

MEETING SUMMARY

Turlock Groundwater Subbasin Management

Public Workshop #1

May 31, 2017 | 10am-12pm | Denair Community Center
3850 N. Gratton Road, Denair, CA 95316

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP), CSU Sacramento

A. Background

In September 2014, Governor Brown signed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), marking a fundamental shift in the management of water resources in California. Under the legislation local agencies are charged with the responsibility to form groundwater sustainability agencies (GSA) to create and implement groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) leading to sustainable groundwater basins. The ultimate goal is to create GSA(s) and GSP(s) that are responsive to the interests of beneficial users and groundwater users while simultaneously protecting the long-term reliability of the resource.

To assist with this effort in the Turlock Subbasin, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has provided professional facilitators from the California State University Sacramento's Center for Collaborative Policy (Center) to conduct a series of public workshops and stakeholder interviews to assess stakeholder interests, concerns and goals for GSA formation, intra-basin and, inter-basin coordination. The feedback received from this workshop will help identify stakeholder interests, perspectives and develop recommendations for an outreach and engagement plan for GSP development activities.

B. Meeting Objectives

The purpose and goals for this workshop were to:

- Provide an overview of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).
- Discuss roles of various organizations in SGMA including the Turlock Groundwater Basin Association (TGBA) as the workshop convener, and the newly formed East Turlock Groundwater Sustainability Agency (East Turlock GSA) and West Turlock Groundwater Sustainability Agency (West Turlock GSA).
- Provide an update on GSA formation activities to date.
- Receive public input on best practices for stakeholder outreach and preferred methods of engagement.

C. Turlock GSA Formation Update

Stephanie Lucero, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) facilitator, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Michael Cooke, City of Turlock, introduced himself and provided

welcoming remarks. He encouraged stakeholders to work collaboratively to comply with the State regulations and share common resources.

Interested stakeholders may submit questions to turlockgroundwater@gmail.com or access workshop information and documents via the TGBA website: <http://www.turlockgba.org>.

Kevin Kauffman, Coordinator for the East Turlock GSA, explained the meeting purpose and provided background on SGMA basics. Presentation highlights are as follows:

- TGBA began in 1995 and developed strong working relationships.
- The initial element of SGMA requires local agencies with water or land-use authority to form GSAs by June 30, 2017. If agencies fail to accomplish this task, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) will intervene.
- The Turlock Basin is well-managed compared to the surrounding basins in critical overdraft.
- Once GSA formation occurs, the GSAs begin the GSP development process. The Turlock basin must complete GSP development by January 31, 2022.
- The Turlock basin created two GSAs; the East and West Turlock GSAs. These public agencies created a Joint Powers Authority and submitted notification for exclusivity for the Turlock basin between the two GSAs. After a 90-day period, if no other GSA submits notification that overlaps, these two GSAs will be the exclusive GSAs of the Turlock basin.
- He provided a brief overview of groundwater in Turlock.
- He also listed the inter- and intra-basin coordination requirements and highlighted the methods of stakeholder communication used thus far.

D. Stakeholder Open Discussion and Comment Session

Unless otherwise noted, TGBA Staff provided responses.

- Do the two GSAs plan to submit one plan?
 - Yes, they have both committed to submitting one GSP.
- If one GSA is out of compliance, is the entire basin then out of compliance?
 - Not necessarily, only the non-compliant GSA should be out of compliance under proposed GSP.
 - Facilitator: However, both GSAs have to agree to the GSP they develop. State intervention will only occur now, if the GSAs do not form, form and do not cover the entire basin, or form and have overlapping boundaries. None of which is the situation in the Turlock Subbasin. State intervention will likely only occur on groundwater management after the GSP development phase.
- Why wait until 2022? What if pumpers deplete the groundwater before then?

