

Cosumnes Subbasin SGMA Working Group Meeting

Meeting #39

Meeting held May 20, 2020 [Online]

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute and the Water Forum

MEETING-IN-BRIEF

The Working Group shared updates on overall GSP development; progress related to grants; report-backs from neighboring subbasins; and report-backs from the Outreach and Engagement Committee. The Working Group discussed outstanding needs for access agreements for wells related to the monitoring network and isotopic study related to the Prop. 68 grant. The Working Group also had an initial discussion on Sustainable Management Criteria related to Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels. The GSA took no formal actions, but discussions suggested initial conceptual agreement among individual GSAs for the following Sustainability Management Criteria related to Lowering Groundwater Levels: 2015 as baseline; using the projected 20-year water level as a minimum threshold; and customizing SMCs, as appropriate, to account for variability across the subbasin. Lastly, the Working Group’s facilitation consultant, CBI, presented information on the Surface Water Advisory Group and the Long-term Governance Committee.

GSP-Related Actions Decisions:

- No formal actions for the GSP
- Individual GSAs provided general support for the technical consultant to further explore SMC for groundwater levels (refer to summary)
- GSAs gave guidance on modifying the composition/approach for forming new committees (SWAG and Long-term Governance).

ACTION ITEMS

Who	What
GSAs	Secure high-priority one-time and long-term access agreements (see table below)
GSAs	Send CBI feedback on the draft fact sheet and/or related to public meeting design
GSAs	Contact Mike Wackman if interested in the Dept of Conservation’s Watershed Coordinator funding opportunity
GSAs	Expect contact from Craig Moyle (DWR) to explore interest in participating on the long-term governance discussion.
Austin	Send GSAs more information about SRCD’s FSS application for long-term governance discussions
Water Forum	Reach out to the GSAs to determine best path forward to obtain the necessary access agreements (expecting these discussions to occur offline)
CBI/Water Forum	Invite the suggested two additional SWAG members (BLM Refuge Manager and Amelia Vankeuren) (aiming to convene SWAG in late June)
CBI	Coordinate next Outreach and Engagement Committee meeting to discuss near-term public outreach and engagement approach and eliciting feedback that feeds into the SMC (e.g., minimum thresholds and sustainability indicators)
CBI	Continue to research other GSAs’(or appropriate analogues) public outreach efforts

CBI	Research additional information to add to governance table (e.g., are GSA members appointed or elected?)
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Meeting Documents

[Agenda](#) | [2 – Draft Fact Sheet](#) | [3 – Virtual Public Workshop Draft Agenda](#) | [4 – DWR May Update](#) | [5 – EKI Technical Presentation](#) | [6 – SWAG Update Presentation](#) | [7 – Long-Term Governance Committee Presentation](#) | [8 – Long-Term Governance Committee Draft Terms of Reference](#) | [9 – GSP Governance Summary Table](#)

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.

UPDATES

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN UPDATES

Grant status – Prop. 68 and TSS

Sacramento County GSA representatives reported that they received a written agreement for the Cosumnes Subbasin’s Prop. 68 grant last week. A Water Forum representative reported that they spoke with Galt ID GSA regarding the Technical Support Services (TSS) grant and confirmed that Galt ID wishes to move forward with installing a companion monitoring well for a well south of Dry Creek. Water Forum is moving forward with having the Sacramento County GSA lead the offer of submitting that TSS application to DWR.

ESJ / South American updates

A technical consultant to Sacramento County GSA reported that the Eastern San Joaquin (ESJ) Groundwater Authority discussed its budget at its last meeting. He shared that the group discussed many options for cost share (e.g., potentially use population size within the GSA’s boundaries and water use, with customized adjustments for eastern portion and a minimum threshold to adequately fund GSP implementation).

