Upper Ventura River SGMA | 2nd STAKEHOLDER FORUM MEETING SUMMARY
GSA Formation Committee Meeting Formation Committee

Thursday, January 28, 2016, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Oak View Community Center, Knuckle Hall, 18 Valley Rd, Oak View, CA 93022

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2. ACTION ITEMS

- **Mindy Meyer** to update year on work plan to 2016.
- **Mindy Meyer** to request an old/new basin boundary overlap map be made available online.
- **Tully Clifford** to hare County may on website.
- **Steve Wickstrum** to prepare an updated map depicting total groundwater usage by each agency, including updating the calculations.
- **Jena Acos** to develop a “legal questions and answers” document to include on forthcoming website.

3. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Bruce Kuebler, Ventura River Water District, opened the meeting of the Upper Ventura River (UVR) Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Formation Committee. Following self-introductions by

meeting participants, Mindy Meyer, facilitator from the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP), reviewed the meeting agenda, ground rules, and the following meeting goals:

- Provide information about the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the GSA and Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) processes
- Provide targeted feedback to the UVR GSA Formation Committee plans and actions to become a GSA

Mr. Kuebler next introduced the five agencies involved in the Formation Committee and listed the individuals representing these agencies:

- Casitas Municipal Water District: Steve Wickstrum, Mary Bergen, and Pete Kaiser
- City of Ventura: Shana Epstein
- County of Ventura: Tully Clifford
- Meiners Oaks Water District: Mike Hollebrands, Mike Krumpschmidt, and Mike Etchart
- Ventura River Water District: Bert Rapp, Ed Lee, and Bruce Kuebler

4. INTRODUCTION OF GSA FORMATION COMMITTEE AGENCY MEMBERS

PRESENTATION: GSA FORMATION

Steve Wickstrum, Casitas Municipal Water District, provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Formation Committee Agency Members*. Key items reviewed were:

- GSA Formation Committee Agency Members
- Maps depicting each District's population, ground water basins and water sources.
    - All maps provided by the Ventura River Watershed Council.
- **Meiners Oaks Water District**
    - Meiners Oaks uses four groundwater wells, rarely utilizing supplementary water from Casitas
    - They have the ability to monitor the wells
    - Various use types include municipal, industrial and agriculture
- **Casitas Municipal Water District**
    - Water sources include local watersheds, Ventura River surface water diversions, Lake Casitas and Mira Monte Well
    - Casitas has various users from municipal, industrial, agriculture, recreation and more.
- **Ventura River Water District**
    - Water sources are groundwater wells and Casitas,when needed as a supplemental supply or in an emergency.
    - District users include municipal and industrial
- **City of San Buenaventura**
    - Local sources include Ventura River, Mound Groundwater, Oxnard Plain, Santa Paula Groundwater Basin, recycled water and Casitas

    - District users are municipal, industrial and potable reuse
- **County of Ventura**
    - Local sources include storm water capture and reuse
    - The County also offers grant funding support

5. WORK PLAN SCHEDULE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Meyer provided background and information regarding the Formation Committee's preparations for developing a GSA, including conducting personal meetings with 17 stakeholders in order to understand key opportunities, challenges and issues pertinent for the GSA to address. The stakeholders interviewed represented a range of interests, from agriculture, environmental, tribal, federal and state agencies, etc. A synopsis of interview findings will be available at future date on the forthcoming GSA website. The website is currently in development, and may be ready for launch as early as February 2016. Public members will be able to sign up on the website to receive email updates.

The Formation Committee work plan was reviewed (please refer to handout). This work plan was developed to assist the Formation Committee in meeting the State required timeline for GSA development. The Committee expects to meet approximately one per month through August 2016. The topics anticipated for discussion at each of these meetings was indicated on the work plan, subject to change as needed.

Public Comment Period:

- How will the Formation Committee draft the GSA without guidelines for the Groundwater Sustainability Plan?
    - Ms. Meyer: DWR plans to release draft Regulations for Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) in February. And yes, as form follows function, by having a better understanding of what GSA's are expected to do this will aid the Formation Committee in setting up their GSA.
- A correction was noted on the physical timeline exhibit in the room to update the year from 2015 to 2016.
    - ACTION ITEM: Mindy Meyer to update year on work plan to 2016.

