

AUGUST 2021

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

SISKIYOU COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Shasta Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan

PUBLIC DRAFT REPORT



**SISKIYOU COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
SHASTA VALLEY GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

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Chapter 1. Introduction

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Note: Appendices 1-B and 1-C will be provided after the public meetings have occurred and once all comments on the draft GSP have been received.

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67 **1.1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

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69 In September 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater
70 Management Act (SGMA), a three-bill legislative package composed of Assembly Bill
71 (AB) 1739 (Dickinson), Senate Bill (SB) 1168 (Pavley) and SB 1319 (Pavley), which is
72 codified in Section 10720 et seq. of the California Water Code. The legislation provides a
73 framework for long-term sustainable groundwater management across California. The
74 intent of SGMA is to provide local and regional agencies the authority to sustainably
75 manage groundwater resources to help preserve water supplies for existing and potential
76 beneficial uses and to protect communities, farms, and the environment against
77 prolonged dry periods and climate change.

78 The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources
79 Control Board (State Board) provide primary oversight for implementation of SGMA. DWR
80 adopted regulations that specify the components and evaluation criteria for groundwater
81 sustainability plans, alternatives to Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), and
82 coordination agreements to implement such plans. To satisfy the requirements of SGMA,
83 local agencies must do the following:

84 Locally controlled and governed Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) must
85 be formed for all high- and medium-priority groundwater basins in California.

86 GSAs must develop and implement GSPs or Alternatives to GSPs that define a
87 roadmap for how groundwater basins will reach long-term sustainability.

88 The GSPs must consider six sustainability indicators defined as: groundwater level
89 decline, groundwater storage reduction, seawater intrusion, water quality
90 degradation, land subsidence, and surface-water depletion.

91 GSAs must submit annual reports to DWR each April 1 following adoption of a GSP
92 with the first report due April 2022.

93 Groundwater basins should reach sustainability within 20 years of implementing their
94 GSPs.

95 The Shasta River Valley Basin (Basin) is a medium priority basin in Siskiyou County in
96 Northern California. A description of the Basin, including a summary of the jurisdictional
97 areas, water resources monitoring and management, land use, and groundwater
98 conditions are presented in Chapter 2.

99 In accordance with SGMA, this GSP was developed and will be implemented by the
100 Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) representing the Basin, the Siskiyou County
101 Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

102 Per SGMA requirements, the GSA is responsible for developing and submitting a
103 Groundwater Sustainability Plan, by January 31st, 2022. The GSA feels the GSP will
104 provide long-term sustainability for all beneficial uses and users of water. The GSA also
105 anticipates these plans will be a tool used for the overarching watershed goal of improving
106 water management in the watershed bringing multiple interests to the table to resolve
107 water conflicts in the basin.
108

109 **1.2. SUSTAINABILITY GOAL**

110

111 The overall sustainability goal of groundwater management in the Basin is to maintain
112 groundwater resources in ways that best support the continued and long-term health of
113 the people, the environment, and the economy in the Basin, for generations to come.
114 Further description of the sustainability goal, as it relates to the sustainability indicators,
115 is included in Chapter 3.

116 **1.3. AGENCY INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

117 **1.3.1. Agency Information**

118 Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
119 190 Greenhorn Road
120 Yreka, CA 96097

121 **1.3.2. Organization and Management Structure**

122 The Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is the sole GSA for
123 the Basin. The Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Act (Cal
124 Uncod. Water Deer, Act 1240 §§ 1-38) was adopted by the State Legislature in 1959.
125 This Act established a special district of the same name, and of limited powers that could
126 provide flood protection, water conservation, recreation and aesthetic enhancement
127 within its boundaries. At the time of its creation, the jurisdictional boundaries of the Flood
128 District were smaller than those of the County. In 1983, following LAFCO action, the
129 balance of the County was annexed into the District making its jurisdictional boundaries
130 coincide with the County. The District is governed by a Board of Directors that is
131 composed of the Board of Supervisors; however, the District is a separate legal entity
132 from the County, with independent rights and limited powers set forth in its originating act.
133 The District's purpose is the conservation and control of storm, flood, and other waters
134 and ensuring beneficial use thereof.

