

**Collaborative Work Group  
Meeting Summary #4: February 15, 2017**

**Meeting-At-A-Glance:**

- L. Allen to review new DWR portal to identify GSA boundary inconsistencies; will provide affected eligible GSAs with information on both incidental and significant overlaps or gaps (if any).
- Water Forum/CBI to work with the County to hold a workshop focused on “white space” users prior to Sacramento County Board of Supervisors discussion on March 21. Intention is to present information on SGMA, explain law’s relevance to groundwater users and lead conversation among water users to consider options for representation.
- Eligible GSAs to begin work on a framework agreement, to be completed by June 30, to articulate mutual commitments going forward and position the sub-basin to pursue Prop 1 grant funding to support Groundwater Sustainability Plan development. Water Forum to begin pulling together draft language and options for Work Group consideration.
- Group wants to be well-positioned to apply for DWR grant funding which are expected to become available in August 2017. Water Forum (J. Lowrie) will conduct an initial gap analysis to assess data needs and being outlining a preliminary scope of work needed to support a Prop 1. application.
- Rough draft FAQ reviewed; suggestions offered to strengthen relevance for likely audience. CBI to produce updated draft based on feedback for review and discussion with Work Group members.

**BACKGROUND**

The Water Forum convened the Cosumnes Sub-basin SGMA Work Group to continue discussions related to implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The Work Group, comprising seven eligible Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), met February 15, 2017, at the Herald Fire Protection District hall, to discuss the following:

- General updates
- Assessment of water users in “white spaces” (areas not covered by expected GSA filings)
- Assessment of eligible GSAs and associated process recommendations
- Elements of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) handout

The meeting was attended by the following participants: Mike Wackman, Kurt Kautz and Leland Schneider, Omochumne Hartnell Water District; Mark Clarkson, City of Galt; Jon Goetz and Ramon Roybal, Sacramento County Water Agency; Leo Van Warmerdam and John Mulrooney, Galt Irrigation District; Rick Wohle, Clay Water District; Damon Wyckoff and Gene Mancebo, Amador Water Agency; Tom Gohring, Lilly Allen and John Lowrie, Water Forum, and Bennett Brooks and Julia Golomb with the Consensus Building Institute. L. Allen drafted the meeting summary.

**DISCUSSION – KEY THEMES**

Below is a summary of key themes discussed and next steps agreed to at the meeting. This summary is not intended to be a meeting transcript. Rather, it focuses instead on the main points covered during the group’s discussions.

## **General Updates**

### **Filing Status**

Participants began the meeting discussing current and intended GSA filing status and coverage of “white spaces.” Seven entities have or are expected to file as GSAs for the Cosumnes Sub-Basin. Specific updates included the following:

- Sloughhouse RCD, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District, Galt Irrigation District and Clay Irrigation District have all filed with the state to become a GSA. Clay’s application is still under review by the state and not yet posted to the state’s website.
- Jackson Valley Irrigation District, Amador County and Amador Water District have executed a Joint Powers Authority to serve as GSA for Amador County lands within the Cosumnes Sub-Basin. They expect to file with the state by mid-March.
- Galt City Council has directed the city to file as GSA for all city land, including its treatment plan west of the city. It is not filing at this time for land within its sphere of influence.
- Sacramento County remains open to filing as the GSA for any remaining white spaces within the sub-basin. T. Gohring noted that the Board of Supervisors intends to hold a board workshop March 21 to discuss options for representing water users in the white spaces. The County is also working with the Water Forum to organize outreach to users in white spaces. The county intends to file by the end of March.
- Lower Cosumnes RCD reiterated that it does not intend to file to become a GSA.
- North Delta Water Agency could potentially file for a sliver of land in the southwest corner of the sub-basin. It is not yet known whether it will file.

Participants will continue to provide updates at the periodic Working Group meetings.

