

**Siskiyou County Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Shasta Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
SUMMARY**

Meeting date/time: June 23, 2021, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Location: Hybrid Meeting

In Person: LTC Conference Room, 190 Greenhorn Road, Yreka, California 96032

Virtual Online Zoom Platform: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83552127020>

Key contacts:

- Matt Parker, County Natural Resources Specialist, mparker@co.siskiyou.ca.us 530.842.8019
- Katie Duncan, Stantec Consulting – Facilitator. katie.duncan@stantec.com 916-418-8245
- Laura Foglia PhD, U.C. Davis Technical Team Lead, lfoglia@ucdavis.edu 530.219.5692

MEETING RECAP

- **Approval of Past Meeting Summary.** The committee approved its May meeting summary for posting on the Siskiyou County Website.
- **Public Comment:** Public comments provided below.
- **District Staff and Other Announcements:** Matt Parker provided an update on the revised schedule. Pat Vellines provided a brief update from DWR, regarding the recent GSP Assessment reviews.
- **Presentation on Updated Fee Study and Economic Analysis:** Josue Medellin-Azuara presented a preliminary economic analysis based on potential land use changes.
- **Discussion of Surface Water Depletion Sustainable Management Criteria:** The Advisory Committee discussed the proposed Minimum Threshold and Measurable Objective for the Interconnected Surface Water SMC.
- **Discussion of Project and Management Actions and GSP Chapter 4:** The Facilitator briefly introduced slides discussing proposed changes to the PMA Chapter.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Status/Deadline</i>
Revise May meeting minutes to add the qualifier requested by the Advisory Committee.	Facilitator	June
Technical team will follow-up to learn more about agreements to protect the use of data associated with voluntary groundwater metering in other basins.	Technical Team	June
Technical team will follow up with Bonny Nichols to obtain PDFs of the data she referenced.	Technical Team	June
Review the proposed revisions to the PMAs on the slides posted to the website and draft any recommended changes by the next meeting.	Advisory Committee	June
Follow up with Ginger Sammito to answer her question about carbofuran testing.	Matt Parker/Facilitator	June

View [Siskiyou County's groundwater website](#) for posted meeting materials.

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Call to Order, Agenda Review and Hybrid Meeting Platform

The Facilitator thanked all for joining, reviewed the hybrid in-person/virtual meeting platform procedures, indicated that quorum had been reached and called the meeting to order. The Facilitator then reviewed the meeting agenda.

Review of Past Meeting Summary

The Facilitator obtained consent from the Advisory Committee to post the May meeting notes to the County's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Website after noting a change to the meeting notes requested by an Advisory Committee member.

Review Action Items

The Facilitator reviewed action items and provided updates regarding progress toward their completion.

Public Comment Period

One attendee suggested that the cost burden of adding monitoring stations should center on heavy water users.

Ginger Sammito asked whether groundwater will be tested for carbofuran as a preventative measure in the Big Springs Lake area or other potential artesian areas. The Facilitator indicated they would follow up with her after the meeting.

Ginger Sammito also asked about pumping well source data.

The Facilitator fielded a question about whether the fee study would inform the GSP.

District Staff Updates and Other Announcements

Matt Parker provided an update about the schedule: An Advisory Committee meeting has been added in July to obtain final review and recommendation from the Committee for the Board to release a public draft at the August 3rd Board Meeting.

Pat Vellines from DWR noted that four Critically Overdrafted Basins GSPs have been reviewed and DWR's review is posted on the [online portal](#). Letters were issued to the GSAs for whom the GSPs were not adopted; DWR is scheduling one-on-ones with them to bring them into alignment. Pat suggests looking over the reviews that are posted online. The Facilitator advised showing the work in the GSP and noted that statements made need to be backed up. DWR noted that it is okay if there are data gaps; they do not expect the plans to be perfect.

Presentation on Updated Fee Study and Economic Analysis

Josue Medellin-Azuara of UC Merced presented an economic analysis of the Scott, Shasta, and Butte Valleys for four land use change scenarios: 15%, 30%, and 60% retirement of alfalfa and pasture, as well as 33% reduction of alfalfa harvest (foregoing the third alfalfa cutting).

One attendee asked whether the model considered the property tax consequences of changing land use at this scale. The property tax classifications have a huge impact on the county budget,

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since agriculture is the “biggest source of tax revenue” in Siskiyou. If the land goes out of production, then it changes the value of the land.

A participant observed that this analysis represents a good start, but that there are many factors that are unaccounted for.

Grant Johnson noted that it is important to think about the impacts to salmon fisheries if groundwater extraction is not controlled. He shared that the Shasta River historically accounted for approximately half of the chinook run. The fishery took a hit of approximately \$100 million when it was shut down, some years back. Agriculture isn't the only industry that has taken financial hits.

One participant expressed frustration that “no one has been able to” attribute a dollar value of water for fish. They noted that “we have spent \$80 million rehabilitating the river” and there have never been fewer fish, therefore “we must be doing something wrong.”