135 **1.3.3. Legal Authority of the GSA**

136 Siskiyou County Resolution FLD17-01, approved by the District Board on April 4th, 2017
137 authorized the District to act as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Butte, Scott
138 and Shasta Valley groundwater basins.
139

140 **1.3.4. Contact Information for Plan Manager**

141 The Siskiyou County Natural Resources Department is designated as the plan manager,
142 and can be reached at:

143 1312 Fairlane Rd
144 Yreka, CA 96097
145 Phone: 530-842-8005
146 SGMA@co.siskiyou.ca.us

147

148 **1.3.5. Estimated Cost of Implementing GSP and GSA’s Approach to Meet**
149 **Costs**

150 The GSA will pursue all available grant funding opportunities to assist in covering the
151 yearly costs. The GSA utilized a consultant to conduct a fee study to have in place
152 should the GSA feel funds need to be raised publicly to pay for yearly management of
153 the plans. It is expected that the GSA will manage implementation and reporting of the
154 GSP, with support from other entities as needed.

155

156 **1.4. NOTICE AND COMMUNICATION**

157 **1.4.1. Notice**

158 GSP information, GSA Board and Advisory Committee meeting schedules, and useful
159 links can be found at the County of Siskiyou Website¹.

160 The GSA holds publicly noticed public Board and Advisory Committee meetings to allow
161 stakeholders to engage and provide input throughout the process as well as meetings
162 with specific working groups in the Basin to address specific technical topics or questions.
163 As the GSP is developed and implemented, the website will be updated accordingly with
164 new information for public comment. Notices of public hearings are communicated
165 through multiple methods including local newspapers and postings on the County of
166 Siskiyou website, and a SGMA email outreach list, informing the public on meeting
167 information, subject, and how to provide comments.

168 **1.4.2. Decision- Making Process**

169

Note: This section is under legal review.

170

171 GSP decision-making and input is represented by the roles of the Groundwater Advisory
172 Committee, GSA Boards and Stakeholders.

¹ <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/naturalresources/page/sustainable-groundwater-management-act-sgma>

173 Decision-making during GSP development and for final approval is ideally achieved
174 through consensus. In the absence of a consensus, as a last resort, members of the
175 Groundwater Advisory Committee or GSA Board may be called upon to cast votes.

176 **1.4.3. Public Outreach**

177 **1.4.3.1. Communication and Engagement Plan**

178 The Siskiyou County Groundwater Sustainability Agency developed a Shasta River
179 Valley Basin Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan (C&E Plan) to educate
180 interested parties about local SGMA implementation, describe the phases of GSP
181 development, encourage public participation in the process, and address noticing and
182 communication requirements in the law (Appendix 1-A).

183 The C&E Plan describes how the local GSA was formed in Siskiyou County, the support
184 role played by technical and facilitation consultants, and the process by which the GSA
185 board of directors (GSA Board)—with support from a stakeholder advisory committee—
186 gathers, considers, and responds to needs and interests of constituents throughout the
187 community. Consensus building is a foundational principle of all committee discussions,
188 and membership is intended to reflect the diversity of beneficial groundwater uses and
189 users in the Basin.

190 The GSA maintains a government-to-government relationship with any Native American
191 Tribe in Siskiyou County or the larger Klamath River watershed which expresses interest
192 in SGMA. Tribal representatives have been appointed to the advisory committees in the
193 Scott Valley, Shasta Valley and Butte Valley groundwater basins. Moreover, Siskiyou
194 County and the Karuk Tribe formalized good faith communication protocols around SGMA
195 through an established memorandum of understanding.

