



# UKIAH VALLEY BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

340 Lake Mendocino Dr. ♦ Ukiah ♦ California 95482 ♦ (707)463-4363 ♦ fax (707)463-5474

## Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

1:00 P.M. – Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Mendocino County Department of Transportation

340 Lake Mendocino Drive, Ukiah CA, 95482

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

### Supporting Documents:

- October 13, 2021 Agenda
- September 9, 2021 Minutes Summary

### Meeting Summary

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

TAC Members Present: Elizabeth Salomone, Ken Todd, Laurel Marcus, James Linderman, Sean White, Don Seymour

Absent: Mike Webster, Javier Silvia, Levi Paulin

All Others Present: Kristin Pringle, Amber Fisetto, Bree Klotter, Devon Jones, Jim Sullivan, Monty Larson, Dominic Guterrez, Amir Mani, Laura Foglia, Sam Sandoval, Chantal Simonpietri, Michael Harrigan

Meeting Called to order at 1:02 PM

#### 2. Approval of Meeting Summary from the September 9, 2021 Meeting

Committee Action: Motion to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2021 TAC Meeting, Call for approval by James Linderman, Motion made by Beth Salomone, Seconded by Ken Todd. Motion carries unanimously to approve meeting summary from September 9, 2021 meeting.

#### 3. Open Forum Discussion Regarding Groundwater Sustainability Plan Comments

Presenter(s): Laurel, Amir

*HCM, Public Outreach, and Engagement*

- a. *No comments from TAC*

*Identify and Consider Beneficial Users of Basin*

- b. Amir suggested adding description of beneficial users in the basin to the Communication & Engagement Plan
- c. Discussion on comment regarding considering beneficial users of surface water (SW).



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- i. Sean White (City of Ukiah) - Don't know if we saw the documented impact on SW. I have an interest on protecting both sides (groundwater [GW] users and SW users).
  1. Amir - To clarify, this is in response to how we are defining undesirable results. We can include impacts to beneficial users of SW as part of the undesirable results.
  2. Laura - We looked at impacts to fish and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE)
- ii. Samuel Solis (UC Davis)
  1. This basin is different. GDEs are mostly present during summer. In this case, summer flows are documented because of releases from the reservoir.
  2. With regards to disadvantaged communities (DAC), I suggest noting upfront that this is not an over drafted basin. Domestic wells will suffer the same consequences as other wells we are monitoring. I feel like that this comment is relevant to other basins, but not Ukiah.
- d. Discussion on comment regarding identification of potential GDEs.
  - i. Amir - The letter from non-governmental organizations (NGO) wanted us to include more GDEs. Also objected to the criteria that we used to identify GDEs.
    1. Our process was to create groundwater elevation map. We then intersected the groundwater elevation map with a natural resources community map. If a natural resource community had access to GW at least 50% of the time based on its root zone , it was considered it a GDE. We looked at both wet and dry cycles.
    2. NGO letter objected to 50% threshold. Argued that if a natural resource community uses groundwater at all, it should be considered a GDE.
    3. LWA's recommendation is to add back some of the GDEs as potential GDEs and commit to monitoring.
  - ii. Laura - Also recommend using satellite data to verify potential GDEs.
  - iii. Laurel (California Land Stewardship Institute) - Did the letter suggest an alternative method? It sounds like they are defining anything that uses groundwater as a GDE.
    1. Amir - [in response to Laurel] We did what the guidebook suggested.
  - iv. Samuel -
    1. Anything that has potential should be included as a GDE.
    2. The main stem is varied in size. In some places, it's is draining water throughout the basin.
    3. We should ask are the roots of the trees left without water because of the channel incision in the main stem or are they impacted by the groundwater basin?
    4. Ok with leaving some communities as GDEs and monitor them.
  - v. Stephen Maples (Sonoma Water) - Asked Samuel if he was speaking conceptually about the effects of incision in the river. It seems like you [Samuel] are implying the SW is increasing GW levels. In the modeling results, I see that there is an exchange of GW in both directions depending on the season.
    1. Samuel - During summer, there are augmented flows from Lake Mendocino and Coyote Valley down. In this case, the GW levels have been artificially raised during the summer because of the releases. It changes depending on the season.
    2. Stephen - Advocating that we acknowledge that there are a lot of exchanges in both directions. Considering the impacts on surface water is important. Would like to see the comment.
    3. Amir - Noted that currently we only have data for spring and fall. Don't have data for summer and winter; that's a data gap. During implementation, we can monitor for summer and winter.



