

Pre-Draft – CHARTER – Pre-Draft
Sierra Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (SVGSP)
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
V4 - September 14, 2020

1 **Section 1. Background**

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3 The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), enacted in 2014, created a
4 “framework for sustainable, groundwater management” that balances use and recharge.
5 Medium- and high-priority groundwater basins across California are required to create and
6 implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) with measurable objectives and milestones in
7 increments of five years in order to achieve sustainability over a twenty-year timeframe. The Sierra
8 Valley groundwater subbasin in Plumas and Sierra counties was ranked by the California
9 Department of Water Resources (DWR) as medium priority and is required to prepare and submit a
10 GSP by January 31, 2020.
11

12 Although DWR provides guidance and identifies required elements for the GSPs, local
13 Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) develop the GSPs for their respective groundwater
14 basins and subbasins. This allows local entities to create GSPs that address local interests,
15 conditions, and priorities within the required elements of the GSP. In Sierra Valley, the two GSAs
16 for the subbasin are the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (District) and the County
17 of Plumas (Plumas). These GSAs entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on January
18 8, 2019 to develop a single GSP for the Sierra Valley groundwater subbasin.
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21 SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests relating to the uses and users of groundwater. The
22 GSAs must state how the perspectives of interested parties will inform the operations of the GSAs, as
23 well as the development of the GSP. These interested parties include a wide range of governmental
24 entities, water users, water systems, California Native American tribes, and economic and
25 environmental considerations. Also, GSAs “shall encourage the active involvement of diverse social,
26 cultural, and economic” perspectives. In addition to holding public workshops, the Sierra Valley
27 GSAs are establishing a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to bring multiple perspectives into the
28 development of the GSP.
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31 **Section 2. GSP Process Timeline, Purpose, and Activities**

32 For the Sierra Valley groundwater subbasin, the GSP must be: developed, released for public
33 comment, approved by the GSAs, and submitted to DWR no later than **January 31, 2022**. The GSP
34 must meet SGMA requirements.
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36

37 This process is established to incorporate input from different interested parties to create a GSP
38 that will be adopted by the GSAs. The resulting GSP provide a more complete understanding of the
39 groundwater subbasin, and of strategies and options, to support sustainable long-term use and
40 stewardship of groundwater supplies.
41

42 A technical consultant team, led by Larry Walker and Associates, is assisting the GSAs in developing
43 information and the GSP itself. This may include, but is not limited to, the following elements:

- 44 • data sets, analyses and modeling efforts
- 45 • descriptions of local groundwater basin conditions (Basin Setting)
- 46 • targets or “Sustainable Management Criteria” relating to:
 - 47 i. groundwater levels and storage
 - 48 ii. land subsidence
 - 49
 - 50

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- 1 iii. water quality
- 2 iv. surface water - groundwater interactions (including groundwater-dependent
- 3 ecosystems)
- 4 • potential projects and actions addressing the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs) to
- 5 enhance long-term stewardship of groundwater
- 6
- 7

Section 3. Organization, Roles and Responsibilities

9 GSAs: The GSAs, Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District and Plumas County, will:

- 10 • Retain authority and responsibility for the final product and the decisions contained within
- 11 • Contract for technical support and facilitation services
- 12 • Participate in the Planning Committee and TAC to provide information on policy,
- 13 operational, and regulatory matters
- 14
- 15

16 Planning Committee: A Planning Committee – consisting of representatives from the two GSAs, the

17 technical consulting team, and planning partners – will meet to:

- 18 • Identify individuals and parties with interests or expertise related to GSP development
- 19 • Develop draft proposals for work plans and timelines
- 20 • Anticipate and meet data needs
- 21 • Prepare agendas and materials for all meetings and public workshops, ensuring that
- 22 materials are understandable and provide enough information for meaningful discussion
- 23 • Share insights on issues and developments that arise
- 24 • Advise on implementing and updating the Stakeholder Communications and Engagement Plan
- 25 • Review and discuss progress to date and next steps
- 26
- 27

28 Generally, the Planning Committee will meet once a month for two hours

29

30 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): Collectively, members of the TAC will provide advice, input,

31 and recommendations to the GSAs on all aspects of the GSP, as described above in the section on

32 Project Purpose and Deliverables. The GSAs have authority for final decisions on the GSP. TAC

33 members also have responsibilities to:

- 34 • Carefully review, discuss and refine the GSP chapters
- 35 • Identify, assess, and review data needs and provide resources that are appropriate for each
- 36 task
- 37 • Help anticipate and describe near- and long-term future conditions and planning efforts that
- 38 will influence factors related to the GSP
- 39 • Respond to questions and queries from the District specific to the GSP
- 40 • Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss agenda items; this includes reviewing
- 41 materials and information distributed in advance of the meeting
- 42 • Participate in a problem-solving approach based on respectful and constructive dialogue,
- 43 where the interests of all members are considered
- 44 • Keep their organizations and constituents informed about the process, discussions and
- 45 recommendations; and to seek and report back on feedback received as a result of
- 46 informational briefings
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1 It is expected that eight (8) TAC meetings will be scheduled, each about 3 hours long. The dates and
2 times will be reviewed for each meeting. For 2020, a meeting is proposed for the end of October
3 and again in early December.
4

5 It is critical that the District Board be regularly updated on the development of the GSP and
6 discussions of the TAC.
7

8 Work Groups: Ad hoc work groups may be created as needed to address specific tasks, technical
9 aspects, or issues. Additional participants may be invited to join to provide necessary perspectives
10 or expertise.
11

12 Public Workshops: Public workshops will be scheduled several times, to provide updates and share
13 ideas on the GSP process.
14

- 15 • A public workshop is proposed for late October 2020 and early December 2020
- 16 • Several additional workshops will take place in 2021
- 17 • A public hearing is required prior to adoption of the final GSP
18

19 Facilitator: The facilitator’s primary responsibility is to maintain an opportunity where all
20 perspectives, views and opinions are heard and thoughtfully considered. The facilitator will:
21

- 22 • Design and conduct a consensus-seeking process where the TAC can best assist the GSAs in
23 developing a GSP within required regulatory guidelines and timeframes
- 24 • Facilitate all meetings that are part of the GSP process, generating agendas and meeting
25 summaries
- 26 • Capture the range of views and ideas presented by TAC members and reporting on where
27 there are areas of both agreement and differences
- 28 • Develop draft proposals and recommendations that reflect TAC discussions
29

30 Technical Consultant(s):
31

- 32 • Research technical issues
- 33 • Inform and engage the Planning Committee on GSP development
- 34 • Develop draft text for the GSP, including but not limited to:
 - 35 i. Basin Settings and Hydrologic Conceptual Model
 - 36 ii. Monitoring networks and associated evaluations and analyses
 - 37 iii. Sustainable Management Criteria
 - 38 iv. Projects and Management Actions
- 39 • Present and discuss draft text, and incorporate input from the GSAs, Planning Committee,
40 TAC meetings, and public workshops
- 41 • Prepare technical reports as needed to document work products
42

43
44 **Section 4. TAC Composition – VERY PRELIMINARY (reorganized)**

45 To bring a diverse range of perspectives into GSP development, it is proposed that a core group of
46 individuals serve on the TAC who have interest or expertise regarding GSP content. Members are
47 invited to identify alternates, in case the original member is unable to attend a TAC meeting.
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1 It is proposed that the following interests, organizations, and/or individuals serve on the TAC.
2 (Note: This is an initial suggestion. Membership could change as needed.)
3

- 4 • GSA: Sierra Valley GMD
- 5 • GSA: Plumas County
- 6 • Planning Partner: Kristi Jamason
- 7 • Planning Partner: Greg Hinds
- 8 • Agricultural Uses: Sierra Valley RCD
- 9 • Agricultural Uses: UC Cooperative Extension
- 10 • Tribal Uses: Maidu, Paiute, Washoe
- 11 • Integrated Water Management: Upper Feather River IRWM
- 12 • Human Right to Water: Sierra Brooks Water System, Sierraville Public Utility District
- 13 (Domestic water uses)
- 14 • Land Uses: City of Loyalton, USFS Plumas National Forest
- 15 • Economic Development: East Sierra Valley Chamber of Commerce, Boards of Supervisors
- 16 • Environmental and Ecosystem Uses: Plumas Corporation, Plumas Audubon Society, Sierra
- 17 Institute
- 18 • Water Quality: Departments of Environmental Health (Sierra Co., Plumas Co.)
- 19 • Soils, Subsidence: Mike Hogan
- 20 • Groundwater: Sierra County Public Works
- 21
- 22

