

# FEE RATE STUDY: Introduction & Next Steps

Advisory  
Committee  
Meeting

January 11, 2022



# Background

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- Current member agency funding expires on June 30, 2022
- Three Sonoma County GSAs are collaborating on engagement of consultant team to conduct rate and fee study update for funding GSP implementation, including GSA operations, beginning July 1, 2022.
- Following competitive solicitation process, the three GSAs selected SCI Consulting Group and Larry Walker Associates.

# Consultant Team

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SCI Consulting Group

*Jerry Bradshaw, P.E. – Senior Engineer, Project Manager*

*Arcelia Herrera – Senior Consultant*

*Valerie Flores – Senior Consultant*

*Ryan Aston - Consultant*

*Specializing in Public Finance,  
Rate Studies, Public Engagement*



Larry Walker Associates

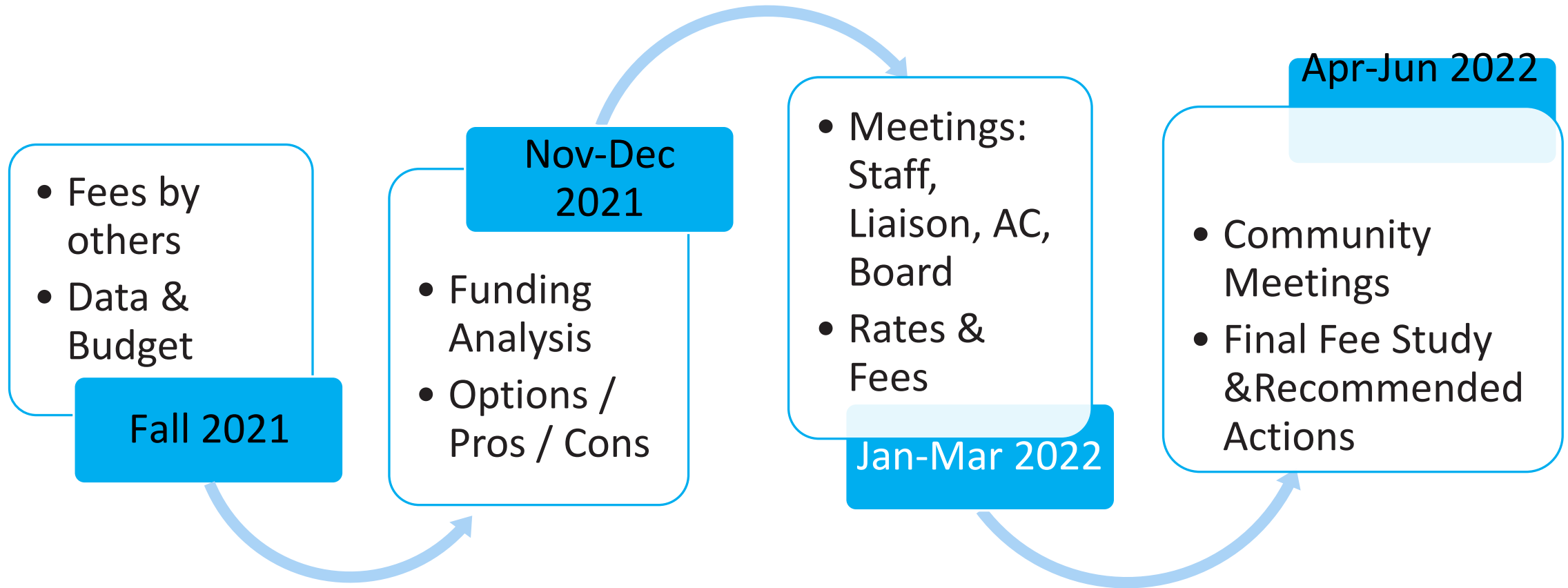
*Rich Pauloo, PhD - Data & Science Wizard*

*Specializing in Water and Water  
Quality Engineering*



# Phasing of Fee Study

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# Challenges

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## Who Should Pay

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- Just well owners?
- All water users?

2

## What Should They Pay For

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- Local or state management
- Services provided
- Value to the community

3

## Rate Levels

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- Operating budgets higher in future years
- Pay back agencies?
- Include capital costs?

4

## How Fees are Paid

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- \$\$ / AF (similar to SRP 2019 fee structure)
- Other options

Community  
Acceptance

# Budgets & Costs

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- Implementation and Operations
  - Preliminary estimate \$1.2M/year
- Projects and Management Actions
  - Group 1 by 2025 (non-capital)
  - Groups 2A & 2B later (estimated to cost \$8.6M)
- Other Considerations
  - Reserve levels?
  - Pay back member agencies?
  - Rely on grants for programs or capital projects?

# Funding Options

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- Fee based on groundwater use
  - Similar to the Santa Rosa Plain fee
- Fee based on benefit received from GSP Programs / Projects
- Tax levied on all parcels in the basin
  - Would require a ballot measure (2/3 majority)
- Other sources
  - Member agency contributions
  - Grants

# Policy Decisions

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- Policy Question
  - Groundwater users (*higher fee / Board has authority to impose*)
  - All water users (*lower fee / must get voter approval*)
- Practical Considerations
  - Groundwater use for many parcels can only be estimated (*not fully metered*)
  - Working to develop database (*extension and update of SRP 2019 database*)
  - Working to leverage efficiencies by collaborating with Petaluma Valley & Santa Rosa Plain GSAs
- Basic Formula (used by Santa Rosa Plain):
  - Revenue need ÷ total acre-feet pumped → \$/AF Rate
  - Santa Rosa Plain Rates (2019): \$19.90 per AF || Rural residential is \$9.95



# Next Steps

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