A Sacramento County GSA representative shared that the County is investigating a Sacramento County-wide fee option and has hired a consultant to conduct a fee study. If interested, Sacramento County representatives will present the results of its study later this summer and explore with Cosumnes Subbasin GSAs their interests in a County-wide fee and plans for Prop. 218 processes. The County representative emphasized that the County does not want to implement County fees in areas where GSAs wish to implement their own fees. An OHWD representative asked to discuss the fee study earlier rather than later due to the expense involved in carrying out a Prop. 218 process. An SRCD representative commented that he was interested in a County-wide fee and thanked the County for investigating this option.

Water Forum staff reported that a final memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes the South American Working Group has been developed and the groundwater sustainability plan process is kicking off with hiring of consultants. They also shared that SCGA has an interim Executive Director, John Woodling.

Outreach and Engagement Committee

Draft Fact Sheet: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2-Draft-Cosumnes-Fact-Sheet-May-2020.pdf>

Draft 2020 Virtual Public Meeting Agenda: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/3-Draft-2020-Virtual-Public-Workshop-Agenda-v1.pdf>

CBI reported that the Outreach and Engagement Committee met earlier in May and identified the following objectives as well as pros/cons of virtual engagement at this time:

- Important to reach out to public in some way (whether it be in person or virtually),
- Advantages – some people may be able to participate who wouldn't otherwise,
- Disadvantages – likely not as much participation.

CBI did not find any outstanding examples of public outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic but will continue to seek insight from others conducting virtual public meetings.

Discussion:

- Working Group members considered several alternatives for holding a public meeting, including a hybrid version that would allow for some in-person capacity (e.g., a live meeting in July outside at the Wilton Community Center, where attendees would be able to observe social distancing). One challenge is that some participants may be uncomfortable in the heat.
- No decision on approach was made, and the O&E Committee is to discuss further.

Next Steps:

- Working Group members should contact Stephanie Horii, CBI if they have edits on the public factsheet.
- The Outreach and Engagement Committee will meet again to discuss plans for public outreach.

GENERAL UPDATES

Financial/grant related issues

No updates.

Dept. of Conservation SGMA Watershed Coordinator grant

Mike Wackman, OHWD, reported that South Sacramento Water Agency approved his moving forward with applying for \$200,000 for Watershed Coordinator to work with GSAs. He requested letters of support from other GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin and said that he would distribute the

concept letter by email to GSAs. Another GSA representative suggested spending time discussing this at the June Working Group meeting. John Lowrie, Water Forum, commented that, given the current economic uncertainty, several state departments and their respective programs are at risk of losing or delayed funding.

Relevant updates from Subbasin GSAs

No updates.

Public comment

No public comment.

DWR Updates May 2020: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/4-DWR-May-Update.pdf>

GSP TECHNICAL WORK PROGRESS AND PLANNING

EKI Technical Presentation #17: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/5-EKI-Technical-Presentation-2020-05-20.pdf>

Three-month look ahead

Near-Term Priorities

[Refer to [slides 3-6 and 25](#)]

- **[Top Priority]** Meet near-term Prop 68 grant deadlines – GSAs will secure well access agreements for the monitoring network to enable field work to start in late June/July. (Also refer to the critical path table provided below.)
- Finalize CoSANA model calibration. Once calibrated, EKI can use the model to work on the water budget and preliminary estimate of sustainable yield (TM#8)
- Identify and install monitoring wells as needed (July-December)
- In July, the group is expected to begin discussions to define Undesirable Results, associated sustainability goals, and Sustainable Management Criteria (Minimum Thresholds, Measurable Objectives, and Interim Milestones).
- Working Group decides whether to establish Management Areas

Groundwater modeling – CoSANA

[Refer to [slide 7](#)]

EKI reported on the status for repurposing and validating the CoSANA model. They have completed Surface Water updates including geometry and rating curves for Tier 1 and Tier 2 streams, model representation of Camanche Reservoir and Dry Creek inflows and diversions refined, as well as groundwater updates including extending Cosumnes layering throughout CoSANA domain (work conducted by Woodard & Curran) and correcting agricultural water supply calculations in Amador County. EKI also shared that it completed pre- and post-processing tools to assist calibration effort and initiated calibration.

