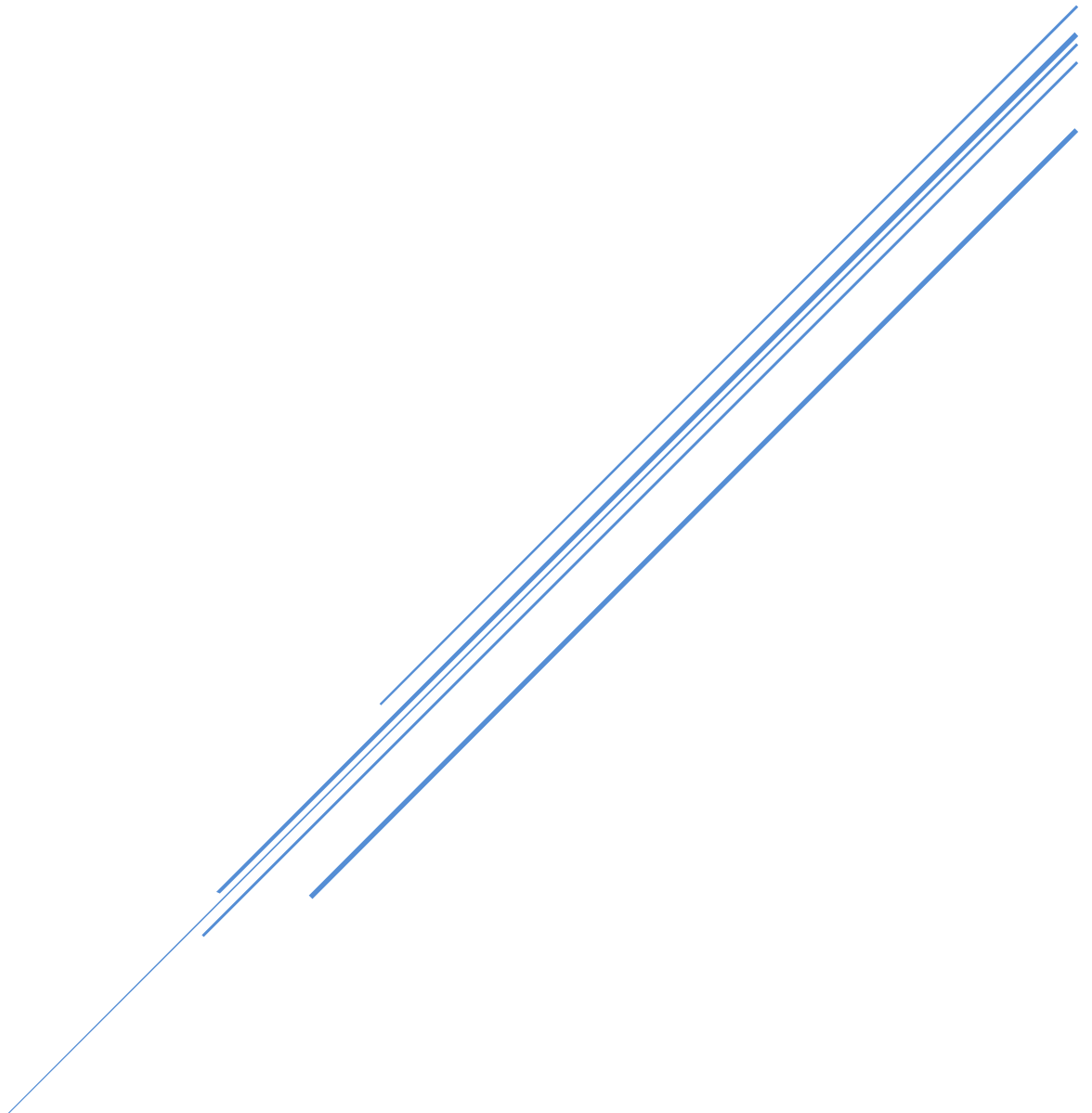


SIERRA VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN

Stakeholder Communications & Engagement Plan



Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation
Draft Version: October 2, 2019

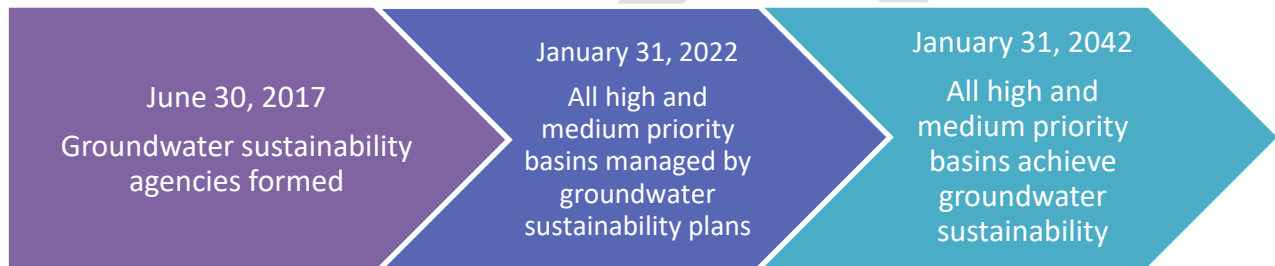
Table of Contents

Background	2
SGMA Milestones	2
Desired Outcomes & Goals of the Plan	2
Plan Goals	2
Outcomes	3
Communications and Engagement for GSP Plan Elements	3
SGMA Requirements for Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement	4
Relevant Participants/Potential Audiences in the Sierra Valley Basin	5
Participating GSAs and Interagency Coordination	5
Interested Parties & Other Stakeholders	5
Interested Parties List	5
Table 1. Sierra Valley Stakeholder Group Interests & Anticipated Level of Engagement.....	6
Purpose of Engagement Process	8
Table 2. Spectrum of Public Participation	8
Communication & Engagement Forums	8
Public Meetings/Hearing	8
Public Notices	9
Stakeholder Briefings	9
Public Workshops	9
Table 3. Anticipated Workshop Schedule	9
Methods for Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement	10
Table 4. Print & Online Media Sources & Contact Information	11
Reference Materials	11
Table 5. Reference Documents for SGMA Implementation.....	11
Evaluation and Assessment	12
Appendix A: SGMA Implementation Schedule of Activities	13
Appendix B: Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District & Plumas County Coordination Agreement	16
Appendix C: Plumas National Forest & Inter Tribal Participation Memo (Placeholder- not for external circulation)	17
Appendix D: Interested Parties List	21
Appendix E: Tribal Outreach Guidance	22
Appendix F: Target Audiences & Frequently Asked Questions	25

