



CGA/GGA Joint Technical Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

February 9, 2024 | 1:00 p.m.

In Person Meeting Locations:

122 Old Highway 99W, Maxwell, CA 95955
4485 Spring Meadows Circle, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Public participation was also available via Teams.

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introductions

Darrin Williams called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

In Attendance:

Committee Members:

GGA: Shasta Banchio, Donald Bills, Emil Cavagnolo, Mark Lohse

CGA: Deke Dormer, Jim Wallace, Darrin Williams, Bill Vanderwaal

Others in Attendance: Lisa Hunter and Kaitlyn Murray (GGA Staff), Carol Thomas-Keefer and Denise Carter (CGA Staff), Katherine Klug, Jeff Davids (Davids Engineering), Eddy Teasdale (Luhdorff & Scalmanini), Janice Bell, Thad Bettner, Rod Bradford, Brandon Davison (DWR), Arne Gustafson, Ben King, Shelly Murphy, George Pendell, Lisa Porta, Jenny Scheer, Jered Shipley, M. Ward, John McHugh, Kate Dunlap

2. Approval of Minutes

a. ***December 1, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes (GGA TAC)**

On motion made by Mr. Lohse, seconded by Mr. Cavagnolo, the GGA TAC approved the December 1, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Banchio, Bills, Cavagnolo, Lohse

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Beynon, Deadmond

b. ***January 12, 2024 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes (CGA, GGA TAC)**

On motion made by Mr. Vanderwaal, seconded by Mr. Wallace, the CGA TAC approved the January 12, 2024 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Dormer, Vanderwaal, Wallace, Williams
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

On motion made by Mr. Cavagnolo, seconded by Mr. Lohse the GGA TAC approved the January 12, 2024 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Banchio, Bills, Cavagnolo, Lohse
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Beynon, Deadmond

3. Period of Public Comment

None.

4. Announcement of April 12, 2024 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Cancellation

Ms. Lisa Hunter reported that the April 12, 2024 meeting of the Joint TAC has been cancelled. Instead, the CGA and GGA Boards will plan to meet jointly that day to review revisions to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in order to meet the April 23 deadline for submittal to DWR.

5. Water Year 2023 Annual Report

Mr. Jeff Davids, Davids Engineering, provided an update on the Water Year 2023 Annual Report, noting that the annual report is required to include an update on groundwater conditions, information on water supply and water use, and progress toward GSP implementation. He stated that today's presentation would focus on groundwater elevations, change in groundwater storage, and groundwater conditions related to Sustainable Management Criteria. Mr. Davids then reviewed groundwater conditions, including groundwater elevations determined from 48 Representative Monitoring Site (RMS) wells, hydrographs from select wells, and the calculated change in groundwater storage from 2022 to 2023. He stated that changes in groundwater storage are based on measurements taken in Spring of each year. The change in storage from 2021 to 2022, a very dry period, was -214,000 acre-feet, while the change in storage from 2022 to 2023 was an increase of 34,000 acre-feet. Mr. Eddy Teasdale, LSCE, then reviewed subsidence changes in the Orland/Artois area and the Arbuckle area, noting the maximum vertical displacement for the 2023 Water Year was 0.2 to 0.3 feet for Orland/Artois, and 0.3 to 0.35 feet for Arbuckle, or less than half of the amount for 2022. Mr. Davids then reviewed GSP implementation updates and noted that none of the RMS wells were below the Minimum Threshold (MT) at the spring/fall measurements; 9 wells were below the Measurable Objective at the spring measurement, and 11 of the 48 RMS wells were missing either spring and/or fall measurements, mainly due to access issues. Discussion ensued on various clarifications and methodologies for analyzing the groundwater conditions and sustainability indicators.

Mr. Davids then reported that the Draft Annual Report would be released for review by the two GSAs on February 28, 2024, and the final report would be submitted to DWR no later than April 1, 2024.

6. Colusa Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

a. *Discussion and potential recommendations to GSAs on projects and management actions

Mr. Davids noted that consultants from West Yost, who contributed to the original Colusa Subbasin GSP, are also participating in the development of the required GSP revisions. Chair Williams also welcomed Thad Bettner to the GSP revisions team. Ms. Klug, with Davids Engineering then reviewed the schedule for GSA board meetings, Joint TAC meetings, and submittal of the final revised GSP by April 23, 2024. She reviewed the three key deficiencies relating to overdraft, groundwater levels and subsidence, and stated that revisions would focus on these issues. She also reported that the key take-aways from consultation meetings with DWR are that existing conditions do not indicate that the subbasin is on track to achieve sustainability; consequently, projects and management actions (PMAs) are needed to mitigate subsidence, overdraft and groundwater level decline. Revisions should focus on developing management actions as backstops to address overdraft and groundwater conditions, and the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) should be revised to include more justifiable undesirable results (URs) and minimum thresholds (MTs). To date, DWR and the joint GSA boards have discussed and concurred on a revised approach to determining overdraft as well as a conceptual “formal agreement” approach for developing management actions relating to groundwater levels and mitigating well impacts. GSP projects would also need to be updated with timelines and benefits. Ms. Klug stated that today’s meeting would focus on further development of PMAs, especially technical aspects of proposed management actions, and on SMC for groundwater levels. She noted that discussion on subsidence-related SMC would occur at the next Joint TAC meeting.

