

# Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Citizens Advisory Committee

## Meeting Notes | June 9, 2022

### Meeting Materials

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

### Meeting-in-Brief / Outcomes

- The first meeting of the Cosumnes Groundwater Authority (CGA) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on June 9, 2022, in person with an option to participate via Zoom.
- Staff oriented Committee members to the charge and anticipated activities of the Committee, including providing feedback on the CGA's Communication & Engagement (C&E) Plan and Project Priorities List (PPL).
- The CAC provided many suggestions for improving outreach and engagement, including populations to target and methods for outreach.
- CAC members expressed a strong desire to provide input on the PPL, and highlighted a substantial need for more education and information in the Cosumnes Subbasin about groundwater management and the science and economics relevant to the proposed projects.
- The CAC would like to be engaged more often than the planned quarterly meetings.

### Action Items

- **CBI** will draft a summary of CAC Meeting 1 in the next two weeks and will distribute it to the CAC for review for accuracy before posting to the website.
- **CAC members** are encouraged to complete the outreach suggestion form (sent via email on June 14) and [meeting feedback form](#).
- **CBI and CGA staff** will continue to work with CAC members to find ways to engage between quarterly meetings, particularly to help plan the upcoming public workshop.
- **CAC members** should contact CBI if interested in helping to plan the upcoming public workshop and/or CAC meetings.
- **Everyone** - The CAC is still looking for more members. Please encourage anyone who may be a good fit in contributing to CAC's diverse perspectives and helping problem-solve to learn more about the CAC and [apply here](#).

### Meeting Overview

#### Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

Cosumnes Groundwater Authority (CGA) Administrator Austin Miller and CGA Watershed Coordinator Stephen Julian, with support from Consensus Building Institute (CBI) facilitators Stephanie Horii and Sophie Carrillo-Mandel, welcomed participants to the first CAC meeting, led a "get to know you exercise" between participants, and oriented them to the CAC's purpose and primary objective.

CAC Purpose:

- To provide a productive venue for input from, and information-sharing among, the subbasin's diverse communities and interests.
- To serve an advisory role to the CGA Board of Directors, to inform the Board's implementation of the Cosumnes Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

CAC Primary Objective: To develop a mutual understanding of, and provide feedback on, the implementation of the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP.

Staff added that the group is intended to be a long-standing body and the range of the CAC's scope overtime is purposefully broad, to be able to adapt to evolving interests and priorities of CAC members and the CGA. The staff and facilitators shared the following information about groundwater management structures in the Cosumnes Subbasin:

- The CAC is an advisory committee to the CGA, which is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) between the seven Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Cosumnes Subbasin;
- The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) tasked local agencies with creating the GSAs to develop GSPs, locally defined plans to make local groundwater levels sustainable within 20 years;
- The seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin share one GSP;
- Public input from 2021 led to the formation of the CAC, to provide a venue for citizens to provide direct guidance to the CGA Board of Directors;
- CGA's other committee, the Projects and Management Actions (PMA) Committee, is made up of CGA representatives and will lead the effort of prioritizing potential PMAs to bring the subbasin to groundwater sustainability. CAC will have a role in providing input on project prioritization.

## Outreach and Engagement

CGA staff and facilitators shared features of the CGA Communications & Engagement (C&E) Plan, a required companion document to the GSP. CBI is revising the C&E Plan, now that CGA is moving from the phase of GSP Development to GSP Implementation. CBI specifically identified the importance of engaging both the full range of people who may be impacted by groundwater management actions, as well as adequately engaging those *most* affected, and expressed a hope for the CAC to contribute to improving the C&E Plan in that context.

CAC members generally expressed concern that few Cosumnes subbasin residents and groundwater users know about CGA, the GSP, and local groundwater management efforts. Most members shared that they themselves feel ill-informed about SGMA and GSP implementation. They noted that improving local understanding and trust will be essential for long-term local support and funding. Members voiced a desire to help with upcoming outreach, but would like to have a more solid understanding of SGMA and the Cosumnes GSP in

order to do so. Some members expressed concern about what's perceived as "final" decisions made in the GSP and CGA's trajectory, without broad understanding by residents.

