

Cosumnes Working Group Meeting

April 21, 2021

Meeting-in-Brief

The April 21st Cosumnes Working Group (WG) meeting focused on progress and planning for developing the Cosumnes Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), potential fee structure options under consideration, and near-term outreach and engagement.

The GSAs have been discussing how they plan to move the subbasin on the path towards sustainability given groundwater conditions (chronic decline in groundwater levels and a preliminary estimate for the projected annual storage decline of approximately 10,000 acre feet per year, AFY, in the Basin Plain). Preliminary estimates indicate that the subbasin's volume would need to increase by an average of 20,000 AFY over the next 20 years to compensate for both the estimated deficit plus outflows from the subbasin. The WG has been exploring potential projects and management actions that could be adequately proactive to avoid/minimize undesirable results, while also providing sufficient flexibility and time to establish, fund, and implement projects/management actions.

GSP Development. Draft sections under review and forthcoming. GSA comments on the draft Technical Memorandum 12 (TM #12) on Projects & Management Actions (P/MAs) are due by May 1st. The group acknowledged that some components of proposed P/MAs still need to be refined/updated after the May 1st deadline. The WG decided that the technical consultant, EKI, should finalize TM #8 (Water Budget and Estimate of Sustainable Yield) as part of the Draft GSP (August release). In the meantime, EKI will continue to refine model analyses in coordination with others (e.g., P/MA Committee) and provide updates at the WG meetings. The next TM, TM #13 (GSP Implementation), will be distributed for GSA review on June 1st with comments due by the June 16th WG meeting.

TMs will be updated and compiled into an Administrative Draft GSP for GSAs to review on July 1st with comments due by the July 21st WG meeting. The Draft GSP will be presented at the August 18th WG meeting, initiating a 60-day public comment period. EKI will present proposed responses to comments at the November 17th WG meeting, then finalize revisions for to provide the Final GSP at the December 15th WG meeting. Each GSA will each hold its own public hearing to formally adopt the GSP. In January, the WG will confirm GSP adoption and submission of the final GSP to the State by January 31, 2022.

GSP-Related Decisions

(Refer to the forthcoming meeting summary for additional context)

- GSA comments on Technical Memo #12 (TM #12) on Projects and Management Actions are due May 1.
- GSAs agreed EKI will wait and finalize TM #8 on Water Budget and Sustainable Yield estimate as part of the Draft GSP (scheduled for August release).
- GSAs agreed the Sac County technical consultant should move forward with the fee nexus study.
- The Working Group will hold a special meeting on May 14 to receive an update on the fee study and decide on next steps for the fee program.
- GSAs agreed to describe in the GSP their intent to establish an inter-basin coordination agreement within the first five years of GSP implementation.
- GSAs gave guidance for the May 26 webinar (and added in-person 27 in-person) public workshop.
- The O&E Committee will coordinate with respective GSA members to review/finalize a dedicated webpage for posting draft GSP components.

GSP Implementation. Several efforts underway feed into the GSP Implementation Plan (TM #13). The WG received updates on the GSP Implementation Plan components and how various efforts by WG committees feed into the Implementation Plan. GSP Implementation Plan will include monitoring and data collection, data gap filling, reporting, stakeholder outreach, and implementation of P/MAs. EKI identified components requiring direction from the WG and committees to complete the GSP Implementation Plan.

Inter-Basin Coordination. Consider developing a coordination agreement. While this type of agreement is not required under SGMA, the WG acknowledged its value. WG members indicated they do not have the capacity to pursue developing an agreement at this time; however, informal coordination discussions are underway and will continue. The WG agreed the GSP should document the GSAs' commitment to develop an inter-basin coordination agreement as part of GSP implementation over the next five years. The GSAs should also ensure that funding for these efforts are included in the GSP budget.

Understanding groundwater dynamics to inform planning: Groundwater Model and Water Budget. EKI conducted CoSANA model analyses with and without future climate change scenarios and preliminary analysis of proposed P/MAs. EKI received an updated CoSANA model in mid-April. As mentioned earlier, the WG instructed EKI to continue to work with neighboring subbasins and WG Committees utilizing the model, but the final TM #8 on water budget and sustainable yield estimates will not be finalized until August.

Collecting data for GSP development: Monitoring Network and Other Technical Studies. Locations for two **new monitoring wells** have been finalized, and discussion on an alternate site is underway; installations are expected to begin in the spring. **Voluntary metering for monitoring groundwater extraction** is moving forward with three installations (vineyard, ag-res, horse property) with a likely additional installation for an aquaculture well. **Groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDE) field verification** was completed in February. A final GDE report and inter-basin coordination with the South American Subbasin are underway. The report is expected to be distributed and ready for discussion in time for the June WG meeting.

Reports for **isotopic and geophysics technical studies** were provided to the GSAs in late March. These studies provided better understanding of recharge sources, such as the influence of the Cosumnes and Mokelumne Rivers, and the location and diverse mix of geological features in the subbasin. These results will help refine the Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model (HCM), but do not change big picture conclusions.