Background

The purpose of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), signed by Governor Brown in 2014, is to ensure local sustainable groundwater management in medium- and high-priority groundwater basins statewide. California's Department of Water Resources has determined that the Sierra Valley Groundwater basin located in Plumas and Sierra counties is medium priority and subject to SGMA.

SGMA Milestones:



Desired Outcomes & Goals of the Plan

Plan Goals: SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater, and encourages involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin during GSP preparation and implementation. The goals of the Communications & Engagement Plan are to:

1. Enhance understanding and inform the public about water and groundwater resources in the Sierra Valley basin, the purpose and need for sustainable groundwater management, the benefits of sustainable groundwater management, and the need for a GSP.
2. Engage a diverse group of interested parties and stakeholders and promote informed feedback from stakeholders, the community and groundwater-dependent users throughout the GSP preparation and implementation process.
3. Coordinate communication and involvement between the GSAs and other local agencies, elected and appointed officials, and the general public.
4. Employ a variety of outreach methods that make public participation accessible and that encourage broad participation.
5. Respond to public concerns and provide accurate and up-to-date information.
6. Manage communications and engagement in a manner that provides maximum value to the public and constitutes an efficient use of GSAs' resources.

Time Period: The Plan is intended to cover communications and engagement through January 2022, when the GSP is due to be submitted to California Department of Water Resources. Since this is a multi-year effort, this plan may be amended, as needed.

Outcomes: The desired outcome of this Communications & Engagement plan is to achieve adoption of the GSP with input from and in consideration of the people, the economy, and the environment within the basin. In practical terms, the GSP regulations require a communications section of the GSP that must include the following:

- Explanation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies’ (GSA) decision-making process
- Identification of opportunities for public engagement and involvement
- Description of GSAs’ encouragement of active involvement of diverse elements of population within basin
- Method the GSAs shall follow to inform the public about GSP progress

This Plan will form the basis for the communications section of the GSP.

The figure below illustrates the timeline for the concurrent processes of stakeholder engagement and other SGMA activities in the basin:



GSP Planning Timeline and Stakeholder Communication at a Glance

(See Appendix A for Sierra Valley SGMA Implementation Project Schedule.)

Communications and Engagement for GSP Plan Elements

To truly engage the public in development of a GSP that is science-based, complex, technical, and includes achievable outcomes, GSAs will strive to meet these overall objectives:

- Educate the public in meaningful ways. Communicate what may often be complex concepts in straightforward, comprehensible ways
- Show how the input received has been incorporated into the plan or process

- Remain focused on results

It is anticipated that the GSP will be developed in six phases:

1. Preparation and submittal of initial notification of GSP preparation
2. Definition of plan area and basin setting
3. Development of sustainable management criteria, including the sustainability goal, undesirable results, minimum thresholds, measurable objectives and interim milestones
4. Design of monitoring program and data management system
5. Identification and evaluation of proposed projects and management actions
6. Development of GSP implementation costs, detailed schedule, and reporting

Each phase requires outreach with the goal of educating and engaging the general public and stakeholders on the technical and policy aspects of the GSP plan elements. Each phase will include a mix of communication tools, to be used in a variety of forums.

SGMA Requirements for Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement

SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater as a part of GSP development and implementation.

Further, as is stated in Water Code Section 10727.8, “The GSA shall encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin prior to and during the development and implementation of the GSP.”

In addition, the GSP Regulations require that GSAs document in a communications section of the GSP the opportunities for public engagement and active involvement of diverse social, cultural and economic elements of the population within the basin.

This Plan articulates a differentiated approach and explicit activities to engage the following stakeholder categories:

- ✓ Staff and governing bodies of participating GSAs
- ✓ Federal government agencies with interests in the basin
- ✓ Native American Tribes with interests in the basin
- ✓ Other Affected Parties (Beneficial Users and Uses of Groundwater, See pages 5-7 below)

The Plan also identifies a variety of communication tools that will be employed to address the distinct interests of each group and provides a schedule of activities that clearly outlines the timeline for Plan implementation.

Relevant Participants/Potential Audiences in the Sierra Valley Basin

Participating GSAs and Interagency Coordination

There are two GSAs within the Sierra Valley basin that are actively participating in GSP development:

- ✓ Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (District)
- ✓ Plumas County

Most of the basin is within the jurisdiction of the District. However, there is a small section of the basin outside the jurisdiction of the District within Plumas County. Consistent with Water Code Section 10727(b), the two GSAs intend to develop a single GSP covering the entire basin. While the GSAs are not required by SGMA to enter into a formal coordination agreement, the GSAs have entered into a voluntary interagency agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that specifies the GSAs' intent to cooperatively implement SGMA (See Appendix B).

The lands in the basin within Plumas County but outside the jurisdiction of the District are also within the management jurisdiction of the federal government (Plumas National Forest). This area is also significant to area Tribes. Through stakeholder outreach and engagement, Plumas County may enter into agreements with these key stakeholders, if warranted (See Appendix C).

Interested Parties & Other Stakeholders

SGMA identifies interested parties that GSAs must consider when developing and implementing the GSP. The GSA must establish and maintain a list of interested parties and provide an explanation of how those interests will be considered, as required by Water Code Section 10723.2.

- Agricultural users of groundwater
- Domestic well owners
- Municipal well operators
- Public water systems
- Land use planning agencies
- Environmental uses of groundwater
- Surface water users
- The federal government
- California Native American tribes
- Disadvantaged communities (including those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems).

