

# Petaluma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency

## Advisory Committee Meeting

### Meeting Summary

Date/Time: October 14, 2020 | 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Zoom  
Contact: Ann DuBay, Sonoma County Water Agency, PVGSA Administrator  
Email: [Ann.DuBay@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:Ann.DuBay@scwa.ca.gov) Phone: (707) 524-8378

Next Meeting: November 4, 2020, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Zoom  
Petaluma Valley GSA website: <http://petalumavalleygroundwater.org>

#### Welcome and Call to Order

Sam Magill, Facilitator, opened the meeting at 4:32 p.m. and conducted roll call.

#### Public Comment

None.

#### Agenda and 2020 Meeting Schedule Review, Approval of Previous Meeting Summary

Sam Magill walked through the meeting agenda and 2020 Meeting schedule. Ann DuBay, Administrator, mentioned that the November 4 meeting might be postponed until Wednesday, December 9 as surface water depletion and reduction of groundwater storage topics might not be ready for discussion by the November date. Let Ann DuBay know by chat or email if you are available for the December 9 meeting at the usual time.

No changes were requested to the September meeting notes; they will be posted as presented.

#### Projected Water Budget and Water Scenario Modeling – Projected Water Demand Focus

*Objective: Overview of projected water budget requirements, follow-up and next steps for Climate Future scenario, discussion of approaches and assumptions for simulating future water demands, including information and recommendations from practitioner work groups (as available).*

Marcus Trotta, Technical staff, presented a slide of the Water Budget/Model and Project Concepts/Management Actions Relational Schedule. He said he was looking forward to a discussion today on future water demands for rural residential and agriculture.

Pete Parkinson, Technical Consultant, former Director of what is now *Permit Sonoma*. Parkinson is providing consulting services on this topic to all three GSAs. He gave an update on rural residential projections (does not include municipalities or public water companies) covering a 50-year GSP planning period. The objective is to develop a high/low range of projections for the planning horizon of the GSP. As no one is doing projections beyond 2040, and we are using the Sonoma County Traffic Model which combines TAZ (traffic analysis zones) and projections from PlanBayArea 2040, to develop two scenarios – General Plan Buildout and PlanBayArea2040. For PlanBayArea, we project growth in rural residential areas will be very low – about 0.5% annually. The growth under General Plan buildout is forecast to be even lower. Next steps include

extrapolating 2040 projections to 2072 and accounting for increased Accessory Dwelling Unit development. We are also modeling growth projections in the watershed area outside of the basin as they are important areas in terms of recharge to the basin.

### *Advisory Committee Questions/Comments*

John Shribbs (chat) – Do projections include the Rainier Crossing? Could be a huge game changer with current elections.

Pete – I don't know the answer, but I would think the same principal holds. To the extent that there will be extensive growth in the Petaluma Valley, it will be in the existing urbanized area within the City of Petaluma and Penngrove. Unless there is a major change in the County's approach to land use, or urban boundaries get busted down the road, most of the growth will be in the city areas.

Shribbs (chat) – Potential growth in NW hills could change dramatically depending on lots of things.

Clayton Engstrom (chat) - The city of Petaluma gets 10% of its water from wells. How can the city be excluded?

Trotta – The City's future pumping will be included. Sonoma Water is coordinating with them, as they are currently preparing projections as part of their Urban Water Management Plan which they are currently working on.

Andy Rodgers (chat) – Are the recent relaxations of in-law limitations in county and/or city factored into rural growth projections?

Parkinson – Yes, those are the accessory dwelling units.

Marcus Trotta discussed Agricultural Water demand projections. The GSAs formed a practitioner workgroup to help us identify which crops might expand/contract in future and where they are likely to occur. This workgroup has met twice and will meet again this week to discuss the results of a survey that was sent out recently to members of Farm Bureau, Community Alliance of Family Farmers and Sonoma Winegrape Commission, and discuss potential approaches for defining range of potential changes. General feedback (received from 39 respondents) is an expected reduction of farmed acreage for all crop types except vineyards and cannabis/hemp. Water supply availability, population growth/land conversion for residential use, and land prices were cited as the primary causes for contraction of other agricultural uses.

Cannabis/Hemp – Staff is considering not simulating cannabis/hemp for initial GSP as we don't have a lot of data, current acreage is small, and there are uncertainties related to any potential future cultivation of hemp and associated farming practices. If we start to see a substantial amount of cannabis growth in the three basins, we will include it in the regular 5-year GSP updates.

### *Advisory Committee Questions/Comments*

Shribbs (chat) – Climate change will push increase in local produce and crops so cannot depend on past so much.

Shribbs – County versus local may not correlate well since vineyards take off in local area expansions. If you are using the county data covering a large area – and using potential growth that has happened over time, when you get to smaller areas, and the growers decide to move fast, you are going to see massive growth over a short period. Using average county data may be fine but not for local.

Trotta – Good points on the county-wide data. The data is all we had to work with to compare historical trends with that was consistent over time, but I understand your points on county versus local trends. We can look at trends for some of the more important crops in Petaluma Valley compared to other county-wide data sets.