Initial Discussion: Sustainable Management Criteria

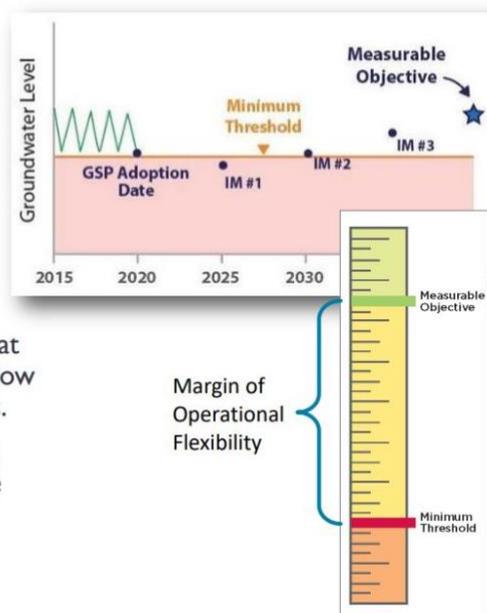
[Refer to [slides 8-17](#)]

EKI presented a brief overview of the SGMA requirements and potential approaches for establishing the Sustainable Management Criteria.

Draft – For discussion purposes only

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA⁽¹⁾

- **Sustainability indicators (SIs)** are the six effects that, when significant and unreasonable, become undesirable results.
- **Minimum thresholds (MTs)** are the quantitative values representing groundwater conditions at a representative monitoring site that, when exceeded, may cause an undesirable result(s).
- **Measurable Objectives (MOs)** are quantitative goals that reflect the basin’s desired groundwater conditions and allow the GSA to achieve the sustainability goal within 20 years.
- **Interim Milestones (IMs)** are target values representing measurable groundwater conditions, in increments of five years, set by an Agency as part of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan.



(1) DWR, 2017. Draft Sustainable Management Criteria BMP; Union of Concerned Scientists, 2017.



SI: CHRONIC LOWERING OF GW LEVELS

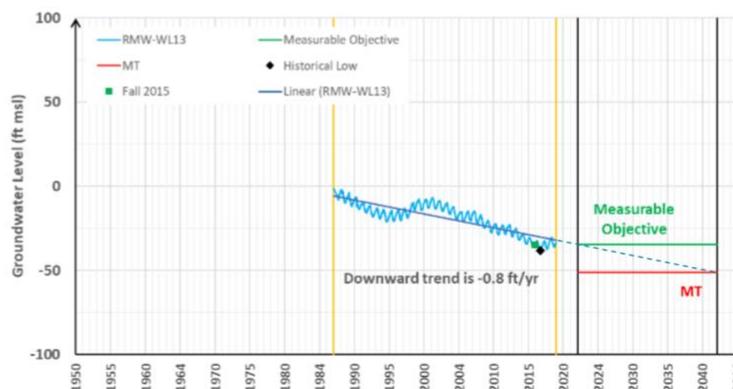
Potential Approach to Sustainability Criteria

*Note: Slide from 20 May 2020
EKI Technical Presentation #17*

- **Minimum Threshold**
 - Historical low
 - OR -
 - Projected 20-year water level based on long-term trend
 - OR -
 - Threshold based on other SI (e.g., Interconnected Surface Water or Subsidence)
- **Measurable Objective**
- Fall 2015 water levels



RMW-13



MONITORING NETWORK NEXUS TO SMCs

Note: Slide modified from 20 May 2020 EKI Technical Presentation #17

- Groundwater (GW) elevations measured in wells are the most relevant and can be used as “proxy” for many sustainability indicators

Sustainability Indicator	SMC Metric	Potential Proxy	RMW Network
1) Lowering of GW Levels	GW elevation	GW elevation	RMW-WL
2) Reduction of GW Storage	GW volume	GW elevation	RMW-WL
3) Seawater Intrusion	Chloride Concentration Isocontour	n/a	
4) Degraded Water Quality	Number of supply wells, GW volume, or location of isocontour	--	RMW-WQ
5) Land Subsidence	Land Surface Elevation	GW elevation	RMW-WL
6) Depletions of Interconnected Surface Water	Volume or rate of streamflow depletion	GW elevation	RMW-ISW

