

**Cosumnes Subbasin SGMA Working Group + Technical Advisory Committee  
Joint Meeting  
Meeting #15**

**Meeting held February 21, 2018**

**Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute**

**ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>
SSCAWA/Sac County	Submit letter to DWR (during comment period) regarding shift to Sac County as grant administrator (but with SSCAWA in backup position)
Sac County	Seek County Board of Supervisors' approval of Sac County as Prop. 1 grant administrator
Water Forum/Sac County	Clarify contractual/funding/decision-making protocols given Sac County role as grant/contractor administrator
Water Forum	Contact DWR to explore possibility of adding third drop down screen (single GSP, option for multiple GSPs in future) in GSP notification portal and/or adding commentary on subbasin's proposed approach consistent with Prop. 1 submittal. Add link to GSA/cities in public notification filing.
EKI	Attend Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin's March JPA meeting
Water Forum/Sac County	Update technical consultant selection process given Sac County's role as contract administrator

**DISCUSSION – KEY THEMES**

Below is a summary of key themes discussed at the meeting. This summary is not intended to be a meeting transcript. Rather, it focuses on the main points covered during the group's discussions and any action items.

**GENERAL UPDATES**

**Proposition 1 Grant Status**

[View slide 3.](#) The Cosumnes Subbasin submitted a Proposition 1 grant proposal to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in November 2017. DWR released the **draft grant award proposal on February 6**. The Cosumnes Subbasin's application scored 19 out of 19 and was recommended for full funding (\$1 million). Final awards are expected at the end of March or in early April.

**DWR Technical Support Services**

[View slides 4 + 5.](#) The DWR Technical Support Services (TSS) webpage is now live. The application portal is anticipated to open in early Spring 2018. GSAs must submit initial notification of GSP development before applying for TSS funding. TSS grants are not first-come, first-serve, as previously suggested.

### **Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Guidance Document**

[View slide 6.](#) The Nature Conservancy released a Guidance Document to help groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) effectively incorporate groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) into their groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs). DWR will produce its own Guidance Document and Statewide GIS database for groundwater dependent ecosystems, anticipated for release in Spring 2018.

### **Update from Neighboring Subbasins**

**Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority** (SCGA) awaits DWR's determination on its alternative submittal. SCGA scored 17 out of 19 on its Prop. 1 application, with a draft \$1 million award. SCGA can execute a grant agreement only if its alternative is withdrawn or rejected, as the Prop. 1 funds are allocated for GSP development only.

At the request of Supervisor Don Nottoli, the Water Forum is convening a series of bilateral meetings between SCGA and Omochumne-Hartnell Water District and between SCGA and Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District to discuss areas of GSA overlap.

**Sacramento County** is conducting a jurisdictional basin boundary modification of 600 acres in the San Joaquin River that will shift West Island from the Tracy Subbasin to the Solano Subbasin.

### **Public Comment**

- SCGA engineer Ramon Roybal noted in public comment that SCGA is considering the impact that a basin boundary line adjustment will have on the basin's sustainability.
- Michael Monasky expressed the importance of ensuring that the GSP development process is transparent, inclusive, and presented in such a way (e.g., jargon-free) to ensure that content is accessible to members of the public. Accessibility, he said, should include holding public meetings in the evening and streaming meetings online. Monasky emphasized the importance of including and consulting with tribes in the process. Additionally, Monasky noted that climate change impacts are severe and will continue to impact groundwater and that groundwater recharge efforts must benefit people, flora and fauna.
- Suzanne Pecci, a longtime ag-res owner in Elk Grove, expressed the importance of public involvement and transparency as members of the public become increasingly aware of SGMA implementation.