#### Impact on & Role of Farmers

The CAC specifically discussed the importance, in a heavily agricultural community like the Cosumnes Subbasin, of understanding impacts on farmers and the limited availability of farmers to attend meetings. The CAC acknowledged that farmers are the biggest groundwater users in the basin and are most impacted by decreasing groundwater levels, but don't have high enough margins to take on a large percentage of the costs for attaining sustainability. Like many industries at the moment, farmers are struggling to find employees and anticipate the cost of food to increase, in part as a result of diminishing groundwater levels and related groundwater management actions.

#### Defining Outreach & Engagement Success

Given some members' concerns about limited public understanding of local groundwater management, the CAC discussed how to measure or define successful outreach. Preliminary thoughts included that outreach can be considered successful "when people know what we are talking about," "when people are in agreement supporting mitigation projects", and via results of a potential survey. While CBI conducted a survey with moderate return in 2019, participants thought that another survey may be more successful, at least among irrigators, now that irrigators are paying a tax to fund CGA's administrative needs. Defining these metrics will be an important next step for the CAC and CGA staff and consultants.

The CAC identified the following challenges and opportunities to outreach and engagement:

#### **Challenges/Considerations**

- Residents don't know what's going on in the region.
- People worry how they will be affected financially and with water availability.
- People in town don't know where their water comes from.
- People are busy – farmers are occupied sunrise to sunset, especially in summertime.
- There are differing levels of impact and engagement capacity among stakeholders; some feel the cost burden more than others.
- It can feel inequitable that some stakeholders are being paid to engage (agencies), while others, like CAC members, are donating their time.
- Lack of trust of public agencies or other organizations and concern that a past advisory group (i.e., Surface Water Advisory Group) did not represent a full breadth of stakeholder interests or those who prioritize the Cosumnes Subbasin.

#### **Opportunities:**

- New interest has arisen since GSP development, now that more specific details are available.
- There are new and improved resources and contacts for outreach.
- There are new partners and support (e.g., CAC).
- CGA and CBI have benefitted from many lessons learned since the first round of C&E.

## CAC Outreach & Engagement Suggestions

CAC members provided the following suggestions for outreach:

### *Stakeholder Groups*

- 4H
- Agricultural-residential users
- All farmers
- All rate payers
- Diverse concerned committees for each basin
- Future Farmers of America (FFA) California headquarters just north of Galt
- Galt FFA
- Galt Youth Commission
- Non-ag stakeholders
- Sacramento County Environmental Commission (Tom Malson is a member)
- Schools
- Young farmers

### *Methods*

- Flyers (hard to measure success)
- Survey
  - Might be more successful now that \$10 per acre tax is levied
  - Different surveys for residential vs agricultural customers; likely to have higher return rate from those being charged
  - City users might not participate because they won't be taxed
- Educational opportunities
  - Public workshops
  - Lunch hour calls like Maven's Notebook
- Tabling
  - Farmers markets
  - Sacramento County Sheriff Children's Safety events
- Farm Bureau events
- Individual representatives as trusted messengers (must be someone credible in the community)
  - Door to door (maybe not cost effective)
  - Brief presentation at Farm Bureau dinners
  - Ag Credit dinners
  - City Council meetings
- Newsletters & Mailing lists
  - CGA's 500-person mailing list
  - FSA newsletter
  - NRCS mailing list
  - Mailing lists for participants of past NRCS or Farm Bureau programs
  - Title company mailing list
  - Utility bill inserts
  - Mailed notices

### *Tone and manner of outreach*

- Ensure consistent, transparent, and authentic messaging
- Encourage responses by emphasizing that fees will be involved
- Use easy to understand graphics; graphics of each PMA would be helpful

CBI encouraged meeting attendees to submit additional suggestions via an outreach and engagement input form.

## Projects and Management Actions

CGA staff and CBI facilitators introduced the GSP Project Priorities List (PPL) and explained the PMA prioritization process. The PPL outlines the full list of potential PMAs included in the GSP. Over the next six months, the PMA Committee will refine the project priorities and project descriptions with the technical guidance of a projects technical consultant, and then potentially partner with a grant writer to incorporate the details of the projects into an anticipated large Department of Water Resources (DWR) SGMA grant in the fall. PPL development will include multiple opportunities to fold in feedback from others, including the CAC, individual GSAs, and the general public, before this first version of the list is “finalized” in the fall. The PPL is intended to be a living document.

