

FEE RATE STUDY: Introduction & Next Steps

Advisory
Committee
Meeting

January 12, 2022



Background

- 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

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*



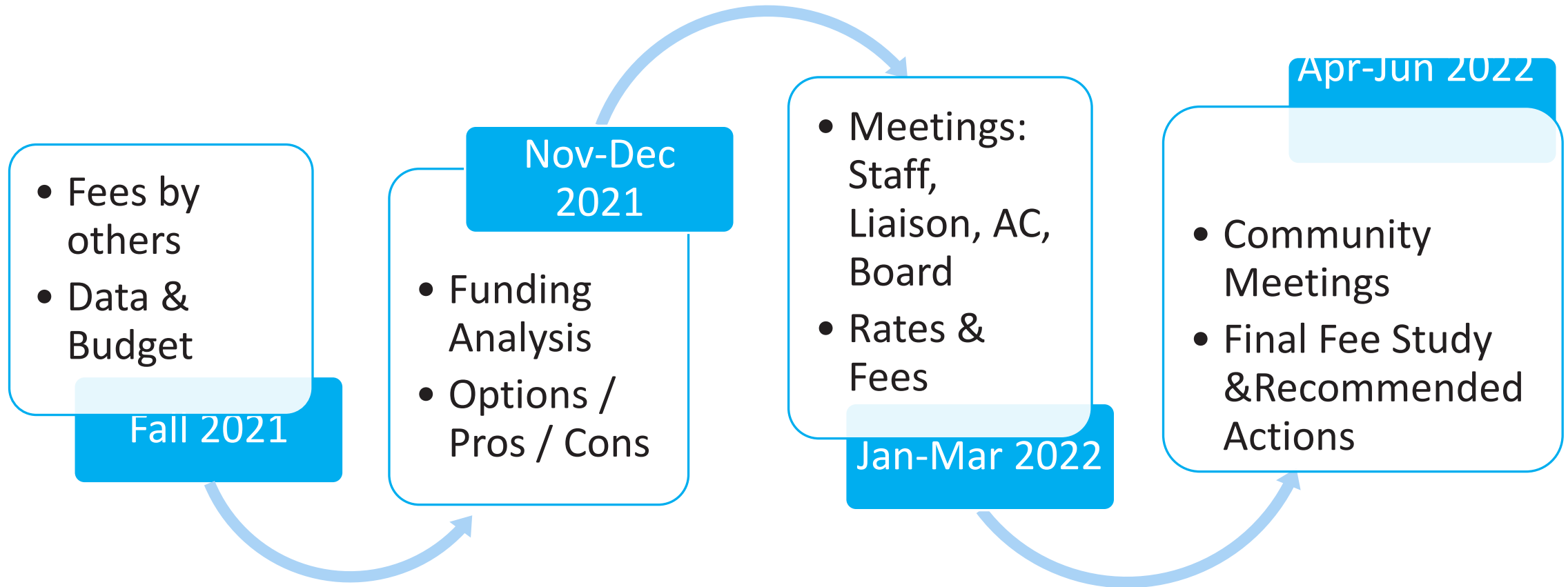
Larry Walker Associates

Rich Pauloo, PhD - Data & Science Wizard

*Specializing in Water and Water
Quality Engineering*



Phasing of Fee Study



Challenges

1

Who Should Pay

- Just well owners?
- All water users?

2

What Should They Pay For

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

3

Rate Levels

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

4

How Fees are Paid

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

Community
Acceptance

Budgets & Costs

- Implementation and Operations
 - preliminary estimate \$1.1M/year
- Projects and Management Actions
 - Group 1 by 2025 (non-capital)
 - Groups 2 through 5 later
- Other Considerations
 - Reserve Levels?
 - Pay back member agencies?
 - Rely on grants for programs or capital projects?

Funding Options

- 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

- 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 Sonoma 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