### **Basics of Coordination**

[View slides 7-18.](#) Anona Dutton with EKI, the Cosumnes Subbasin's technical consulting firm, provided the following updates:

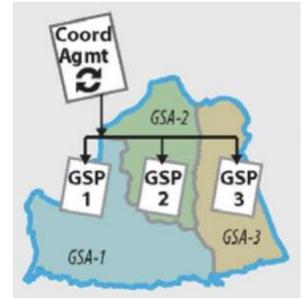
- A representative of EKI attended the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (ESJ) meeting on February 14. Relevant updates include: ESJ has hired a consultant via RFQ process to complete its scope of work for GSP development.
- Dutton is in conversation with the ESJ County Representative regarding how formal the inter-basin coordination needs to be. ESJ has expressed openness and interest in coordination with the Cosumnes Subbasin.

More broadly, Dutton provided an overview of coordination requirements related to GSP development and as part of DWR’s evaluation criteria for an “Approved” GSP. Coordination is multi-faceted, involving various entities and levels of involvement:

**1. Intrabasin Coordination – Between GSAs within a Basin (required if submitting multiple GSPs in a subbasin)**

One GSP submittal will be accepted per Basin by DWR. Coordination agreements are required if more than one GSA within a basin intends to submit a GSP. Coordination agreements must describe “a process for submitting all Plans, Plan amendments, supporting information, all monitoring data and other pertinent information, along with annual reports and periodic evaluations.” *Coordination agreements must describe:*

- A point of contact on behalf of the Basin (i.e. “Plan Manager”)
- The responsibilities of each GSA for meeting the terms of the agreement
- Procedures for exchange of information between GSAs
- Procedures for resolving conflicts between GSAs
- How the GSPs, implemented together, satisfy the requirements of SGMA



Coordination agreements must outline how the GSAs used the same data and methodologies to prepare the GSP, including:

- Groundwater elevation data
- Basin-wide water budget and Sustainable Yield estimate
- Definition of Undesirable Results
- Basin-wide Data Management System (DMS)

Intrabasin coordination can create additional efficiencies. GSAs may further benefit through coordination on:

- Implementing a stakeholder engagement plan
- Developing sustainable management criteria
- Developing & managing monitoring networks
- Developing projects and management actions
- Developing a GSP implementation plan
- Pursuing funding opportunities for GSP implementation

Intrabasin coordination is required only if there is more than one GSP within the subbasin. However, as one Working Group member noted, regardless of whether the Cosumnes Subbasin develops one or multiple GSPs, all GSAs will need to discuss the items outlined above (e.g. implementing a stakeholder engagement plan, developing sustainable management criteria, etc.).

**2. Interbasin Coordination – Between GSAs across Basin lines (optional)**

Potential areas of interbasin coordination include:

- *Modeling and water budgets* -- Are there opportunities to leverage modeling efforts of Eastern San Joaquin (ESJ), South American Subbasins, City of Roseville's Sacramento Regional Groundwater Model (SRM), or DWR's upcoming Sacramento Valley Simulation Model (SVSim)?
- *Cross-boundary flows* -- How will recharge from the Cosumnes River be parsed between S. American, Cosumnes Basins?
- *Sustainability criteria* -- To ensure that minimum thresholds will not impede neighboring basins from meeting sustainability goals, and vice-a-versa
- *Monitoring networks* - Are there opportunities for coordinated monitoring networks along the Cosumnes River?
- *Projects and management actions* -- e.g., potential coordinated recharge projects along Cosumnes River floodplain/gravel channel outcroppings?



*Optional* interbasin coordination agreements between GSAs in adjacent basins can help to establish early coordination between basins and avoid problematic disagreements after key GSP elements have already been prepared for each basin. These agreements can include information on sustainability criteria and a monitoring network that would “confirm no adverse impacts result from the implementation of the Plans of any party to the agreement,” and can also contain:

- An estimate of groundwater flow across basin boundaries
- An estimate of stream aquifer interactions at boundaries
- Common understanding of relevant hydrogeologic characteristics