196
197 The Shasta Valley C&E Plan includes the following overarching public outreach goals:

- 198 • Provide the GSA, Advisory Committee, community leaders and other beneficial
199 users a roadmap to ensure broad understanding and consistent messaging of
200 SGMA requirements
- 201 • Foster information sharing, communication and collaboration, and opportunities for
202 stakeholders to have meaningful input on the GSA decision-making process
- 203 • Provide reasonable opportunities for interested stakeholders to receive and
204 understand the technical groundwater information developed as part of the GSP
205 process
- 206 • Ensure a collaborative GSP development and implementation process that is
207 widely seen in the community as fair and respectful to the range of interested or
208 affected stakeholders
- 209 • Assist the GSA in meeting all SGMA communication and engagement
210 requirements

211
212 Specific objectives which help the GSA achieve these overarching goals include the
213 following:

- 214 • Educate stakeholders on:
 - 215 ○ Important SGMA requirements, events and milestones
 - 216 ○ The role, authorities and responsibilities of the local GSA in Siskiyou County
 - 217 ○ The advisory committee's role and how the public can stay informed or
 - 218 involved
 - 219 ○ The benefits of having a technically robust and broadly supported GSP
 - 220 ○ Potential changes to groundwater monitoring and management under
 - 221 SGMA
 - 222 ○ How the interests of beneficial uses and users will be considered under
 - 223 SGMA
- 224 • Develop strategies and communication mechanisms for obtaining broad
- 225 stakeholder input and feedback that informs GSP development
- 226 • Coordinate outreach and engagement activities that foster information sharing,
- 227 raise awareness and encourage public engagement in SGMA
- 228 • Ensure the needs, interests and perspectives of all beneficial uses and users are
- 229 identified, documented and considered by the GSA Board
- 230 • Support local beneficial users to identify, preempt or otherwise proactively address
- 231 and resolve different perspectives or conflicts over groundwater use and
- 232 management
- 233 • Track all input received by beneficial users during the GSP development process
- 234 and document GSA Board responses as input is considered
- 235 • Develop strategies and communication mechanisms for long-term GSP
- 236 implementation
- 237

238 A comprehensive list of identified stakeholder groups in the Basin is included in the C&E
239 Plan. Initially developed by GSA staff, the list was reviewed and expanded by the local
240 SGMA advisory committee. The list may be improved and updated at any time during the
241 GSP development or implementation process. Stakeholder groups included in the list
242 represent a priority target audience for SGMA related communication and engagement.

243 The final section of the C&E Plan describes outreach strategies which the local GSA
244 employs to effectively advance SGMA implementation. Specific tools and forums include
245 the following:

- 246 • Advisory committee meetings
- 247 • Constituent briefings with local organizations
- 248 • Tribal engagement
- 249 • Public meetings and workshops
- 250 • GSA Board meetings
- 251 • Coordination with local resource conservation districts
- 252 • Coordination with state and federal agencies
- 253 • Integration of relevant studies and materials
- 254 • Interested parties list
- 255 • Informational materials
- 256 • County SGMA website
- 257 • Local media and public service announcements

258

259 The local GSA will at key times evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of its C&E Plans
260 for each SGMA groundwater basin in Siskiyou County. Evaluations will likely occur at or
261 near key milestones, such as the completion of a major phase of work or shortly before
262 or after submission of the GSP for evaluation by the Department of Water Resources. As
263 needed, the C&E Plan will be updated to best serve Siskiyou County, its constituents,
264 and all its collaborative partners in the SGMA implementation process.