### **DWR Portal**

DWR has created a new online portal where it will be collecting and displaying all basin and GSA boundary information. The State plans to use the portal to identify any gaps or overlap in coverage. L. Allen is to review the information on DWR’s portal and identify any outstanding issues. The Water Forum will not take any unilateral actions to address or resolve any GSA boundary issues. Rather, it will flag issues for discussion among the relevant parties.

### **Water Forum Update**

T. Gohring gave a brief overview and history of the Water Forum. The discussion highlighted both Water Forum purpose and funding. Several participants acknowledged the important role the Water Forum plays in fostering dialogue on SGMA-related issues in the Cosumnes Sub-basin. See attachment A for additional background on the Water Forum.

### **Other**

B. Brooks provided a brief update on the status of GSA formation in the Eastern San Joaquin sub-basin. T. Gohring provided a brief update on the status of the Alternative Submittal filing for the South American sub-basin.

<p><b>NEXT STEPS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• L. Allen to review the information on DWR’s portal and identify any outstanding issues</li><li>• T. Gohring is to provide and update on the technical model being used in the Eastern San Joaquin sub-basin.</li></ul>
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**Assessment Overview: White Space**

B. Brooks provided an overview of his recent assessment of water users in areas not expected to be covered by any GSA filings (aka, white spaces). His report, based on confidential conversations with 12 different water users representing a broad range of perspectives, summarized key feedback related to water users interests, groundwater sustainability, representation needs and outreach recommendations. The key points from his assessment are summarized in the attached presentation shared with the Work Group (pdf in attachment B).

Based on the presentation, Work Group member comments centered on the following:

- Given SGMA's intent to foster local control, one participant recommended that the workshop should engage water users in conversation to identify the most viable options for fostering and ensuring effective local representation.
- One participant sought to clarify the extent to which the county can serve as interim GSA (to satisfy the June 30 SGMA deadline) and then allow for water users to identify an alternative GSA. B. Brooks noted that such a transition is permissible. This approach was of interest to several meeting participants.
- Once an acceptable representation approach is identified and confirmed, it likely makes sense to broaden the Cosumnes SGMA Work Group participation to incorporate representatives from the white spaces.
- In the near-term, it seems most appropriate for the County to move forward as GSA for water users in the white spaces, but step aside if any other entity is formed or steps forward to serve as GSA. J. Goetz noted the County is pursuing a similar approach in the Delta.

Based on the discussion participants recommended that the Water Forum and CBI move forward with the County to arrange workshops to discuss possible representation approaches with water users in the sub-basin's white spaces. T. Gohring noted that he will strive to hold the first workshop prior to the County Board of Supervisors' March 21 meeting. As necessary, the Water Forum will seek to host a second workshop or one-on-one dialogues with stakeholders to sharpen representation options and approaches.

B. Brooks noted that CBI and the Water Forum will coordinate with key partners (Farm Bureau, etc.) to encourage a strong turnout, as well as invite participation by Supervisor Don Nottoli. B. Brooks once again asked Work Group participants to identify contacts among ag-res water users in the white spaces.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Water Forum is to distribute to Work Group members the APN numbers for water users in the white spaces. Work Group members are asked to identify any candidate ag-res users to contact for help in publicizing the upcoming workshop
- Water Forum is to work with the County and other partners (e.g., Farm Bureau, Lower Cosumnes RCD) to convene a workshop with "white space" water users in mid-March

### **Assessment Overview: Eligible GSAs in Cosumnes Sub-Basin**

B. Brooks provided an overview of his recent assessment of the eligible GSAs. His report, based on confidential conversations with each of the eligible GSAs, covered the following topics: current context; interests and guiding principles; implementation approach; near-term benchmarks; governance; outreach needs; and recommendations for moving forward. The key points from his assessment are summarized in the attached presentation shared with the Work Group (pdf in attachment C).

