

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

September 27, 2022, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Held in-person at Fort Jones Community Hall and remotely via Zoom

Meeting Recap:

1. **Approval of Past Meeting Summary:** Advisory Committee approved the minutes from their most recent meeting held in October 2021.
2. **Announcements and Updates:** included an update from Matt Parker on Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) activities and an update from Pat Vellines on news from the California Department of Water Resources. Also included time for comments from the public on non-agenda items (there were none) and updates from Committee Members on basin conditions.
3. **Technical Team Presentation:** included overview of the Annual Report submitted in April 2022, and an overview of the DWR implementation grant requirements. The team also reviewed the determined components that will be included in the grant proposal.
4. **Discussion of DWR Implementation Grant Proposal:** Advisory Committee selected projects and management actions from Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Chapter 4 to include in the DWR implementation grant proposal.
5. **Reflection on Next Steps:** Members of the Advisory Committee were identified to help scope the projects and management actions to include in the DWR implementation grant proposal and follow-up discussions with the technical team were scheduled to be take place in early October.

Next Steps for the DWR Implementation Grant Proposal:

Members of the Advisory Committee are meeting with Larry Walker and Associates (LWA) and GSA staff in early October to develop the high-level scope for the projects that will be included in the DWR implementation grant proposal. Following the October meetings, the technical consultants will draft project descriptions to include in the implementation grant proposal. The projects selected for inclusion in the grant include:

- Irrigation efficiency projects - Assessment + Pilot Projects + Measurement of Benefit
 - Michael Stapleton, Jim Morris, Tom Menne, Crystal Robinson
- Winter stock water/ditches recharge assessment / Recharge site assessment & flood plain expansion – identification of additional sites (flooding, off stream ponds, flood plain expansion)
 - Theo Johnson, Jim Morris, Tom Menne, Charnna Gilmore
- Upland issues – green infrastructure and/or fuels reduction
 - Charnna Gilmore, Amanda Cooper, Michael Stapleton
- Additional funding for Scott Valley Irrigation District (SVID) recharge project
 - Jim Morris (Laura from LWA is following up directly)
- Well Inventory/Registration Program Development (County-wide)
 - Charnna Gilmore, Amanda Cooper and other basin representatives
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Other Action Items:

- The GSA will connect with the Regional Water Board group (Eli Scott is a potential starting point of contact) to share information about the monitoring data that's available. Laura will also follow up with Crystal Robinson since she was unable to share her thoughts during the meeting.
- Larry Walker and Associates will follow up with members of the Advisory Committee as noted throughout the minutes.

Attachments, Links:

- PowerPoint Presentation Slides (attached)
- DWR updates and Northern Regional Office Flyer (attached)
- Fall Newsletter (attached)

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

- Annual Report: <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gspar/submitted>
- DWR implementation grant [proposal solicitation package with scoring criteria](#)

Attendees: see last page

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. Call to Order, Introductions, Agenda Review, and Hybrid Meeting Structure

Facilitators Emily Finnegan and Marisa Perez-Reyes convened the meeting and conducted a roll call of Advisory Committee Members participating in person and online, establishing quorum. Emily reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. Approval of Past Meeting Summary

Tom Menne motioned to accept the previous meeting minutes and Tom Jopson seconded. Three members abstained. The October 2021 Meeting Summary was approved and will be posted to the [Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\) Website](#).

3. Public Comment Period

Members of the public were invited to provide comments unrelated to meeting agenda items. No public comments were shared.

4. District Staff Updates

Matt Parker shared updates:

- The Scott Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was submitted to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) by the January 31, 2022 deadline. DWR is now reviewing the Plan and has until January 2024 to determine if the Plan is adequate, incomplete, or inadequate. The District will provide any updates on the progress of DWR's review, but feedback from DWR is not anticipated until mid- to late-2023 at the earliest. The GSP may be viewed on DWR's SGMA portal: <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gsp/preview/88>
- The Committee asked questions about the number of plans that have been approved thus far and Pat Vellines (DWR) provided an overview. If a plan is determined to be incomplete, the GSA has 180 days to submit a revised plan, which is followed by another 60-day public comment period. DWR will send preliminary determination letters prior to the formal GSP determination.
- Matt Parker provided an update on Executive Order N-7-22 and how this impacts the County's well permitting process. GSA staff is working with Siskiyou County Environmental Health Department regarding the County's well permitting and application process to comply with the Executive Order and will bring information to the Board of Supervisors at an upcoming meeting
- The Stantec Facilitation team is assisting in the development of a "Multi-Basin Management Strategy Document" that will serve as a guide for the GSA to manage the three GSPs. The GSA is gathering input through interviews and a stakeholder survey. A link to fill out the survey will be made available soon.
- The GSA is working to explore and develop opportunities with the community and local entities to improve monitoring and data collection under the current drought conditions that will aid the GSA in improving groundwater reliability for all beneficial users.