265

266 **1.4.3.2. Shasta Valley Basin Beneficial Uses and Users**

267 Groundwater in the Basin serves the needs of communities, farms, and businesses and
268 provides high quality drinking water to urban and rural residents, in addition to helping to
269 sustain vital ecosystems. Beneficial uses of groundwater include water for irrigation,
270 agriculture, domestic use, municipal use, and water for the protection and enhancement
271 of fish and wildlife. Beneficial uses and users of the Basin have been identified as the
272 following:

- 273 • Agricultural users (farmers, ranchers, dairy professionals)
- 274 • Rural, Agricultural and Domestic well owners
- 275 • Municipal well operators
- 276 • Public water systems
- 277 • Local land use planning agencies
- 278 • Environmental uses and users of groundwater, including but not limited to habitat
279 that supports fish, birds, animals and insects; endangered species protection;
280 protection of beneficial habitat for recreation and other societal benefits
- 281 • Surface water users
- 282 • Tribal Governments
- 283 • Disadvantaged communities

284

285 **1.4.3.3. Public Engagement Opportunities**

286 The GSA is committed to encouraging the active involvement of diverse social, cultural,
287 and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin. The County of
288 Siskiyou website provides information regarding GSA Board Meeting frequency,
289 background information, documents, status updates, and contact information. GSP
290 updates will be included as noticed per GSA respective meeting agendas that are
291 published in advance. Meetings providing updates on GSP development are scheduled
292 on regularly, typically once a month, to inform the public and Interested Parties and
293 provide opportunities to ask questions and make suggestions. These meetings are posted
294 on the County of Siskiyou website² and announced via email. A full list of public meetings
295 where the GSP was discussed or considered are included in Appendix 1-B.

² <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/naturalresources/page/sustainable-groundwater-management-act-sigma>

296 In addition, GSP Staff will be available throughout the GSP development process to
297 communicate and engage with Interested Parties and the public. Interested Parties can
298 be involved in GSP development by providing input throughout the process.

299 Other avenues for public engagement included or will include:

300 **GSA Board meetings:** During Public comment period of any Siskiyou County Board
301 of Supervisors or Siskiyou County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
302 (GSA) Board meetings

303 **Working Groups:** Working groups may be formed during GSP implementation to
304 provide specific input from Interested Parties or on specific topics.

305 **Comments:** Opportunity for the public or interested parties to comment on draft GSP
306 sections or chapters is provided. Comments received through this process, and
307 the responses provided are included in Appendix 1-C.

308 **1.4.4. Coordination**

309 GSA and Siskiyou County staff, and at times technical team held coordination meetings
310 or phone calls to provide additional input into the GSP with various state agencies, Tribes,
311 NGO's, or members of the public. GSA staff and at times the technical team also attended
312 non-SGMA focused workshops to provide updates or information regarding SGMA and
313 the GSP development. Some highlights of those efforts are below:
314

- 315 • **California Department of Fish and Wildlife**
 - 316 ○ GSA staff has monthly coordination meetings with CDFW staff to discuss
317 numerous topics, which includes SGMA updates and key items and issue's
318 related to groundwater management.
- 319 • **North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board**
 - 320 ○ Recently, GSA staff and the technical team has met with Regional Board
321 staff regarding efforts to gather groundwater samples, and to also discuss
322 the relationship of TMDL waivers in Scott and Shasta Valleys and how those
323 will be impacted or partnered with projects and managements actions in the
324 GSP.
 - 325 ○ GSA staff and technical team participated in a Scott and Shasta flow
326 working group, led by Regional Board staff, where immediate project needs
327 were discussed which included actions as they will relate to GSP actions
328 and projects. Development of the interconnected surface water SMC was
329 discussed, and members of the working group provided comments and
330 asked questions that were answered by the technical team.
- 331 • **Quartz Valley Tribe**
- 332 • **Yurok Tribe**
- 333 • **Karuk Tribe**
 - 334 ○ The GSA developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the
335 Karuk Tribe regarding improving coordination and communication efforts
336 related to GSP development which provided a bridge of opportunity to

337 discuss and deliberate on GSP development for the Scott and Shasta
338 basins. This took multiple meetings, with valuable assistance from DWR
339 provided Facilitation Support Services. The MOU (in Appendix 1-D) was
340 signed and approved by the District Board on March 17, 2020.

