

# **Cosumnes Groundwater Authority**

Project and Management Actions Committee

## **Meeting Notes | May 25, 2022**

### **Meeting Materials**

<https://www.cosumnesgroundwater.org/meetings/committee-meetings/>

### **Meeting-in-Brief / Outcomes**

- This meeting of the Cosumnes Groundwater Authority (CGA) Project and Management Actions (PMA) Committee was held on May 25, 2022, in person with a virtual Zoom option.
- Committee members confirmed the initial framework for the Committee's near-term discussions related to developing the Project Projects List (e.g., projects be implementable within 5-6 years, entail a leadership role for CGA, and that sufficient information can be prepared in time for the DWR grant in the fall).
- Members also provided feedback on the draft Project Priorities List and began to identify data gaps that need to be filled to prioritize projects.
- The Committee determined that updating the geospatial groundwater model is essential for prioritizing projects.
- Committee members identified desired qualifications and potential activities for a technical consultant to support the Project Projects List development, to inform the Request for Qualifications to be posted publicly May 27.
- The next PMA Committee meeting is yet to be scheduled. The next meeting is expected to focus on technical consultant applications and continued data gaps discussion.

### **Action Items**

- Stephen Julian will add to the Priority Projects List (PPL or "List") presentation slide deck table a column for anticipated funding sources and will change the language "suggested funding sources" to "confirmed funding sources." He will also incorporate refining the groundwater model as an important next step to inform priority projects.
- Open to all: Forward contact information or resources to CGA staff and CBI facilitators that may help address data gaps (e.g., well drillers)
- S. Julian to connect with Toney Tillman and Laura Foglia for guidance on data gaps.
- Committee members will review page 18 of the PPL - identify and propose methods for filling data gaps, and whether those methods might require the use of consultants or CGA can fill the gaps internally
- Kristyn Lindhart, EKI, will send CGA staff any GIS datasets from the development of the current model with updated land use information from local landowners.
- S. Julian will confirm whether CGA approving a consultant contract at the July 18 meeting leaves enough time for a projects consultant to provide sufficient input before the DWR grant is expected to be due in the fall.

- S. Julian will update the RFQ to send to the PMA Committee. Committee members should provide any feedback by Friday at noon, after which S. Julian will post the RFQ publicly.
- S. Julian will try to schedule consultant interviews/PMA Committee meeting for Wednesday, June 29th and if that is not possible, will send a scheduling poll for the last week of June.

## Meeting Overview

### Project Priority List Review and Discussion

S. Julian shared the Cosumnes Groundwater Authority (CGA) Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Project Priorities List (PPL or “List”), updated with Committee member edits from the previous meeting. The document outlines the full list of potential PMAs and proposed approach for more focused discussions over the next 4-6 months. He asked for feedback on the general structure and overall content of the List. The proposed Committee activities will include refining the project priorities and project descriptions with the technical guidance of the projects technical consultant, and then potentially partnering with a grant writer to incorporate the details of the projects into the anticipated large Department of Water Resources (DWR) Sustainable Groundwater Management Program (SGMP) grant in the fall. List development will include multiple opportunities to fold in feedback from others, including the CGA Citizen Advisory Committee, individual Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), and the general public, before this first version of the list is “finalized” in the Fall. The List is intended to be a living document.

The Projects and Management Actions (PMAs) include:

- PMA #1 Omochumne-Hartnell Water District (OHWD) Agricultural Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR)
- PMA #2 Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency Flood-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
- PMA #7 – Conservation (Agriculture)
- PMA #8 – Nature Based and Managed Aquifer Recharge
- Other small-scale projects

### 2022 Project Prioritization List Development Criteria

The PMA Committee confirmed an initial set of key criteria for List prioritization discussions over the next 4-6 months:

- Implementable within 5-6 years
- CGA plays a leadership role (the project is not viable without CGA involvement)
- Sufficient information can be prepared in time for the DWR grant in the fall

These criteria will focus the Committee's discussion and work over the next few months. CGA staff anticipate the Committee will identify additional criteria to further inform prioritization.

Because PMAs 1-4 are projects being implemented by other entities, they fall outside of the criteria defined above. Committee members generally agreed PMA 6 should not be a priority at this time because it is not implementable within 5-6 years due to its complexity (e.g., requires longer discussions to flesh out details to address concerns and build broad support). Therefore, the Committee's List prioritization discussions over the next 4-6 months will focus on PMAs 5, 7, and 8.