A member of the public asked whether the group would discuss the effort to improve the monitoring networks and Laura confirmed that this item would be covered later in the agenda.

5. Announcements from DWR and Other Agencies

Pat provided updates from DWR on the following. See attached flyer for full details.

- SGMA Implementation Grant Program
- Streamlined permitting process for groundwater recharge projects – CEQA exemption for groundwater recharge projects. If you are interested in learning more, talk to DWR's Tim Godwin: timothy.godwin@water.ca.gov or call 916-873-4599
- Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) surveying information is now available on the California Natural Resources Agency Open Data Portal: <https://data.cnra.ca.gov/dataset/aem>.

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

Tito Cervantes (DWR) shared information about the DWR Northern Regional Office's land and water use programs (see attached flyer and map).

6. Committee Member Updates

In the interest of time, Committee Members were encouraged to share updates during the Discussion item later in the Agenda.

7. Presentation from Technical Team

Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates (LWA), shared updates on the Annual Report submitted in April 2022 and provided an overview of hydrological conditions and basin modeling efforts. See attached PowerPoint slides.

- This year's **Annual Report** generally set up the process for subsequent reports. Next year, the team will have more information available to report to demonstrate progress.
- **Hydrologic conditions** – everyone knows things have been dry. The GSP included up to water year 2018. They are now up to Spring 2021. Laura shared graphs of groundwater elevation data.
- **Monitoring:** Laura shared an update on the status of monitoring efforts (see slides). The Committee discussed how to best go about connecting with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to coordinate on addressing data gaps and share monitoring data (see below).
 - Sari Sommarstrom (public participant) expressed concern about monitoring data sharing and the lack of engagement by the State and Regional Water Boards. She cited a specific flows meeting recently held by the Regional Water Board, where they seem to be approaching a stalemate on well monitoring.
 - Laura noted that the Scott Valley has some of the best data available due to a voluntary program from 2006. Giuliano Carneiro Galdi from the UC Cooperative Extension has been monitoring a set of wells that are relatively new and haven't yet been incorporated into the GSP.
 - Eli Scott from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has attended Advisory Committee meetings in the past. The Committee proposed contacting Eli to request that he join the next meeting, and/or if the GSA should attend the next Water Board meeting to provide an update on well monitoring so that the agencies can coordinate. Pat encouraged this idea.
 - Some of the data sharing concerns seemed to center on access to the raw monitoring data. Many people don't want their name attached to their data. In regards to access—the technical team shared that the data in the hydrographs that were presented earlier is as raw as the data can get.
 - Tom Jopson added that the Karuk Tribe developed their own model. He expressed concern about getting back on the same page in terms of joint fact-finding.
 - Laura suggested doing something with the monitoring network to help solidify trust in the model. Small adjustments could make a big difference.
 - Charnna Gilmore (AC member) echoed that she heard back and forth at the flow meeting but did not perceive it to be a stalemate. She shared that she perceives the frustration is less about the monitoring, more that there's not an impact on the gauge. She hasn't heard a lack of trust around the data.
 - **Proposal:** The Committee concluded that they would connect with the flows group to share information about the monitoring data that's available. Laura and others will follow up with Crystal Robinson since she was not able to weigh in live during the meeting.
- Laura shared information about the SVID trial recharge project that was conducted this spring using the stock water permit. LWA wrote a report last year which is currently under review by the State Water Board. The trial confirmed that the infrastructure is in place to divert water if flows come next year, but the flows were much too small this year to see an observable change.
 - There was a question from the Committee about DWR's streamlined process for issuing 180-day temporary permits. This process does not really apply for Scott Valley because flows rarely exceed the 90th percentile (it would be just about one week per year).
 - Pat advised Laura to talk to Tim Godwin about the issue, as DWR is seeking to understand how they can improve their process to remove barriers to streamlined permitting like this.

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

- Pat added that it can be difficult for drought and emergency funds to cover recharge projects. She shared an example of a project at Sonoma Water that received funding and was considered a study.

8. Discussion: DWR Implementation Grant Proposal

Background

Laura shared information about the DWR implementation grant and the timeline for submitting the application. LWA is targeting the end of October to have the proposal finished because DWR has offered to take a first pass at reviewing and providing preliminary comments ahead of the final submission at the end of November.