Steven Mains noted that under the scenario shown in the analysis, fewer than 10 cfs would be added back to surface flow, which “isn't much of an impact.” He expressed the belief that the challenges Shasta Valley faces are societal issues. He suggests distributing the cost burden of implementing solutions across sectors. Clarification: The intent of this comment was to note that most costs need to be borne at regional and national levels.

Grant Johnson noted that fisheries have been strong allies with farmers, in bringing grant money to the table that is mutually beneficial (for example, increasing water efficiency saves growers pumping costs and keeps water in the river, helping the bottom line).

One attendee commented on the impacts to water and wildlife of the illegal marijuana grows in the valley.

One participant referenced the possibility of compensating farmers to grow less during drought years.

Michael Speiss requested clarification about Scenario 4's acreage reduction.

An attendee asked how this analysis fits in with SGMA. They shared the belief that the valley is roughly at equilibrium between water pumping and recharge. The GSA has the authority to maintain interconnected surface waters for ecological and agricultural resources, but it does not have the legal authority to apportion that water, once it's back in the ground/river. How does this analysis fit in?

Laura explained that it is a side analysis, but also a requirement of SGMA to evaluate each sustainability indicator and find the best possible approach for the subbasin. The fee study will be useful when PMAs are evaluated and compared. This analysis is important when doing a cost-benefit analysis during implementation.

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Laura noted that there are many more cascade effects that need to be incorporated into the cost modeling and that this analysis likely underestimates the economic impacts of the actions described.

An attendee noted that there are institutional barriers to making changes. They also suggested that similar to the various drought-relief programs that compensate farmers, fisheries might also be compensated.

Discussion of Surface Water Depletion Sustainable Management Criteria

The Facilitator summarized the past month's ad hoc meeting discussions. A few of the items that would be discussed with the larger Advisory Committee are the importance and GSP's commitment of addressing data gaps, the urgency to take action on stream depletion, and clarification around implementation authority. Laura Foglia presented considerations of how comments received on the surface water SMC have been considered and where the plan addresses the comments.

Laura noted that many of the comments the technical team received were related to monitoring. She noted that if the GSP recommends collection of additional data, it needs to explicitly state why and how the data will be used. The team is going to go back through the GSP and add adequate detail to clarify how the data will improve the group's understanding of the valley's hydraulic system.

Laura addressed the confusion in the comments between adding monitoring points and adding Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs), which may be attributed to discussion around "representative monitoring points." Those monitoring points are not the full, comprehensive data set. There is not enough history at some of the data points for the technical team to be able to use them for the model yet. The team does not feel that they need to add more SMCs, but more monitoring points may be necessary. Representative monitoring points are the ones that need to be reported to DWR annually.

One attendee shared their concern over the hypothetical situation where the flood control district may eventually make monitoring a mandatory requirement for growers.

A participant noted that ultimately, the interconnected surface waters for fish and farmers can't be protected if the subbasin doesn't have enough data. Perhaps the GSP needs to say that data gap needs to be addressed, otherwise we really only have estimates.

The water budget is based on the best available science, however, it was acknowledged that there is limited information about how much water is going to illegal cannabis. Down the line, the team hopes to have that data, but for now, it can only be estimated.

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There are historic wells that aren't on the database. One PMA is to inventory wells on a voluntary basis at this point. The County plans to start in a nonobtrusive way because they don't have the resources to pursue it otherwise.

Discussion of voluntary monitoring or metering program as another PMA. Similarly, it would start on a voluntary basis.

Some of the committee expressed concern that if the metering isn't mandatory, they won't get the data necessary. Matt Parker responded by saying the Board will not support mandatory metering.

The Facilitator noted that when new wells are permitted, they are not required to have a meter attached.

The Committee discussed how the flood control district could communicate the consequences of not collecting the data to the growers. The messaging could follow along the lines of: we need your help and input to manage this groundwater resource because if we don't have accurate data, there's the potential for much bigger risks.

Matt suggested that such messaging could be conveyed via memo rather than through the GSP.

The Facilitator posed the question: Is the agricultural community willing to look at data collection as a way to protect their interests? The group went around the table and shared the pros and cons of such data collection, from multiple perspectives.

Pat Vellines of DWR reminded the group that there are grants available to upgrade meters.

One attendee expressed concern that demands may escalate (i.e., if agricultural growers say yes to this, it may be harder to say no later). If the GSP can't ask for mandatory metering now, the group could look into educating the public now in an effort to reduce potential pushback further down the road, say in five years. The attendee recommends including an education action in the GSP.

Ginger Sammito asked whether the Advisory Committee could draw up an agreement that assures the monitoring data would only be used for the GSP and not other programs? The Facilitator directed the question to Laura, who indicated that she would double-check to see how other regions have done it.

An attendee warned that installing meters transfers power and that taxes are likely to follow.

Bonny Nichols shared maps and data in the comments. She has made numerous maps for studies using Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) data and National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) data and you can clearly see where the largest quantities of water are being used and where, surface or groundwater throughout the Klamath basin. It is easy to see

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groundwater versus surface water users. It's all public data on a database from satellite imagery. The data can be accessed through ArcGIS pro, and Bonny can make pdf maps.

