

**Appendix 1-D**  
**Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency**  
**Advisory Committee Charter**

# Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee Charter

## Charge

The Advisory Committee purpose is to advise the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“SVGSA” or “Agency”) Board of Directors (“Board”) on groundwater sustainability plan development and implementation, and on Agency policies. The intent of the Committee is to provide community and stakeholder perspective, participation and input to the Agency on groundwater sustainability activities and actions. The Committee will make recommendations that the SVGSA Board will consider in its decision-making.

The Advisory Committee may review or provide recommendations to the Board on groundwater-related issues:

- Development, adoption, or amendment of the groundwater sustainability plan
- Sustainability goals, objectives, and criteria
- Technical and reporting standards, including best management practices, data management and reporting
- Technical expertise pertaining to groundwater sustainability
- Monitoring programs
- Annual work plans and reports (including mandatory 5-year milestone reports), and schedules
- Modeling scenarios
- Inter-basin coordination activities
- Projects and management actions to achieve sustainability
- Grant funding proposals
- Community engagement and public participation programs
- Local regulations to implement SGMA
- Fee proposals
- General advisory in response to Board inquiries

The Advisory Committee will not be involved in Agency budgets or day-to-day operations, such as personnel staffing or contracting.

## Brown Act, Open Process, and Conflicts of Interest

All meetings of the Advisory Committee are open to the public. The Agency will announce Committee meetings on its web site and through its regular communication channels.

Advisory Committee meetings are subject to the Brown Act. The Advisory Committee shall adopt a schedule and location for regular meetings, and meeting agendas shall be posted in compliance with the Brown Act.

All Committee meetings shall provide for public comment in conformance with the Brown Act, including non-agenda public comment and public comment on individual agenda items. Speakers will generally be limited to three minutes, but the time may be adjusted based upon meeting circumstances. As needed, time limits may be placed on public comments to ensure the Advisory Committee is reasonably able to

address all agenda items during the course of the meeting. Special and emergency meetings need not provide for non-agenda public comment, but such comment may be allowed at the Advisory Committee's discretion. Members of the Advisory Committee are subject to all applicable conflict of interest laws including Government Code section 1090 and the California Political Reform Act. The Board shall adopt a conflict of interest code for the Advisory Committee.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Agency Board of Directors**

The SVGSA Board commits to the value of the Advisory Committee and will consider Advisory Committee recommendations when making its policy decisions.

### **Advisory Committee**

The role and responsibility of the Advisory Committee is to solicit and incorporate community and stakeholder interests into recommendations on SGMA implementation in the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Basin for the Board to consider in its decision-making process.

Advisory Committee members ("members") reflect the diverse interests of local public agencies, non-profit organizations, and groundwater users. The criteria for Advisory Committee members are to:

- Serve as strong, effective advocates for the interest group represented,
- Work collaboratively with others,
- Commit time needed for ongoing discussions, and
- Collectively reflect the diversity of basin interests, and
- Bring personal experiences with the benefit of advising the Groundwater Sustainability Agency,

As part of membership, members agree to:

- Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda. Preparation may include reviewing meeting summaries, technical information, and draft documents distributed in advance of each meeting.
- Present their constituent members' views on the issues being discussed and be willing to engage in respectful, constructive dialogue with other members of the group.
- Develop a combined consensus building and problem solving approach in which they consider the interests and viewpoints of all group members, in addition to their own.
- Keep their constituencies informed about the deliberations and actively seek their constituents' input.

### **Chair**

The Advisory Committee will appoint a chair and vice-chair. Vice-chair will act as the chair in the chair's absence. The chair for the Advisory Committee agrees to:

- Work with the Agency administrator and facilitator to develop the agenda for all Committee meetings.
- Assist in framing issues so members are able to have a productive conversation and develop recommendations.
- Brief the Board on the nature and progress of the Committee at key milestones, and on recommendations from the Committee.
- Serve as the Advisory Committee spokesperson when media are referred by the Agency communications lead (See Communications section below).

## **Administrator**

- Maintain a current roster of Committee members.
- Work with GSA Board to fill Committee vacancies, as needed.
- In coordination with the facilitator and Committee Chair, prepare agendas for Advisory Committee meetings.
- Notice all meetings in accordance with the Brown Act.
- Staff all meetings, record minutes and develop and distribute meeting summaries.
- Work with Committee and GSA Board to develop annual work plan and schedule for Advisory Committee meetings.
- Facilitate the process of incorporating Committee recommendations into Board packets.
- Provide options and ensure records for AB 1234 Ethics Training and Brown Act Training for Advisory Committee members.

## **Facilitator**

As resources allow, a third-party facilitator will provide impartial facilitation services for Advisory Committee meetings. The facilitator's primary responsibility is to ensure an open process where all member interests are heard and thoughtfully considered. To this end, the facilitator works on behalf of the process and the members contributing to Advisory Committee efforts. Specific responsibilities include:

- Support the Agency Administrator and Advisory Committee Chair and/or Vice Chair in developing and distributing Committee agendas and relevant materials.
- Advocate for a fair, effective, and credible process, but remain impartial with respect to the outcome of the deliberations.
- Apply collaborative, interest-based negotiation methods that foster openness and identify areas of preliminary and final consensus agreement for advice and recommendations to the Board.
- In the absence of consensus, help identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Check in with members as needed to ensure all issues are identified and explored.
- Coordinate with the Agency Administrator and Chair or Vice Chair to ensure accurate, impartial documentation of meetings and agreements (i.e. meeting summaries and recommendation reports).
- Ensure all members uphold the tenets of the charter.