- According to geologists, aquifer depletion is not a topic of immediate concern, though it may occur on the scale of individual properties. While the deadline is 2022, there is nothing saying the GSP cannot be completed before then.
- What is the difference between being a GSA Member and an Associate Member?
 - The difference is in the voting capacity and financial contribution. Associate members do not have voting rights, but are encouraged to provide input.
- Why is the TGBA only meeting on a quarterly basis?
 - The TGBA was envisioned long before SGMA was enacted. The basin has been organizing on groundwater for decades. With the onset of SGMA regulations, the TGBA will transfer work onto the individual GSAs. The Joint Powers Authorities/GSAs are only meeting quarterly because there are not many decisions to make yet. The GSA Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) are meeting weekly.
- How is sustainability defined?
 - SGMA legislation identifies six undesirable results as minimal thresholds. Each of the local GSAs will develop GSP(s) to sustainably manage groundwater and prevent State intervention for non-compliance.
- Why are there two GSAs in the Turlock Subbasin?
 - The primary reason is there is overdraft occurring in the East side of the basin. The West side does not want to contribute funds to fix the overdraft; and the East side wants to handle the issue on their own, without relinquishing control.
 - The East and West sides are pumping out of different formations. While the aquifers are interconnected, it would take years for water to flow between the formations.
- Why is there duplication of agency representatives in both GSAs?
 - The relationships between the agencies in the Turlock Subbasin are strong, and work well together. There is duplication because there is agency representation that crosses the GSA boundaries.
- Since the Turlock Subbasin is bound by rivers, do the adjacent basins influence each other?
 - There is influence between adjacent basins. The GSP will determine how that interaction occurs and how the GSAs plan to prevent the undesirable results.
- What is the rationale behind having one GSP?
 - Even though the hydrology is in one basin, each GSA might have different policies for addressing issues. The GSP will allow GSAs to have different approaches, as long as they achieve the agreed-upon objectives.

- When developing the GSP, GSAs can also create separate management areas.
- Is it one large aquifer?
 - Think of it as separate layers. Each of the layers varies in quality and quantity of water.
- Typically the aquifer flows east to west, has this changed recently?
 - In some areas, yes, the directionality has changed. There will be a meeting of the West Turlock GSA Board at Turlock Irrigation District at 6pm June 1. The consultants will be available to answer specific questions.

Ms. Lucero introduced the workshop evaluation survey and offered participants the opportunity to stay and discuss concerns in small groups.

E. Summary of General Stakeholder input and Breakout Sessions

Participants broke into separate groups to discuss issues and perspectives based on presentations as well as provide feedback to a set of outreach questions found in the online Survey (See Appendix A.)***

The following is a summary of comments and questions participants requested be considered during GSP development. These are broken up based on the breakout group. The majority of participants sought to discuss issues relating to the West Turlock GSA boundaries, with only a few less discussing East Turlock GSA issues and a few participants discussing overall Subbasin activities.

East Turlock Group

- **Concerns:**
 - Pumpers will experience overdraft; even with access to surface water.
 - New groundwater pumping technologies are needed, even 10 years ago volumes and methods were different.
 - Can use of surface water give groundwater credits?
 - Will there be surface water storage?
 - What new projects will arise?
- **Methods of communication:**
 - Email is preferred.

West Turlock Group

- **Concerns:**

- Important questions stakeholders requested additional information and feedback regarding.
 - What kind of basin yield is expected? This is an important question to stakeholders.
 - What will it cost?
 - How will water quality be addressed?
 - Will management be similar to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program in San Joaquin County?
 - How will the GSAs define sustainability?
 - Will private well-owners have to reduce pumping?
- Outreach materials and GSP planning should show stakeholders how the GSP benefits stakeholders (i.e. "What is in it for me?")
- **Methods of communication:**
 - Email is preferred.
 - Personal phone calls as follow-up.
 - Mailings if necessary.

All Basin:

- **Concerns:**
 - Stakeholders are interested in understanding if and how GSP development will influence appraisal values
- **Recommendations:**
 - There are audiences that are still unaware of SGMA and require outreach.
 - Minority groups
 - Latino communities
 - Farm Bureaus
 - Realtors
 - Having Spanish translation is useful.
 - Some Latino or Hispanic communities may not feel comfortable in a large group setting and may prefer more community focused meetings like existing Latino community roundtables.
 - The information might be too technical for some audiences.
 - There are still farmers and small pumpers that could use outreach through school districts and farm bureaus.
- **Methods of communication:**
 - Having a variety of communications and mixed media formats are beneficial.
 - Consider both small group discussions and larger regular meetings.
 - A central website for both GSAs, with regular updates on the technical work and reports in progress is recommended.
 - When printing materials, print in large font with visible graphics.