Shribbs – With regards to cannabis acreage, we have just a few hundred acres of cannabis now within the basin area. It will increase to a potential of some thousands of acres+ easily, which is more like 100-500% rather than the 10% increase cited. We need to look at total acreage rather than percentage increases to get a better estimate.

Trotta – The acreage is ultimately what we need for the groundwater models, and water use demands associated with irrigated crops. Your point on cannabis is a good example of why we are thinking to not include it initially until we have more data.

Shribbs – For cannabis you can cap it at 100-200 acres potential possibility given the current situation we have. Per acres it is a lot of water use, but on total water use probably very small compared to vineyards.

Rodgers – A question on process – when the workgroups are complete will the recommendations from the workgroups come to the Committee here?

Trotta – Absolutely, once we have the recommendation, we will share the information with the Committee.

Eugene Camozzi – On the irrigated pastures, you have 1,221 acres. Are you counting the reclaimed wastewater from the City of Petaluma or are you counting pumping water for irrigation?

Trotta – The numbers were not broken out by source of water, just if the pasture was irrigated or not, I assume a lot of it is recycled water.

Camozzi – I would say 100% is recycled water, no one is irrigating pasture from a well.

## Water Quality Degradation Sustainable Management Criteria

*Objective: Review water quality SMC proposals and draft GSP section narrative and discuss additional considerations and next steps.*

Marcus Trotta – We had a good discussion at our last meeting. Today we will focus on feedback received since that meeting on water quality SMC, and the development of Sustainable Management Criteria (Minimum Thresholds, Measurable Objectives, and Undesirable Results) and look for your input.

Lisa Porta, Montgomery & Associates, presented detailed feedback received from the group on water quality concepts and recapped key points to develop Sustainable Management Criteria for water quality. Porta provided a revised proposed statement for Significant and Unreasonable Conditions following recent Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa AC Input and asked for feedback.

*Significant and unreasonable water quality conditions occur if:*

- 1) Petaluma Valley GSP projects or management activities directly cause an increase in the concentration of constituents of concern in groundwater; or*
- 2) water quality is affected due to undesirable results occurring for other SMCs that lead to adverse impacts on beneficial users or uses of groundwater.*

## Advisory Committee Questions/Comments

Rodgers - Can you give an example of what a non-project 'management activity' might be that could increase Constituents of Concern (COC) concentrations?

Porta – It is something that isn't under the control of the GSA such as a leak, a plume, something that the GSA isn't directly responsible for. Does that answer your question?

Rodgers – What could the GSA do as a management activity that could increase concentration?

Porta – For example if there is a recharge project developed in an area that has high arsenic concentration, the recharge project could cause arsenic to mobilize and get into other wells or areas in the basin.

Rodgers – That is a project.

Porta – I don't have an example of a management action. It is to cover for any activity the GSP is doing.

Rodgers – So we are dotting the "i"s.

Shribbs (chat) - Reducing future liabilities seems like a good idea.

Shribbs (chat) How can monitoring wells change concentrations? Monitoring wells look at results from other wells and cannot be causes.

Porta – The wells themselves are not the cause. We are looking at the wells to measure change or an exceedance. If there is a change or exceedance, then we would look at if the cause is GSP implementation or something the GSP has nothing to do with.

Magill –Is there an example of a GSP activity that could result in an undesirable condition?

Porta – Yes, if you are recharging with a recharge pond and creating different conditions, the primary way a GSP could change water quality is by allowing the movement. During the next 20 years of implementation and planning, we will look at putting projects in areas that don't cause these kinds of issue/disruption. If a project gets designed, there would be additional constraints on the project.

Gary Mickelson (chat) – There is no way you can control the three listed items in the water when drilling a new well. We have many wells in our basin that have high levels of all three Constituents of Concern.

Porta – That is a challenge. The monitoring network doesn't currently identify other Constituents of Concern. The network will be modified over time.

Rodgers (chat) - If the state lowers (or raises) the MCLs after GSP adoption, I assume our GSA Minimum Thresholds will be held to the MCL standards stated in the GSP?

Porta – The MCL would have to be changed; we need to comply with the current standards.

Engstrom – TDS is Total Dissolved Solids. If my well is currently exceeding any one of these constituents and I need to drill a new well and the new well has the same constituents in it, what do I do then?

Porta – The GSA wouldn't be responsible; it is probably caused by natural causes.

Engstrom – Exactly, so, I want to drill a new well because I have exceedances with the old well, I would have the same problem. I am concerned about establishing a standard that can't be met. I should be able to treat the water in my well any way I want.

Porta –Your well is not part of the monitoring network. Domestic wells are currently not included in the monitoring network; there are no Minimum Thresholds.

Trotta – The water quality thresholds/concentrations in these figures are not established by the GSA now nor will they be in the future. They are established by the Water Quality Control Board, and there are other regulatory programs involved. For this SMC we need to come up with a metric for the number of wells that have an exceedance due to the GSA's actions. Your example of a single residential well would not be under the purview of the GSA.

Engstrom – So you said it isn't currently regulated but isn't that what we are trying to do here? Come up with regulations?