6. INTRODUCTION TO SGMA AND THE GSA/GSP PROCESS

PRESENTATION: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Tully Clifford, Director, Ventura County Watershed Protection District, provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Sustainability Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).* Key items reviewed were:

- Map of Ventura County Ground Water Basins:

    - 12 groundwater basins are in Ventura County
    - 21 basins are in total overdraft, of which two are in Ventura County
- Groundwater Conditions Update: How we got here, "The Hydrological Cycle"
- SGMA Legislation: Three bills were merged to develop SGMA, including: Assemble Bill (AB) 1739, Senate Bill (SB) 1168 and 1319
- Legislative Goals of SGMA: Set Standards, allow local agencies to manage groundwater sustainability, increase groundwater storage, prevent deterioration of water quality, and preserve existing water rights
- GSA Powers and Authorities: Management of groundwater extractions and water wells, groundwater monitoring and reporting, replenishment activities, imposition of fees, enforcement, data collection, analyses and management, preparation of a groundwater sustainability plan.
- Who forms a GSA: One or more local agencies that implement the provisions of SGMA.
    - Local agencies must have water supply, water management or land use responsibilities within a groundwater basin.
    - A water corporation regulated by the Public Utilities Commission or a mutual water company may participate in a GSA through a memorandum of agreement or other legal agreement. The authority provided does not confer additional powers on a nongovernmental entity.
- How is a GSA Formed: A combination of local agencies may form a groundwater sustainability agency by using any of the following methods:
    - (1) A joint powers agreement (JPA)
    - (2) A memorandum of agreement
    - (3) other legal agreement
- What is a GSP: A groundwater sustainability plan shall be developed and implemented for each medium or high priority basin by a groundwater sustainability agency to meet the sustainability goal established pursuant SGMA.
    - Key components: Yield, groundwater allocation and alternative supplies.
- GSP Plan Requirements:
    - Historical data, groundwater levels, quality, subsidence, surface water interaction.
    - Historical and projected demands and supplies recharge areas, measurable objectives, milestones and goals, planning and implementation and monitoring data.
    - Control of saline water intrusion, protection and recharge areas, contaminated groundwater migration, well abandonment and destruction program, replenishment, use, storage, efficiency measures, state and federal regulations, coordination with land use agencies and impacts on ecosystems.
    - Bottom line: How much water can we take on a daily basis to maintain sustainability?
    - GSP Plan Key Components: Sustainable Yield, Groundwater Allocation and Alternative Supply.
- Key Terminology
    - Sustainable Yield: Maximum that can be extracted without causing undesirable result. Calculated over "base period representative of long term conditions" and compares "safe yield," a condition when average annual extractions are equal to or less than average annual recharge.

- Undesirable Result: Chronic lowering of groundwater levels and significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage, seawater intrusion, degraded water quality, subsidence and adverse impacts on surface water.
- Groundwater Allocation: To control groundwater extractions by regulating, limiting or suspending extractions from individual groundwater wells or extractions from groundwater wells in the aggregate.
- Beneficial Uses and Users: Holders of overlying groundwater rights including ag and domestic, Municipal well operators, public water systems, local land use planning agencies and environmental users. Surface water users, federal government, California Native American Tribes, and Disadvantaged communities (private domestic wells or small water systems).
- Groundwater Supply: Transport, reclaim, purify, desalinate, purchase, transfer, deliver or exchange. Conserve, store, spread or replenish. Acquire lands or property, facilities and services. Supply, produce, treat and distribute. Appropriate and acquire: surface water or groundwater rights, import surface water or groundwater, conserve and store water.

- Options to fund the GSA and GSP:
  - Regulatory Fees: May be imposed prior to GSP adoption, used to fund GSP preparation and other costs of sustainability program and include permit and other regulatory fees.
  - Extraction Fees: Available only if GSP adopted, may be used for acquisition, operation, maintenance of facilities and acquisition, treatment, production and distribution of water. No requirement that fees be uniform and must follow prop 218 requirements.
- Key Dates:
  - January 1, 2015: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act goes into effect.
  - January 31, 2015: Basins categorized as high, medium or low priority.
  - June 1, 2016: DWR adopts regulations for evaluating GSP's and implementation efforts.
  - December 31, 2016: DWR estimate of water available for replenishment.
  - January 1, 2017: DWR publishes best management practices for sustainable groundwater management.
  - June 30, 2017: Last day to file notice of intent to become a GSA.
  - January 1, 2020: Last day to adopt GSP for basins in critical overdraft.
  - January 1, 2022: Last day to adopt GSP for all other medium and high priority basins.
  - January 1, 2040: Last day to achieve sustainability.

7. BASIN BOUNDARY MODIFICATION

PRESENTATION: Upper Ventura River Basin Boundaries: Evolving and Dissecting

Mr. Kear provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Upper Ventura River Basin Boundaries: Evolving and Dissecting.* Key items review included:

- Basin Boundary Modification: Focus on technical information, geologic, hydrologic and structure and infrastructure.

