

MEETING MINUTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Eastern Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin January 21, 2021

A SPECIAL meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Eastern Management Area (EMA) in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin was held on Thursday, January 21, 2021. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency and Governor Newsom's Executive Orders to protect public health by issuing shelter-in-home standards, limiting public gatherings, and requiring social distancing, this meeting occurred solely via teleconference as authorized by and in furtherance of Executive Order Nos. N-29-20 and N-33-20 and in accordance with Santa Barbara County Health Office Order 2020-12.11.

EMA GSA Committee Members Present: Meighan Dietenhofer (Acting as Alternate), Mark Infanti, Brad Joos, Brett Marymee

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

Others Present: Steve Anderson, Jeff Barry (GSI Water Solutions), Doug Circle, Maygan Cline (Geosyntec), Sam Cohen, Tim Gorham, Mary Heyden, Gay Infanti, CJ Jackson, Stewart Johnston, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Jim McCord (IRP Water), Kevin Merrill, Tim Nicely (GSI), Anita Regmi (DWR), Steve Slack (CDFW), plus 8 other members of the public whose names were not registered.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

GSA Committee Member Marymee called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked Mr. Buelow to call roll. Three GSA Committee Members were present and GSA Committee Member Dietenhofer acted as Alternate for Supervisor Hartmann. Mr. Buelow welcomed a new GSA Committee Member representing the City of Solvang, Mr. Mark Infanti, newly elected City Councilman for the City of Solvang.

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

Mr. Buelow announced names of phone attendees.

Mr. Buelow reviewed history of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements and what has been completed so far in the Santa Ynez River Basin including: the creation of the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Basin (EMA, CMA, WMA), coordinating efforts between the eight agencies participating in the three GSAs, establishing a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) in each of the Management Areas of the Basin, and achieving certain milestones in developing the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). The GSPs are due in January 2022. Thus far, the EMA GSA Committee has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, a Data

Management Plan, and a Draft Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model including Groundwater Conditions, which is currently open for public review and comment through February 15, 2021. All documents are accessible on SantaYnezWater.org.

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

No additions or deletions were made.

IV. Public Comment

Mr. CJ Jackson expressed concern with the current state of local media and the need to ensure getting word out about these SGMA efforts due to recent changes in local media. He encouraged the GSA Committee to repeat past press releases or expand on them for a healthy and robust engagement with the public.

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

Mr. Jeff Barry (GSI Water Solutions) and Mr. Jim McCord (IRP Water) presented information on the “Numeric Groundwater Model” for the EMA GSA. Mr. Barry informed the GSA Committee that the Water Budget will not be presented tonight although is on the Agenda. Additional work is being performed on that analysis and it will be presented at a future meeting.

Public comment, GSA Committee Member discussion, and follow-up from the consultants and staff followed the presentation.

- GSA Committee Member Brett Marymee asked for clarification on the following:
 - What is represented by the Y-axis scale on slide 4? Mr. McCord (IRP Water) explained the scale and that the thickest part is 3,000 feet.
 - Regarding slide 7, does the model fidelity account for differences based on the wet/dry seasons experienced in the Santa Ynez Valley? Mr. McCord responded that he would address that issue in slide 13 and that models are set up in monthly periods to honor seasonality and variability.
 - He asked if there exists a state model in comparison to our area and asked about relative confidence in the model fidelity. Mr. McCord responded that basin characterization performed by USGS was helpful, so we did not need to create a new estimation.
 - He expressed concern about recent fires east and south of the EMA and asked if the fires have temporarily changed the surface and whether fire retardant may have entered the surface and sub-surface areas of the basin; are these matters that can be seen or modeled in the EMA. Mr. McCord responded that this model does not do surface water hydrology or contaminant transport. Mr. Buelow emphasized that SGMA does not mandate GSAs to remediate water quality, particularly those unrelated to groundwater pumping, and that other agencies are tasked with that. Mr. van der Linden explained that wastewater treatment plants have been ordered by

the state to monitor for fire retardants like PFAS and are required to provide that data to the state.

- He asked if slide 19 provides enough data points to consider. Mr. McCord responded that the 15-year period shown is limited to a smaller time period only for doing calibration. However, the final model will be based on a 38-year period (1981-2018).
- GSA Committee Member Brad Joos asked for clarification on the following:
 - What is the confidence level for this model? Mr. McCord stated he will elaborate on model calibration and confidence in later slides. He clarified that the indication of 97% accuracy is for water levels on average over a large time scale (39 wells for 15 years).
 - Are there outflows of groundwater that are attributed to fault lines or other underground drainage to other Management Areas other than CMA? Mr. McCord stated that so far, the model is not indicating outflows elsewhere, only to the CMA and production wells in the basin. The baseline fault is being simulated currently. Mr. Barry indicated that the consultants do not see evidence of flow between the EMA and San Antonio Basin.
 - Has the model ever been shown to be defensible in a court of law since we know the EMA GSP must be defensible in a court of law? Mr. McCord assured that the model is currently being created and is not ready yet but should be robust enough to hold up in court. He has presented models in court before. Mr. Barry advised that the consultants are using best available practices and models.
- Matt van der Linden stated that the preliminary calibration margin of error at 3.7% is good. Mr. McCord agreed and indicated that more work is being done to model water flows. He does not anticipate a better percentage than 3.7%
- GSA Committee Member Mark Infanti asked why water quality is not shown in this model. Mr. McCord advised that this model does not include water quality. The Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model does discuss baseline water quality as required by SGMA.
- Kevin Merrill asked when the CAG will meet again to go over these documents as they are the liaisons with community. Mr. Buelow responded that staff will be setting up a EMA CAG meeting to review the Draft HCM within the next few weeks.
- Anita Regmi (DWR) clarified the groundwater flow model review process at DWR. DWR has a groundwater flow model review team on staff that will review the numeric groundwater flow model. Mr. Buelow stated that we are using one of DWR's approved models (Mod-flow USG). Ms. Regmi reiterated that DWR is not looking for a perfect Groundwater Sustainability Plan without data gaps or a perfect model without errors and to remember that this is just the first step in the process.
- Mr. Buelow stated today's presentation is available to download on SantaYnezWater.org.

- GSA Committee Member Marymee requested that the images on slide 18 be broken out into separate slides for easier reading. Mr. McCord said he would do that and create an addendum to the presentation for posting on the website.

VI. Next EMA GSA Meeting: Thursday, February 25, 2021, 6:30 PM, via Teleconference

GSA Committee Member Marymee announced that the next EMA GSA Committee Meeting will be a Regular Meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2021, 6:30 PM. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it will be held via video and teleconference.

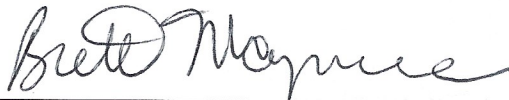
VII. EMA GSA Committee requests and comments

EMA GSA Committee Members thanked Mr. Jeff Barry and Mr. Jim McCord for an excellent and thorough presentation.


Mr. Buelow encouraged all who have not done so already to sign up as an Interested Party to receive email notices, download the two newsletters, review the Draft HCM, and provide public comments via the portal.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, GSA Committee Member Marymee adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.



Brett Marymee, Chairman


William J. Buelow, Secretary