

Cosumnes Subbasin Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary #3
Meeting held August 15, 2017
Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

MEETING IN BRIEF

At its August 15 meeting, the Cosumnes Subbasin Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) welcomed EKI, the subbasin’s newly selected technical advisors. EKI introduced its team, Anona Dutton and Earl James, and presented on Proposition 1 grant proposal requirements. The TAC reviewed the recommended timeframe and process for Prop. 1 proposal development. GSAs are asked to submit a form for each proposed project element to include in the Proposition 1 grant application by August 31. The TAC requested that EKI prepare information on the pros and cons of developing one versus multiple GSPs for the subbasin.

ACTION ITEMS

Who	What
EKI	Send Project Proposal forms to TAC
EKI	Send revised tier framework for project elements to TAC
EKI	Prepare information on pros/cons of single versus multiple GSPs for near-term discussion
Water Forum	Schedule additional TAC meetings for Sept. and Oct.
Water Forum	Send EKI scope of work to TAC
Water Forum/CBI	Send presentation and handouts from meeting to TAC
Water Forum/CBI	Share Rob Swartz’s presentation on groundwater models to EKI
CBI	Send list of TAC members’ preferred email addresses to TAC for confirmation
TAC members	Confirm preferred email address by Aug. 31
TAC members	Send EKI comments on proposed tier framework for categorizing project elements by Aug. 31 (now extended to September 8)
TAC members	Submit project element proposal forms to EKI (copy Tom Gohring) by Aug. 31 (now extended to September 8)
TAC members	Send materials and studies to include in Cosumnes bibliography to EKI (copy Tom Gohring) by Aug. 3 (now extended to September 8)

DISCUSSION – KEY THEMES

Below is a summary of key themes discussed at the TAC 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.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Facilitator Bennett Brooks welcomed participants to the third meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which serves as an advisory body to the Cosumnes Subbasin SGMA Working Group. This is the first TAC meeting open to public attendance.

TAC participants discussed two email protocols:

1. TAC member agreed that they will avoid using blind copy on emails among TAC members to ensure all parties are aware of the complete email string.
2. For announcements sent by the Water Forum to the broader interested parties email list, public recipient email addresses will be sent via blind copy to protect recipients' private contact information.

TECHNICAL ADVISOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The ad hoc Technical Advisor Selection Committee, composed of a representative from each of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin, issued a request for qualifications for an independent technical advisor in June. The RFQ was posted for three weeks, during which time the ad hoc committee received seven statements of qualifications. The ad hoc committee reviewed and ranked all seven applications and invited the top three ranked applicants to interview. Following interviews, the firm EKI Consultants was top-ranked. The Water Forum successfully negotiated EKI's scope of work., but formal execution of a contract is pending until the firm's selection is officially approved by the Working Group at its August 16 meeting. Anona Dutton of EKI will serve as lead technical advisor; EKI's Earl James will provide additional staffing. Ms. Dutton is a certified hydrogeologist working on SGMA implementation throughout California.

Anona Dutton shared a brief presentation ([link](#)) to introduce the EKI Team:

- Firm: EKI Environment and Water, teamed with HydroFocus, Inc.
- Ms. Dutton brings substantial SGMA experience which she will tailor to the Cosumnes-Subbasin context. She will draw, in particular, from her experience working in White Wolf Subbasin in southern Kern County, which is critically overdrafted.
- Additionally, both EKI and HydroFocus have previously conducted technical hydrogeological work in the Cosumnes Subbasin, which enables the technical advisory team to rapidly begin work.

Tom Gohring of the Water Forum outlined the following guidelines for how GSAs should interface with the technical advisory team:

- When EKI requests information from TAC members, please respond to Anona Dutton directly (adutton@ekiconsult.com).
- Additionally, please copy Tom Gohring (tgohring@waterforum.org) on all correspondence.
- Participants are welcome to copy the other TAC members on correspondence with EKI.
- At TAC meetings, Ms. Dutton will report to the group on any questions and comments that she has received from GSAs and her response.
- EKI's initial task is to help develop the Proposition 1 grant application.
- EKI takes direction from and reports to the TAC as a collective body. EKI does not take direction from individual GSAs.
- As needed, Ms. Dutton will clarify with Mr. Gohring as to whether requests made of EKI are within scope (see attached EKI scope).