Interested Parties List

Under SGMA, GSAs are obligated to maintain a list of interested parties and to consider the interest of beneficial users of groundwater (See Appendix D).

Table 1. Sierra Valley Stakeholder Group Interests & Purpose of Engagement




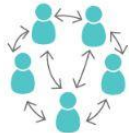

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Engagement Purpose
<p>General Public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens groups • Community leaders • Interested individual • Universities/Academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Interested Parties List • 	<p>Inform to improve public awareness of sustainable groundwater management</p>
<p>Land Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities • Local land use agencies • Regional land use agencies • Community Service Districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Loyalton 	<p>Consult and involve to ensure land use policies are supporting GSPs and there are no conflicting policies between the GSAs / GSP and local government agencies</p>
<p>Private Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private pumpers (domestic and agricultural) • Schools and colleges • Hospitals 		<p>Inform and involve in assessing impacts to groundwater users</p>
<p>Urban/ Agricultural Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water agencies • Irrigation districts • Municipal water companies • Mutual water companies • Resource conservation districts • Farmers/Farm Bureaus • Water Districts • Water users associations • Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumas-Sierra Farm Bureau • Plumas-Sierra Cattlemen’s Association • Plumas Sierra Cattlewomen’s Association • Plumas-Sierra County Agricultural Commissioner • Plumas-Sierra University of California Cooperative Extension • Sierra Valley Grange #466 • Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District (RCD) 	<p>Collaborate to ensure sustainable management of groundwater</p>
<p>Industrial Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial and industrial self-suppliers • Local trade associations or groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Inform and involve in assessing impacts to users</p>
<p>Environmental and Ecosystem Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and State agencies • Wetland managers • Environmental groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumas Audubon Society • The Nature Conservancy • Northern Sierra Partnership • Feather River Land Trust • Upper Feather River Watershed Group • There are three wildlife refuges 	<p>Inform and involve to consider/incorporate potential ecosystem impacts to GSP process</p>

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Engagement Purpose
	<p>managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) either within or adjacent to the Sierra Valley basin including: Antelope Valley, Smithneck Creek, and Crocker Meadows.</p>	
<p>Surface Water Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation Districts • Water Districts • Water users associations • Agricultural users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Inform and involve to collaborate to ensure sustainable water supplies</p>
<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers of commerce • Business groups/associations • Elected officials • State Assembly members • State Senators • Economic Development Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Inform and involve to support a stable economy</p>
<p>Human Right to Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged communities • Small water systems • Environmental justice groups/community-based organizations • De minimis well owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Inform and involve to provide safe and secure groundwater supplies to all communities reliant on groundwater</p>
<p>Tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federally Recognized Tribes • Non-Federally Recognized Tribes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washoe, Paiute and Maidu Tribes 	<p>Inform, involve and consult with tribal government</p>
<p>Federal Lands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • U.S. Bureau of Reclamation • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers • U.S. Forest Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumas National Forest 	<p>Inform, involve and collaborate to ensure basin sustainability</p>
<p>Integrated Water Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional water management groups (IRWM regions) • Flood agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group 	<p>Inform, involve and collaborate to improve regional sustainability</p>

Purpose of Engagement Process

When considering the purpose of engagement for various stakeholder groups, the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation may assist decision-makers in clarifying how to define the appropriate level of involvement for various stakeholder groups.

Table 2. Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal					
	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise To The Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decision

Communication & Engagement Forums

Public Meetings/Hearing

Public meetings or hearings are formal opportunities for people to provide official comments on programs, plans and proposals. District board meetings occur monthly and give interested parties regular opportunities for consistent engagement with decision-makers in the basin. Since District meetings are public meetings that comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act, these meetings offer a forum for public comment on groundwater management in the basin more broadly as well as specifically on GSP planning in the basin. SGMA requires that a public meeting be held prior to the adoption of a fee and that public hearings are held for the

adoption of GSP elements and the final GSP plan. There are also constitutional requirements for public hearings for some fee/rate options. Public meetings and hearings are an important forum for people to share viewpoints and concerns, but often occur at the end of a process, when only one option is under consideration. The GSAs will hold required public meetings and hearings, but will also use less formal public workshops to solicit feedback and information early in the process.

Public Notices

In addition to the public notice required for fee adoption, SGMA requires that prior to initiating the development of a GSP, GSAs must provide a written statement describing the manner in which interested parties may participate in the development and implementation of the GSP. The statement must be provided to all the cities and counties within the basin.

Stakeholder Briefings

Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District board members will meet with and communicate regularly with the stakeholders they represent.

Public Workshops

The GSAs will convene public workshops. These workshops provide opportunities for people to learn about groundwater, SGMA, and GSP elements. Workshops can be organized in a variety of ways, including open houses, “stations” where people can ask questions one-on-one, and traditional presentations with facilitated question and answer sessions. In order to solicit feedback from people who may not be comfortable speaking in public, workshops can include small group breakout discussions, comment cards and other techniques. Whatever format is used, workshops will be designed to maximize opportunities for public input.

Public workshops will serve as the primary means for stakeholders to learn about SGMA implementation in the basin and to participate in GSP planning. Workshops will occur at key points in the planning process to ensure that stakeholders have opportunities to provide input and give feedback on the GSP. Workshops also serve as a venue to reply to stakeholder comments on the GSP. The following table outlines the approximate number of workshops, the estimated timing of the workshops, and the expected purpose/topics that will be addressed at each workshop which is aligned with the scope and sequence in the development of required GSP elements.