The current GSP PMAs are:

- 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

The PMA Committee’s initial set of key criteria for project prioritization discussions over the next 4-6 months include:

- 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

Because PMAs 1-4 are projects being implemented by other entities, they fall outside of the criteria defined above. The PMA Committee has also established that PMA 6 should not be a CGA priority at this time because it is not implementable within 5-6 years due to its complexity. Therefore, the PMA Committee’s prioritization discussions over the next 4-6 months will focus on PMAs 5, 7, and 8.

The CAC expressed strong curiosity about project details and development, and a desire for more discussion time. Some of their specific questions include:

- How did CGA develop the PMA list?
- Will those that need help get that help – for the Cosumnes Subbasin and specific areas within (enough water, compensation, etc.)?
- How much will this cost and who will pay for it?
- What are the opportunities to be involved and provide feedback?

- How will the first three PMAs directly contribute to the health and sustainability of the Cosumnes aquifer?
  - How will other, more local projects that directly benefit the Cosumnes Subbasin, be adequately evaluated and invested in?

CAC members requested educational resources on the following topics, for themselves and the broader community:

#### *General Cosumnes Groundwater Sustainability Topics*

- Overview of all subbasins in Sacramento County/the region (Cosumnes, North American, South American, Solano)
- Best practices in areas with minimal water (deserts)
- Interaction/relationship between the Cosumnes River and the groundwater aquifer (ideally a repeat of a valuable water agency educational presentation in Wilton several years ago)
- If the groundwater level in the basin is dropping one foot per year, how many years until groundwater users experience substantial impacts?

#### *CGA GSP-Specific Topics*

- Data on viability of projects – how effective is MAR?
- Conservation standards, methods, and intended impacts (relevant to PMA 7)
- Development and features of the Cosumnes, South American, and North American Groundwater Subbasins (CoSANA) Model
- Specific estimated recharge/deficit amounts (groundwater accounting; this is included in the PPL)
- Examples of land repurposing and incentives for repurposing (relevant to PMA 5)
- OHWD data informing PMAs 1 and 3
- Viability of using seasonal creeks for passive recharge (included in the “other PMAs”)

#### *Suggested methods to convey information or model information distribution after*

- CGA staff office hours to ask questions
- Seminar series
- Educational materials
- Resources from CSU Fresno
- Maven’s notebook lunch hour webinars

### Next Steps

Committee members generally expressed appreciation for the convening of the CAC, and still questioned how CAC input will be meaningfully considered, particularly with the group only meeting quarterly. They would like to meet more frequently. CGA staff and CBI will report back to CGA at their June meeting with the input from the CAC, and will reach out to CAC members about supporting planning of the upcoming Public Workshop focused on projects, tentatively to take place in August or September.

CGA staff and CBI facilitators thanked CAC members for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

### Upcoming Meetings & Engagement Opportunities

- **CGA Board** (meet monthly, 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 9 AM)
  - Next Meeting: June 20 at 9 AM, agenda will be posted [here](#)
  - CGA will review Mark Nelson and Belinda Ellis’s CAC applications
- **PMA Committee Meeting** (approximately monthly through Fall)
  - Next Meeting: Last week of June, agenda will be posted [here](#)
  - Discuss tech consultant applications
  - Further discuss information/data needs
- **Public Workshop 1** Tentatively late August, focused on projects
- **CAC Meeting 2:** Tentatively late August/early September
  - Review draft PPL
  - Address stakeholder feedback from August Workshop
- **CAC Meeting 3:** Tentatively November/December
  - Discuss long-term funding and financing
  - Plan Public Workshop #2 focused on funding and financing
  - Report back on PPL and grant app guidelines as applicable

### Meeting Attendance

#### CAC Committee

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| • Dave Means     | • Teresa Flewellyn |
| • Gary McEnerney | • Tish Espinosa    |
| • Gene Rose      | • Tom Malson       |

Member Neil Dubrovsky was unable to attend. Belinda Ellis and Mark Nelson attended as members of the public while their CAC applications were pending CGA approval.

**Staff and Consultants:** Stephen Julian & Austin Miller, CGA; Stephanie Horii & Sophie Carrillo-Mandel, CBI.

Members of the public were also in attendance.