- Bulletin 118 defines a groundwater basin.
- Proposals for modification requests must be submitted to DWR no later than March 31, 2016. (The next opportunity to revise boundaries will be in 2019.)
- 1933 DWR map of the groundwater reservoir, general locations of key basins.
- Ventura River Underground reservoir appears to follow river gravels only. Note that is varies greatly from the boundaries currently referenced today by Bulletin 118.
- 1953 map provided by State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).
    - Map shows the separation of the upper and lower river basins. The Upper Ventura River Basin extends from Kennedy Narrows to Foster Park and east to include Meiners Oaks and Mira Monte.
- 1976 map provided by DWR:
    - Shows two separate basins including portions of Lake Casitas, San Antonio Creek and most limits of alluvium.
- 2003 groundwater basin map provided by DWR, still used currently.
    - Here, the upper and lower basins are considered as two sub-basins with a single basin. This map does not include San Antonio Creek either.
- 2012 groundwater basin map provided by Ventura County.
    - This map is distinctly different than the State DWR map in that it includes San Antonio Creek and Lake Casitas.
- 2011 map provided by DBS.
    - The red outline is the groundwater basin boundary. This map was used in a balance study as part of a Proposition 50 grant funding effort.
- 1991 map produced by Tom Dibblee.
    - This map used geologic data *and* local knowledge to distinguish groundwater basins. It includes more detailed information on landslides and alluviums.
    - It includes San Antonio Creek as part of the alluvium. It is similar to the Ventura County map, but separates the creek and the main stem at the clear exposure of bedrock. The State may not consider this area percolating groundwater.
- It is suggested to overlay the Dibblee map, the Ventura County map, and the DWR map to generate a better understanding of the differences in suggested boundaries and what each difference means for groundwater extraction.
- 2005 map provided by DWR, 1984 map provided by Rockwell, and additional map detailing alluviums and faults.
- Map used at January 5, 2016 DWR meeting:
    - This maps shows various alluvium, bedrock, gaging sites, surface ridges as well as the Arroyo Parida-Santa Ana Fault down to the Casitas River gage.
- Map showing county defined boundary defined as “out” of UVRB, which includes about 20 wells. Green area highlights what would be included.
    - There are no existing active production wells added to proposed revision.

Public Comment Period:

- Will the new boundaries as shown on the map developed with DWR at the January 5th meeting be captured in a report? The public needs to see the supporting data as well as the maps.

- Yes, we will submit a technical scientific report that defines the basin boundaries as shown on this map. We will use DWR's web interface to submit our basin boundary modification package. Supporting documents for submission of this request form are currently being gathered, and will be complete around March 21st, and no later than March 31st. It will be available for public review and comment following submission. Stakeholders are encouraged to contact Bert Rapp at 805-646-3403, bert@venturariverwd.com with comments and to subscribe to the DWR's email list-serv for additional information: http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/subscribe.cf

- How will the basin boundary study be funded?
  - The formation committee has planned to split the costs between agencies, which amounts to approximately $1,000 per agency. This includes the cost of generating the basin boundary modification request form.

- Please describe the benefits and disadvantages that would result from exclusion of wells in the proposed modified basin.
  - The excluded wells indicated on the map extract water from bedrock areas, not alluvium. DWR defines groundwater as being extracted from alluvium, not bedrock. Thus by the geologic definition of groundwater basin boundaries, they are not considered groundwater users. The Formation Committee may discuss this situation further at an upcoming meeting.

- How will private well users be affected by regulations?
  - Estimates show there may be approximately 160 private wells in this area, utilizing a combined total of 50-75 acre feet of water per year (AFY). If a well does not produce more than 2 AFY, it may not necessary to regulate its extraction.

- One public member expressed concerns that some residents may choose to pump water from areas that would be outside of the new basin boundaries, and their cumulative long-term water use may not actually be negligible. The GSA should consider these situations when drafting their GSP.

- What wells will be excluded with the proposed boundary adjustments, including the exclusion of San Antonio Creek?
  - According to Bulletin 118, San Antonio Creek is currently excluded from the basin. We anticipate an additional 15 to 20 wells may be excluded from the modified basin boundary area.

- Can the Committee share the map of the well locations coupled with the cross section of the basin?
  - This data is in the County files, and can also be accessed by the public once it is submitted to DWR as part of the modification request.

- How does DWR intend to regulate wells and extractions that fall outside of the basin boundaries?
    - This is to be determined. Regulation may come from SWRCB.