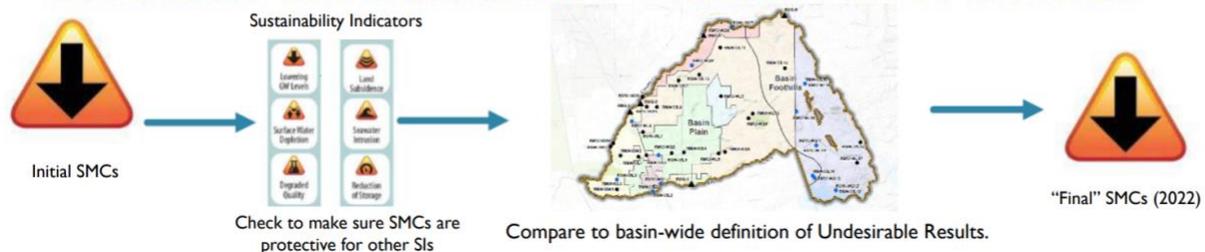


CCR § 354.28(c); DWR, 2017, Best Management Practices for the Sustainable Management of Groundwater Sustainable Management Criteria Draft BMP, dated November 2017

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Draft – For discussion purposes only

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA IS A PROCESS



SMC next steps:

- Finalize Monitoring Network (MN) so initial SMCs can be developed for all network wells
- Develop initial SMCs for the Monitoring Network thus far
- Check that initial SMCs are reasonable and don't negatively affect beneficial users (e.g. domestic well users)
- Develop basin-wide definition of Undesirable Result (UR) and compare SMCs to it
- Once all initial SMCs are set for the finalized MN check to make sure they are protective for other Sustainability Indicators (SIs)



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EKI requested initial feedback on setting sustainability criteria, noting that trends in water levels in the subbasin have been declining and the group should set realistic targets.

Discussion:

- Given the preliminary nature of the Working Group discussion, formal GSA confirmation on technical issues was not sought during the meeting. But individual feedback from some GSAs suggested the following:

- Conceptual agreement with EKI's proposed approach to developing Sustainable Management Criteria, including using fall 2015 water levels as the measurable objective related to Lowering Groundwater Levels.
- Interest in using a projected 20-year water level as the minimum threshold given long-term, basin-wide downward trends and the time needed to secure funding and implement management actions.
- Interest in customizing sustainability indicators, as needed, to account for varying conditions and needs throughout the subbasin.
- EKI stressed the importance of developing measurable objectives which consider known trends in the subbasin while not creating negative impacts. EKI also noted that the Sustainability Criteria are to be firmed up in the fall following further development of the monitoring network, SWAG and public input, and additional GSA discussion.

Public Comment

None

Well Monitoring and Access Agreements

[Refer to [slides 6 and 25](#)]

EKI presented information on the status for obtaining access agreements which are needed for developing a monitoring network and for isotopic studies under the Prop. 68 in Technical presentation #17 (<http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/5-EKI-Technical-Presentation-2020-05-20.pdf>).

GSA representatives reported back on the status of outreach effort to land- and well- owners. Several indicated they continue to have challenges securing the remaining access agreements. Water Forum has been working to coordinate GSAs in their outreach efforts and will continue this work to address outstanding gaps.

Discussion:

- EKI reiterated that written access agreements are needed for long-term access, but verbal agreements are sufficient for one-time access. Technical consultants clarified that the representative monitoring network necessitates GSAs secure long-term access agreements. Through Prop. 68, Cosumnes GSAs are also gathering a snapshot of isotopic data from wells, which is a one-time sampling event. Ideally, representative monitoring sites will also be used for isotopic data. These are two different asks.
- Bennett Brooks, CBI, recommended the group look back at the write-up of talking points and GSAs use this document to conduct outreach.
- The Water Forum and Working Group representatives had previously met to discuss the approach for establishing the Monitoring Network. There was a suggestion for another meeting to discuss the Monitoring Network and well access agreements in greater detail.
- A Sac County GSA representative suggested that the group prioritize tasks that will ensure the subbasin is reimbursed through Prop 68.