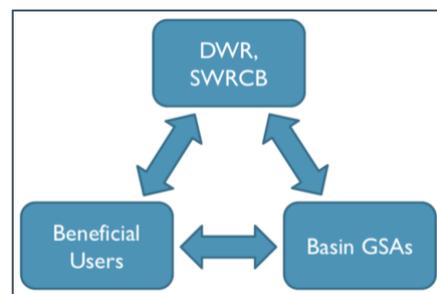
There are potential timing issues, as neighboring basins are implementing SGMA on an accelerated timeframe. The Cosumnes Subbasin GSP is due January 2022, whereas ESJ Subbasin's GSP is due January 2020, with estimated completion in October 2019. South American Subbasin's Alternative Plan was submitted in 2017. Interbasin coordination will be necessary early on in the GSP development process to ensure neighboring GSPs/Alternative Plans align with Cosumnes Subbasin sustainability criteria and management framework, and vice-a-versa. Dutton suggested that the Cosumnes Subbasin will benefit from beginning discussions on interbasin coordination with neighboring basins as soon as possible.

While interbasin coordination agreements are voluntary, the comment period tied to submittal of a GSP to DWR provides the opportunity to comment on the adequacy of a neighboring basin's plan to DWR. Given the different timeframe for GSP completion, Dutton advises some form of review and comment on the adjacent Basin plans, especially if neighboring subbasins' sustainability criteria have the potential to be counter to the Subbasin's interest.

A Working Group member noted the importance of conducting technical work on an accelerated schedule and gathering data as quickly possible within the Cosumnes Subbasin, while closely tracking ESJ and SCGA GSP development.

### 3. Stakeholder Engagement – Between GSAs and local stakeholders / beneficial users

Development of minimum thresholds must consider effects on *beneficial uses and users* of groundwater or land uses and property interests. A thorough *stakeholder engagement plan* can help ensure that sustainable management criteria developed will reflect the input of beneficial users of groundwater. Local data (e.g., pumping data, land use data) will need to be compiled from basin stakeholders. After a GSP is adopted and posted to DWR's SGMA portal, stakeholders will have a 60-day opportunity to comment on the adopted GSP. DWR will consider these comments in their evaluation of GSPs.



**Next steps:** Seek guidance on what information the Cosumnes Subbasin needs to establish in order to initiate coordination. ESJ's groundwater model is still under calibration; at this point, ESJ is not far ahead of the Cosumnes Subbasin in its GSP development efforts.

### UPDATE ON EASTERN SAN JOAQUIN MODELING EFFORT

[View presentation.](#) Technical consultant John Fio of HydroFocus, subconsultants to EKI, presented on ESJ's groundwater modeling efforts (referred to as ESJ Integrated Water Flow Model, or ESJM) to-date, including how the Cosumnes Subbasin is represented in ESJ's model. In his presentation, Fio noted the importance of establishing consensus on the science between the Cosumnes Subbasin and neighboring basins. ESJ constructed and is now calibrating its model. **Fio emphasized that the Cosumnes Subbasin would benefit from developing a solid geohydrologic framework as soon as possible in order to, among other things, evaluate model results.**

**Philosophy of Groundwater Models:** Fio explained that Groundwater models serve myriad functions in GSP development and SGMA implementation. They are a tool that can be used to quantify the water budget (historical, current, and projected) and depict ground and surface water interactions and boundary flows; help identify factors leading to **undesirable results**; develop and support **minimum thresholds**; and calculate **sustainable yield**. Models can be utilized to identify projects and management actions and to forecast the impact of actions on future conditions. Groundwater models that best represent the **geohydrologic framework** typically generate the most accurate predictions. Fio emphasized that the accuracy of a model's prediction is more closely linked to a sound geohydrologic framework than it is to good calibration. Thus, to build or improve a groundwater model, it is key to *first* define the geohydrologic framework and then confirm water inflows and outflows.

ESJ's data for the Cosumnes Subbasin are very coarse and lack any information north of the Cosumnes Subbasin. Fio noted that water and landscape input datasets are complex, involve a great deal of estimation and require groundtruthing. To this end, **transparency and ownership are key to multi-stakeholder model development.** Representation and oversight at the workbench support **transparency** around what information goes into and comes out of the model. Technical consensus and a commitment to improvement with new information support **ownership**. Fio noted there will always be areas of disagreement and uncertainty and that it is important to define those areas.