Ms. Klug then noted that, in addition to refining project descriptions and benefits as well as adding new projects, management actions would be developed to address 1) domestic well mitigation, and 2) demand management. She reviewed the potential program measures for domestic well mitigation, such as emergency solutions, deepening wells, and lowering pumps, as well as program considerations and limitations, such as temporary program status, well evaluation process, and coordination with county ordinances. She also reviewed the various potential items that may be included in the program (i.e., application process, priority, mitigation awards, etc.). Discussion followed regarding the degree to which the GSAs might need to provide mitigation and how to develop reasonable limits. Ms. Klug also noted that DWR’s guidelines for well mitigation have been incorporated in the program components, and summarized the committee’s comments for additional consideration as recognition of basin conditions in affected areas; inclusion of county programs and ordinances; acknowledgment of well abandonment costs; and public education on program purpose and process. Mr. Ben King added the state’s Human Right to Water policy should also be considered, so that domestic well mitigation would be prioritized over agricultural wells.

Ms. Klug then reviewed the potential measures for a demand management program, including immediate implementation of voluntary measures (including dry farming, fallowing, incentivized land use changes, and multi-benefit land repurposing) as well as phased adaptive implementation (including water use allocations and land use/zoning restrictions in cooperation with counties). She then reviewed items to consider in developing the program, including a program implementation process, public outreach and engagement, and implementation of phased measures. Phased measures may need determinations on applicable areas, sustainable yield, transition period to achieve sustainability, processes and timelines for putting measures into place, and monitoring and enforcement. Chair Williams suggested that an important measure to add is incentives for growers to implement best management practices for run-off capture and

other water conservation and water use practices. Discussion followed on how and when these determinations would be made, and Mr. Davids stated that the initial need is to identify the program components and prepare an agreement between the two GSAs to fully develop and implement the program measures. Ms. Hunter also noted that program funding should also be a consideration. Ms. Klug summarized the group's comments with the addition of best management practices for growers as well as conservation measures for consumptive use in voluntary demand reduction measures; and inclusion of funding and financing as well as cooperation with other groups to enhance outreach efforts as part of the program measures.

b. *Discussion and potential recommendation to GSAs on Groundwater Level Sustainable Management Criteria

Ms. Klug reviewed key needs relating to revisions to Groundwater Level SMC, including justification of how URs and MTs represent significant and unreasonable conditions, compared to previous conditions; and clarifying the relationship between Groundwater Level SMC and subsidence. She stated that, in addition to updating the UR definitions, the revisions would need to clarify at what level do the unreasonable conditions occur, and suggested referring to conditions during 2020-2022, including number of dry wells reported, reduction in pumping capacity, need to deepen wells and/or lower pumps, and adverse impacts to the environment. She indicated that tying revisions to specific 2020-2022 conditions would provide a justifiable basis for explaining impacts to beneficial uses, connection to subsidence, and setting MTs.

Ms. Klug then reviewed the proposed revisions to Groundwater Level SMC, noting that well impacts varied throughout the subbasin, with greater impacts in the Orland/Artois and Arbuckle areas, so it was reasonable to suggest that MTs should also vary depending on area. Areas with dry wells and/or subsidence since 2015 are referred to as "focus areas," and would have MTs set at the 2020-2022 low, while areas outside the "focus areas" would have MTs set at the 2020-2022 low plus 10 feet. Measurable Objectives (MOs) would be the average pre-SGMA (2011-2013 or other range) groundwater levels, and Interim Milestones (IMs) would be established to bridge the MTs and the MOs to reach sustainable conditions. Mr. Wallace questioned the use of a two-year period as potentially too narrow for identifying sustainable water levels conditions. Ms. Klug explained that the presence of undesirable results during the 2020-2022 period appears to provide a good justification for setting MTs at those levels so that the SMC avoid further lowering of groundwater below those levels. Ms. Hunter suggested that hydrographs showing those the various proposed SMC versus actual water levels would be helpful. Discussion followed regarding the availability of surface water and its impact on groundwater use and groundwater levels. Mr. Davids noted that the GSP must address management of groundwater supplies regardless of surface water availability. Ms. Klug then asked for concurrence on the proposed SMC, especially with regard to the MTs, in order to discuss that proposal with DWR at the upcoming consultation meeting. She also noted that the margin or buffer for areas outside of focus areas could be further discussed. The Joint TAC concurred with pursuing the proposed MT approach and bringing it to DWR for discussion.

c. *Discussion and potential recommendation to GSAs on monitoring network and basis of Sustainable Management Criteria for land subsidence

The subsidence discussion was held for the next Joint TAC meeting. Ms. Klug reviewed next steps and timelines, including the upcoming next meeting with DWR on February 16, special Joint CGA/GGA board meeting on February 23, and items for the next Joint TAC meeting.

7. Member Reports and Comments

Mr. Bill Vanderwaal reported that, at a recent ACWA sub-committee meeting, he learned that other basins are also feeling the same short timelines and frustrations in making GSP revisions due to incomplete determinations; he also reported that DWR indicated that the State Water Resources Control Board is not involving DWR in state control efforts for those basins where the GSP has been deemed inadequate.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 8, 2024.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.