341 • **State Water Resources Control Board**

- 342 ○ Only for the Shasta Valley basin, GSA staff and the technical team regularly
343 met with SWRCB staff regarding developing groundwater and surface water
344 models for the Shasta River. Both parties regularly shared information, data
345 and input for each respective parties modeling needs. More information
346 regarding SWRCB’s modeling efforts in the Shasta can be found in [Chapter
347 2]
- 348 ○ On November 14th and 15th, GSA and County staff, District Board members,
349 met with SWRCB staff and toured agricultural operations in the Scott and
350 Shasta Valleys to discuss water issues and observe on-ground projects
351 being planned or implemented that in various ways will help improve both
352 groundwater and surface water sources.

353 • **Klamath Coalition of the Willing**

- 354 ○ This is a large group of NGO’s, Tribes, and irrigators brought together to
355 develop solutions related to the Klamath Basin conflicts. County staff and
356 the technical team has interacted with the group and developed project
357 ideas that are both being implemented and in initial design phases,
358 including managed aquifer recharge, storage development and improving
359 upland lake management. These projects are further described in Chapter
360 4.

361 • **Scott and Shasta Valley Watermaster District**

- 362 ○ GSA staff and the technical team have had multiple meetings with
363 Watermaster District staff regarding how the GSP’s will not conflict with the
364 Watermaster duties of upholding the Scott and Shasta Valley decrees. The
365 meetings have also been beneficial to understanding current data related
366 to flow and determining data gaps, that will both aid in the accuracy and
367 reliability of both basins respective numerical models.

368 **1.5. GSP ORGANIZATION**

369 The GSP is organized in accordance with the GSP Emergency Regulations and statutory
370 provisions of SGMA. The format of the GSP is similar to the outline provided by DWR’s
371 Sustainable Groundwater Management program. A brief summary of each GSP section
372 is provided below.

373 **Executive Summary.** Provides a summary of what is included in the GSP.

374 **Chapter 1 – Introduction.** The Introduction includes the purpose and administration
375 of the GSP, sustainability goal, agency information, and GSP organization.

376 **Chapter 2 – Plan Area and Basin Setting.** Plan Area describes the geographic
377 setting, existing water resources planning and programs, and additional GSP
378 components. The Basin Setting includes a detailed discussion of the hydrogeologic

379 conceptual model used to prepare the GSP; current and historical groundwater
380 conditions; future groundwater conditions after allowances for growth, land use
381 changes, and climate change; and a discussion of the area's current and future
382 groundwater budget.

383 **Chapter 3 – Sustainable Management Criteria.** Includes the sustainability goal,
384 addresses the mandated six sustainability indicators that monitor undesirable
385 results; defines the Minimum Thresholds for each undesirable result; and sets
386 Measurable Objectives for the GSP's complete implementation, including Interim
387 Milestones for intermediate plan years. This Chapter also describes the network
388 of monitoring wells and other information to measure the GSP's outcomes;
389 assesses the need for improvements to the network to provide fully representative
390 data; and address monitoring protocols and data analysis techniques.

391 **Chapter 4 – Projects and Management Actions to Achieve Sustainability.**
392 Describes potential projects and management actions that may be implemented in
393 pursuit of sustainability. Where available, project details include measurable
394 objectives that are expected to benefit from the project or management action,
395 required permits, anticipated benefits, estimated costs, and how the project or
396 management action will be accomplished.

397 **Chapter 5 – Plan Implementation.** Describes the GSP implementation process,
398 including estimated costs, sources of funding, a preliminary schedule through full
399 implementation, description of the required data management system,
400 methodology for annual reporting, and how progress evaluations will be conducted
401 over time.

402 **Appendices – References and Technical Studies.** Contains the references and
403 sources used to prepare this GSP.

404 ■ **DWR GSP Elements Guide**– This GSP was prepared to meet the regulatory
405 requirements established by DWR, as shown in the completed GSP Elements
406 Guide, provided in Appendix 1-E, which is organized according to the California
407 Code of Regulation Sections of the GSP Emergency Regulations.

408

409