Work Group discussion centered around the following themes:

- Near-term progress on a framework agreement is essential to ensure the sub-basin has a viable vehicle in place to pursue Proposition 1 funding later this year. (Water Forum staff noted that, based on their understanding, the State intends to allocate the full complement of Prop 1 funding in one round this year. Water Forum staff also noted that the Water Forum may be in a position to use its Zone 13 funds to cover 80-90% of the required 50% local match for Prop 1 funds.)
- Participants broadly supported the concept of a framework agreement by June 30 to articulate a sub-basin-wide implementation approach, near-term governance, tech support and funding needs, and a streamlined roadmap for developing a GSP (e.g. tasks, timelines, technical support, etc.). In reviewing the draft elements of a framework agreement prepared by CBI and distributed at the meeting, participants noted the following:
  - Near-term governance/funding is seen as necessary to cover the period from July 1, 2017 through 2022 (unless, as one Work Group member said, participants identify and agree to a governance/funding structure earlier in the five-year time period.)
  - A framework agreement should be flexible enough to foster buy-in and allow for changes as the GSAs develop a deeper understanding of SGMA program needs.
  - There is value in assessing sooner than later (i.e., within the next few months) a likely scope and cost associated with the technical work needed to submit a grant-funding request. T. Gohring suggested that J. Lowrie with the Water Forum could begin conducting a gap analysis to assess data needs.
  - A framework agreement should be formally endorsed by each GSAs respective governing body. Given the time needed to secure endorsements, a framework agreement needs to be completed by mid-May to ensure confirmation by June 30.
- Amador County representatives noted their interest in a framework approach that allows for discrete implementation within its portion of the sub-basin. Further discussion is needed to understand the extent to which a single GSP coupled with GSA implementation autonomy will be sufficient to meet Amador's needs.
- The guiding principles outlined in B. Brooks' assessment report serve as a good basis for principles to incorporate into a framework agreement. Other possible principles noted during the meeting include: (1) target funding at tasks that support broad implementation needs and not those of any one GSA; and (2) account for the uncertainty regarding possible basin boundary changes. Participants would like the Water Forum/CBI to develop a first cut at a draft set of principles for inclusion in a framework agreement.
- The Work Group should draw on language developed in other sub-basins when identifying options and approaches to incorporate in its framework agreement. B. Brooks offered to gather relevant materials from facilitators working in other areas.

- In general, Work Group members will look to the Water Forum/CBI team to develop strawman documents for review by and discussion with participants. These draft materials are seen as helpful as propelling progress.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- CBI/Water Forum is to take first cut at the elements of a framework agreement based on Work Group discussions to-date. Where possible and appropriate, the draft should draw from other sub-basins to suggest approaches and options. A working draft will be distributed at least one week prior to the next Work Group meeting to foster early review.
- Water Forum (J. Lowrie) will conduct an initial gap analysis to assess data needs and being outlining a preliminary scope of work needed to support a Prop 1. application.
- Water Forum/B. Brooks will identify near-term funding models being used in other sub-basins for discussion at the next Work Group meeting.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

J. Golomb distributed a draft of a possible mailer (attachment D) to support outreach efforts for the white space workshops and other stakeholder engagement meetings. The draft was based on examples from other sub-basins that had been provided previously to the Work Group. Participant feedback included the following:

- The draft is largely on-target. It will be important to add a section upfront that explains both the impetus and imperative for action.
- For this draft, it is best to remove the language regarding the white space public workshops and instead include language that speaks more generally to the commitment of strong stakeholder participation. For the upcoming white space workshops, participants suggested drafting a brief cover letter summarizing workshop purpose, location, etc.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Work Group participants are to review the draft FAQ and provide any additional comments/feedback to J. Golomb within the next week.
- J. Golomb is to revise the FAQ based on the feedback and distribute for additional comment.
- J. Golomb to prepare a brief cover note to use in publicizing the upcoming white space workshop.

**Wrap-Up and Next Steps:**

B. Brooks noted that the Work Group should anticipate monthly meetings between now and July 1, 2017, to ensure sufficient progress on a framework agreement and other near-term tasks. Water Forum staff is to canvas participants for possible meeting dates.

For questions regarding this meeting summary, please contact T. Gohring or L. Allen at the Water Forum.