Pat Vellines shared that if anyone wants to determine whether a well location has a permit, they can call Siskiyou County Environmental Health at 530-841-2100. They can also report unlicensed activity using the following link: [Reporting Unlicensed Activity \(ca.gov\)](https://www.siskiyou.ca.gov/Reporting-Unlicensed-Activity)

Information about well permitting can be found here: [Well Permit Application \(siskiyou.ca.us\)](https://www.siskiyou.ca.us/Well-Permit-Application)

Dave Webb shared that given the likely hurdles, it seems likely the team will need to adopt a hybrid approach, with some wells and fields tied to groundwater volume monitoring, and most of the rest based on remote sensing, with the monitored fields and wells serving to validate the remote sensed areas.

An attendee noted that monitoring in real-time offers a better picture than periodic sampling.

Another participant seconded the hybrid model suggestion. Laura confirmed that well data would be used to groundtruth the model.

Laura reviewed the river transect slide of the presentation. The data, encoded by Davids Engineering, will be attached in the GSP appendix.

An attendee noted that this monitoring should be included as a management action, to encourage continued funding to refine the model.

Interconnected Surface Water SMC Minimum Threshold

Laura indicated which gages were used in the analysis and proposed SRM and Dwinnell. Proposed Minimum Threshold: 100 cfs; Proposed Trigger: 115 cfs; Proposed Measurable Objective: 145 cfs. Note that the plan doesn't fail if the threshold is violated in one bad year.

A participant asked whether the plan would include a provision that details the exact actions that would be triggered, should the flow hit a certain level? Laura confirmed that the plan would want to lay out those actions.

An attendee shared concern that if the Flood Control District doesn't take action, there will be consequences in the form of the state "coming in and dealing with" it. The plan may need to be clearer about what the specific actions would be, should the MT be crossed.

An attendee noted that TNC collected flow data at the water wheel from 2013-2020. That data was considered when the model was created, but it's not analogous, since they only had one point, rather one on both sides of the river.

Note the actions proposed by the technical team hinge largely on the five-year check point.

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An attendee commented that if resolving the groundwater challenge is such an important priority, the state and federal government should allocate the appropriate amount of funding to support implementation, rather than laying the burden on landowners.

Recommendation that the plan include clear language to establish that the SMC will be updated based on the five-year datapoint.

Consensus around including language in the beginning of the GSP that lays out the intention to address the data gap and broadly acknowledge the limits of the plan.

Recognition that consistency in Advisory Committee in the long-term would be valuable. Are there term limits for Advisory Committee members? Probably something that needs to be sorted out in the charter.

Given the data gaps and complexity of the basin, an attendee shared they aren't sure they can sign off on something now which "we know is likely to be inadequate." If the Committee kicks decisions down the road five years, they need to also lay out what will happen in the next five years.

An attendee suggested establishing actions tied to what the Committee learns in the next five years.

Laura noted that feasibility studies for individual actions still needs to be conducted as part of implementation of the plan.

Laura asked the Committee if they had concerns about the SMC or if there is information that's not there that would prevent a recommendation. This discussion will continue during the July Advisory Committee Meeting.

Some concern regarding the "live" nature of the plan; how are we actually held to our milestones, if we can just change our targets later?

Discussion of Project and Management Actions and GSP Chapter 4

The Facilitator reviewed the slides that she is going to post on the website, on the topic of proposed revisions to PMAs. The Advisory Committee should review the revisions and think through whether they have any recommended changes by the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourns

The Facilitator thanked all for participating and adjourned the meeting.

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MEETING ATTENDEES

** = virtual attendee*

Advisory Committee Members

Justin Sandahl, Shasta River Waters Users Association
John Tannaci, Residential
Blair Hart, Private Pumper
*Steve Mains, Grenada Irrigation District
Lisa Faris, Big Springs Irrigation District
*Tristan Allen, Montague Water Conservation District
Gregg Werner, Environmental/Conservation
*Grant Johnson, Karuk Tribe

Absent Committee Members

Pete Scala, Private Pumper
Justin Holmes, Edson-Foulke Ditch Company
Robert Moser, Municipal/City (Lake Shastina Community District)

District Staff

Matt Parker, County of Siskiyou Natural Resources Specialist

Technical Team

Dr. Laura Foglia, UC Davis/Larry Walker Associates
*Dr. Thomas Harter, UC Davis
*Josue Medellin-Azuara, UC Merced
*Spencer Cole, UC Merced

Agency Staff

*Janae Scruggs, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
*Jessica Boyt, Department of Water Resources
*Pat Vellines, Department of Water Resources
*Kevin Delano, SWRCB
*Eli Scott, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
* Ethan Brown, Shasta RCD

Absent Agency Staff

Chris Watt, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Shari Whitmore, National Marine Fisheries Service
Bryan McFaddin, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Facilitator

*Katie Duncan, Stantec

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Craig Moyle, Stantec

*Marisa, Stantec

Members of the public

*Alex

*Bonny Nichols

*Michael Spiess

*David Webb

Nick Joslin

*Ginger Sammito

*Katrina Arredondo

*Pat Witt

*Elisa Noble, Executive Director Scott Valley and Shasta Valley Watermaster District