

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management  
**Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting**  
Meeting Summary

January 24, 2023, 3:00 – 5:00 P.M.  
Held online via Zoom

**Action Items:**

- The September meeting minutes will be revised per Charnna Gilmore's comment and Matt will upload to the Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) website. Matt will also include the PowerPoint presentation slides from the meeting.
- Larry Walker and Associates (LWA) will share a draft version of the Annual Report by the end of February, for Advisory Committee members to review and provide comments.
- Matt Parker will make the Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) data factsheets prepared by California Department of Water Resources (DWR) available to those interested in accessing them.
- Crystal Robinson and Janae Scruggs will follow up with others at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) about the high priority spawning survey.

**Attachments/Links:**

- PowerPoint Presentation Slides (attached)

**Attendees:** see last page

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

**1. Call to Order, Introductions, Agenda Review, and Virtual Meeting Structure**

Facilitator Marisa Perez-Reyes reviewed virtual meeting guidelines. Chair Tom Menne convened the meeting and conducted a roll call of Advisory Committee (AC) Members, establishing quorum (see Attendance on last page). Tom also reviewed the meeting agenda.

**2. Approval of Past Meeting Summary, Notice of 2023 Meeting Schedule and Formats**

Charnna Gilmore requested adding a note on page 6 of the September 2022 meeting minutes to clarify that no action was taken in response to her question about establishing a Watermaster for the entirety of the Scott Valley basin.

Charnna motioned to accept the previous meeting minutes pending the correction and Michael Stapleton seconded. The September 2022 Meeting Summary was approved and will be posted to the [Siskiyou County SGMA Website](#).

Marisa shared the dates and format for Scott Valley Advisory Committee meetings anticipated to be held in 2023 which include:

- April 25 – in person only
- July 25 – online only
- October 24 – in person only

Marisa explained that the reason for the alternating in-person/virtual format is to save on staff budget and reduce travel time for AC members. Tom Menne solicited input from the Committee about their preferred meeting format:

- Tom, Michael, Charnna, and Theo Johnson all requested that meetings continue to be held fully in-person without a virtual option.
- Amanda Cooper noted that she will not be able to attend the April meeting in person and expressed interest in a hybrid option for in-person meetings.
- Matt Parker (Distract staff) shared his perspective that hybrid meetings are the least desirable of the three options.

District staff will take Committee responses into consideration when planning the April AC meeting.

**3. Public Comment Period**

Members of the public were invited to provide comments unrelated to meeting agenda items. No public comments were shared.

**4. District Staff Updates**

Matt Parker shared updates from the GSA on the following items:

- Advisory Committee Terms and Roles:

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- Given Crystal Robinson's transition to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Tribal seat occupied by the Quartz Valley Indian Reservation is open. The application period will be open between February 15 and March 15. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the GSA Board in early April.
- Chair and Vice-Chairs will be playing a more active role in conducting these meetings, moving forward. Both roles will be confirmed at the April meeting. Chairs will be given the opportunity to continue in their role, otherwise they will go through a nomination process.
- The Board will review a draft well permitting guidelines at their February 7 meeting.
  - This will be the first time that members of the public as well as the Advisory Committee will have the opportunity to weigh in. Depending on the feedback received during that meeting, the Board may direct the Advisory Committee and GSA staff to review the guidelines and provide feedback.
  - Matt will send the Board materials to the SGMA email list on the Friday preceding the Board meeting.
- DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Implementation Grant
  - Matt provided an overview of the components which were included in the DWR SGM implementation grant application. He touched on the difficulties with identifying components that were that would be competitive for funding given the limited funding available and a lack of clear direction on how DWR will prioritize funding. He noted that activities undertaken now could be reimbursed if they fall within one of the approved grant components.
  - Pat Vellines (DWR) shared information about the applications that DWR received for the grant funds:
    - There were 82 applicants of the potential 94 basins that could have applied, one of which was deemed ineligible. \$200 million is currently available and \$780 million was requested. DWR is hoping that SB 170 could add an additional \$60 million to the total amount available, therefore, they will wait until the end of the legislative session when the state budget is approved to list the final awards (possibly August or September).
    - There are at least 4 rounds of review conducted internally, including review by DWR's Financial Assistance Branch in April. Draft grant awards won't be released until June. There will be a public comment period on the draft awards. Following that, internal notifications occur and the final awards won't be released until at least October 2023.
    - This round prioritized funding for non-critically overdrafted basins, which includes Siskiyou.
  - Michael Stapleton asked clarifying questions about the component prioritization determination process.
    - Matt responded that the options were discussed at the September meeting and the Advisory Committee had the opportunity to provide comment on the prioritization of the components via email in November.
  - Michael reiterated the comment he sent along to Matt during the prioritization process, when he suggested swapping Components 6 and 7. He is concerned there won't be enough water for recharge under Component 6.
    - Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates, responded with reasoning for why Component 6 was prioritized, which include the fact that it's a smaller funding request and that the project component included sufficient details to be shovel ready.
    - Theo added that activities are already underway for ditch infiltration, working with Chris and the Resource Conservation District in the Barker Ditch area. The ban on leaky ditches was lifted for a short period of time and although it was reinstated yesterday, they are working to secure a Local Cooperative Solution (LCS) exemption under which they could continue to use the ditches this winter. The LCS includes monitoring to assess the affects on infiltration.