Porta – Not for water quality. We are trying to not make the water quality worse. The GSA wouldn't regulate water quality of your wells. We are trying to protect water users; we are not regulating well owners on water quality. It is more a protection.

Mickelson – Sounds like based on the comments, the constituents' level is only based on the monitoring wells and they affect the groundwater in the basin. Any changes affecting the basin that have increased over time? We have numerous wells in the basin that have arsenic and nitrates and high sodium concentrates. It is different than calcium.

Porta – That is not monitored regularly so there is no way to measure if there is an issue. I think there is room for improvement in the future for additional monitoring.

Shribbs (chat) – I agree with Clayton on this issue. Seems like we are legalizing to protect the GSA and it is not based on a real scenario of concern.

Shribbs (chat) - Language is an issue. High salt is "undesirable" whether we are causing it or not.

#### **POLL**

1. Sam Magill provided three questions for Advisory Committee input using polls:

- Are you comfortable with the revised significant and unreasonable conditions statement?
- Is Zero the appropriate number of exceedances for constituents of concern for the minimum threshold?
- Which undesirable results option are you most comfortable with?

Advisory Committee members were unable to provide answers to all three polls during the meeting and requested additional time to consider the questions above. Staff followed up with an email to all members on 10/15 restating the questions with reference to specific materials in the meeting packet.

#### *Advisory Committee Questions/Comments*

Engstrom (chat) – I will not be voting

Shribbs (chat) – Language can be very confusing to public as Clayton Engstrom's comments suggest.

Rodgers (chat) – The Water Quality SMC is basically saying the GSA is not going to make things worse by projects we implement in the future. The GSA is essentially regulating itself, not others (the way I interpret it).

Shribbs (chat) – We seem to be spending lots of time and effort to protect the GSA rather than protecting well users. I am not comfortable with the survey question.

Rodgers (chat) – Existing agencies have the Water Quality authorities protect well users.

Shribbs (chat) – The key is determining if GSA is the cause, it does not matter on number of exceedances.

Rodgers (chat) – I suggest the GSP indicate that an exceedance needs to be a validated exceedance, perhaps by confirmation samples. Lab results need to be confirmed not just against the thresholds we establish but the lab results themselves, they can vary.

Porta – This is drinking water; we can only assume that the data posted online by the State Board is truly an exceedance.

Shribbs (chat) – Determining cause is very difficult, near impossible. Cause needs lots of data, not one point or even ten points.

If you need more time to digest the information or have questions, please contact Marcus Trotta. Lisa Porta mentioned the other two GSAs favor Option 2.

## Updates

*Objective: Provide relevant updates that inform the Advisory Committee – AC to ask questions if needed.*

Ann DuBay mentioned that Martha Murphy is no longer able to participate as an Advisory Committee member given her work schedule. If you have any ideas for a replacement send names to Ann DuBay. This position would be a Sonoma Water appointment. DuBay said she would like to have someone, (preferably with a science background as material is so technical), lined up before the next Advisory Committee meeting.

The stakeholder-based two-year appointees all indicated they are interested to continue through the development of the GSP. I am thrilled, thank you.

Next Board meeting – The Board will be looking at water quality and climate futures. They will also consider adopting a policy that would allow for policy decision to be made between Board meetings and considering appointing a Board member liaison to rural community outreach project.

Andrea Rodriguez – If you are setting up any meetings, let Andrea know. As mentioned, for rural outreach, we are identifying a Board member as a Board liaison from each basin as we develop the survey.

Marcus Trotta provided a quick overview of the practitioner work groups. The maps and other information we are compiling from the groundwater dependent eco-systems are being shared with the group looking at surface water depletion indicator. We had our first meeting last week; it went well, and we are in the process of developing technical information.

Sam Magill mentioned that we will follow up with the Advisory Committee on the proposed December 9 or alternative December meeting date. The next Board meeting is October 22 at 4:00 p.m. The Advisory Committee should send input on water quality to Marcus Trotta by Wednesday by October 21; he will send an email follow-up soon outlining the short assignment.

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

## Attendees

### *Advisory Committee Members - Attending*

Andy Rodgers  
Clayton Engstrom  
Gary Mickelson  
John Shribbs  
Lindsey Strain  
Martha Murphy

Eugene Camozzi  
Rebecca (Becky) Ng

*Advisory Committee Members – Not Attending*

Drew Buechly  
Heidi Bauer – apologies for not attending, had incorrect date on her calendar

*Staff / Presenters*

Ann DuBay, PV GSA Administrator  
Jay Jasperse, Plan Manager  
Marcus Trotta, Sonoma Water, Technical Staff  
Lisa Porta, Montgomery & Associates  
Andy Rich, Sonoma Water, Technical Staff  
Pete Parkinson, Consultant  
Andrea Rodriguez, Sonoma Water, Outreach  
Simone Peters, GSA Administrative Aide, (recorder of meeting notes)

*Other Attendees*

Gina Lisa Tamayo, Member of Public  
Chelsea Thompson, City of Petaluma  
Sheila Fischer, Member of Public  
Tim Parker, Facilitator of Sonoma Valley GSA