

Tabletop Discussions Notes
Sonoma Valley Funding Options Community Workshop

General Notes, Comments, Ideas, Questions

Common themes
EVERYONE PAYS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everyone in the basin should pay to some degree• Combination of parcel and well owner - spread it as far and wide as possible (most palatable)• Whoever is benefiting from GW should pay• Should charge whole watershed – unfair to only charge those in basin?• High interest in expanding boundaries - General issue with not including wells in watershed, but outside basin
OUTREACH SUGGESTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brand a little bit better – when you make it sound like people have been stealing water makes well owners very mad• Branding conversations around wells needs to be more friendly• Marketing/branding - Not paying to USE water, but paying for someone to make sure we can ALWAYS use water!• People might want to pay if they know the GW problems exist
RECHARGE/CONSERVATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watering• Short season of rain - how can we conserve?• Everybody has to have incentive to conserve• Benefits for recharge and conservation (develop criteria)• Usage fees should account for NET use (include recharge!)
OTHER FUNDING IDEAS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parcel tax per irrigated parcel?• Tiered system (like system in Marin) – popular idea
OTHER COMMON THEMES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give a break for food crops land use• Land use is important – need to have county, city planning involved• Need more information to make informed decisions• Should use different structures for Phase I and Phase II (usage-based for Phase II, but for Phase I, flat fees may be better)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the pros and cons of distributing costs to all land owners in the groundwater basin on a per-parcel basis?

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: some would support this for Phase I but NOT Phase II (should become quantity-based) • Simple and easy, clean, avoids political campaign • Fair and equitable – “We are all on the same island” • All water comes from the basin – equitably pass along • Only practical solution without GW usage • Keeps people off your property in terms of regulating/metering • “All using groundwater - some just pay to pump it” • Everyone is using GW – don’t demonize people using GW, because it has value to everyone • Keeps the state away! • This is a wider issue than who uses water - everyone benefits from functioning community, GSA, and GSP • Consider residential vs. comm. • City uses GW too • Precedent – well owners pay for Warm Springs Dam even though they don’t use that water • Some well-owners would want to be on city water if possible • Everyone already pays something for water • Pay for farmers to grow food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not encourage conservation • Not (only) charging those who use groundwater • Variation in parcel size; Subsidizes large parcels, not fair to small property owners • Some think this is unfair – i.e., apartments vs homeowners • High users deplete resources and are charged the same as others • “I get my water from the city” • Affects all homeowners • Need to consider effect of Williamson Act

a. Do the pros/cons change if the parcel charge is under \$20 a year? \$10 or less per year?

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PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine if it's \$10 (cheap) • Possibly ok if per AF or crop type is used to balance remaining budget • Better, easier to bear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General agreement that it may not be fair, but a small amount of money is not a big deal • Hard to answer without knowing the source of the other funding • Some say this makes no difference

2. What are the pros and cons of distributing costs to all landowners in the basin on a per-acre basis?

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Parcels or acres not an issue for our small water system" • Sliding scale would seem fair • Simple and easy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for large fees for large dry lots • Depends on what you use the acreage for – size doesn't correlate with water use necessarily • Unfair to farmers, could reduce farming/increase cost of local food products • "I am dry farming – do not want to pay for acres" • Unirrigated acreage/open space • How to account for ponds used for water storage?

a. Do the pros/cons change if the charge is less than \$10 per acre? NO

3. Distributing costs to all landowners in the basin on a per-acre basis taking into account how they use their land as it relates to groundwater use (e.g. residents, farms, businesses)

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems more fair for large users who use multiple kinds of use – dry farmer vs water user • Only if acreage using water is counted, not all acreage - Parcel tax per irrigated parcel? • Beneficial to have tiered system (land use and well capacity) – more equitable, protect farmers • Approaches equity amongst water users • Accounts for some cons of per-acre charge (land use as much of a variable as acreage) • Good if it factors in things like dry farmer vs dairies, recycling water into pastures, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require metering • Seems based on assumptions • Seems cumbersome - People conserve, people don't conserve – too little time for the back and forth arguing about how much water they use • "If you use 1000 gallons, it should cost the same regardless of use" • "for surface water users there could be out of basin issues that are not accounted for" • Not as accurate data • Some farming types (grazing) don't use much water – not equitable • Penalizing farmers – cost goes to consumers

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4. What are the pros and cons of distributing costs to all well owners in the basin?

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, Low cost, Easy to implement • Ok if charging a reasonable fee per well • Should charge ag/commercial higher rates than domestic • Seems fair IF only a part of cost/revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a popular option • Not equitable • Large users are mining the basin • Don't know all the wells in the valley • Ignores amount of water coming out of the ground • People have to register • Already pay electricity, maintenance • Costs too high on per-well basis – not reasonable • Different wells have different types, levels of use

a. Do the pros and cons change if we charge all well owners in the basin for the amount of water they pump?

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volumetric charge encourages conservation - “It’s a crime to not meter wells” • Pressure on heavy users Protects average to poor folks, puts cost on businesses that can afford it • Best for long-term • Tiered rates – encourage conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too cumbersome for Phase I (metering) • Meters are expensive to install, maintain

b. Cities and water districts use groundwater, and have large wells. If we charge cities or water districts, what are the pros and cons of them passing those costs on to residents as part of their water bills?

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That is equitable • They have the data • Easy to implement • Different from well owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They pay for one or two wells • Residents will be unhappy, have to pay more • No one likes this

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “No pros knowing districts and agencies have the right to charge distribution fees”• Everyone benefits from GW• Might be able to spread costs outside basin | |
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5. Is there a combination of options that you believe would be fair and equitable?

- a. Phase 1 only: Parcel tax PLUS large public well owners pay more and distribute to their users - *we prefer this option*
- b. Flat fee per well, then charge based on usage
- c. Small parcel charge + additional per acre based on land use (not water use)
- d. Small parcel charge + charge based on GW users (well charge?)