#### **5. Update on Preparations for the Annual Report**

Laura Foglia shared updates on preparations for the Annual Report to be submitted in April 2023 and provided an overview of hydrological conditions and basin modeling efforts. See attached PowerPoint slides. Highlights included:

- Overview of contents of Annual Report, which include:
  - GSA progress in GSP implementation (including AC meetings)
  - Data collected from the monitoring network
  - Groundwater extractions, surface water supply, total water use and changes in groundwater storage
- Hydrographs showing groundwater elevations through September 2022. The hydrographs include the upper and lower measurable objectives, soft triggers, and minimum threshold metrics. In general, groundwater level trends are in a good range. Some wells are missing data, and LWA is looking into it.
  - Laura noted that impacts from the recent storms in early 2023 will be reflected in next year's Annual Report.

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- In response to Crystal's question, Laura clarified that the measurements are typically taken twice a year at the end of March and end of October.
- Crystal also asked how the technical team is incorporating continuous monitoring data. Laura replied that they are using the continuous data to ground truth their other measurements, which have matched so far.

A draft version of the Annual Report will be distributed to the Advisory Committee for comments in February. The final version will be submitted by April 1.

Pat Vellines added that the DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Office (SGMO) is observing a lot of variation in Annual Reports submitted across the state, so DWR is preparing an Annual Report guidance document that will be coming out later this year that can be used for the 2024 Annual Reports.

## **6. Committee Member Updates and Discussion**

Pat shared updates about DWR's GSP determinations:

- DWR is staggering their GSP review and notifications, releasing determinations in batches. The basins which submitted one GSP to cover the entire basin are likely to be included in the first batch.
- Pat's sense is that determinations will be made this summer and that unless a plan has significant issues that warrant an incomplete determination, DWR is likely to provide conditional approvals, with corrections to be made in the GSP Five-Year Updates.

Michael Stapleton asked Pat if recent state budget deficits will impinge on the funds available under the SGM grant. Pat replied no, the \$200 million is already dedicated. DWR will know by August or September about whether the additional SB 170 funds of \$60 million are available.

Tom Menne asked Laura whether the Annual Report would reflect the big shifts in agricultural equipment usage (particularly, greater use of pivots), as well as the 30% reduction in groundwater pumping LCS plans enacted last year.

- Laura replied that the model needs to be updated, and the team hopes to engage the Advisory Committee next year to identify where changes in irrigation type have occurred and 30% reductions enacted, so they can make relevant updates to the maps and models.
- Tom expressed the urgency of ensuring that actions that've been taken be reflected in the current conditions.
- For the Annual Report next year, Laura will send maps to the group with a request to collect updated information.

Tom Menne asked about whether the curtailments affect recharge projects.