23
24 DWR and CDFW would be invited to participate in TAC meetings.
25

26 Consultant Support

27 The TAC would be supported by core members of the LWA consulting team:

- 28 • Laura Foglia, Project Manager
- 29 • Cab Esposito, Asst. PM – Technical or Betsy Elz
- 30 • Judie Talbot, Facilitator
- 31

32
33 **Section 5. Decision Making**

34
35 The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have responsibility and authority for all decisions
36 regarding the final GSP and its adoption.
37

38 In its work, the TAC will strive to find agreement on suggestions and recommendations related to
39 the GSP. As needed, participants could be asked to show their level of support for suggestions
40 being develop, and to submit ideas for improving those suggestions being developed.
41

42 Those areas that receive substantial agreement will receive the highest possible consideration for
43 inclusion in the GSP. However, group consensus alone does not determine whether an item will be
44 incorporated into the final GSP. For those areas where differences remain, the full range of
45 perspectives will be submitted to the GSAs for their review. The GSAs, with assistance from the
46 Planning Committee, will determine the priorities and preferred forums for resolving those
47 differences. Ultimately, the GSP must be reviewed and adopted by the GSAs (the District and
48 Plumas) and DWR.
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1 **Section 6. TAC Meeting Approach**

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3 Hybrid Meeting Options:

4 Standing TAC members and consultants would be encouraged to participate at in-person meetings.
5 TAC meetings would have a webinar option to support involvement of TAC members who cannot
6 attend in-person, as well as encourage participation by TAC liaisons and ad-hoc TAC members
7

8
9 Attendance: Given the volume of information that needs to be considered and developed, regular
10 attendance by TAC members or their designated alternate is essential. Alternates must be
11 identified in advance, fully briefed and able to represent the member when making suggestions and
12 recommendations related to the GSP.
13

14 Open Meetings: TAC meetings will be open to the public, although opportunities for public
15 comment during the meetings may be minimal. Ideas, comments, questions, and suggestions from
16 those other than TAC members may be submitted via email or postal mail. [OR through the web-
17 based option?]
18

19 Problem-solving: All TAC participants agree to:

- 20 • Listen for understanding and openly discuss issues with others who hold diverse views
- 21 • Not ascribe motivations or intentions to the statements or actions of others
- 22 • Work to develop creative proposals, suggestions, and recommendations that address the
- 23 interests of all
- 24 • Keep commitments once made
- 25 • When appropriate, distinguish between personal versus organizational perspectives (i.e., for
- 26 an organization that a TAC member represents)
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30 Good faith: All participants agree to act in good faith in all aspects of this consensus-seeking
31 process and to communicate their interests in TAC meetings, public workshops, Planning
32 Committee, and District Board meetings. Comments and suggestions made in open and honest
33 conversations about creative options, approaches, or strategies will not be used against any party in
34 litigation or public relations campaigns. This provision will not restrict the ability of participants to
35 pursue legal remedies.
36

37 Good faith also requires that participants or their organizations not make commitments they do not
38 intend to follow through with. Participants must act consistently in the GSP process and in other
39 forums where the issues under discussion in the GSP process are also being addressed. Good faith
40 provisions continue to apply to participants who withdraw from the process.
41
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43 **Section 6. TAC Communications**

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45 In planning processes, ideas may become fully formed over the course of several meetings.
46 Subsequently, when members discuss the work of the TAC, care should be taken to distinguish new
47 concepts from those recommendations adopted by the full group. When discussing the process
48 with others, TAC members should present their own perspectives, without characterizing the
49 positions and views of any other party or attributing comments to other members. TAC members
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1 are encouraged, and will be facilitated, to develop common statements about their work for release
2 into newsletters and similar publications.
3

4 GSA Briefing Summaries will be prepared and distributed several times a month, providing updates
5 on discussions. This will allow GSA parties to anticipate what types of materials will be included in
6 packets for monthly District Board meeting discussions.
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9 Meeting Summaries will be provided within seven working days of TAC meetings.
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11 Related Data: TAC members are encouraged to contribute and share information (excluding
12 privileged or confidential materials) that help inform discussions and clarify questions of fact. As
13 appropriate, support materials that explain, interpret or analyze data or policies can also be
14 provided.
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