Table 3. Anticipated Workshop Schedule

Workshop Number	Estimated Timing of Workshop	Primary Topics/Purpose
1	October 2018	SGMA overview and milestones, SGMA implementation activities to date, GSP planning process timeline/work plan overview, identification of opportunities for stakeholders to participate in GSP planning (including, for example, siting of monitoring wells on property,

Workshop Number	Estimated Timing of Workshop	Primary Topics/Purpose
		registration of inactive wells, etc.)
2	Fall 2019	Phase: Definition of Plan Area and Basin Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update the community on the planning grant, work plan, and schedule • receive presentation summarizing Bachand & Associates groundwater study and other relevant information which forms the basis for the basin setting • Solicit community input on Plan Area and preliminary basin setting results
3	Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input on sustainable management criteria, including the sustainability goal, undesirable results, minimum thresholds, measurable objectives and interim milestones
4	Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of monitoring program and data management system • Begin projects and management actions discussion
5/6	Spring 2021 (early and late Spring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue projects and management actions discussion • Solicit comments on draft GSP sections
7	Fall 2021	Response to stakeholder comments on draft GSP and provide comments/feedback on refined draft GSP

Methods for Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement

The overall communication strategy is designed in an inclusive and transparent manner. Outreach and communication efforts will take many forms, depending on the need (e.g., provide general background information, provide notice of upcoming public meetings) and target audience (e.g., general public, stakeholders). Communication methods will include, but are not be limited to the following:

- Traditional media: When required or appropriate, press releases will be distributed to the media list in time to meet deadlines for local newspapers and radio public service announcements to inform the general public (See Table 4).
- Website: Background information, notice of public meetings, and information on GSP process and content will be posted on the District website (<http://www.sierravalleygmd.org/sustainable-groundwater-management-act>).
- Interested Party List Updates: The District will collect the names and contact information of interested parties at monthly District board meetings and public workshops, at a minimum.

Through targeted outreach, GSAs will build and refine the Interested Parties List. Information will be sent via email, via post or phone, as appropriate, to those who have provided their contact information.

- **Personal communication:** Local representatives of the GSP team, consultants and GSA officials will communicate directly with stakeholders and interested persons (via email, telephone, U.S. mail, in person), as appropriate and necessary.
- **Meetings and workshops:** Meetings and workshops will be conducted at various locations within the basin, and for various purposes (e.g., work groups, public meetings), as needed and appropriate.
- **On-line Surveys:** To provide the greatest access possible to the greatest number of people, on-line surveys may be a useful stakeholder engagement tool to get a sense of stakeholder values as they relate to the development of sustainable management criteria and may be employed throughout the GSP development process.
- **Printed materials:** Printed materials will be used throughout the GSP development process for increasing awareness and understanding. Materials may take many forms, including flyers to be posted and otherwise made available in public places at key milestones, educational materials provided at meetings, a limited number of hard copies of GSP documents as they become available, and meeting handouts to facilitate public understanding and participation.

Table 4. Print & Online Media Sources & Contact Information

Media Source	Contact
Mountain Messenger	(Don Russell) mtnmess@cw.com ; (Jill) yesdearyousuck@yahoo.com
Portola Reporter	(Eva Small) esmall@plumasnews.com ; (Debra Moore) Managing Editor, Feather Publishing dmoore@plumasnews.com
Sierra Booster	(Jan Buck) jbuck@psln.com
Sierraville.org	http://www.sierraville.org

Reference Materials

DWR has developed various reference materials about SGMA and GSP development. While not comprehensive, the below table lists some essential SGMA reference materials to aid with successful GSP development.

Table 5. Reference Documents for SGMA Implementation

Reference Document Titles—include documents for inclusion at public workshops, for example: SGMA brochure, domestic well user brochure, data and tools resources, GSP regulations, guidance documents, BMPs, link to SGMA list serve subscription, link to SGMA portal (and include an intro piece)	Publishing Entity	Date/ Year of Publication
Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Emergency Regulations Guide	DWR	July 2016

Reference Document Titles—include documents for inclusion at public workshops, for example: SGMA brochure, domestic well user brochure, data and tools resources, GSP regulations, guidance documents, BMPs, link to SGMA list serve subscription, link to SGMA portal (and include an intro piece)	Publishing Entity	Date/ Year of Publication
http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/pdfs/GSP_Final_Regs_Guidebook.pdf		
<p>Best Management Practices Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring Protocols Standards and Sites 2. Monitoring Networks and Identification of Data Gaps 3. Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model 4. Water Budget 5. Modeling 6. Sustainable Management Criteria <p>https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management/Best-Management-Practices-and-Guidance-Documents</p>	Department of Water Resources	2016-2018
<p>Guidance Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource Guide for Climate Change Data and Guidance 2. Guidance for Climate Change Data Use During Sustainability Plan Development 3. Stakeholder Communications and Engagement 4. Engagement with Tribal Governments 5. GSP Annotated Outline 6. Preparation Checklist for GSP Submittal <p>https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management/Best-Management-Practices-and-Guidance-Documents</p>	Department of Water Resources	2016-2018

Evaluation and Assessment

Any communication strategy should include opportunities to check in at various points during implementation to ensure that it is meeting the communication and engagement goals and complying with SGMA. These periodic check-ins can include:

- ✓ What worked well?
- ✓ What didn't work as planned?
- ✓ Listing lessons learned
- ✓ Making changes and developing mid-course corrections

Appendix A: SGMA Implementation Schedule of Activities

Sierra Valley Groundwater Basin Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation 2019-2022 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Acronyms:

- PT= GSP Project Team
- GSA= Groundwater Sustainability Agency(ies)—Referring to SVGMD and Plumas County
- Sub= SVGMD Board Subcommittee
- C= Consultant(s)
- DWR= California Department of Water Resources
- TSS= Technical Support Services Program (DWR)
- PW= Public Workshop