### Discussion

- Participants reiterated the importance of beginning technical work as soon as possible (truthing assumptions and looking at variables, risk analysis and data gaps), particularly

given that the Cosumnes Subbasin is bounded by two subbasins that are on an accelerated schedule for GSP development.

- Model evaluation is included in Phase One of the Proposition 1 scope. Accordingly, the subbasin’s technical consultants (once selected) will begin tackling this task early on.
- A member of the public spoke to the need for effective and transparent coordination around water development and with water districts.
- One Working Group member sought guidance on the level of precision needed to characterize the subbasin. Fio noted the importance of repeatedly asking the question, “How precise do we need to be in our mapping, modeling and data collection?” He explained that there are times when it makes sense for the subbasin to conduct focused technical work and times when it does not. Fio recommends starting with “known” data and then asking if the precision is sufficient or if it needs to be further narrowed. For example: While it is ideal to have a robust map of subsurface geologic structure, it is extremely expensive to produce. An alternative is to collect point data from boreholes and extrapolate, in lieu of a seismic approach to mapping the basin, and then ask if the uncertainty of hydraulic connectivity distribution is so high that it would change decisions that the subbasin would make.
- DWR has engaged in cooperative learning with entities from Denmark that utilize SkyTem technology for flyovers and aquifer mapping. DWR is considering flying the entire state. There is not grant money specifically earmarked for individual basins to do this work.

## **GSP Public Notification Requirement**

John Lowrie requested Working Group approval for the Water Forum to submit the public notification on behalf of the subbasin, via DWR’s automated notification portal through which GSAs are required to provide DWR with a public notification of initiation of the groundwater planning process. This notification to the public is intended to raise public awareness about what entities are developing the GSP and to support opportunities for public participation in the groundwater planning process. Lowrie noted that this is a notification requirement that draws on decisions already made within the subbasin and does not require any new substantive decision-making and can be amended at any time. The subbasin must submit a notification to DWR before beginning the GSP development process, pursuing a technical assistance grant, or entering into agreement with DWR for Prop. 1 funds.

In introducing the discussion, Lowrie provided draft answers (drawn from previously approved subbasin documents) to the five questions required by DWR (Lowrie’s suggested answers are italicized):

1. **How many GSPs planned for the basin:** *One*  
Note: this is a drop-down menu with only two options: Single GSP or Multiple GSPs; there is no option for “single GSP with option for multiple GSPs at later date”
2. **Select GSAs that would develop the GSP(s):** *All of the GSAs, listed out*
3. **Name point of contact:** *John Lowrie, Water Forum*
4. **Briefly describe the process:** *Description of public workshops, meetings open to the public, link to website, and how the public can become more involved and informed about the planning process.*
5. **Link:** *Link to the Cosumnes Subbasin SGMA website, GSA websites, and websites of relevant cities/jurisdictions.*

DWR requires one notification per GSP in the subbasin. The notification signals the subbasin's intent to initiate the planning process and is from the Working Group to DWR *at this moment in time*. The notification is non-binding and does not limit any future options for a GSA to develop its own GSP; if the subbasin later decides to develop multiple GSPs, the GSA would be required to submit a new notification indicating this change. Facilitator Bennett Brooks noted that notification for a single GSP leaves open the option for multiple GSPs, and thus is consistent with the subbasin's Prop. 1 application. Alison Tang from DWR reiterated that this is the *initial* notification and that additional notifications can be filed at any point in the future.

