

Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Advisory Committee Meeting

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Date/time: September 10, 2019 ♦ 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Location: Valley of the Moon Water District Office, 19039 Bay Street, El Verano
Contact: Ann DuBay, Sonoma Valley GSA Administrator
Email: AnnDuBay@scwa.ca.gov Phone: (707) 524-8378

MEETING RECAP

- Fred Allebach, SVGSA Advisory Committee Chair, welcomed all attendees and kicked off the SVGSA Advisory Committee meeting.
- The previous meeting summary for July 2019 was approved unanimously (with amendments) by Advisory Committee Members to finalize and post.
- Greg Carr provided a report from the ad hoc.
- Marcus Trotta, Sonoma Water, gave an introduction to Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC).
- Marcus Trotta, Andy Rich (Sonoma Water) and Lisa Porta (Montgomery Associates) discussed the water budget and groundwater model.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Responsible Party	Deadline
Finalize and post the July meeting summary on the SVGSA website.	Staff	September 30, 2019
Send comments to Marcus on information needs	All	October 4, 2019
Comments on information needs and other items to be shared in packet for next meeting		October 20, 2019

Next Meeting: October 8, 2019, 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., Valley of the Moon Water District

Sonoma GSA Website: <http://sonomavalleygroundwater.org/>

MEETING SUMMARY

Roll Call, Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda and Meeting Schedule Review

No changes to the agenda. Due to time constraints, the Advisory Committee did not review the meeting schedule.

Approval of July Meeting Summary

ACTION ITEM REVIEW: All Action Items were completed.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTION: The meeting summary for July 2019 was amended by members Stornetta, Johnson, and Hill, and approved unanimously as amended (with Cornwall abstaining).

ACTION ITEM: Staff to finalize and post the July meeting summary on the SVGSA website.

Ad Hoc report

Greg Carr asked the committee to refer to the revised Ad Hoc report for details. The Ad Hoc has completed their assignment, but if Advisory Committee asks it to do more work on the subject, it will. Ad Hoc member Carr asked for approval to move the report forward to GSA Board.

Carr noted that in July, the Advisory Committee asked the Ad Hoc Committee for changes, which were made. One change was to add “land use” to the proposed revisions to the well drilling application. The Ad Hoc also categorized the options into three groups. Options 1-4 included the well application having improved information. The second category is to improve monitoring in the areas near/around salt intrusion and depletion areas. Perhaps exempt smaller wells, but leave that detail to the county to work out. The third category is to make well log information available to the public. Permit Sonoma could make their database accessible. This would improve information to applicant and public.

A couple of key points:

The reason the Advisory Committee proposed that the Ad Hoc be created is that if we wait 2-3 years to recommend making the improvements, it’s going to be 2024 /2025 before we get information out about monitoring and it speeds up some of the more obvious things we need to do.

Advisory Committee Questions/Comments

Question: Agree with categories in report. In the second category, will there be a process to determine where we monitor?

Response: We start around depletion zones. Focus efforts on “management areas” opportunity around boundary areas.

Comment: The committee should share information with the other area GSAs. It makes a lot of sense everywhere to share information. Expanding our monitoring would be good for the whole area and agriculture. It is a sensitive case to make to Board.

Comment: Are these options mutually exclusive? It would be good to be clear that it’s not “either or”. All the recommendations should be considered. This is a broad set of recommendations that are being made and all can be considered. Agreed to change the term “options” to “recommendations.”

Comment: Permit Sonoma was surprised how much information the GSA needs and realized how much work it’s going to take.

Comment: Information is good for everyone to have and understand. We should market the information, as it will be helpful. We can’t manage what we can’t measure.

Question: Was there any conversation on how the data is / will be managed?

Response: Would like to put permit info online and not have to look at paper applications. DWR has been asking for this type of accessible information.

Comment: Add a category to make data more transparent.

Questions: Where in recommendation is intended use or size of well? What would they do with the information? It was a way to monitor (over time) with land use?

Public Comment: This is a good set of recommendations: Sensitive part -- can't manage what you can't measure. We have to come to grips with what monitoring means; that it means water levels will be measured. Don't miss an opportunity to collect data on an ongoing basis. Does it include volumes pumped?

Response: No, metering (water volume pumped) did not come up. That is a big hurdle to jump.

Comment: Our Ad Hoc Committee charge was to do what we've done. Now it is up to Advisory Committee and Board to decide what we do with information.

Staff: This will be a recommendation from the Advisory Committee to the Board, which would then recommend to the county Board of Supervisors. The GSA cannot impose meters but can recommend to the county to meter (if the Board wants to go in that direction).