Laura shared information about the scoring criteria for the proposal, noting that the application score is averaged. A single weak component can hurt the overall proposal, so they are going to prioritize projects that are detailed and well thought-out. The GSA will have four years (until June 2027) to implement the grant once they receive it. The funding reward is anticipated to be announced in summer 2023.

Determined Components

The GSA has already decided to include certain high-priority items in the grant proposal. The determined components listed on slide 21 and 22 of the presentation include:

- GSP management and administration
- Fee study and economic analysis continuation
- Stakeholder outreach
- GSP updates, including incorporation of model updates to address data gaps, managing data, responses to the DWR GSP determination, annual reports, and the 2027 GSP update (5-year update).

Charnna asked how public trust will be considered in the economic analysis and whether an economic value would be assigned to groundwater dependent ecosystems. Laura shared that there has been some discussion about the value of water in scenario planning. She invited participation from the AC in the shaping of the economic analysis and suggested that perhaps a working group could convene on the topic. Michael added that if the Chinook are listed, it'll have an economic impact on the County.

The group discussed data management needs for the monitoring network and the need for data standards.

Components for Discussion

Facilitator Emily Finnegan provided framing information about how the Committee will spend the rest of the afternoon to select projects and management actions that will be included in the implementation grant proposal. Laura shared information about a few of the preliminary ideas which were surfaced in the GSP:

- Well Inventory and Application Program Development
- Irrigation Efficiency Projects
- Recharge projects, including SVID.

The GSA should focus on advancing projects which can reasonably be accomplished in the next 3-4 years and have sufficient detail to be included in the grant application.

Flow Meters

Michael proposed the purchase of flow meters if the drought continues. The group spoke about dry well reporting. In the past, a Bureau of Reclamation grant covered that. Tom suggested that the GSA pay for installing flow meters. Matt reiterated that the County would not promote measures that would require the installation of flow meters. Laura suggested incorporating voluntary flow meters into the data collection component. There could also be a mechanism included to aid ranchers with installation of the meters. Local landowners are pursuing local cooperative solutions (LCS) under curtailment. The group talked about how DWR grant funds can't be used to meet regulatory requirements. Even though they're taking voluntary steps, it's in response to the curtailment. This conversation will be taken offline for clarification.

Well Inventory/Registration Program

County Environmental Health wants to update their records across the County. It's really important for the well inventory to track which "new" wells are just replacement wells, otherwise the number just keeps going up. Pat Vellines shared that Tehama County just passed a three-year parcel tax to fund well inventorying. It's so important for the GSA to be able to know where the agricultural and domestic wells are located. Claire Kouba (public participant, UC Davis) clarified that an

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

inventory includes more than just locations of wells, but also groundwater elevation and the elevation of the monitor. All of this data helps improve the model's predictive capacity.

Recharge Projects – Stock Water Ditch Characterization

Theo Johnson shared information about recent limitations on winter stock watering from the State Water Board. She's curious about the opportunity for using existing winter stock water rights for recharge. She thinks that some folks aren't using those full rights, which is a missed opportunity. Stock water ditches are all over the place and could be used. Lots of people would be really happy to recharge. Theo cited multiple locations along the west side and valley wide and expressed that they may be able to push back on limitations to winter stock watering if they have data to demonstrate how recharge can benefit supply. Tom Jopson added information about the French Creek decrees.

Claire added that from the modeling perspective they'd be very interested in knowing more about the infiltration rates of the ditches in different parts of the valley at different flow rates. Basically, it'd be great to have more data on the whole water balance of the ditches. If they know how many miles of ditches exist and the approximate flow rate from the ditches, they can develop a preliminary estimate of how much water the ditches leak each year and come up with a more refined project to collect the data. The full network of ditches was not included in the first model. Theo suggested that the GSA would get good buy-in from landowners now.

The UC Davis soil ag banking index can also help identify locations to maximize water banking.

Irrigation Efficiency Projects – Assessment, Pilot, and Measurement of Benefit

LWA shared about the importance of quantifying benefits from irrigation efficiencies. It was suggested that the GSA could evaluate the LCSs and quantify savings from irrigation efficiencies. There are 29 LCSs, 16 of which have been approved and the expectation was about 30% groundwater savings. UC Cooperative Extension is a neutral party that can be used. This could be part of the assessment process.

Sari asked whether anyone was pulling together ACS data or tracking water use change.

Assessment of Alluvial Fans and Surface Water Connectivity

Tom Jopson expressed a desire for a better understanding of surface water connectivity and flows at Kidder Creek. Sari echoed that the whole alluvial fan is misunderstood, and barely mentioned in connection with surface water impacts. Crystal Robinson added that the integrated hydrogeological model was mentioned at one of the flow meetings last week.