[Post-meeting note] – Based on discussion, the following timeline and critical path were created that focused on meeting near-term Prop 68 Deadlines, as DWR will not reimburse the subbasin for Prop. 68 outlays unless “projects” are completed (Refer to [EKI’s May 20 presentation slides](#)).

When	Who	What
ASAP	Water Forum & GSAs	<p>[Access Agreements] Identify best path forward for access agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prop 68. One-time access to sample wells. It is best, and likely most efficient, for these to be the Representative Monitoring Wells identified in TM9 for the Monitoring Program, but they don’t have to be the same wells. Coordinate sample collections date(s). Target July 2020. • SGMA. Long-term access for metered wells and Representative Monitoring Wells identified in TM9. Access needs to be confirmed by Fall 2020. <p>GSAs coordinate with individual well owners to secure remaining access agreements</p>
ASAP through June	GSAs	<p>[Voluntary GW extraction instrumentation] Secure long-term access to install meters at 4-6 wells. Coordinate timing to visit wells and install meters. Target July 2020.</p>
		<p>[Geophysical Investigation] Secure one-time land access to sites identified for ETS survey.</p> <p>Identify 200-400 acres for ToTEM, secure one-time access, and work with EKI to estimate timing (i.e., dates) of survey. Target July 2020.</p>
		<p>[Recharge Characterization Study] Secure access to 25 wells for one-time sampling of well water. Target July 2020.</p>
	EKI	<p>[Geophysical Investigation] Complete ToTEM Scope of Work and Work Authorization with subconsultant AFTER location, timing, and access is finalized by GSA.</p>
MILESTONE: July 1	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Access and timing for meter installation and one-time well-water sampling secured and finalized. ➤ Subconsultant ready to begin surveys
July	GSAs	<p>[Site Visits] Coordinate/Schedule and (if required by well-owner) accompany EKI and subconsultant on site visits with well owner.</p>
	EKI	<p>[Voluntary GW extraction instrumentation] Initiate well site visits with contractors.</p>
		<p>[Recharge Characterization Study] Initiate well water sampling for study</p>
		<p>[Geophysical Investigation] Initiate ETS survey of 20 or more sites with subconsultant.</p>

Management Areas

[Refer to [slides 18-24](#)]

EKI provided a brief overview of the potential need for establishing Management Areas, possible approaches for defining MA boundaries (e.g., based on groundwater-dependent ecosystems distribution), and implications on the monitoring network. Due to meeting time constraints, the group did not discuss this item in detail and will revisit the topic of Management Areas at the next Working Group meeting.

Public Comment

None

WORKING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

Surface Water Advisory Group (SWAG)

SWAG Update Presentation: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/6-SWAG-Update-Presentation.pdf>

Bennett Brooks, CBI, reported back to the Working Group on outreach to the NGOs, tribes, and agencies suggested by the Working Group as potential participants in the Surface Water Advisory Group (SWAG). Updates included:

- Strong interest from Cosumnes Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Coalition of Sacramento (ECOS), and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF);
- Reached out to California Sport Fishing Alliance but did not hear back;
- Will continue efforts to reach out to and engage local tribal interests;
- Heard back positively from US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service;
- Reached out to RD 800 but did not hear back;
- Confirmed interest from both RWA and South American

Tom Gohring emphasized that the SWAG is not a decision-making body. He also commented that the planning team wants to spend extra time with the South American basin when it comes to discussion around the Cosumnes River, and with ESJ around discussions about Dry Creek.

Working Group members suggested including additional representatives for the BLM Cosumnes River Preserve Refuge Manager and Amelia Vankeuren (a groundwater hydrogeologist who also brings an ag-res perspective).

Discussion

- The Working Group approved including the BLM Refuge Manager and Amelia Vankeuren to participate on the SWAG.

Next steps:

- CBI and Water Forum will invite the suggested two additional SWAG members (BLM Refuge Manager and Amelia Vankeuren).