Month/Year	Meetings/Milestones	Key Topics & Actions
January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PT: Clarify GSP Work Plan priorities and next steps 2. PT: Refine work plan to incorporate draft GSP development progress
February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • Tribal-FS Meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA: Approve coordination agreement between SVGMD and Plumas County 2. PT: Review GSP draft sections (Chapter 1 and Land Subsidence) to help identify data, technical, and resource gaps to inform development of GSP grant application work plan.
March-April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • SVGMD Board Planning Subcommittee • Initiating Planning Grant 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C: Bachand & Associates recharge study report findings presentation to SVGMD Board of Directors at March board meeting. 2. PT/GSA: GSP Project team present preliminary subsidence presentation to the SVGMD Board of Directors at April Board meeting.
May-August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • SVGMD Board Planning Subcommittee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining Programs and Priorities for funding • Finalizing Planning Grant 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PT with Burkhard Bohm: Compile existing basin setting information (technical information associated with basin conditions) to compare to GSP requirements and identify data, technical, and resource gaps to inform development of GSP grant proposal. 2. C/PT/Sub: Establish schedule for subcommittee meetings (to begin meeting in June). 3. PT/Sub/GSA: Present PSP requirements and activities and timeline for completion of proposal to SVGMD Board of Directors at June-July Board meetings. 4. PT: Prepare draft comments to DWR on draft PSP 5. C/PT: Release of groundwater study report and GSP Project Team review (June).

Month/Year	Meetings/Milestones	Key Topics & Actions
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. PT/GSA: Present draft PSP comments to SVGMD at June board meeting and receive input. 7. PT/GSA: Incorporate SVGMD and Plumas County comments and finalize comments on draft PSP and submit to DWR. 8. DWR: Release Phase 2 final Basin Prioritization results. 9. TSS (GSA/DWR): Complete agreement with landowners for entry permit on land for TSS multi-completion well installation. 10. TSS (GSA/DWR): Complete environmental documentation for TSS multi-completion well application.
September-October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Planning Subcommittee • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TSS (DWR): Prepare agreements with landowner, drilling contractor, SVGMD. 2. TSS: Begin construction on multi-completion well. 3. DWR: Release of final PSP for GSP planning grant program (release date 9/9/19). 4. C/PT/GSA/Sub: Attend DWR informational webinar (9/18/19), draft GSP grant proposal, present progress updates and receive input and comments at SVGMD monthly board meetings and subcommittee meetings, incorporate GSA input. 5. Pass SVGMD board resolution for GSP planning grant submission (October SVGMD board meeting).
November-December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting • Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit GSP planning grant to DWR (November 1, 2019). 2. GSA/PT: Plan for fall public workshop. 3. PW: Tentative Public workshop (late November/early December).
January-March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (note-committee structure may be redefined at this point) • SVGMD Board Meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA/DWR: If awarded GSP grant, work with DWR on contracting. 2. GSA/PT: Draft and review RFP(s) for any needed GSP consulting services as per the GSP grant application and determine process for consultant selection. 3. C/PT/GSA: Monitoring protocols 4. C/PT/GSA: Maps 5. C/PT/GSA: Water Resource Monitoring and Management Programs 6. DWR: Release Project Solicitation Package for GSP Implementation Grants.
April-June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting • SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA/PT: Finalize RFP(s) for consulting services and release. 2. GSA/PT: Respond to consulting team questions before proposal submission. 3. GSA: Receive consultant proposals, conduct interviews and select consultant(s). 4. GSA: Contract with selected consultant(s) 5. C/PT/GSA: Description of Plan Area 6. C/PT/GSA: Draft Basin Setting results 7. C/PT/GSA: Monitoring networks

Month/Year	Meetings/Milestones	Key Topics & Actions
		8. PW: Stakeholder feedback on basin conditions/undesirable results
July-September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C/PT/GSA: Land use elements and plans 2. C/PT/GSA: Additional GSP Elements including, but not limited to, impacts on Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems
October-December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting • SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C/PT/GSA: Representative monitoring 2. C/PT/GSA/PW: Sustainability goal 3. C/PT/GSA/PW: Measurable objectives 4. C/PT/GSA/PW: Minimum Thresholds
January-March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting • SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C/PT/GSA: Assessment and improvement of monitoring network 2. C/PT/GSA: Sustainability goal 3. C/PT/GSA: Measurable objectives (what conditions are desirable) 4. C/PT/GSA: Minimum Thresholds (what conditions are unacceptable) 5. C/PT/GSA/PW: Projects and Management Actions
April-June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting • SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C/PT/GSA: Projects and Management Actions 2. C/PT/GSA/PW: Draft GSP for public Comment
July-September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C/PT/GSA: Response to public comments
October-December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting • SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C: Incorporate public comments and prepare final review draft GSP 2. PT/GSA: Final review of GSP 3. C: Prepare final draft of GSP 4. GSA: GSAs adopt resolutions in support of GSP
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team • SVGMD Board Meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA: Submit GSP to DWR via SGMA Portal

Appendix B: Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District & Plumas
County Coordination Agreement

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Appendix C: Plumas National Forest & Inter Tribal Participation Memo (Placeholder- not for external circulation)

DELIBERATIVE, PRE-DECISIONAL, FOR INTERNAL COORDINATION ONLY

Topic: Sierra Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan: Plumas National Forest Potential Participation

Date: May 29, 2019

Contact: Nancy Francine, Joe Hoffman

Phone: Nancy Francine (530) 283-7754; Joe Hoffman (530) 293-7868

Email: nancy.francine@usda.gov

Issue Summary: PNF participation in one aspect of the SVGSP is requested by Plumas County and affected tribes. The focus is on a segment of the Sierra Valley Groundwater Basin known as the “Sliver”, a 155-acre parcel on PNF (Beckwourth RD, Ramelli grazing allotment). This relatively small parcel is located in proximity to the headwaters of the Middle Fork Feather River Wild & Scenic River, and is of great importance to Native American tribes. PNF is being asked to provide some staff time to participate in Plumas County’s pending grant proposal, write the “Basin Setting” for this area, and work closely with tribes in management of this land.

