

Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Project and Management Actions (PMA) Committee

Meeting Notes | May 9, 2022

Meeting-in-Brief / Outcomes

- The first meeting of the Cosumnes Groundwater Authority (CGA) Project and Management Actions (PMA) Committee was held on May 9, 2022, virtually by Zoom.
- Staff oriented Committee members to the charge and anticipated activities of the Committee.
- Committee members offered preliminary feedback to inform upcoming activities. The group emphasized the need to keep the CGA Board regularly informed of the Committee's discussions.
- Next PMA Committee meeting: May 25, 2022, 3-5p. Both in-person and virtual participation options will be provided. Location is TBD.

Action Items

- S. Julian will send the PMA Committee the draft priority projects list.
- PMA members should review the draft priority projects list and send any suggested format revisions to S. Julian.
- S. Julian will send the PMA Committee an email seeking feedback on engaging landowners and growers related to water conservation and land repurposing projects.
- S. Julian will confirm the availability of meeting space at the Farm Bureau for the next PMA Committee meeting.
- S. Julian will confirm that the next PMA Committee meeting will be May 25, 3-5, location to be determined, but potentially the Farm Bureau.
- S. Julian will consult with CGA's legal counsel on whether it is a requirement for PMA meetings to be held within the Cosumnes Subbasin.

Meeting Overview

Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Review

Stephen Julian, CGA Watershed Coordinator, presented [the sections of CGA's GSP that refer to PMAs](#). He noted that per SGMA and their adopted GSP, the seven groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in the Cosumnes Subbasin must develop and implement PMAs that address the groundwater problems (e.g., current groundwater deficit) and help the basin achieve its groundwater sustainability goal.

Committee Discussion

No Questions or Comments

Committee Expectations and Timeline

S. Julian shared the PMA Committee's anticipated duties and timeline of activities:

Expected Duties:

- Develop Priority Project List, focusing on near-term implementation (2022-2028)
- Recommend actions to CGA Board
 - What does CGA/staff need to do?
 - What does CGA need to ask for in grant applications?
- September 2022: Submit Priorities Project List to CGA
- October 2022: DWR Round 2 grant solicitation

Expected Timeline (subject to change):

- May
 - Planning team, develop immediate recommendations, identify future meeting dates, determine project costs and fee study, identify project consultant needs for the consultant request for proposals (RFP)
- June
 - Review applications of the State's Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Round 1 grant awards for Critically Overdrafted Basins (CODs), work with fee study consultant, content suggestions for late summer public workshop, and review RFPs
- July
 - Draft list ready for broader input at GSA meetings, additional stakeholder venues
- August
 - Incorporate stakeholder feedback, prepare for a public workshop, Citizens Advisory Committee meeting #2
- September
 - PMA committee approves draft project list and submits to CGA Board
- October/late 2022
 - Review DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Program Grant Proposal Solicitation Package guidelines

Committee Discussion

Committee members underscored the need to keep the CGA Board informed of PMA progress at every step.

A committee member asked why CGA will need a draft scope of work for the Department of Water Resources (DWR) SGM grant request for proposals in October 2022. S. Julian responded that the PMA list needs to be ready to apply to any grant opportunities, and the DWR grant is the most significant grant opportunity expected at this time. Having the draft list of priority projects by September gives ample time to revise and refine per feedback from the CGA Board and stakeholders. CGA staff hope the second DWR grant solicitation comes out in October 2022, though it was delayed once and could be delayed again. The priority projects list will be a living document and updated throughout the GSP's 20+ year implementation.

PMA Overview

S. Julian reviewed the PMAs outlined in the GSP (Refer to GSP Table PMA-1):

- PMA #1: Omochumne Hartnell Water District (OHWD) Recharge
- PMA #2: Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR)
- PMA #3: OHWD Cosumnes River Flow Augmentation
- PMA #4: City of Galt Recycled Water Project
- PMA #5: Voluntary Land Repurposing
- PMA #6: Groundwater Banking and Sale
- Other PMAs

Staff recommend this first iteration of the project priorities list focus on certain PMAs that can be completed in the first five years of GSP implementation (Phase 1: 2022-2028) – namely PMAs #1, 2, 4, 5, and other PMAs as appropriate.