PROPOSITION 1 DEVELOPMENT

The Working Group is applying for Prop. 1 funding to support development of the subbasin's GSP. A **successful Prop. 1 application is critical** to the Cosumnes Subbasin's groundwater planning efforts and to each GSA in the subbasin. Without a successful application, GSAs will bear the financial responsibility for GSP development.

The Proposition 1 proposal solicitation package (PSP) is expected to be released by the end of August, with the application due nine weeks later (approximately in late October). The TAC will need to reach agreement on contents of Prop. 1 application. There is a total of \$46.3-\$61.3 million available to service Prop. 1 funding requests. 108 groundwater basins throughout California are currently rated high or medium priority (category 2, tier 2 as described in the draft PSP) and eligible to apply for Prop. 1 funding. The Cosumnes Subbasin is expecting to submit an application for \$1 million.

One GSA must serve as the formal grant applicant and administrative entity. The administrative entity must meet DWR criteria, including CASGEM compliance. The Cosumnes Subbasin Working Group will be the venue for determining the grant applicant and administrative entity.

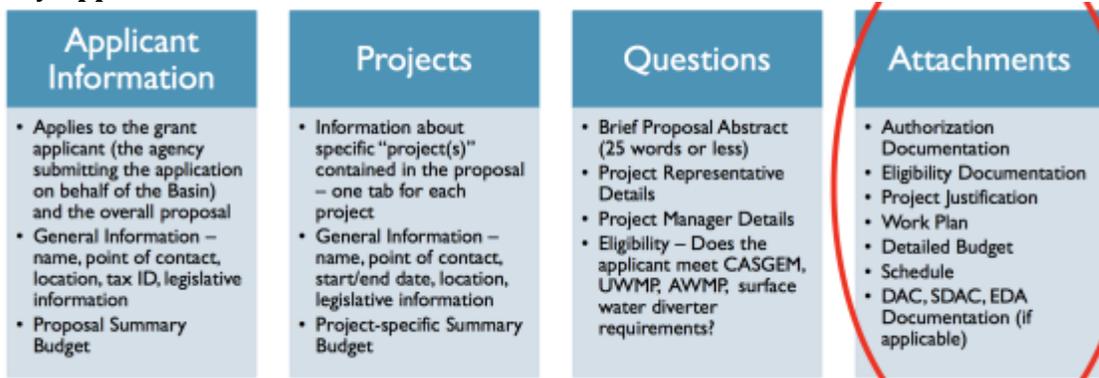
Presentation: Prop. 1 Grant Overview ([link](#))

Ms. Dutton presented on Proposition 1 grant requirements and next steps.

Overview

- Funded by DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Planning Grant Program
- Pursuing Category 2 grant – eligible project types include: “those activities associated with the planning, development, or preparation of GSP(s)”
- Maximum of \$1M per basin with 50% match requirement
- One application accepted per basin
- Continuous filing in the August through October 2017 timeframe (exact dates not yet determined), with award expected December 2017

Key Application Elements



Ms. Dutton reviewed key application elements, noting in particular the types of attachments that are central to the Prop. 1 application. For example, she noted that each project or project element must have a supporting set of attachments, including documentation of authorization, eligibility, project justification, work plan, detailed budget, schedule, and DAC, SDAC, and EDA documentation (if applicable). This requirement will likely shape the number and type of projects able to be included in the application.

Proposed Application Structure

Ms. Dutton outlined the following proposed application structure.



Tier 1 (Basin Level "Project Elements") are *definable now*. These elements are critical to SGMA compliance and groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) development and must take place at the basin level. Accordingly, these elements must be included in the Prop. 1 application.