Long-Term Governance

Long-term Governance Committee Presentation: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/7-Long-Term-Governance-Committee-Presentation.pdf>

Long-term Governance Committee Draft Terms of Reference:
<http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/8-Draft-Governance-Committee-guidelines.doc>

GSP Governance Summary Table: <http://cosumnes.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GSP-Governance-Summary-Table-2020-05-12.xlsx>

Brooks presented information on the Long-Term Governance Committee purpose, guiding principles, and composition. As with the SWAG, the Long-Term Governance Committee would not be a decision-making body, but would develop recommendations for long-term governance and funding for implementing the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP. The group would also identify issues that may require legal counsel and consider decision-making protocols for SGMA implementation.

Discussion

- CBI had reviewed the GSPs submitted in January 2020 to explore whether the governance structure changed compared when the GSAs were established in 2017. For the most part, governance approached appeared the same, though funding strategies did shift in some cases (from equal share for GSP development to more weighted funding strategies for implementation). There was a request to look at GSA representation process (e.g., elected, appointed, etc.).
- SRCD is pursuing DWR facilitation support services grant to help SRCD develop internal policies and develop a GSP implementation “business plan.” Other GSAs can contact SRCD or Stantec/DWR if they are interested in this capacity-building opportunity. Note: Long-term governance may be a potential discussion topic during the SRCD FSS effort, but the FSS effort has a different scope and purpose from the Long-Term Governance Committee.

Next steps:

- The Working Group will finalize representation on the Long-term Governance Committee over the next few months.
- CBI will research additional information to add to the governance table (e.g., are GSA members appointed or elected?)
- Austin Miller, SRCD, will send GSAs more information about SRCD’s FSS application. Craig Moyle (DWR) may also be contacting GSAs to explore their interest in participating on the FSS governance discussion.

Public Comment

A member of the public conveyed appreciation that the SWAG would include Amelia Vankeuren, to bring both the valuable ag-res perspective and technical expertise.

NEXT MEETING

The Working Group will next meet on June 17, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, via Zoom Meeting: <https://cbuilding.zoom.us/j/95582571206> | Join audio by phone: +1-669-900-6833 | Meeting ID: 955 8257 1206

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Darrel Evenson, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority
Gary Thomas, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority
Austin Miller, Sloughouse Resource Conservation District
Barbara Washburn, Sloughouse Resource Conservation District
Jay Schneider, Sloughouse Resource Conservation District
Mike Wackman, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District
Mark Stretars, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District
Michael Selling, City of Galt
Kerry Schmitz, Sacramento County
Linda Dorn, Sacramento County
Rodney Fricke, Sacramento County
John Fio, EKI
Anona Dutton, EKI
Kristyn Lindhart, EKI
Bennett Brooks, CBI
Stephanie Horii, CBI
Tom Gohring, Water Forum
John Lowrie, Water Forum
Katherine Perkins, Water Forum

Additionally, members of the public and DWR attended the meeting.

GLOSSARY

Below is a list of commonly used terms:

CBI	Consensus Building Institute - The organization that facilitates SGMA implementation in the Cosumnes Subbasin
CoSANA	A groundwater model being developed by Woodard & Curran which covers the Cosumnes, South American and North American subbasins.
DTW	Distance to water, or the depth at which the ground is saturated.
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EKI	The firm that currently serves as independent technical consultant for the Cosumnes Subbasin
Galt ID	Galt Irrigation District (link) - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin

GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
OHWD	Omoichumne-Hartnell Water District (link) - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin
QAQC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control Plan (link)
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualification
Prop. 1	Proposition 1
SGMA	California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (link)
SRCD	Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin
SSCWA	Southeast Sacramento County Agricultural Water Authority (link)
TAC	Cosumnes Subbasin Technical Advisory Committee – An advisory body, with representatives from each of the seven GSAs, that develops recommendations for approval by the Working Group.
WF	Sacramento Water Forum (link)

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

Visit cosumnes.waterforum.org for the latest meeting information and materials.