Background (excerpted from 3/7/2019 Joe Hoffman memo)

- In 2014, State of CA passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which is landmark legislation for the long-term sustainable management of groundwater in California. The Act requires that, for all medium and high priority groundwater basins, local authorities must form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) that oversee the preparation and implementation of a local Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). GSAs are required to have developed and begun implementation of their GSPs by January 31, 2022. GSAs have until 2040 to achieve groundwater sustainability. More information regarding SGMA is available at: <http://groundwater.ucdavis.edu/SGMA/#>
- The Sierra Valley groundwater basin is the only groundwater basin in Plumas County and the Upper Feather River watershed that was designated by the state as a “medium priority” (all others are “very low priority”).
- The Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (SVGMD) was formed in 1980 to protect and oversee the management of groundwater within the Sierra Valley basin. Since then, SVGMD has been maintaining a groundwater monitoring well network and a

metering program for all large capacity wells. More info about SVGMD is at: <http://www.sierravalleygmd.org>. The vast majority of the state-defined Sierra Valley groundwater basin (118,000 acres) is located within the SVGMD boundary.

- In April 2017, the State of CA Department of Water Resources (CA-DWR) granted GSA authority to SVGMD for the Sierra Valley basin, for lands located within the District's boundaries. Also in April 2017, CA-DWR granted Plumas County GSA authority for Sierra Valley basin lands located outside of the SVGMD's boundaries.
- The "Sliver" is the only remaining land area within the Sierra Valley GSP boundary that is not within SVGMD's boundary. For the purpose of the Sierra Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan, Plumas County is the GSA for the Sliver.
- The Sliver is roughly 155 acres entirely on Plumas National Forest System lands, just south of CA Highway 70 and just west of the CA Highway 70 rest stop. Nearly all of the Sliver is located within the Ramelli grazing allotment. For a map depicting the Sliver, see excerpt from a report developed by Hoffman in February 2018 in response to a request from Plumas County for information on how PNF manages the Sliver lands.
- In February 2019, Plumas County and SVGMD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate development of a single GSP for the Sierra Valley basin. *Note: The GSP is not a NEPA or CEQA effort.*
- The area within and surrounding the Sliver is of great cultural and historic significance to local Native American tribes. The Sliver is located at Rocky Point, where Big Grizzly Creek flows into Middle Fork Feather River and where the river makes an abrupt change from the large Sierra Valley meadow areas to its canyon reach. The Sliver is located just across the river from the Ross Meadow complex, where three local tribes (Maidu, Washoe, and Paiute) held a "Big Time" gathering in both 2017 and 2018. The tribes hope to make this an annual event in the Ross Meadow area.

Current Status/Opportunity

- SVGMD has hired a consultant to prepare a grant proposal to CA-DWR to fund development of the Sierra Valley GSP. CA-DWR's planning grant guidelines public comment period is May-June 2019, with proposal solicitation to follow this summer. Implementation grants will also be available starting in 2020. Plumas County would like part of the grant proposal to include some funding for the County, the Tribes, and Plumas National Forest to "tell the story" (= "basin setting") of the Sliver and surrounding geography within the GSP.
- Just what exactly would be included within the GSP, in relation to the Sliver and its surrounding area, is not clearly defined at this point. It is important that Plumas County, PNF, and the tribes coordinate and communicate well so that the Sliver area is well represented in the GSP.
- The GSP could also discuss management objectives for the Sliver area. None of these objectives have yet been defined by Plumas County or the tribes. One idea is

improvement of the interpretive panel at the Hwy 70 rest stop. The existing panel talks about historic significance of the site but pays little attention to tribal activity today or in the future. Another idea may be to develop a foot trail from the rest area to the river; however, close consultation with the tribes would be important since such a trail would run close to very sensitive historic areas.

- The GSP would not augment or amend the Plumas NF LRMP and would not prescribe management for PNF lands within or near the Sliver. However, the GSP should contain a short discussion of how the Sliver lands are currently managed and perhaps some goals for future management. The GSP should include at least a brief discussion of the flood irrigation practices that occur annually in the Ramelli Allotment.

Next Steps/Recommendation:

- Identify a primary PNF point of contact for the GSP, and perhaps field contacts (District level) for tribes and Plumas County. Who will review the imminent grant proposal? Which PNF staff will review the GSP as it is developed?
- Plumas NF should also begin a dialogue with the Tribes and Plumas County so that common interests for information contained in the GSP can be developed. Is an MOU appropriate (or tier to the Plumas County MOU)? How would the tribes prefer to be engaged in these cooperative discussions?
- Plumas NF staff may have historic information that is relevant to the basin characteristics description within the GSP.
- If PNF leadership decides to move forward in GSP participation, then develop a preliminary budget and workplan for the grant proposal.

So all, I have an update to this as the PNF and tribal representatives and myself were able to meet on Monday, July15th.

At the 7/15/19 meeting with the Plumas National Forest and tribal representatives, the following agreements were reached:

1. As “sovereigns” under SGMA the National Forest and the three tribes (Washoe, Paiute, Maidu) will speak for themselves, will conduct outreach and engagement and consultation as they define it under their obligations for government to government consultation during the GSP development process and will draft their sections of the GSP write-up on the Plumas GSA “sliver” area
2. The area of focus for Plumas County, the Plumas National Forest and the three tribes is the federal lands within the Wild and Scenic Corridor of the Middle Fork of the Feather River between Rocky Point and the A-23 Bridge which includes the Plumas County GSA’s 155 acre “sliver” area. The Plumas National Forest will use its staff resources and information archives to prepare the “basin setting” write-up for the focus area. All three parties (tribes, PNF and Plumas County) advocate that financing in the Stakeholder and Outreach portion and budget for the GSP include funding for the

tribes to consult and coordinate on tribal input for the GSP. Plumas County is willing to manage the contract with the tribes for their involvement in GSP development and their write-up of tribal water management priorities for the federal lands within the Wild and Scenic Corridor of the MFFR from Rocky Point to the A-23 Bridge and other areas and issues of tribal interest in GSP development that arise during the government to government consultation process for the Plumas County GSA “sliver” area. Plumas County staff will help the tribes develop the work tasks and refined budget for the GSP grant submittal.