- Benjamin McCovery, Engineering Geologist from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWB) Division of Water Rights, oversees permitting for Scott Valley. He shared that the recharge project is not impacted by the curtailments in effect. The curtailment is more restrictive on usage related to livestock. SVID has a 1916 standard water license that is specifically related to livestock stock watering and will be affected, as opposed to this recharge project.
- Sari Sommarstrom noted that the LCS Plans for 30% groundwater reduction are available on the State Water Board website and they include documentation of acreage changes and maps. She also noted that the increased usage of pivots is visible in recent updates to Google map views.
  - LCS Plan link:  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water\\_issues/programs/drought/scott\\_shasta\\_rivers/ilcs.html#theListCooperative](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/scott_shasta_rivers/ilcs.html#theListCooperative)
  - Tom Menne commented that the Google map images have not all been updated, to reflect every new pivot.

Tom Jopson agreed with Tom Menne's comments, emphasizing the hope that folks can get credit for the work that's been done. His second comment was that getting permits is very difficult and frequently the opportunities have passed by the time the permits are granted. He highlighted the threat of this to the success of future recharge projects. Tom also asked Matt to share updates about other groundwater-related projects the County is pursuing, outside the GSA, particularly the High Mountain Lakes project.

- Matt shared high-level updates about High Mountain Lakes project which is proceeding outside the SGMA process and was a Board-initiated effort. Matt noted that he was not aware of other groundwater-related projects being pursued outside of the DWR SGM proposal.
- Matt and Laura added that National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funding secured by the Coalition of the Willing helped support the SVID project.

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Theo agreed with Tom Jopson's points and circled back to Sari's comments in the chat about making use of the resources on the State Water Board website. Theo clarified that the basin is not in a curtailment status right now, rather, it's a ban on inefficient irrigation in the form of restrictions on using leaky ditches.

Laura shared that they don't plan to update the groundwater model yet. They are waiting for the activity to be funded under the grant.

Charnna asked for follow-up about the NRCS feasibility studies for reservoirs on Wildcat and Noyes Valley Creek which were approved during a December 2022 meeting.

- Matt responded that the Siskiyou County Farm Bureau is interested in using the PL 566 USDA Watershed Planning program. The Farm Bureau asked the County Board of Supervisors if they would support as partners, to which they agreed and provided a letter of support, however, they also had a lot of questions for the Farm Bureau about the goals of the program. Matt recommends reaching out to Ryan Walker from the Farm Bureau for more information about the status of those feasibility studies.

Michael asked for additional details about the High Mountain Lakes project.

- Matt replied it's in early stages and he doesn't have much to share, but he did offer to share more about this and the other projects at the next meeting.
- Sari Sommarstrom added information in the chat: DWR Study in 1991 assessed the High Mountain Lakes option and found - at most - a potential of 3,500 acre-feet but most lakes were in Congressionally designated Wilderness Areas and had lots of challenges. DWR recommended against pursuing the option as there were better ones, SVID recharge project proposes to add 5,400 acre-feet.

Benjamin McCoverly provided information about the history of permitting for SVID:

- The first permit request was submitted in 2016. Another permit request was issued in 2017 but it was cancelled because it was not sufficient. Last year's 2021 permit built on the 2016 submission, including the addition of a tracer isotope study and biological and flow measurement monitoring.
- The big hold-up last year was related to issues with the US Forest Service (USFS) concurrence and the lack of a comprehensive monitoring plan which troubled CDFW.
- The hold-ups are different this year. The summary report did not reflect the terms of last year's permit and pointed to illegal diversions for stock water ditches, and lack of adherence to the monitoring plan. They have since worked through these issues. Janae Scruggs from CDFW added details about the concerns CDFW fielded from environmental and Tribal groups about ensuring that measures for fish and wildlife protections were in place.

Benjamin provided information about how to best time the permit applications to guarantee they'll be granted:

- Benjamin noted that they get the highest volume of applications 1-2 months in advance of diversion season, but it takes about 4 months to effectively execute a permit. An expedited timeline is 3 months.
- From a timing perspective, submission of permit applications in July is the safest bet.

Given the extent of work that has gone into granting the past permits, Benjamin suggested that if SVID files for another permit next year he anticipates it would be a much faster process.

Laura clarified that the permit is effective for January 1 through March 31, so they can't use it for a November or December storm. Benjamin noted that the diversion season is set by CDFW.