- Is surface water used to replenish groundwater levels?
    - Yes. It does filter down, but there are currently no facilities to divert surface water into recharge basins."
    -
- Is a detailed map that shows the parcels and the proposed basin boundary available for public use?

    The Ventura City Water Commission has made this request, and we are currently creating a more detailed map to post on our website: http://www.uvrgroundwater.org/

- The GSA could be splitting land parcels in the new basin boundaries if the lines are drawn only to scientific rational.

    Yes. A scientific change must be based on geology, not property boundaries.

- It is important that water users immediately outside of the boundaries participate in this process.
    - Note that the County also represents the public interest.
    - Please offer any suggestions on persons/businesses/organizations to contact on the provided comment cards.
    - A letter will be sent to all owners of active wells in the area notifying them of the process.
    - All public water suppliers in the area will be notified of the process.
- It is difficult to identify where one's property falls on the maps in the room indicating the proposed basin boundary.
    - The forthcoming website will include a detailed map that allows for zooming in on basin boundaries and particular parcels.
    - ACTION ITEM: Mindy Meyer to request a parcel map with the old/new basin boundary overlap map to post online. ACTION ITEM: Tully Clifford to have County create the map.

- If a person is opposed to any portion of the proposed boundary modifications, how can those oppositions be filed?
    - Comments can be submitted to the Formation Committee, and to DWR once the modification request is submitted to them. All comments are welcome; though please note the boundary changes proposed are made strictly on the basis of updated science (e.g. geologic location of alluvial fields and bedrock), not on jurisdictional or political considerations. DWR is only interested in receiving scientifically-based adjustments to basin boundaries.

- What happens if DWR does not accept proposed boundary changes?
    - In this case, the basin boundaries would remain as determined in Bulletin 118.

- If a property owner has a well on a parcel that is partially in and partially out of the basin, based on the new basin boundary, and their well is in the UVR basin, but they use it on the parcel that is now outside of the basin, would this then be considered an appropriative use?
    - The GSA is encouraged to consider the big picture issue of use of groundwater outside of the basin affecting return flow to the basin when drafting the GSP.
        - Note that SGMA does not alter existing water rights. A significant amount of the water pumped within the basin is used outside of the basin so this is a management issue for the GSP. In cases like this, existing uses can be grandfathered into the Plan. This is an area of ambiguity in the law, and legal counsel is doing further research on addressing this situation.
        - The same problem exists by using the Bulletin 118 boundaries – the issue is not one that is created by boundary modifications.
        - ACTION ITEM: Jena Acos to develop a "legal questions and answers" document to include on forthcoming website.

- One member pointed out that under the new boundaries, her water provider, Golden State, would not be on the GSA and therefore her interests would not be represented.
    - The County sill represents all of the residents.
    - Mr. Kear stated he would be happy to attend a follow up discussion regarding basin boundary modifications for public members that are interested in talking further on this topic. Ms. Epstein can arrange for this meeting if enough interest is indicated on comment cards.

- Will the actual scientific data for boundary modifications be available for review?
    - Yes, it is being collected and formatted into a viewable report form.

- Have all well owners within the basin been notified of this effort, regardless of how much or how little they pump?
    - They had not all been contacted individually, but a letter will be sent to owners of all active wells. Other suggestions are most welcome.

8. OPEN COMMENT, QUESTION AND DISCUSSION PERIOD

Prior to commencing an open discussion period, Shana Epstein, Ventura Water, provided an overview of following topics:

- Non-local Agency GSA director seats
    - What criteria will help us find the best representative for non-local agency GSA director seats?
    - What are the responsibilities of the representative?
    - In designating the nomination process, what would you like us to consider?

- Funding
    - Purpose: What activities are stakeholders willing to pay for?
    - Mechanism: What mechanisms are preferred
- Outreach
    - Best tools to communicate with stakeholders
    - Barriers to participate/ways to overcome those barriers?
    - Who else should be involved?
    - How can you help?
- Basin Boundary Modification

Public Comment Period:

- It is difficult to identify where one's property falls on these maps.
    - The forthcoming website will include a detailed map that allows for zooming in on basin boundaries and particular parcels.
    - ACTION ITEM: Mindy Meyer to request an old/new basin boundary overlap map be made available online.
    - ACTION ITEM: Tully Clifford to hare County may on website.

- Can comments be submitted after this meeting concludes?
    - Yes, comments may be submitted to Bert Rapp directly via email, or hard copies of written comments sent to any of the five agency's offices.

