

# MEETING MINUTES

## Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Eastern Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin March 24, 2022

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, March 24, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, this meeting occurred solely via teleconference as recommended by Santa Barbara County Public Health, as authorized by State Assembly Bill 361, and Resolution EMA-2021-001 (passed on 10/21/2021, reaffirmed 2/24/2022).

EMA GSA Committee Members Present: Cynthia Allen (Acting Alternate), Joan Hartmann, Mark Infanti, and Brad Joos

EMA GSA Alternate Committee Members Present: Meighan Dietenhofer

Member Agency Staff Present: Jose Acosta, Bill Buelow, Marliez Diaz, Paeter Garcia, Amber Thompson, Kevin Walsh, and Matt Young

Others Present: Steve Anderson, Jeff Barry (GSI Water Solutions), Bryan Bondy, Sam Cohen, Tim Gorham, Mary Heyden, Gay Infanti, Curtis Lawler, Brian Macy, Tim Nicely (GSI Water Solutions) and Bruce Wales

### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

EMA GSA Committee Vice-Chair Brad Joos called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and asked Mr. Buelow to call roll. Three EMA GSA Committee Members and one Acting Alternate were present providing a quorum plus one EMA GSA Alternate Committee Member also present.

Mr. Buelow welcomed and introduced Ms. Marliez Diaz, a new staff member with the Santa Barbara County Water Agency who was hired to assist with SGMA matters in the County.

### **II. Consider findings under Government Code section 54953(e)(3) to authorize continuing teleconference meetings under Resolution EMA-2021-001**

Mr. Buelow explained that the reasonings for State Assembly Bill 361 and adoption of Resolution EMA-2021-001, passed on October 21, 2021, and reaffirmed on February 24, 2022, which authorized teleconference public meetings were still in effect. There was no discussion.

EMA GSA Committee Member Mark Infanti made a MOTION to authorize continuing teleconference meetings under Resolution EMA-2021-001. EMA GSA Committee Member Joan Hartmann seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**III. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

No additions or deletions were made.

**IV. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**V. Receive Draft First Annual Report for the Eastern Management Area of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (EMA AR)**

Mr. Tim Nicely and Mr. Jeff Barry, GSI Water Solutions, presented a summary and review of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin – Eastern Management Area First Annual Report (2019-2021), dated March 21, 2022. He stated that the Annual Report documents that no undesirable results were found in the EMA for Water Years 2019 through 2021. The Annual Report provides a summary of groundwater extractions, surface water supply, total water use, and change in groundwater in storage of each water year. It summarizes data collected through September 2021 and describes progress towards implementing the GSP.

Mr. Nicely reported that additional monitoring wells in the EMA GSA are needed. Discussion followed. Mr. Matt Young advised that Santa Barbara County Water Agency staff have been working on securing additional wells for the monitoring network. Mr. Bryan Bondy, on behalf of the Santa Ynez Water Group, offered to seek assistance from landowner members of the Water Group to fill the need. Mr. Nicely will send a Data-Gap map to Mr. Bondy.

GSA Committee Member Joan Hartmann made a MOTION to accept the First Annual Report, as presented and submit the report to DWR. GSA Committee Member Mark Infanti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**VI. Discuss and consider requesting staff to develop well registration and metering program for EMA**

Mr. Buelow introduced the GSP implementation tasks of well registration and metering programs. He advised that although the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (District) has a well registration program, a large area of the EMA GSA lies outside of the District's jurisdiction, the Santa Barbara County Water Agency staff offered to review the measure and meter requirements in California, and with approval from the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, developed the Well Monitoring Assistance Program (WMAAP) providing funding to offset up to \$500 of the equipment cost of qualifying water meters.

Discussion followed. Ms. Diaz explained the rebate program and the eligibility rules including that the GSA must encourage or require metering. Mr. Young and Mr. Buelow both emphasized the importance of consistency in technical meter and installation requirements across all three GSAs within the Basin and provide a clear, smooth transition with costs defrayed. EMA GSA Committee Vice-Chair Brad Joos asked that the CAG be engaged in the process. Mr. Buelow suggested the CAG provide input on the proposed rules and requirements prior to implementation. EMA GSA Committee Member Joan Hartmann clarified that County staff has offered to do research on what other counties across the state require. Mr. Young further clarified that the intent of County staff is to compile data points with staff from the three management areas and bring back options and recommendations for the Committee to discuss and perhaps implement.

EMA GSA Committee Vice-Chair Brad Joos made a MOTION requesting staff to research well metering technical requirements, develop a well registration and metering program and return to the Committee with options and recommendations. GSA Committee Member Joan Hartmann seconded the motion. the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Discussion continued regarding the involvement of the CAG.

## **VII. Update and discussion on future governance**

Mr. Buelow reported that staff and attorneys from all eight basin-wide member agencies have participated together in a few meetings, attorneys from all eight member agencies have met separately and each GSA staff and attorney groups have also met together to discuss future governance. He reported that EMA member agency staff together with respective legal counsel are working on a draft Joint Powers Agreement, concepts on interim cost sharing and comparison of costs for different future governance model options. The future governance model options take into consideration direction and suggestions received from the GSA Committee and CAGs including to keep away from top-heavy organization, keep costs low for the constituents, consider where costs can be shared among the three GSAs while maintain local control of implementation of the GSPs.

Discussion followed. EMA GSA Committee Vice-Chair Brad Joos emphasized that the future governance plan should be fair and equitable, non-biased, inclusive, transparent, and non-disenfranchised. CAG member Mary Heyden requested consideration for a direct Agriculture representative seat on the future governance board. Mr. Steve Anderson, legal counsel for ID No. 1 and part of the attorney group working on a JPA agreement toward for future governance, advised of the need for direction from the Committee as to representation seats on the Board, voting structure, and cost sharing.

## **VIII. Next Regular EMA GSA Meeting, Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.**

Mr. Buelow announced the next regular EMA GSA meeting will be Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 6:30 p.m., either in person at the Santa Ynez Community Services District

Conference Room or via Zoom. The details will be determined closer to the meeting date based on continuing health concerns presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**IX. EMA GSA Committee requests and comments**

Mr. Buelow showed the press release regarding the Santa Ynez Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plans Approved written and submitted by County staff that was published in the Santa Ynez Star, March 15, 2022 edition.

**X. Adjournment**

EMA GSA Committee Vice-Chair Brad Joos adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

  
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Brett Marymee, Chairman

  
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William J. Buelow, Secretary