Comment: Including metering in the recommendation is a good way to put an anchor on a sinking boat. Even if metering is ultimately necessary in the long run.

Motion: Move to bring these recommendations to the Board.

Motion was made by Norman Gilroy; seconded by Jane Whitsett. The motion was unanimously approved.

[Introduction to Sustainable Management Criteria \(SMCs\)](#)

Marcus reviewed Sustainable Management Criteria using examples from other basins and DWR's best Management Practices. He noted that SMCs are the meat and potatoes to the GSP, and how we quantify the information in a multi-dimensional way. The SMC will drive decisions and implementation of GSP with projects and cost. The main question for the public is "What do you NOT want to see happen in the basin?" The sooner we start this dialogue and get on a common page about what we are talking about, the better.

[Advisory Committee Questions/Comments](#)

Comment: One slide shows a minimum threshold point below the historic lows.

Response: In the example provided, the GSA knew the level will continue to drop before it comes back up - like in the San Joaquin Valley.

Question: Is minimum threshold a marker to where minimum level is?

Response: Discussed metrics for minimum thresholds which include measurable objectives and interim milestones. For saline intrusion, the metric is chloride levels; for Reduction of storage, the metric is total volume.

Question: Regarding representative monitoring sites, why are so many of the monitoring locations not used?

Response: You need to set threshold milestones. Setting threshold in every well in the basin is a lot of work, both to set up and monitor going forward. The ones used should be representative of conditions in basin.

Question: Would we tell DWR about the groundwater management plan – if some of these things are already in place – is that part of the report? If we already have monitoring wells in place. Is there any incentive to get some of these things done early?

Response: We will bring forward existing network and identify which ones could be indicator wells for DWR plan.

Marcus discussed the “Information & Data Needs” handout, and asked the Advisory Committee to review the document and provide feedback on additional data needs that would be helpful in decision-making.

Action: Advisory Committee members provide feedback to Marcus regarding Information & Data Needs.

Ann discussed SMC Outreach, noting that it will be a subset of the overall outreach plan. She noted that these will be challenging topics for people to understand and we need to put in language people can understand. There are plans for a late winter/early spring workshop on SMCs.

The Advisory Committee provided feedback to staff on (1) one or more sustainability indicators that are key to their stakeholder groups and (2) what they would NOT want to see happen in the basin (significant and unreasonable effects) regarding those indicators. (NOTE: Ken Johnson provided a written statement regarding sustainability indicators and significant and unreasonable effects.)

Comment (Caitlin Cornwell, environmental representative): All of the sustainability indicators are important to the environment. However, surface water-groundwater connection is a key sustainability indicator. A significant and unreasonable effect on surface water would be any reduction in stream flow, particularly stream volumes in Sonoma Creek between Kenwood and Glen Ellen in August to November.

Comment: Reading through BMP, under the consideration for minimum threshold on Surface Water Depletion, they fail to mention stream habitat. I know we are not limited to these definitions but should think about other factors.

Response: Think about all the beneficial users. The effects have to look at significant unreasonable effect on all beneficial uses and users.

Comment (Jane Whitsett, City of Sonoma representative): I don't see big red flags on water quality or surface water. The City is a developed area with streams. It's important that surface water runoff is part of the balance, which makes a difference in developed area as water runs off concrete into streams.

Comment (Fred Allebach, Sonoma Water appointee): DACs have a fair share of municipal use, and groundwater storage is a big deal. The rate of depletion in El Verano is high compared to the depletion area as percentage of overall volume. If too steep, the rate of depletion would be unreasonable. Raising the groundwater levels would help everyone.

Comment (Greg Carr, Sonoma County appointee): Groundwater elevations and seawater intrusion are two key sustainability indicators for rural residential wells and agricultural wells. Not to diminish other factors. I think we are already in undesirable effects. But how much worse can it get? I don't know.

Question: Is it true that the minimum threshold triggers management actions?

Response: Measurable objective is the way to take action or trigger.

Comment (Jim Bundschu, agricultural representative): As Ag rep, I can tell you that there is a big fear in this – primarily regarding who pays. As groundwater users who don't have other water sources, the fees will primarily be on Ag's shoulders, yet we are all beneficiaries of a healthy system. For Ag, the big sustainability indicators are groundwater levels, water quality and seawater intrusion.

Comment (Matt Stornetta, North Bay Water District appointee): Vineyards need predictable groundwater sources, hopefully it's not just through less pumping but through other approaches that will increase the water budget, like increased recycled water, and conservation. We don't stand a chance if we don't involve the entire community.