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Appendix D: Interested Parties List

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Appendix E: Tribal Outreach Guidance

Consistent with Water Code Section 10720.3, the federal government or any federally recognized Indian Tribe, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a GSP through a joint powers authority or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. A participating tribe shall be eligible to participate fully in planning, financing, and management. Additionally, SGMA identifies California tribes (including those that are not federally recognized) as possible beneficial users whose interests shall be considered in GSP development and implementation.

The Plumas National Forest lands within Plumas County but outside of the District's boundary are considered important to area tribes. During the stakeholder assessment, Plumas County clarified that it would take the lead on tribal outreach and engagement. Those activities may include the following:

Outreach Steps—Phase I

1. Plumas County will conduct an initial, informal communication with tribal primary points of contact to clarify interest in communicating formally regarding SGMA and tribal interests; request advice about appropriate avenues for outreach; and identify next steps. In the event a tribal representative cannot be contacted within a responsible timeframe, Plumas County will consult with DWR's Office of Tribal Policy Advisor for guidance (Anecita Agustinez, DWR Tribal Policy Advisor - Anecita.Agustinez@water.ca.gov).
2. Following successful initial communication with the Native American tribes, Plumas County will facilitate the implementation of the next steps identified in #3. Actions may include preparation of a formal letter from the Plumas County Board of Supervisors to each of the tribes, involvement of the District with the tribes, development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or establishing a consultation framework.

Outreach Steps – Phase II

Contingent on Phase I outcomes.

Relevant DWR Information

SGMA Section 10720.3. ...any federally recognized Indian Tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a groundwater sustainability plan or groundwater management plan under this part through a joint powers authority or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. A participating Tribe shall be eligible to participate fully in planning, financing, and management under this part, including eligibility for grants and technical assistance, if any exercise of regulatory authority, enforcement, or imposition and collection of fees is pursuant to the Tribe's independent authority and not

pursuant to authority granted to a groundwater sustainability agency under this part.

Draft Discussion Paper Tribal Participation with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies

http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/pdfs/SGMA_Tribal_GSAs.pdf

Must a local agency exclude federal and tribal lands from its service area when forming a GSA?

No, federal lands and tribal lands need not be excluded from a local agency's GSA area if a local agency has jurisdiction in those areas; however, those areas are not subject to SGMA. But, a local agency in its GSA formation notice shall explain how it will consider the interests of the federal government and California Native American tribes when forming a GSA and developing a GSP. DWR strongly recommends that local agencies communicate with federal and tribal representatives prior to deciding to become a GSA. As stated in Water Code §10720.3, the federal government or any federally recognized Indian tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a GSP or groundwater management plan through a JPA or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. Water Code References: §10720.3, §10723.2, §10723.8

Tribal Outreach Resources

The following are links to agency tribal outreach resources and considerations, each of which captures important principles and resources for tribal outreach. A short summary of key outreach principles can be found below.

- ◆ [Draft Discussion Paper Tribal Participation with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies](#)
- ◆ [CalEPA Tribal Consultation Policy Memo \(August 2015\)](#)
- ◆ [DWR Tribal Engagement Policy \(May 2016\)](#)
- ◆ [CA Natural Resources Agency Tribal Consultation Policy \(November 2012\)](#)
- ◆ [SWRCB Proposed Tribal Beneficial Uses](#)

- ◆ [CA Court Tribal Outreach and Engagement Strategies](#)
- ◆ [Traditional Ecological Knowledge resources](#)
- ◆ [Water Education Foundation Tribal Water Issues](#)

Key Outreach Principles

- ◆ *Engage early and often*
- ◆ *Consider tribal beneficial uses in decision-making (identified by region [here](#)); identify and seek to protect tribal cultural resources*
- ◆ *Share relevant documentation with tribal officials*
- ◆ *Conduct meetings at times convenient for tribal participation with ample notifications*
- ◆ *Request relevant process input/data/information from tribes*
- ◆ *Empower tribes to act as tribal cultural resources caretakers*
- ◆ *Designate a tribal liaison(s) where appropriate*
- ◆ *Share resources for tribal involvement as is feasible*

- ◆ *Develop MOUs where relevant*
- ◆ *Be mindful of the traditions and cultural norms of tribes in the area*

Key Outreach Partners/Liaisons

The following are potential partners for Sierra Valley tribal SGMA outreach:

- ◆ [California Indian Water Commission, Inc.](#)
- ◆ [DWR Office of Tribal Advisor](#)
- ◆ [DWR Regional Office](#)

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Appendix F: Information for Targeted Outreach

The section will evolve over time through discussions with the GSAs and GSP Project Team.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

- What do we know from past monitoring and analyses undertaken for the SV Basin? (Presentation of the Technical Report Whitepaper and posting of the Technical Report on the Districts website as well as workshop power point presentations and speaker information related to what we think we know and what we think we don't know about groundwater in the SV Basin.)
- What does "medium priority" mean and how was it determined? Overview of DWR's Basin Prioritization Scoring Criteria and how DWR'S identification of undesirable groundwater effects is used to determine the appropriate level of data and analysis for the SV GSP
- Why are there two GSAs and one GSP proposed for the SV Basin?

WHAT DO WE NEED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND IN ORDER TO MORE SUSTAINABLY MANAGE GROUNDWATER IN THE SV BASIN OVER THE NEXT 50 YEARS?

Why is it important to improve the accuracy and coverage of existing monitoring and when is it important to install additional monitoring wells and/or subsidence monuments in the areas of concern?

- Groundwater elevation monitoring is the cornerstone for making good and informed management decisions on sustainable groundwater pumping levels
- We need determine how much significant and diverse data collection as feasible in order to understand the basin groundwater conditions for other groundwater sustainability factors such as water quality and water-dependent ecosystems.
- **We need to increase our confidence in the accuracy of well meters and the accuracy and the distribution or coverage of well data generated from existing well monitoring in the SV Basin. Existing wells are monitored by the District, by the DWR, and by other entities. The District's sustainability actions need be based on groundwater trends in each of the two (2) proposed Adaptive Management Areas (western basin and eastern basin). Groundwater elevation trends are based on well metering data provided by the District, by DWR and by other interested parties in the SV Basin..**
- Siting one or more new monitoring wells in the areas of chronically declining groundwater levels and/or in areas of subsidence in the vicinity of groundwater cones of depression is an important piece of the puzzle that is connected to the installation of a basin-wide subsidence network that together will provide a full picture of basin conditions. A goal of an interconnected subsidence and groundwater elevation subsidence monitoring network is to help the District confirm or rule out large capacity

groundwater well development and use as a cause of subsidence and undesirable effects (damage) to public infrastructure such as roads, powerlines and bridges.