Upland Issues – Green Infrastructure, Fuel Reduction

Charnna highlighted the nexus of water issues with the available fire-related funding. She proposed conducting an upland assessment, inclusive of culverts along roadways, fuel reduction projects, and reducing water demand to the valley floor. Thomas Harter is doing some work related to this and may have ideas on where to focus an assessment of this type. The Upper Watershed rain runoff model can be used to further refine the groundwater model. It's not really management, just simulating the hydrology.

Laura stressed the importance of quantifying benefit in the application. For SVID, they could calculate the recharge. For stock water winter ditches, if they get miles of ditches, preliminary estimates of how much they can leak every year... they need to start from somewhere to quantify benefits.

Charnna stressed the importance of diversifying the project portfolio, since some of the projects proposed today would be hampered in drought years.

The group reviewed the [scoring criteria for the grant proposal](#). Theo asked to see a successful proposal, but DWR doesn't post those. Laura suggested checking board packets from overdrafted basins to see if they had to approve the proposals to advance them. Pat suggested coordinating directly with the Kelley List on questions related to the proposal.

Irrigation Efficiency Assessment, Pilot Projects, and Evaluation of Benefit

Michael Stapleton requested the inclusion of funding for 5-10 pivots per year, or funding to replace nozzles. Laura replied that the assessment needs to come first. They can't use the program to buy tools for private properties. After an assessment that quantifies how much water will be saved, they could use program funds to do as Michael suggests as long as they characterize it as a "pilot study". Then they could go to the Bureau of Reclamation for expansion across the valley.

Amanda Cooper from CalTrout shared that they have had difficulty quantifying benefits. She also questioned whether irrigation measures actually result in saved water if landowners choose not to reduce the amount of water used. She strongly recommends checking landowner willingness. Laura confirmed that this would need to be a first step.

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

Other Topics

The Committee discussed the Coalition of the Free and Willing's High Mountain Lakes project which was recently approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors without input from the GSA and Advisory Committee.

- Sari Sommarstrom expressed frustration that the effort wasn't being coordinated with the Scott Valley Advisory Committee. The project wasn't evaluated as part of the overall "bang for your buck" analysis.
- Matt Parker offered that in the future, he would relay updates on any groundwater related efforts from the County level back to the Advisory Committee.

Crystal shared in the chat: The Shackleford drainage lakes will be evaluated for storage with the USGS QVIHM

Charnna asked if there's a desire for establishing a Watermaster service for Scott Valley as a whole, rather than just the adjudicated zone. There was no Committee action on Charnna's question.

9. Reflection on Next Steps

The Advisory Committee deliberated on next steps and identified some action items. Members will meet with LWA during the week of October 3 to develop more detail for the technical consultants to write project descriptions to include in the implementation grant proposal. The projects selected for inclusion in the grant include:

- Irrigation efficiency projects - Assessment + Pilot Projects + Measurement of Benefit
 - Michael Stapleton, Jim Morris, Tom Menne, Crystal Robinson
- Winter stock water/ditches recharge assessment / Recharge site assessment & flood plain expansion – identification of additional sites (flooding, off stream ponds, flood plain expansion)
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- Additional funding for SVID recharge project
 - Jim Morris (Laura is following up directly)
- Well Inventory/Registration Program Development (County-wide)
 - Charnna Gilmore, Amanda Cooper and other basin representatives
- Incorporated under other grant components:
 - Voluntary installation of flow meters on wells – included in data gaps/monitoring
 - Assessment of alluvial fans/surface water connectivity – Laura will touch base with Tom Jopson

10. Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned by 6:00 p.m. as is the group practice.

Siskiyou County Sustainable Groundwater Management
Scott Valley Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary

Meeting Participants

*= virtual

Advisory Committee Members Present:

Tom Menne
Tom Jopson
Michael Stapleton
Jim Morris
Theo Johnson
Amanda Cooper
*Crystal Robinson
Charnna Gilmore

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Brandon Fawaz

Agency Staff and Members of the Public:

*Philip Cramer, CDFW
*Janae Scruggs, CDFW
*Amy Campbell
*Chris Watts, Regional Water Board
*Leah Easley
Claire Kouba, UC Davis
Leeland Scantlebury, UC Davis
Rachel Agron, UC Davis

Project Team:

Matt Parker, GSA staff
Marisa Perez-Reyes, Stantec
Emily Finnegan, Stantec
Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates
Kelsey McNeill, Larry Walker and Associates
Bill Rice, Larry Walker and Associates