## **Decision-Making**

To inform SVGSA Board decision-making, the Advisory Committee will provide written recommendations in reports, developed and reviewed by members with staff support, that reflect the outcome of Committee discussions. The recommendation reports will identify areas of agreement and disagreement. The Committee may request that one or more Committee members present its recommendations to the SVGSA Board, including areas of agreement and disagreement, consistent with committee deliberations. The SVGSA Board will consider Advisory Committee recommendations when making decisions. If a majority of the SVGSA Board does not agree with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Board shall state the reasons for its final decision.

The Advisory Committee will strive for consensus (agreement among all participants) in all of its decision-making. Working toward consensus is a fundamental principle. Consensus means that all Committee members either fully support or can live with a recommendation. In reaching consensus, some Committee members may strongly endorse a particular proposal while others may accept it as

"workable." Others may be only able to "live with it." Still others may choose to "stand aside" by verbally noting a disagreement, yet allowing all other members of the Committee to reach consensus without them if the recommendation does not affect them or compromise their interests. Any of these actions constitutes consensus.

Any Advisory Committee member or members that disagree with a recommendation must provide an alternative that attempts to meet his/her interests while also meeting the interests of other members. The Committee will strive for consensus, but shall not limit itself to strict consensus if all participants cannot reach consensus after all interests and options have been thoroughly identified, explored, and discussed. Less-than-consensus recommendation-making shall not be undertaken lightly. When unable to reach consensus on advice or recommendations, the Committee will outline the areas in which it does not agree, providing some explanation to inform Board decision-making.

In order to conduct business (e.g. make and advance a recommendation to the Board), a quorum of the Advisory Committee must be present.

#### **Option for How to Define a Quorum**

A seven member simple majority of the Advisory Committee constitutes a quorum.

### **Ad Hoc Workgroups**

The Advisory Committee can form ad hoc workgroups to assist with its work advising the SVGSA Board on groundwater sustainability plan development and implementation, and on Agency policies. Workgroup composition should be representative of diverse groundwater interests.

On an as needed basis, and in coordination with GSA staff and the facilitator, the chair will call for, solicit interested workgroup member participation, and affirm establishment of ad hoc workgroups. Upon establishment, the chair will define the scope and expected duration of any ad hoc workgroup. As needed, the chair may adjust the scope and duration of any ad hoc workgroup. The number of members on any ad hoc workgroup will be limited to five or less to ensure manageable group size and efficiency of work effort. GSA staff, facilitators and technical experts will provide assistance to ad hoc workgroups as needed.

Ad hoc workgroups will develop proposals or recommendations for full Advisory Committee consideration. Ad hoc workgroups will not provide advice or recommendations directly to the SVGSA Board. Rather, ad hoc products will be presented to the full Advisory Committee for consideration. Ad hoc workgroups will abide by the Advisory Committee's ground rules and charter.

### **Membership**

Composition of the Advisory Committee is intended to represent the beneficial uses and users of groundwater in the Sonoma Valley groundwater basins, as identified in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Committee membership is established by the SVGSA Board and is based on the member agency and interest group designations described below.

The governing body of each member of the Agency will appoint one member, for a total of six members:

1. City of Sonoma
2. County of Sonoma

3. North Bay Water District
4. Sonoma County Water Agency
5. Sonoma Resource Conservation District
6. Valley of the Moon Water District

The Agency Board will appoint six interest-based members with presence in the Basin:

7. Environmental representative
8. Rural residential well owner
9. Business community
10. Agricultural interest (surface water or groundwater user)
11. At-large community representative (hydrologist/geologist preference)
12. At-large community representative

Advisory Committee members may not serve concurrently on the SVGSA Board.

Members must live or work within or represent an organization with a presence in the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Basin, identified by the Department of Water Resources current Bulletin 118. The SVGSA Board may choose to appoint one of the interest-based members of the Advisory Committee from outside the Bulletin 118 Basin, provided such member resides, works or represents an organization with a presence in the watershed, which contributes to the Basin. The Board will determine if alternates are necessary, and if so, the appointment process.

Advisory Committee members serve without compensation.

### **Selection and Appointment Process**

The SVGSA Board maintains an interested parties list, develops and oversees an application process, and makes appointments to the Advisory Committee following member terms outlined below.

#### *Member Agency Seats*

Each SVGSA member agency's governing body will appoint its seat.