Tier 2 (Basin/GSA Level "Project Elements") are *definable now*. These elements could take place at the basin or GSA level, depending on how the Working Group chooses to proceed.

Tier 3 (GSA/Local "Project Elements") will be developed through the implementation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 project elements.

Ms. Dutton shared a sample list of project elements grouped by tier ([view handout](#)). She asked that the TAC and Working Group provide input on how best to group project elements by tier.

For the Prop. 1 application, Ms. Dutton suggested it is likely advantageous to categorize a larger portion of proposed project elements in tiers 1 and 2, and a smaller portion as undefined project elements (tier 3). Ms. Dutton recommended that the application articulate a systematic process by which the Working Group will, at a later date, prioritize and rank currently undefined tier 3 project elements.

Prop. 1 Application Process and Timeline

Development of the Prop. 1 grant proposal is highly time sensitive, with a nine-week window for proposal development between PSP release and the proposal deadline.

Given the tight timeline, Ms. Dutton asked for **GSA input by August 31 on proposed project elements**, which she will categorize by tier. (The deadline has since been extended to September 8.) At the September TAC meeting, Ms. Dutton will present a first draft proposal for GSA input. Per TAC request, TAC members will have two opportunities to review and comment on the draft Prop. 1 application.

Discussion: Prop. 1 Application Development

TAC discussions focused initially on weighing the implications associated with filing one GSP versus multiple coordinated GSPs. Key discussion points are summarized below.

- Ms. Dutton noted that the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) comments and materials to-date suggest a preference **for one GSP per basin** rather than multiple GSPs. From Ms. Dutton's perspective, it will be **easier** to submit a Proposition 1 application for a **single GSP**

with one or more management areas than to submit an application for multiple GSPs, which would require submission of a coordination agreement as part of the application .

- Regardless of whether the subbasin produces one or multiple GSPs, Ms. Dutton noted, all **data must be consistent** across the subbasin (including cross-boundary flows and sustainability criteria). To that end Ms. Dutton recommends that the Proposition 1 application focus on the **development of common, basin-level information** (tier 1 project elements), including the groundwater model and water budget. The more items the GSAs agrees on, the more they can categorize as tier 1. This is advantageous, as smaller GSAs may lack the resources needed to develop tier 2 and tier 3 project elements
- Ms. Dutton noted that, per the draft Prop. 1 PSP, DWR will require GSAs to demonstrate, in writing, a commitment to work together in a coordinated and collective fashion. Ms. Dutton suggested that the Framework Agreement offers an effective mechanism to satisfy DWR's requirement. Jay Schneider with Sloughhouse suggested an alternative agreement could be developed if all seven GSAs were unable to support the Framework Agreement.
- Mr. Schneider with Sloughhouse noted his interest to maintain **maximum flexibility** on the technical aspects of groundwater planning and reiterated his reluctance to commit now to developing a single GSP. In response, several TAC members and the technical advisory team noted that producing a single, subbasin-wide GSP does not undermine any GSA's right to **implement the GSP locally** in that GSA's coverage area. Under SGMA, GSAs have the right to make local decisions around how to sustainably manage their coverage areas. Moreover, several TAC members noted that the SGMA Working Group **Framework Agreement** states an intention to include management areas and to support as much local control as possible. Sacramento County expressed an interest in developing a **single GSP with separate chapters** for each area, as it sees this as the most cost-efficient option.

Based on the discussion, TAC members voiced interest in better understanding the **tradeoffs and benefits** – including cost and ability to meet the Prop. 1 application deadline - of **one GSP versus multiple GSPs**. EKI agreed to develop a presentation on this issue for the August 16 Working Group meeting.

B. Brooks also noted that DWR requires that the Prop. 1 proposal describe how GSP development has been informed by **affected parties** (as defined in SGMA). To this end, it will be useful to include the Working Group's Engagement and Outreach Plan in the application and note efforts the group has undertaken to understand and incorporate stakeholder feedback.