### Discussion

- Several Working Group members supported Lowrie's proposed language, noting that the language is consistent with past GSA decisions and does not preclude any GSA from opting to develop its own GSP at a later date. Another Working Group participant suggested uploading a letter under item 4 that clearly states that the subbasin maintains the option to develop multiple GSPs, consistent with its Prop 1 grant application. This was supported by several Working Group participants.
- A board representative from Sloughouse Resource Conservation District voiced strong opposition to the filing as proposed by Lowrie (even with the additional language under item 4), suggesting it locks in the subbasin's commitment to a single GSP. He further commented that SRCD has decided not to be part of a single GSP, noting that it is a misrepresentation to state that SRCD will participate in a single GSP. SRCD, he said, is prepared to fund the cost of an additional GSP, including writing, engineering work, etc.
- Drawing from her observations in other basins, Dutton commented that it is likely more expensive to develop multiple GSPs, because duplicate processes are taking place that could otherwise be streamlined into a single process.
- A participant suggested that the Working Group convene a focused meeting on the topic of developing a single vs. multiple GSPs and to establish the timeframe for making those decisions.
- A participant encouraged the Working Group to consider how best to support stakeholder involvement and suggested that a smaller committee might spearhead this issue in the coming months.

**Next Steps:** At its March board meeting, SRCD is to discuss Lowrie's suggested notification approach. The Working Group will return to this issue at its March meeting and further consider near-term stakeholder outreach needs.

### GSA/SSCAWA/Water Forum Contractual Relationship

[View slides](#). Tom Gohring of the Water Forum presented on contractual relationships for Prop. 1 grant administration. Under Government Code 1090, if the Water Forum serves as contracting entity as previously decided by the Working Group, EKI cannot bid to provide technical services for GSP development. [Gohring's slides](#) provide a comprehensive overview of alternate options for contractual relationships. Gohring emphasized that the contractual relationships should be structured such that they function well, are efficient, transparent and in service to the Working Group.

**Outcome:** The Working Group unanimously voted for Sacramento County to serve both as Prop. 1 grant administrator and as the contracting entity. SSCAWA will serve as the backup entity in the event there is a glitch with Sacramento County, in which case SSCAWA would execute the Prop. 1

contract and later transfer it to Sacramento County. Working Group members specified that all decisions will pass back through the Working Group and that no actions will be taken without Working Group and GSA board approval. The Working Group may form a standing contracting committee. Within the DWR comment period (between now and Wednesday, February 28), **SSCAWA will send DWR** a letter that contains the revised Prop. 1 contracting information and states “subject to Sacramento County board approval.”

### **TECHNICAL CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR GSP DEVELOPMENT**

Working Group and TAC participants are interested in conducting a similar technical consultant selection process as the fall 2017 technical consultant selection process through which EKI was hired. Sacramento County will conduct a competitive RFQ process; the Water Forum will bundle proposals and send to the Working Group for review; Working Group members will decide which candidates to interview; and the Water Forum will help schedule the interviews. While Working group members expressed a preference for an RFQ, Sacramento County will weigh in on the question of whether to issue an RFP or RFQ. The Working Group will revisit this topic at its March meeting.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The Working Group and TAC will next jointly meet at **9:00 am on Wednesday, March 21** in the Community Room at the Galt Police Department.

### **MEETING PARTICIPANTS**

Damon Wykoff, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority  
Darrel Evenson, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority  
Ed Gonzalez, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority  
Gary Thomas, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority  
Gene Mancebo, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority  
Mike Israel, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority  
Amanda Watson, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District  
Herb Garms, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District  
Jay Schneider, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District  
Scott Morris, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District  
Steve Winkler, City of Galt  
Gary Silva, Jr., Clay Water District  
Rick Wohle, Clay Water District  
Sue Wohle, Clay Water District  
Leland Schneider, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District  
Mark Stretars, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District  
Mike Wackman, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District  
Linda Dorn, Sacramento County  
Rodney Fricke, Sacramento County

Tom Gohring, Water Forum  
John Lowrie, Water Forum  
Anona Dutton, EKI  
John Fio, HydroFocus  
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.*

Visit [cosumnes.waterforum.org](http://cosumnes.waterforum.org) for the latest meeting information and materials.