Committee Discussion

No Questions or Comments

Priority Project List Introduction

S. Julian shared the structure of the Priority Project List (derived primarily from the GSP) and categories of information tracked for each project:

- Lead Organization
- Project Description
- Expected Benefits
- Project Status
- Project Timeline
- Estimated Costs
- Suggested Funding Sources
- Next Steps

The above information for each PMA in the priority projects list is necessary for most major grant applications. The PMA Committee will delve into this structure in more detail at future meetings.

S. Julian shared that CGA staff will work to hire a consultant to help develop projects. He invited PMA members to identify important characteristics for this consultant.

Committee Discussion

One member suggested a consultant have agriculture extension or crop science experience to provide input on viable water conservation measures as part of land repurposing projects in an agricultural context. In response to concerns from the public, S. Julian will send an email to the PMA Committee seeking feedback on how to foster buy-in from landowners and growers for water conservation and land repurposing projects.

Future Meeting Times

The next PMA Committee meeting will be from 3-5 PM on May 25. S. Julian will confirm whether the meeting can be held at the Farm Bureau. The May 25 PMA meeting will be a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting.

Public Comment

The Groundwater Model

- The model being used is inaccurate because it does not account for an impermeable clay layer in the subbasin, or a 1 mile wide and 40 feet deep paleo river.

PMA Member Response: We have the best model we can create with the data we have now, and the GSP model was approved by a professional hydrogeologist. It is not perfect, but it will improve over time.

- The model is only as good as the data the modelers were given. More accurate usage rates could have been included in the model had there been more outreach and engagement with the agricultural community during GSP development. Current conservation practices could have been included in the model as well.

NRCS Involvement in the PMA Committee

- NRCS should be represented on the PMA committee as experts in agricultural water conservation.

PMA Member Response: Outside of this Committee, Tony Tillman at NRCS is connecting CGA with his colleagues to provide input on the PMAs.

Potential for PMAs to Support for on-Farm Water Conservation

- Paying a farmer to repurpose land will be challenging. A project providing funding assistance for farmers or growers to improve their water conservation could be more effective with less resistance.

Staff Response: Yes, we hope for CGA to be a central information hub disseminating information to the farmers and ensuring CGA is helping navigate some of those programs.

- NRCS used to pay farmers 50% of the costs to recycle their water in a closed irrigation system. CGA should provide opportunities to help farmers recoup the other 50% of costs.
- Many farmers have implemented closed irrigation systems without registering with NRCS because they view NRCS paperwork as a barrier to accessing that program. CGA needs to document all of those efforts.

Staff Response: Yes; accounting for saved water within our water budget and accurately reporting that back will be a huge challenge. We will need help from a consultant.

- There is likely to be \$100 million in state funds towards water conservation in the FY22/23 state budget. There should be a May budget revision coming out the end of this week or next week.

Meeting Scheduling

- Some laws require special districts to meet within their jurisdiction. Even if the law does not apply to the PMA Committee, this practice would be most appropriate to consider the accessibility for constituents.

Staff Response: CGA will consult with its legal counsel about this.

Meeting Attendance

PMA Committee

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| Amador County Groundwater Management Authority (CGMA) | |
| Clay Water District (Clay WD) | Gary Silva |
| City of Galt | Mike Selling |
| Galt Irrigation District (Galt ID) | Pat Kirby |
| Omochumne-Hartnell Water District (OHWD) | Paul Hensleigh |
| County of Sacramento | Kerry Schmitz (County of Sacramento temporary alternate) |
| Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District (SRCD) | Barbara Washburn |

Other CGA members in attendance: Rick Wohle (Clay WD), Mark Stretars (OHWD)

Staff and Consultants: Stephen Julian (CGA); Austin Miller (CGA); Sophie Carrillo-Mandel (Consensus Building Institute [CBI])

Other members of the public were also in attendance.