Comment (Norman Gilroy, rural residential representative): What's missing is the human factor: population growth. Groundwater is low because it's being overused by people. We don't have measurement of what use is, and are looking at a rush for housing that brings in people on double or triple dwelling units on residential sites. Look at increase in the number of people being invited into the area to potentially draw on the groundwater water in that area. We need an assessment of water in regard to ongoing human demand for things like tourism and hospitality.

[Water Budget and Groundwater Modeling](#)

Marcus described SGMA's regulation for water budgets and the best management practices. He noted that the budgets start with current conditions; and that projected budgets must include land use changes and also predicted impacts from climate change and sea level rise.

[Advisory Committee Questions/Comments](#)

Question: Are shallow water and deep water budgets both needed?

Response: In some areas we will need to take both into consideration.

Question: Do depletion areas need their own water budget?

Response: SGMA requires one water budget for the entire basin, but our computer model will be able to compute for certain areas. However, because of the interconnections throughout the basin assessing water budgets for particular areas can be complicated.

Lisa Porta, Montgomery Associates, discussed groundwater modeling. She described the model as a mathematical approximation of physical processes underground. Since we can't see groundwater, models are one way to estimate three dimensional space. These models are based on true data and calibrated to known information.

Advisory Committee Questions/Comments

Question: Would assumptions be explicit?

Response: Yes. It helps determine uncertainty. An appendix of assumptions will be created.

Andy Rich described how the Sonoma Valley hydrological model (SVIGFM) was developed. The model has a grid of 500 feet by 500 feet cells, that are consistent through entire cell (for example, if two neighbors within the same cell wanted to know how a third neighbor's well impacted them, you wouldn't be able to tell using the model as all three wells within the same cell share the same characteristics). The model is best suited for assessing regional groundwater conditions and characteristics rather than localized small-scale conditions.

Advisory Committee Questions/Comments

Question: (Regarding one of the graphics), What are the axis?

Response: A typical model output shows the year on the X axis and acre feet on the Y axis. Negative values are outflows and top numbers are input values. Blue line shows change in storage in acre feet.

Administrator/Plan Manager/Legislative Update

Andrea Rodriguez reminded the Advisory Committee of the September 23 open house/workshop at El Verano School, 6-7:30 p.m.

Ann DuBay allotted her time to Marcus Trotta.

Marcus Trotta gave an update on the Technical Services Support from DWR, which will include drilling shallow monitoring wells. Sonoma Water is working through access and permitting; there will be wells drilled in five locations along Sonoma Creek. Drilling is anticipated to begin on October 7. Staff will let the Advisory Committee know of the schedule.

The Proposition 68 grant opportunity for additional SGMA funding just opened up; Sonoma Water will be applying on behalf of the GSA.

Caitlin Cornwall noted that SEC submitted a grant to enhance summer streamflow with four land owners. The GSA offered to use its seepage monitoring budget as a 'cost share' to help make projects happen. The Board will review this request on September 23.

No public comment.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Advisory Committee Members

Fred Allebach

Jim Bundschu

Greg Carr
Caitlin Cornwall
Norman Gilroy
Vicki Hill
Matt Stornetta
Jane Whitsett

[Staff](#)

Ann DuBay, SV GSA Administrator
Marcus Trotta, Sonoma Water
Andrea Rodriguez, Sonoma Water
Tim Parker, Facilitator, Parker Groundwater

ATTACHMENT 1

September 9, 2019

From Advisory Committee member Ken Johnson

Sustainability Criteria

I list below the categories identified in the State GMP and have added what I think that would look like in terms of sustainability. Hope this helps!

Chronic lowering of water levels indicating a significant and unreasonable lowering of supply.

- Lowering to the extent that wells are no longer adequately productive
- Lowering to the extent that surface connective severed

Significant and unreasonable loss of groundwater storage

- Loss of storage seems like it would have to be evaluated on a basin-wide scale
- Significant and unreasonable increase in sea water intrusion
- Salinity increases that diminish the beneficial uses of the groundwater

Significant and unreasonable water quality change

- Contaminants from anthropogenic sources that exceed primary or secondary water standards
- Contaminants from natural sources (hydrothermal, deep connate water, highly mineralized water that impacts beneficial uses

Significant and unreasonable subsidence

- Ground fissures or surface subsidence such that structural damage occurs, roads/bridges are impacted, drainage of gravity systems (surface canals, sewers and storm drains) are impacted

Significant and unreasonable depletion of interconnected surface water.

- Flow rates of springs are significantly diminished such that ecological impacts occur or other beneficial uses are impacted