### Projects Driven by Other Entities

Committee members expressed concern that PMAs 1-4, which other entities are driving, will result in fees or taxes for basin residents. CGA staff clarified that these projects are being implemented and paid for by other entities and are only included in the GSP because they are expected to help the subbasin reach its groundwater sustainability goal (i.e., have a positive impact on groundwater levels and demand management in the Cosumnes Subbasin). To help clarify the expected CGA contributions (or lack thereof), S. Julian will add to the List a column for anticipated funding sources and will change the language "suggested funding sources" to "confirmed funding sources." Committee members requested more consistent and up-to-date information be readily provided (particularly related to funding sources and management) of PMAs 1-4.

### Data Gaps & Refining the Model

Committee members agreed that there are many data gaps to address, and that the current model needs to be updated as part of planning and implementing any/all PMAs. They posed that the model should reflect new information regarding:

- Land use changes (agriculture versus residential, make up of specific crops)
- Amount and distribution of agricultural water reuse
- Natural recharge locations
- Rate of recharge in agricultural areas
- Hydrologic influence and impermeability/permeability of the clay layer
- Changes in soil after years of agricultural use

CGA staff asked Committee members to review page 18 of the List, to continue to identify and propose methods for filling data gaps, and whether those methods will require the use of consultants or CGA can fill the gaps internally. Per Committee and public suggestions, S. Julian will connect with Toney Tillman, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Laura Foglia, Larry Walker and Associates, for guidance on data gaps. Any Committee members or members of the public should forward contact information or resources to CGA staff and CBI facilitators that may help address data gaps.

S. Julian will incorporate refinement of the groundwater model into the List as an important next step for planning and implementing PMAs. Kristyn Lindhart, EKI, clarified that to develop the initial model, EKI used 2015 data for Sacramento County and 2014 data for Amador. That

data were updated with some requested information from GSAs and information from Urban Water Management Plans. K. Lindhart emphasized that the intention under SGMA is for the GSP and the model to be continuously updated. She will send CGA staff any Global Information Systems (GIS) datasets from the development of the current model with updated land use information from local landowners.

### **Public Comment**

Members of the public identified the following sources to help the projects consultant fill data gaps:

- Data from Jeremy Wire’s geophysical study
- Local well diggers’ knowledge and firsthand experience
- Assessors’ reports of planted acreage
- FSA aerial photos
- NRCS baseline water usage
- Growers to determine individual return systems

### **Request for Qualifications – Project Scoping**

At its May 23 meeting, the CGA Board directed that, rather than a Request for Proposals (RFP), CGA staff post a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit for a consultant to help develop the List. An RFQ allows for more flexibility than an RFP, letting the CGA select a qualified consultant without being wedded to specific tasks and activities. The CGA budget has \$35,000 earmarked for the projects consultant this fiscal year.

Continuing the discussion from the May 9 Committee meeting, Committee members identified the following desired characteristics for a qualified projects consultant:

- Experience working with farmers and ranchers
- Understanding of different water needs in the diverse areas of the subbasin (north, south, and west of Highway 99)
- Knowledge of the Cosumnes subbasin (geography, agricultural economy, residents)
- Experience with geospatial analysis and ability to advise on updating the mathematical model (e.g., fluency with GIS and parcel data)
- Familiarity with available funding opportunities, to help CGA become a local information hub on funding opportunities
- Up-to-date understanding of advanced farming methods and technology for more accurate water use estimates
- Expertise in “water accounting” to estimate efficacy of proposed projects
- Expertise/skills complementary to that of CGA staff

### **Consultant Next Steps**

S. Julian will send the updated RFQ to the PMA Committee and the CGA Board after this meeting. Committee members should provide any feedback by Friday, May 27 at noon, after which S. Julian will post the RFQ publicly. He will confirm whether CGA approving a consultant contract at the July 18 meeting leaves enough time for the projects consultant to provide sufficient input before the DWR grant is expected to be due in the fall. S. Julian will endeavor

to schedule consultant interviews for Wednesday, June 29 to coincide with a PMA Committee meeting, and if that is not possible, will send a scheduling poll for a Committee meeting the last week of June.

Austin Miller, CGA Administrator, shared that CGA is exploring developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) for SAFCA’s grant writing consultant Mick Classen to work on the fall 2022 DWR grant for CGA. Committee members advised CGA staff to be mindful of any perceived conflicts of interest while doing recurring business with other local entities.

CGA is also posting an RFQ for a fee study consultant.

**Public Comment**

A member of the public suggested CGA staff distribute the RFQ to NRCS, engineers, and geologists who have worked in the basin before, and local well drillers to identify a swath of strong applicants.

**Meeting Attendance**

**PMA Committee**

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

**Staff and Consultants:** Stephen Julian & Austin Miller, CGA; Stephanie Horii & Sophie Carrillo-Mandel, Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Members of the public were also in attendance.