Why is it important to identify inactive high-capacity wells in the basin?

To understand potential pumping capacity associated with existing groundwater extraction infrastructure; to be considered by District when processing new well applications and planning for groundwater sustainability.

What will happen next with the inactive well inventory?

- The inactive well inventory will be integrated into the GSP (data will be incorporated when generating the well density map and will likely be appended in the GSP).
- The inactive wells will be mapped, and the map will be viewed by the District in combination with pumping and groundwater table data when considering whether or not to approve a new well application or application for activating an inactive well.
- The potential for reactivation of existing inactive wells will be considered in the development of sustainability project and management actions (or something like that)

Can the District prevent a property owner from reactivating an inactive well at their discretion?

- Yes. A property owner is required by law to request the District install a meter on their inactive high-capacity well before using the well in a high-capacity fashion. The District has the authority to deny activation of an inactive well or require conditions such as limiting the allowable pumping rate and/or requiring reduction of pumping from a different well on the property or reduction of pumping from the re-activated well in the event that chronic lowering of groundwater levels is observed in the area.

Establishing Baseline Dates

What criteria should be used to determine the appropriate baseline date for the GSP?

January 2015 is commonly understood to be the baseline date, but community engagement is needed to formally decide what baseline should be.

Plan Area Options

What are the options for the GSP Plan Area and what are the considerations for making this determination?

Most likely options:

- The area within the SV Subbasin boundaries
- The area within the SV Basin boundaries (includes both the SV Subbasin, which is a medium priority subbasin, and the Chilcoot subbasin, which is a low priority subbasin)
- The area within the SVGMD jurisdictional boundaries + the sliver of the SV Subbasin beyond the SVGMD jurisdictional area

Plan Area language in the GSP Concept Document:

"The Plan Area is the area within the SV Subbasin as most recently defined in the Bulletin 118 February 2019 Update (DWR, 2019). This area is the primary focus of the Plan and is the area in

which compliance with SGMA is required because the SV Subbasin was characterized as a medium priority basin by DWR (2018). Although the Plan Area is technically the area within the SV Subbasin only, much of the descriptions, data assessment, monitoring, and management actions and projects included in this Plan include areas beyond the SV Subbasin. The reasoning for this is that there are areas within SVGMD boundaries (but outside of the SV Subbasin boundary) which are significant from a groundwater sustainability perspective and for which SVGMD's enabling legislation gives legal authority to monitor and manage groundwater. For example, the northeastern corner of the valley (defined as the Chilcoot Subbasin - DWR Groundwater Basin Number 5-12.02) is within the SVGMD boundary but not within the SV Subbasin and has significant hydrologic connection with the SV Subbasin. Additionally, critical recharge areas in the higher elevation areas surrounding Sierra Valley are within the SVGMD boundary but not within the SV Subbasin boundary."

(Greg Hinds, related comments)

I felt the "Plan Area" should be the SV Subbasin because that's the specific area in which compliance with SGMA is required. Accordingly, I expect minimum thresholds and measurable objectives/milestones will be within the SV Subbasin only. However, many studies have been done which include analysis of data beyond the SV Subbasin, management/monitoring by SVGMD extends beyond the SV Subbasin, and significant hydrologic connection exists between the SV Subbasin and area beyond but within the SVGMD district boundaries, so it makes sense to include areas beyond the SV Subbasin in descriptions and in management/monitoring.

It seems defining "Plan Area" is mostly just a nomenclature thing, the impact of which is likely pretty minuscule (mostly just how it will affect the difficulty of developing/understanding the Plan - I don't believe there are any legal authority repercussions of how the "Plan Area" is defined, but when it comes to compliance/annual reporting, it will probably be important to not mix the subbasin data with data beyond the subbasin).

Sustainability Goal Draft Ideas

Conceptual options from Draft GSP Concept document and publicly available GSP drafts from other basins

- "to balance the supply of groundwater and surface water with the need of all beneficial users (and within 20 years as required by SGMA)"
- "to develop and implement a GSP which will facilitate the timely implementation of economically feasible measures, including projects, policies, and ordinances, as necessary to ensure any and all undesirable results are eliminated by the year 2042 and are minimized to the maximum extent practicable in the interim prior to 2042 and into the long-term after 2042"
- "to halt the overdraft condition in the Subbasin by bringing the groundwater demand in line with sustainable yield by 2040"
- "to maintain groundwater conditions at baseline levels, but to allow enough operational flexibility that groundwater levels could still decline without undesirable results and then return to at least baselines levels"

Sustainable Management Criteria Development Ideas

Develop questionnaire with questions such as –

- Do you perceive groundwater level declines as an issue in Sierra Valley? If so, do you see it as a major or minor issue?
- Do you perceive groundwater quality as an issue in Sierra Valley? If so, do you see it as a major or minor issue?
- Do you perceive groundwater storage as an issue in Sierra Valley? If so, do you see it as a major or minor issue?
- Do you perceive land subsidence as an issue in Sierra Valley? If so, do you see it as a major or minor issue?
- Do you perceive groundwater extraction as having an impact on groundwater dependent ecosystems in Sierra Valley, such as wetlands and streams? If so, do you see it as a major or minor issue?
- What other groundwater sustainability issues are you concerned about in Sierra Valley?
- What conditions in Sierra Valley would you like to see change over the next 20 years?
- What changes in groundwater management would you like to see over the next 20 years?

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