GSP Funding: Proposed Fee Structure Options. The Long-Term Governance Committee presented updates on a proposed subbasin-wide cost-share framework that divided the fee structure into two parts – administrative and projects – to distinguish funding support between these two activities. Both types of fees relate to various combinations of groundwater use, land area, wells, and number of parcels. The Committee recommended a phased fee approach that begins in year 1 with a fee based on irrigated acreage only followed by adding a parcel-based fee in year 2. This will allow for all GSAs, regardless of legal authority, to implement the program consistently. The cost-share for Amador County and the City of Galt will differ due to the different nature of their groundwater usage. Amador, City of Galt, and Rancho Murieta parcels are not included in the parcel-based program. This proposal assumes that those entities will make a voluntary contribution to the program. All other parcels in the basin are included in the program – pumpers and non-pumpers. The Long-Term Governance Committee will

continue discussions and refine assumptions and calculations as the fee study is developed. The Committee will also refine what an appeals process might look like.

To generate funds for GSP implementation starting next year, the GSAs need to adopt the fee program by late July (to be submitted in August to the Auditor's Office to make the 2021/22 Assessment). The WG agreed for Sacramento County's technical consultant to move forward with a fee study for the draft Engineer's Report. The WG will hold a special meeting on May 14 in the afternoon to discuss how the group wishes to move forward with the fee program (e.g., through a Prop 218 or Prop 26 process).

Working Group discussions highlighted several issues meriting further discussion and resolution in the coming months: (1) Amador County's concerns regarding EKI's estimate of the county's groundwater usage and the Governance Committee's current estimate for Amador's suggested contribution to the administrative fee; (2) the aggressive timeline required to launch a Prop. 218 process this summer; and (3) possible barriers to have all GSAs use a consistent implementation method.

The Committee is also continuing its efforts to develop a Joint Powers Authority to oversee and manage GSP implementation. The Committee hopes to put forward a recommended approach for Working Group consideration later this spring.

Other Committees:

Outreach & Engagement (O&E). The committee reported on the March 24 public workshop, which was attended by more than 120 participants total via webinar and at two in-person locations in Herald and Rancho Murieta. The WG agreed with the committee's proposal for the upcoming May public meeting on GSP implementation, including the proposed fee structure. The committee will move forward with coordinating a public webinar followed by an in-person meeting (expected to be on May 26 and 27th, respectively, unless the Committee decides the dates may conflict with extended Memorial Day holiday travel). The committee presented an updated concept draft for a webpage for posting consolidated draft GSP components (e.g., Technical Memos) and identifying opportunities for public comments during the GSP development process. The WG agreed that the O&E Committee will coordinate with GSA members to review the webpage content before finalizing and publicly launching. A draft response letter to ECOS' comments is underway and will be distributed by email for WG review before sending. Engagement invitation letters to Tribes were sent out in February. Two Tribes responded, but no meetings have been set up yet.

2021 Monitoring. The committee has been working on 2021 monitoring plan implementation to address time-sensitive tasks due shortly after January 2022 (e.g., first annual report is due April 2022). The committee expects that a consultant can begin to collect water level and water quality data in May and October (for inclusion in the first annual report and confirm wells in the representative monitoring well program can be accessed and sampled).

GSAs in Attendance

- Amador County
- Sacramento County
- Clay Water District
- City of Galt
- Galt Irrigation District
- Omochumne-Hartnell Water District
- Sloughouse Resource Conservation District

Action Items

Topic	Who	What
P/MAs	GSAs	Submit red-line edits on Draft Tech Memo #12 (P/MAs) to CBI by May 1, 2021.
GSP Implementation	WG Committees	Review components of the GSP Implementation chapter (TM #13) and provide information for EKI to complete the draft TM #13.
Technical studies	EKI / Ad Hoc	Delve into Prop 68 technical studies' findings and implications for P/MAs
Long-Term Governance and fee structure	EKI / Amador	Work with Amador GSA members to better understand Amador's groundwater usage.
	Amador	Continue internal discussions and coordination with LT Governance Committee related to Amador's groundwater usage and cost-share contribution
	LT Gov Committee	Develop cost estimate for establishing an Inter-basin Coordination Agreement as part of GSP implementation
	Sac County	Instruct technical consultant HDR to move forward with the fee nexus study
	CBI/GSAs	Schedule and announce special WG meeting for May 14 in the afternoon to decide on next steps for the fee structure.
O&E	O&E Committee	Move forward with May workshop planning (currently scheduled May 26-27) (consider Memorial Day implications)
	GSAs	Submit feedback on the GSP Tech Memo & public input draft webpage to respective O&E Committee representatives by May 27.
	Austin	Circulate among WG a draft response letter to ECOS' emailed comments
	CBI	Re-post ECOS email comments as part of the April 21 WG materials

Meeting Materials

- [Agenda \(revised\)](#)
- [2a – WG April Update](#)
- [2b – DWR Update \(4-14-21\)](#)
- [2c – GSP Alternative Project List FAQ](#)
- [3 – O&E Update Presentation](#)
- [4a - Updated Draft Cosumnes Subbasin Fee Summary Presentation](#)
- [4b - Updated Draft Fee Strategy Summary](#)
- [5 - EKI Technical Presentation](#)
- ECOS Comments: [Feb 16 Letter](#) | [March 11 Email](#)