Tom Menne asked if CDFW, SWB, or DWR are planning to add staff to address the increased demand for permits.

- On SWB's side, they are hiring new people, but Benjamin noted that the volume of permits is immense, and he is doubtful that it will get better over time. Permit renewal is the cheapest type of application.
- Pat Vellines was not aware if DWR was planning to get more staff to help with permitting but noted that she could ask SGMO staff if they are planning to hire. She also noted that once GSP reviews are done, DWR SGMO staff may have more staffing available to shift and support other groups.
- CDFW shared that they were recently able to hire a water rights coordinator, who was in the field out in Scott Valley today.

## **7. Other Agency Updates**

Aside from the updates she shared earlier about the SGM implementation grant and the status of GSP reviews, Pat Vellines shared that the Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) survey data factsheets for the Scott and Shasta Valleys are

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available. She has sent them to Matt. Pat also noted that she plans to retire this summer and a new DWR regional coordinator may be present with her at the April meeting.

Chris Watt, Regional Water Quality Control Board, shared new regulatory items:

- The Regional Board readopted the low threat waiver of discharge permits and added a category for Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR) projects. The streamlined approach includes a monitoring element and allows the Regional State Water Board to ensure Flood-MAR projects don't have unintended consequences.
- Benjamin requested being kept in the loop about Regional Board updates.
- They have coordinated with the ditch group. Theo thanked Eli and the Regional Board group for the pressure transducers they are using.

Theo asked Janae for an update on the spawning survey. Neither Janae nor Crystal had information, though Crystal noted that she brings it up frequently and agrees that it needs to be done as soon as possible. They indicated that they would follow up on this after the meeting to identify whose plate it's on.

Erin Ragazzi, SWB, echoed Theo's earlier comments that there are no curtailments currently in effect. The SWB had temporarily suspended the regulations which prevented use of stock water ditches. Those suspensions are back in place now. They've received a lot of interest and questions from people about putting those conditions back in place. The SWB is monitoring conditions and considering readopting the emergency regulations. Erin noted that readoption of the emergency regs is dependent on the drought proclamation being in place, and there are CEQA implications.

Tom Jopson asked for information about Flood-MAR. Marisa shared high-level information and provided the contact information for Jenny Marr at DWR: [Jennifer.marr@water.ca.gov](mailto:Jennifer.marr@water.ca.gov)

- Pat added the link to the Flood-MAR page of the DWR website: <https://water.ca.gov/programs/all-programs/flood-mar>

## **8. Closing, Next Steps**

Marisa shared about the Board Workshop on Strategic Planning for SGMA, to be held on February 7. The meeting will be in person at the Board of Supervisors Chambers in Yreka with the option to join virtually. The Workshop will seek direction from the GSA Board on the development of a Multi-Basin Management Strategy Document, including a discussion of results from stakeholder assessment interviews and the draft Strategy Document vision statement, goals, and strategies. There will be a second workshop to discuss specific tactics or actions.

The next AC meeting will be held in person on Tuesday April 25. Additional information (including whether a virtual option will be offered) will be distributed closer to the date. Topics for future meetings include:

- Additional information about the High Mountains Lake project.

## **9. Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned by 5:00 P.M.

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**MEETING PARTICIPANTS:**

Advisory Committee Members Present:

Tom Menne  
Amanda Cooper  
Charnna Gilmore  
Michael Stapleton  
Theo Johnson  
Tom Jopson

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Brandon Fawaz  
Jim Morris

Agency Staff and Members of the Public:

Benjamin McCovery, Division of Water Rights  
Chris Watt, Regional Water Board  
Bonnie Bennett, Quartz Valley Indian Reservation  
Crystal Robinson, CDFW  
Eli Scott, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Erin Ragazzi, State Water Board  
James Patterson, NRCS  
Janae Scruggs, CDFW  
Pat Vellines, DWR  
Sari Sommarstrom  
Zack Zwahlen  
Leah Easley, Scott-Shasta Watermaster District

Project Team:

Matt Parker, GSA staff  
Marisa Perez-Reyes, Stantec  
Emily Finnegan, Stantec  
Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates  
Bill Rice, Larry Walker and Associates  
Kelsey McNeill, Larry Walker and Associates