informing stakeholders and other interested parties on upcoming meetings, agenda materials, workshops, and other general announcements related to GSP implementation. Individuals, organizations, or agencies who wish to be added to the interested parties list may do so by contacting the GSA administrator listed on the UVBGSA website.

### **5.2.3 E-notifications and Newsletter**

As outlined in the UVBGSP, electronic notifications and newsletters will be a prioritized communication and engagement activity during GSP implementation. The UVBGSA has developed an e-notification system to alert interested parties about upcoming meetings, workshops, engagement events, and general GSP implementation activities. Stakeholders expressed a desire for more advance notice with regards to meetings and activities conducted by the GSA along with more information surrounding SGMA, local water supply, and groundwater management. With this preference in mind, the UVBGSA may maintain a UVBGSA Newsletter to keep interested parties informed on upcoming UVBGSP implementation activities, meetings, and opportunities for public engagement along with general SGMA and local water news. This newsletter can be sent out periodically or on an as-needed basis to keep stakeholders up to date on UVBGSP implementation activities.

### **5.2.4 Informational Materials**

The creation of informational materials as a stakeholder communication and engagement activity during GSP implementation is identified in the UVBGSP. The UVBGSA may also develop informational materials such as printed brochures, posters, fact sheets, or news releases. These easily digestible materials can serve as a form of promoting general water education within the Basin and familiarizing the general public with groundwater topics which may be technical in nature. Informational materials can also help relate key groundwater topics to other issues which are of interest to the community such as climate change, drought, or local water supply reliability. These informational materials may be placed at key locations such as libraries, farmers markets, or community centers (see **Table 4** above) to help reach the broadest audience. Additionally, translated materials may be made available to aid in reaching members across diverse communities.

### **5.2.5 Local Communication Platforms**

Several local communication platforms exist which may be utilized by the UVBGSA throughout GSP implementation. **Table 5** lists the platforms which have been identified by stakeholders and Tribal members through the interviews as venues which community and Tribal members currently engage and are familiar with. By utilizing these platforms, the UVBGSA can promote stakeholder participation and

engagement by informing interested parties of SGMA and GSA news through channels which they recognize.

**Table 5. Local Communication Platforms**

Alma Latina music show on KZYZ.org radio	Periodico Al Punto (Spanish newspaper)
County press releases to local papers	Press Democrat
Door-to-door advertisement/flyer dispersal	Reports to the Board of Supervisors
KZYZ Mendocino County public broadcasting	Redwood Valley Corner Store
Mendo Fever blog	Redwood Valley Grange
Mendocino County website	Russian River Flood Control District Newsletter
Mendocino County RCD newsletter	Ukiah Daily Journal
Mendocino Voice	Utility bills
Municipal Advisory Committee meetings	

Additional communication platforms may be identified by stakeholders, interested parties, or the UVBGSAs over the course of UVBGSP implementation activities.

### 5.3 Targeted Stakeholder Engagement

General stakeholder engagement strategies described above may prove successful for many community members and interested parties within the Basin, but the UVBGSAs may seek to address outreach gaps through targeted messaging and communication aimed at selected stakeholder groups. Stakeholders and interested parties which could benefit from this selected outreach include agricultural water users, cannabis growers, Spanish-language communities, and Tribes (see **Section 4**), in addition to other groups which may be identified throughout the UVBGSP implementation process. These groups may have been underrepresented during GSP development and could benefit from specific engagement strategies adjusted to their needs.

#### 5.3.1 Agricultural Water Users

Agriculture plays a vital role in the Ukiah Valley Basin, and groundwater resources are essential to maintaining this industry. Engaging agricultural water users will be key to the success of GSP implementation. In addition to competing demands on time and pressing responsibilities, members of the agricultural community may be unable to attend and participate in general public meetings or outreach activities. With these constraints in mind, the UVBGSAs may host workshops specifically aimed at informing agricultural water users on SGMA and groundwater topics as they relate to the agricultural industry. These workshops can be held at times and locations which are most convenient to members of the agricultural community. Additionally, GSA involvement with the Mendocino County Farm Bureau could encourage agricultural participation in GSA activities. The Mendocino County Farm Bureau sends out quarterly newsletters and monthly e-letters to agricultural community members—a communication outlet which the GSA may engage in its outreach efforts.

During the interview process, agricultural stakeholders pointed out the generational gap which exists between younger and older farmers in the Ukiah Valley Basin. While younger farmers may be easier to engage on groundwater topics due to pre-existing familiarity with SGMA and digital communication outlets, older farmers possess valuable historical knowledge on groundwater conditions within the Basin. Utilizing this knowledge can be beneficial for sustainable management practices within the Basin and can greatly enhance GSP implementation activities. To address this outreach gap, the UVBGSAs may

prioritize the distribution and mailing of printed materials or may seek to directly engage with farmers at in-person events such as the Ukiah farmers' market.

### **5.3.2 Cannabis Growers**

A common concern shared in interviews relates to the impact of cannabis grows on local water availability. To ascertain more information on water-use practices during cannabis production, the UVBGSA may prioritize engaging and opening communication channels with cannabis growers. The Mendocino County Cannabis Alliance is an organization which supports cannabis cultivators and businesses through sustainable economic development, education, and public policy initiatives. The GSA may engage the Alliance to reach out to cannabis growers throughout the Ukiah Valley Basin and share information on GSA and GSP implementation activities and gather information on cannabis groundwater use. Additionally, local cannabis industry events can serve as opportunities to meet with cannabis growers at familiar venues and exchange information about SGMA, groundwater, and cannabis cultivation practices.

### **5.3.3 Spanish-language Communities**

Many of the outreach tools and materials described in this C&E Plan Update may be translated into Spanish to reach Spanish-language communities which reside within the Basin. Additionally, stakeholders have identified local partners and communication outlets which the UVBGSA may draw upon to improve outreach and engagement efforts to Spanish-language communities. Spanish newspapers, radio shows, and community actions groups have all been suggested as potential pathways for engaging with Spanish-language communities in the Ukiah Valley Basin.

## 6.0 ADAPTIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The UVBGSA intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the C&E Plan Update periodically throughout the course of UVBGSP implementation activities. During GSP development, the GSA used the following questions to identify strengths and weaknesses in the approach to stakeholder and interested party engagement. The language of these questions has been modified to reflect the GSP implementation phase:

- Is there a shared understanding of the GSP's goals and its implementation timeline?
- Are stakeholders educated about the GSP implementation process and their own role?
- Do diverse stakeholders feel included?
- Has there been behavior changes related to the program goals? Or are improved trust/relationships evident among participants?
- Has the updated C&E Plan been implemented?
- Has the interested parties' list been expanded?
- Have there been well-attended and robust public meetings at all of the necessary junctures?
- Are all established venues for stakeholders open and effective?
- Are there formal mechanisms to assess outcomes and make improvements?

The UVBGSA may continue to use and build upon these outlined questions over the course of UVBGSP implementation to encourage timely review and evaluation of engagement strategies.