

Draft – ROLES & COMMITMENTS – Draft
Sierra Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (SVGSP)
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
V6 - November 20, 2020

Section 1. Background

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

Although DWR provides guidance and identifies required elements for the GSPs, local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) develop the GSPs for their respective groundwater basins and subbasins. This allows local entities to create GSPs that address local interests, conditions, and priorities within the required elements of the GSP. In Sierra Valley, the two GSAs for the subbasin are the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (District) and the County of Plumas (Plumas). These GSAs entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on January 8, 2019 to develop a single GSP for the Sierra Valley groundwater subbasin.

SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests relating to the uses and users of groundwater. The GSAs must state how the perspectives of interested parties will inform the operations of the GSAs, as well as the development of the GSP. These interested parties include a wide range of governmental entities, water users, water systems, California Native American tribes, and economic and environmental considerations. Also, GSAs “shall encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic” perspectives. In addition to holding public workshops, the Sierra Valley GSAs are establishing a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to bring multiple perspectives into the development of the GSP.

Section 2. GSP Process Timeline, Purpose and Activities

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

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

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

- data sets, analyses and modeling efforts
- descriptions of local groundwater basin conditions (Basin Setting)

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- 1 • targets or “Sustainable Management Criteria” relating to:
 - 2 i. groundwater levels and storage
 - 3 ii. land subsidence
 - 4 iii. groundwater quality
 - 5 iv. surface water - groundwater interactions (including groundwater-dependent
 - 6 ecosystems)
 - 7
- 8 • potential projects and actions addressing the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs) to
- 9 enhance long-term stewardship of groundwater
- 10

Section 3. Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

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

- 14 • Retain authority and responsibility for the final product and the decisions contained within
- 15 • Contract for technical support and facilitation services
- 16 • Participate in the Planning Committee and TAC to provide information on policy,
- 17 operational, and regulatory matters
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20 Planning Committee: A Planning Committee – consisting of representatives from the two GSAs, the

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

- 22 • Identify individuals and parties with interests or expertise related to GSP development
- 23 • Develop draft proposals for work plans and timelines
- 24 • Anticipate and meet data needs
- 25 • Prepare agendas and materials for all meetings and public workshops, ensuring that
- 26 materials are understandable and provide enough information for meaningful discussion
- 27 • Share insights on issues and developments that arise
- 28 • Advise on implementing and updating the Stakeholder Communications and Engagement Plan
- 29 • Review and discuss progress to date and next steps
- 30
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32 Generally, the Planning Committee will meet once a month for two hours.

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

34 and recommendations to the GSAs on all aspects of the GSP. The GSAs have authority for final

35 decisions on the GSP. TAC members also have responsibilities to:

- 36 • Carefully review, discuss and refine the GSP chapters
- 37 • Identify, assess, and review data needs and provide resources that are appropriate for each
- 38 task
- 39 • Help anticipate and describe near- and long-term future conditions and planning efforts that
- 40 will influence factors related to the GSP
- 41 • Respond to questions and queries from the District specific to the GSP
- 42 • Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss agenda items; this includes reviewing
- 43 materials and information distributed in advance of the meeting
- 44 • Participate in a problem-solving approach based on respectful and constructive dialogue,
- 45 where the interests of all members are considered
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- 1 • Keep their organizations and constituents informed about the process, discussions and
2 recommendations; and to seek and report back on feedback received as a result of
3 informational briefings
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5 It is expected that eight (8) TAC meetings will be scheduled, each about 3 hours long. The dates and
6 times will be reviewed for each meeting. For 2020, TAC meetings are scheduled for November 4th
7 and December 7th.

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9 It is critical that the District Board be regularly updated on the development of the GSP and
10 discussions of the TAC.

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

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

- 18 • Several public workshops will take place in 2021
19 • A public hearing is required prior to adoption of the final GSP
20

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

- 24 • Design and conduct a consensus-seeking process where the TAC can best assist the GSAs in
25 developing a GSP within required regulatory guidelines and timeframes
26 • Facilitate all meetings that are part of the GSP process, generating agendas and meeting
27 summaries
28 • Capture the range of views and ideas presented by TAC members and reporting on where
29 there are areas of both agreement and differences
30 • Develop draft proposals and recommendations for the GSAs that reflect TAC discussions
31

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33 Technical Consultant(s):

- 34 • Research technical issues
35 • Inform and engage the Planning Committee on GSP development
36 • Develop draft text for the GSP, including but not limited to:
37 i. Basin Settings and Hydrologic Conceptual Model
38 ii. Monitoring networks and associated evaluations and analyses
39 iii. Sustainable Management Criteria
40 iv. Projects and Management Actions
41 • Present and discuss draft text, and incorporate input from the GSAs, Planning Committee,
42 TAC meetings, and public workshops
43 • Prepare memoranda and/or technical reports as needed to document work products
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V6 - November 20, 2020

Section 4. TAC Composition

To bring a diverse range of perspectives into GSP development, a core group of individuals serve on the TAC who have interest or expertise regarding GSP content. Members are invited to identify alternates, in case the original member is unable to attend a TAC meeting.