#### *Interest-Based Seats*

Interested individuals from the community or local organizations may apply to the SVGSA Board, designating in the application the seat that the applicant would intend to fill. The SVGSA Board encourages interest groups to work together to recommend a single candidate to fill that interest's seat. The Board will give strong consideration to appointing candidates that have the backing of multiple organizations or individuals within that interest group and familiarity with groundwater and its management. The Board will also give strong preference to a representative who lives or works within a Sonoma Valley Disadvantaged Community (as defined in SGMA), and will in any case give preference to appointees that can represent the interests of disadvantaged populations or interests that are otherwise under represented on the Advisory Committee. Additionally, the Board will give preference to applicants with experience working with diverse community-based groups.

The SVGSA Board may modify by supermajority vote the composition and number of Advisory Committee members. The Board can remove an interest-based committee member by majority vote if the member is not performing his or her responsibilities.

### *Terms*

The initial Advisory Committee appointments will include six seats with three-year terms (interest-based categories) ending in December 2020 and six seats with two-year terms (member agency appointees) ending in December 2019. Following initial committee appointment, all member terms will be two-year terms and end in December. Appointees are not term-limited; however, interest-based members must apply for each term. If a vacancy occurs for an interest-based seat before the end of the term, the Board will appoint a new member to complete the term. The appointing GSA Member shall fill member agency vacancies.

## **Process Agreements and Ground Rules**

To conduct a successful collaborative process, the facilitator and all Advisory Committee members will work together to create a constructive, problem-solving environment. To this end, all members agree to the following process agreements that the Committee will use, and to ground rules which will guide individual and group behavior.

### **Process Agreements**

- ✓ **Everyone agrees to negotiate in good faith.** All participants agree to participate in decision making, to act in good faith in all aspects of this effort and to communicate their interests during meetings. Good faith also requires that parties not make commitments they do not intend to follow through with, and that members act consistently in the meetings and in other forums where the issues under discussion in these meetings are also being discussed.
- ✓ **Everyone agrees to address the issues and concerns of the participants.** Everyone who is joining in the Advisory Committee is doing so because s/he has a stake in the issue at hand. For the process to be successful, all the parties agree to validate the issues and concerns of the other parties and strive to reach an agreement that takes all the issues under consideration. Disagreements will be viewed as problems to be solved, rather than battles to be won.
- ✓ **Everyone agrees to inform and seek input from their constituents on the content and outcome of the facilitated discussions.** To the extent possible, scheduling will allow for participants to inform and seek input from their constituents, scientific advisors, and others about discussions. Information, such as talking points and presentation slides, may be developed by staff for member use to assist members and ensure consistent messaging.
- ✓ **Everyone agrees that parties can meet with other organizations or interest group members.** Advisory Committee members may find it helpful to meet with other organizations or interest group members and to consult with constituents outside of the meeting so the member is better able to communicate community concerns on the issues at hand. Members agree to coordinate and advise on outreach activities to address and inform possible overlap.
- ✓ **Everyone agrees to attend all the meetings to the extent possible.** Continuity of the conversations and building trust are critical to the success of the Advisory Committee. Participants are encouraged to turn off cell phones and focus on the issue at hand. Agency staff or the facilitator will coordinate the meeting schedule.

## Ground Rules

- ✓ **Use Common Conversational Courtesy**  
Treat each other with mutual respect as you discuss and deliberate groundwater issues.
- ✓ **All Ideas and Points of View Have Value**  
All ideas have value in this setting. We are looking for innovative ideas. The goal is to achieve understanding. Simply listen, you do not have to agree. If you hear something you do not agree with or you think is "silly" or "wrong," please remember that the purpose of the forum is to share ideas.
- ✓ **Be Honest, Fair, and as Candid as Possible**  
Put your interests forward, help others understand you and listen actively in order to understand others.
- ✓ **Avoid Editorials**  
It will be tempting to analyze the motives of others or offer editorial comments. Please talk about *your own* ideas and thoughts. Avoid commenting on why you believe another participant thinks something.
- ✓ **Honor Time, Be Concise and Share the Air**  
Help ensure an inclusive discussion by being cognizant of time constraints, stating your views clearly and concisely, and sharing the air so others can participate as well.
- ✓ **Think Innovatively and Welcome New Ideas**  
Creative thinking and problem solving are essential to success. "Climb out of the box" and attempt to think about the problem in a new way.
- ✓ **Invite Humor and Good Will**  
Don't hesitate to bring levity and humor to the process when warranted, as this often helps collaborative discussions.
- ✓ **Be Comfortable**  
Please feel free to help yourself to refreshments or take personal breaks. If you have other needs please inform the facilitator.

## External Communications

### General

Members are asked to speak only for their organization or themselves when asked by external parties, including the media, about the Advisory Committee's progress, unless there has been a formal adoption of a statement, concepts, or recommendations by the Advisory Committee. Members should be careful to present only their own views and not those of other participants. The temptation to discuss someone else's statements or position should be avoided.

### Media

Members will refer media inquiries to the SVGSA communications lead, while members do reserve freedom to express their own opinions or those of the organization they represent to media



representatives. The Agency communications lead may refer media to the Advisory Committee Chair to speak on behalf of the Committee as needed.

## **Amendments**

The Advisory Committee can recommend future changes to the Charter. The Board may amend the charter when needed using its decision-making procedure.