Discussion: Prop. 1 Application Project Elements

Given limited time at the meeting, EKI provide a brief overview of its initial draft of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 project elements. Below is a synopsis of presentation and discussion points.

- Ms. Dutton summarized and sought TAC feedback on candidate Tier 1 project elements. These elements (required by SGMA and preliminarily endorsed by the TAC) included the following:
 - Development of data management system (DMS)
 - Compile data for DMS (ensure data quality and consistency)
 - Develop basin-wide hydrogeological conceptual model (compile data and reports created to-date)
 - *Note: conceptual model could be helpful in identifying management zones*
 - Develop basin-wide numerical model

- Develop basin-wide water budget (management areas can have their own water budget)
- Define sustainability criteria and undesirable results
- Write GSP

Below is a summary of key issues covered in the TAC discussion of EKI's proposed project elements.

- The Cosumnes Subbasin and its neighboring basins need to assume the same **cross-basin flow**. EKI advises doing this incrementally by bringing data to neighbors and together identifying data gaps and points that need resolution.
- A management area could be based on jurisdiction or hydrological conditions, though it is typically a physically defined area. Management areas must describe unique conditions that justify unique management relative to the rest of the subbasin. SGMA GSP regulations allow sustainability to be defined within the context of a management area. DWR requires justification of the rationale for defining management areas. One or more GSAs can exist within a management area. Alternately, a single, subbasin-wide GSP with no management areas could implement broad sustainability criteria at different levels throughout basin.
- Each GSA has the authority within its jurisdiction to levy fees and assessments, police, and exercise other powers. Ultimately each GSA has a potential cost obligation for groundwater management, and it is up to each GSA to determine how it will fund that cost obligation.
- In the Prop. 1 application, it is important to TAC participants to maintain **flexibility** for developing management areas or multiple GSPs while conducting as much work as possible at basin-wide level.
- Project proponents must prepare a substantial amount of information, to be included as attachments to the Prop. 1 application. DWR's scoring of projects will influence scoring for the overall Prop. 1 application. GSAs are asked to submit **project element proposal forms** to EKI by August 31. Ms. Dutton will then share proposed projects with the TAC, which will identify which projects to include in the Prop. 1 application.

Next Steps – Prop. 1 Development

- TAC participants request that EKI **clarify the pros and cons of one GSP versus multiple GSPs** (including whether development of a single GSP will limit a GSA's autonomy).
- GSAs to provide Ms. Dutton with feedback on the proposed **project tier framework by August 31 (subsequently change to September 8)**.
- GSAs to submit **project element proposal forms** to Ms. Dutton **by August 31 (subsequently change to September 8)**.
- The Water Forum will schedule approximately four **TAC meetings** between late August and the Prop. 1 application due date. It will also work with TAC members to establish a regularly scheduled monthly meeting time starting in November.
- Water Forum/CBI share Rob Swartz's presentation on groundwater models with EKI.

TAC SCHEDULE

The Water Forum will schedule additional TAC meetings in September and October.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Gene Mancebo, Amador Water Agency
Damon Wykoff, Amador Water Agency

Mike Israel, Amador County
Amanda Watson, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District
Herb Garms, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District
Jay Schneider, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District
Leo Van Warmerdam, Galt Irrigation District
Rick Wohle, Clay Water District
Sue Wohle, Clay Water District
John Mulrooney, Galt Irrigation District
Mark Stretars, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District
Mike Wackman, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District
Kerry Schmitz, Sacramento County
Rodney Fricke, GEI/Sacramento County
Mark Clarkson, City of Galt
Anona Dutton, EKI
Earl James, EKI
Tom Gohring, Water Forum
John Lowrie, Water Forum
Bennett Brooks, CBI
Julia Golomb, CBI

For questions regarding this meeting summary, please contact Tom Gohring at the Water Forum or Julia Golomb at the Consensus Building Institute.