- Currently over use of water is penalized by imposing fines or higher fees. How will water conservation be rewarded? This is an opportunity for change in support of conservation actions.
    - Water savings is financially rewarded by an overall lower water bill. While rates may increase, the amount spent monthly on water is entirely up to the use. As a collective basin, if all residents work to conserve water, rates will stay lower. It is far more expensive to locate and tap into new/alternative water sources than to parsimoniously use existing water supplies.

- Ms. Epstein: What are peoples' opinions about adding two addition seats to the GSA's Board?
    - Generally, public members were supportive of including these two additional seats. These seats could be designated to other agencies and/or non-governmental organizations, including environmental interests.
    - One public member commented that in their opinion, environmental interests are often well represented in surface water regulation and agricultural process. They further suggested there should be an agricultural seat on the Board. Several other individuals were in support this suggestion.

- It was suggested to prepare an updated map depicting total groundwater usage by each agency, and an estimate of water use for agricultural purposes. This distribution of use should be taken into consideration by the GSA when appointing Board representatives.

- ACTION ITEM: Steve Wickstrum to prepare an updated map depicting total groundwater usage by each agency, including updating the calculations.

- How will sustainability be addressed? What is the safe yield for the basin?
  - One step in determining sustainability for the basin is developing an active water balance. Current estimates of overall water use indicate about 10,000 AFY, and it appears there has been a stable period for water levels in the basin for 60 years, except for the last several years due to drought. That is where the estimate for safe yield is derived.

- Have all well owners within the basin been notified of this effort, regardless of how much or how little they pump?
  - They have not all been contacted individually, but the Formation Committee is working on doing so via a notification letter. Suggestions other than providing hard-mail notices and meeting notifications in local papers are most welcome.

- If a person is opposed to any portion of the proposed boundary modifications, how can those oppositions be filed?
  - Comments can be submitted to the Formation Committee, and to DWR once the modification request is submitted to them. All comments are welcome, though please note the boundary changes proposed are made strictly on the basis of updated science (e.g. geologic location of alluvial fields and bedrock), not on jurisdictional or political considerations. DWR is only interested in receiving scientifically-based adjustments to basin boundaries.

- What happens if DWR does not accept proposed boundary changes?
  - In this case, the basin boundaries would remain as determined in Bulletin 118.

- When the GSA considers its criteria for filling the Board seats, they should consider requiring the representatives to live within actual groundwater basin boundaries.
  - Further ideas on Board member selection criteria and responsibilities of Board members are welcome.

- The GSA was encouraged to consider the big picture issue of use of groundwater outside of the basin affecting return flow to the basin when drafting the GSP.
  - Note that SGMA does not alter existing water rights. Currently a significant amount of the water pumped within the basin is used outside of the basin. This is an area of ambiguity in the law, and legal counsel is doing further research on addressing this situation.
  - The same problem exists by using the Bulletin 118 boundaries – the issue is not one that is created by boundary modifications.
  - ACTION ITEM: Jena Acos to develop a "legal questions and answers" document to include on forthcoming website.

- One member pointed out that under the new boundaries, his new water provider would be Golden State, and his interests may therefore not be represented on the GSA.
    - Recall that the County sill represents all of the residents.
    - Mr. Kear stated he would be happy to attend a follow up discussion regarding basin boundary modifications for public members that are interested in talking further on this topic. Ms. Epstein can arrange for this meeting if enough interest is indicated on comment cards.

- Will the actual scientific data for boundary modifications be available for review?
    - Yes, it is being collected and formatted into a viewable report form now.

9. CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Kuebler thanked all participants for attending, and reiterated that Formation Committee is highly interested in hearing ideas, feedback and suggestions from the public. Mr. Kuebler and Mr. Rapp are available as points of contact to public members. There will also be a comment submission form on the web site residents are encouraged to use.

The next meeting of the Formation Committee will be on February 16, 2016 at the Casitas Municipal Water District, beginning at 1:00pm. Public members are welcome to attend this meeting.

10. ATTENDANCE

Formation Committee Members

- Bert Rapp, Ventura River Water District
- Bruce Kuebler, Ventura River Water District
- Ed Lee, Ventura River Water District
- Mike Hollebrands, Meiners Oaks Water District
- Mike Krumpschmidt, Meiners Oaks Water District
- Shana Epstein, Ventura Water
- Steve Wickstrum, Casitas Municipal Water District
- Mary Bergen, Casitas Municipal Water District
- Tully Clifford, Ventura County Public Works Agency

Staff Support

- Debra Martinez, City of Ventura
- Jordan Kear, Kear Consulting
- Lisa Ballin, Center for Collaborative Policy
- Mindy Meyer, Center for Collaborative Policy
- Zoe Carlson, County of Ventura