It is proposed that the following interests, organizations, and/or individuals serve on the TAC. Membership can be updated as needed.

- GSA: Sierra Valley GMD
- GSA: Plumas County
- Planning Partner: Feather River Land Trust
- Planning Partner: Greg Hinds
- Agricultural Uses: Sierra Valley RCD
- Agricultural Uses: UC Cooperative Extension
- Tribal Uses: TBD
- Integrated Water Management: Upper Feather River IRWM
- Small Water Systems: Sierra Brooks Water System, Sierraville Public Utility District
- Land Uses: City of Loyalton, USFS Plumas National Forest
- Economic Development: Sierra County, Plumas County
- Environmental and Ecosystem Uses: Plumas Audubon Society
- Water Quality: Departments of Environmental Health (Sierra Co., Plumas Co.)
- Soils, Subsidence: Integrated Environmental Restoration Services
- Groundwater: Sierra County Public Works
- Domestic Well Users (those who rely exclusively on domestic wells for water supply)

DWR and CDFW have been invited to participate in TAC meetings as ex-officio agency members.

Consultant Support

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

- Laura Foglia, Project Manager
- Cab Esposito, Assistant Project Manager – Technical
- Betsy Elzufon, Assistant Project Manager – Administrative
- Judie Talbot, Outreach and Engagement Facilitator

Section 5. Decision Making

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

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

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

Hybrid Meeting Options:

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13 Standing TAC members and consultants are encouraged to participate at in-person meetings. TAC
14 meetings will have a webinar option to support involvement of TAC members who cannot attend
15 in-person, as well as encourage participation by TAC liaisons and ad-hoc TAC members.
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19 Attendance: Given the volume of information that needs to be considered and developed, regular
20 attendance by TAC members or their designated alternate is essential. Alternates must be
21 identified in advance, fully briefed and able to represent the member when making suggestions and
22 recommendations related to the GSP.
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25 Open Meetings: TAC meetings are open to the public. Public comments are welcome during the
26 meetings as time allows. Ideas, comments, questions, and suggestions can also be submitted via
27 email to sierravalleygmd@sbcglobal.net or by postal mail to SVGMD – GSP at .O. Box 88, Chilcoot,
28 CA 96105, or through the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District’s ‘Contact Us’ webpage
29 at <https://www.sierravalleygmd.org/contact-us> and note ‘GSP Public Comment’ in the ‘Subject’ line.
30

31 Problem-solving: All TAC participants agree to:

- 32 • Listen for understanding and openly share information with others who hold diverse views
- 33 • Not ascribe motivations or intentions to the statements or actions of others
- 34 • Work to develop creative proposals, suggestions, and recommendations that address the
- 35 interests of all
- 36 • Keep commitments once made
- 37 • When appropriate, distinguish between personal versus organizational perspectives (i.e., for
- 38 an organization that a TAC member represents)
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41 Good faith: All participants agree to act in good faith in all aspects of this consensus-seeking
42 process and to communicate their interests in TAC meetings, public workshops, Planning
43 Committee, District Board meetings and Plumas County Board of Supervisors meetings. Comments
44 and suggestions made in open and honest conversations about creative options, approaches, or
45 strategies will not be used against any party in litigation or public relations campaigns. This
46 provision will not restrict the ability of participants to pursue legal remedies.
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1 Good faith also requires that participants or their organizations not make commitments they do not
2 intend to follow through with. Participants must act consistently in the GSP process and in other
3 forums where the issues under discussion in the GSP process are also being addressed. Good faith
4 provisions continue to apply to participants who withdraw from the process.
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Section 6. TAC Communications

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10 In planning processes, ideas may become fully formed over the course of several meetings.
11 Subsequently, when members discuss the work of the TAC, care should be taken to distinguish new
12 concepts from those recommendations adopted by the full group. When discussing the process
13 with others, TAC members should present their own perspectives, without characterizing the
14 positions and views of any other party or attributing comments to other members. TAC members
15 are encouraged, and will be facilitated, to develop common statements about their work for release
16 into newsletters and similar publications.
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19 GSA Briefing Summaries will be prepared and distributed, providing updates on discussions. This
20 will allow GSA parties to anticipate what types of materials will be included in packets for monthly
21 District Board meeting discussions.
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23 Meeting Summaries will be provided via email to TAC members, including the GSAs, and posted on
24 the SVGMD GSP website at <https://www.sierravalleygmd.org/tac-meetings> for public viewing
25 within seven (7) working days of TAC meetings.
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28 Related Data: TAC members are encouraged to contribute and share information (excluding
29 privileged or confidential materials) that help inform discussions and clarify questions of fact. As
30 appropriate, support materials that explain, interpret or analyze data or policies can also be
31 provided.
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