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- vi. Elizabeth Salomone (Russian River Flood Control District) asked what the additional monitoring work would include and whether the work is part of the existing monitoring
  - 1. Amir - It would be having more groundwater elevation data. Refining the model with the groundwater elevation. The model could then be used to refine estimates.
- vii. Elizabeth - Noted that the TAC didn't have sufficient time to review the comments and proposed comment responses. The group will discuss the comments and proposed responses next week after they have time to review the materials more closely.
- e. Comment on managed wetlands
  - i. Elizabeth - Suggested having the Resource Conservation District weigh-in
- f. Comment on climate change in water budget
  - i. Elizabeth - Do you believe that these comments were made that there wasn't enough clarity?
    - 1. Amir - Yes, believe that providing the water budget appendix will provide clarity. Also suggest including some of the information in the appendix in the GSP chapter.
- g. Discussion on comment regarding adding a project and management action (PMA) and timeline for conducting additional climate change scenarios
  - i. Amir - We used two of DWR's climate change scenarios. The commenter wants the GSA to look at additional climate change scenarios. LWA recommends adding a PMA to conduct additional climate change scenarios after the model is calibrated.
  - ii. Devon Jones (Mendocino County Farm Bureau) - Is this consistent what you are seeing in your basins?
    - 1. Laura - Yes, this is the same comment as other basins has gotten.
  - iii. Devon - Can you expand on what we would be agreeing to? Worried about what we are going to sign ourselves up for the next five years.
    - 1. Elizabeth clarified that the proposed response it to add as a PMA, but not necessarily to have it done by the five-year update.
    - 2. Laura suggested doing something by the five-year GSP update and then having a revised evaluation by the 10-year update.
- h. Discussion on comment regarding setting sustainable management criteria (SMC) for naturally occurring constituents of concerns (COC)
  - i. Amir - We are monitoring for five COCs; however, we are only setting SMC for two. The other three COCs are naturally occurring and already over the limit. The commenter suggested setting SMCs for the three naturally occurring COCs. LWA is recommending keeping as-is.
    - 1. Devon, Sean, and James agreed with Amir's recommendation.
- i. Discussion on comment regarding cumulative water quality impacts to DACs and tribes.
  - i. Elizabeth - Suggested if the tribes raise a comment on this topic, discuss further.
- j. Discussion on comment regarding GW pumping impacts to juvenile salmon and steelhead
  - i. Amir - We suggest adding a firm implementation plan for filling data gaps to fisheries by including an implementation schedule for filling data gaps.
  - ii. Elizabeth - Asked for clarification on what filling the data gaps would require and the anticipated additional level of effort.
    - 1. Amir - Most of it is what would be included as part of the regular monitoring network.
    - 2. Laura - Suggest making a refined implementation table for next year. Describe the monitoring plan by quarter.
    - 3. Elizabeth - What I'm hearing is more clarity in the plan, but it won't require additional monitoring?



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- iii. Devon - Did they [the commenter] offer any proposed scope? Does it include monitoring tributaries? I want to make sure the monitoring we are doing is practical and provides useful information.
- iv. Laurel - I agree with Laura. There are so many things that affect flow in these tributaries and GW pumping is not necessarily the main one. We wouldn't want to commit to one thing, like GW pumping, to study this. So the less we commit to the better.
- k.** Discussion on comments regarding SMC for interconnected surface water (ISW)
  - i. Amir - Don't have enough data on ISWs. Modeled impacts, but model is imperfect based to lack of data. [Explained how the SMC was set. ]Commenter saying that the SMC is not protective and questioned use of drought year. Proposed response is to keep SMC as is. Comments valid due to data gaps; however, have adaptive management in place.
  - ii. Stephen Maples - Wanted to touch on our [Sonoma Water] comment. We are glad to see the consistency between the Sonoma County basins and Ukiah Valley Basins. We looked back at our Sonoma Valley wells where there was continuous data. We did an analysis of CASGEM vs well data. Margin more in the order 2.5 - 5%. Our comment was to bring that closer what we have observed in our basin. We appreciate the approach in consistency between the two basins.
  - iii. Devon - Is DWR recognizing that there isn't a one-size-fits all approach to agreeing what is being suggested?
    - 1. Dominic (DWR) - If you look at the comment letters we put out so far, we provide input on some of these topics
- l.** Discussion on comment regarding representative monitoring points (RMP)
  - i. Amir - The reason we only have 3 RMPs is because we don't have additional wells that can be included as an RMP. Recommend adding a PMA to drill new wells that will become a RMP.
  - ii. Elizabeth - Are you saying that new wells will need a couple of years before that can become RMPs? Is there an additional cost to committing to this PMA?
    - 1. Laura - We needed wells that have a long enough history to capture droughts and multiple types of water years.
  - iii. Devon - What is involved and the goal of biological monitoring?
    - 1. Amir - It's for GDEs. Will need to double check the guidelines. Basically, you pick a few vegetation species and see how healthy they are.
  - iv. Sean - For what we are doing here, establishing any type of causation to an observation is impossible. Statistically linking impacts of GDEs to groundwater is beyond the scope of what we can do as part of this program. There are a lot of factors that could impact the health of the vegetation outside of groundwater pumping.
  - v. Jim Sullivan - I know Sonoma County and Ukiah have high-capacity wells that could impact natural communities. That is something that should be investigated and looked at. There is potential for impacts from high-capacity wells to GDEs.
- m.** Discussion on PMAs.
  - i. Elizabeth - I need more time to digest this.
- n. ACTION ITEMS**
  - i. Elizabeth requested more clarity on what commitment to implementation would look like.
  - ii. Laura and Amir to send out presentation slides and link to comment letters on GSA website.
  - iii. TAC members to review items that LWA is looking for direction on and come ready to discuss next week.



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#### **4. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda**

This time is reserved for the public to address the Committee about matters not on the agenda and within the jurisdiction of the Advisory Committee. Persons wishing to speak on specific agenda items should do so at the time specified for those items.

#### **5. Adjournment**

Meeting Adjourned at 2:55 PM

DRAFT