### Glossary of Common Terms

AFY	Acre-feet per year (also written as acre/ft/yr)
ACGMA	Amador County Groundwater Management Authority – One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://amadorwater.org">amadorwater.org</a> ]
C&E Plan	Communication & Engagement Plan (C&E is also sometimes referred to as "O&E" or "Outreach and Engagement")

CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee – an advisory committee that supports implementation of the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP
CBI	Consensus Building Institute - organization that facilitates SGMA implementation in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://cbi.org">cbi.org</a> ]
CGA	Cosumnes Groundwater Authority – JPA for the seven GSAs to lead GSP implementation (formed November 2021)
Ci of Galt	City of Galt – One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://ci.galt.ca.us">ci.galt.ca.us</a> ]
Clay WD	Clay Water District - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://sscawa.org/clay-water-district">sscawa.org/clay-water-district</a> ]
CoSANA	Cosumnes, South American, and North American Groundwater Subbasins (CoSANA) Model – Numerical groundwater model shared by the three regional Subbasins, upon which groundwater management actions in the GSP are based, developed by EKI
DAC / SDAC	Disadvantaged Community / Severely Disadvantaged Community
DWR	California Department of Water Resources – the SGMA regulating and assisting state agency [ <a href="http://water.ca.gov">water.ca.gov</a> ]
EKI	The firm that developed the GSP as an independent technical consultant for the Cosumnes Subbasin
ESJGA	Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority
Flood-MAR	An integrated and voluntary resource management strategy for using flood water for managed aquifer recharge (MAR) [ <a href="http://water.ca.gov/Programs/All-Programs/Flood-MAR">water.ca.gov/Programs/All-Programs/Flood-MAR</a> ]
Galt ID	Galt Irrigation District - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://gid.specialdistrict.org">gid.specialdistrict.org</a> ]
GDE	Groundwater-dependent ecosystem
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
HCM	Hydrogeological Conceptual Model
ISW	Interconnected surface waters
JPA	Joint Powers Authority – refers to the legal agreement uniting the GSAs into the CGA
MO	Measurable Objective
MT	Minimum Threshold
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NOI	Notice of Intent
O&E	Outreach and Engagement (O&E is also sometimes referred to as "C&E" or "Communication and Engagement")
OHWD	Omochumne-Hartnell Water District - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://ohwd.org">ohwd.org</a> ]
PIO	Public Information Officer



PPL	Project Priorities List – refers to list of PMAs to be prioritized for implementation; a living document
PMAC	Projects & Management Actions Committee
PMAs	Projects & Management Actions
Prop 1 / Prop 68	Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 (state grant funding for sustainable groundwater planning and projects)
RMW	Representative Monitoring Well
Sac County GSA	Sacramento County GSA – One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://waterresources.saccounty.net/Pages/Sacramento-County-Groundwater-Sustainability-Agency.aspx">waterresources.saccounty.net/Pages/Sacramento-County-Groundwater-Sustainability-Agency.aspx</a> ]
SAFCA	Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency [ <a href="http://safca.org">safca.org</a> ]
SCGA	Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority [ <a href="http://scgah2o.saccounty.net">scgah2o.saccounty.net</a> ]
SGA	Sacramento Groundwater Authority
SGMA	California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act [ <a href="http://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management">water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA- Groundwater-Management</a> ]
SI	Sustainability Indicator - Six (6) Sustainability Indicators under SGMA related to groundwater storage, groundwater levels, water quality, surface water depletion, land subsidence, and seawater intrusion.
SMC	Sustainability Management Criteria
SRCD	Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District - One of the seven GSAs in the Cosumnes Subbasin [ <a href="http://sloughousercd.org">sloughousercd.org</a> ]
SSCAWA	Southeast Sacramento County Agricultural Water Authority [ <a href="http://sscawa.org">sscawa.org</a> ]
SWAG	Surface Water Advisory Group – multi-stakeholder advisory body that met in 2020-2021 to discuss and provide input on the draft GSP-related to interconnected surface waters
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) – the SGMA enforcing state agency [ <a href="http://waterboards.ca.gov">waterboards.ca.gov</a> ]
TM	Technical Memorandum – Summary documents produced by EKI to inform Working Group discussions and decision-making
UR	Undesirable Result
WF	Sacramento Water Forum [ <a href="http://waterforum.org">waterforum.org</a> ]
WG	Cosumnes Subbasin Working Group, the entity that created and convened the CGA