

Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Agenda

When: 8:30 am – 11:30 am, Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Where: Galt Police Department Community Room
455 Industrial Drive
Galt, CA 95632

Zoom: Via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85653148920>
Meeting ID: 856 5314 8920
Call in Number: 1-669-444-9171

PUBLIC COMMENT – Any member of the public may address the Board concerning any matter on the agenda before or during its consideration of the matter. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person. For good cause, the Board Chair may waive these limitations.

ACCESSIBILITY - If you have a disability and require a reasonable accommodation to fully participate in this event, please contact CGA Staff before the day of the meeting via email [info@CosumnesGroundwater.org] or telephone [916-526-5447] to discuss your accessibility needs.

Call to Order (10 minutes)

1. Introductions
 - a. Determine if Quorum is Present

Consent Calendar

2. Consent Items (10 minutes)
 - a. Agenda – March 6, 2024
 - b. Minutes - February 7, 2024
 - c. Financial/Treasurer's Report – March 2024

Regular Business Action Items

3. CGA Fee Study Draft Presentation (45 minutes)
4. EKI Annual Report Draft Presentation (45 minutes)
5. SGMA Implementation Update (30 minutes)
 - a. Spring Groundwater Monitoring

6. Staffing Services and Work Plan (30 minutes)

Informational Items (30 minutes)

7. Committee Reports
 - a. O & E Committee Update
8. CGA Staff Report
9. CGA Counsel Report
10. DWR North Central Regional Office Update
11. Director/Member GSA Comments
12. Upcoming Agenda Items

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items *(Limit of 3 minutes per speaker)*

13. Public Comment: *Comment will be received for items not on the agenda, but within the jurisdiction of the agency. The Board will hear comment but may not act on issues raised on non-agenda items.*

Identification of items for future meetings

The Board approved the following future agenda items by consensus:

- Final Fee Study from SCI
- Final Annual Report from EKI
- FY 24-25 Work Plan
- Spring Groundwater Monitoring Updates

Adjourn Meeting

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2024 - 8:30am

*** A recording of this meeting can be found on the CGA website at:
<https://www.cosumnesgroundwater.org/meetings/>*

Call to Order: 8:38am

1) Introductions / Determine if Quorum is Present

Directors in Attendance: Gary Thomas, Mike Selling , Leo VanWarmerdam, Chris Hunley, John Mulrooney, Herb Garms, Gary Silva, Jay Vandenburg, Rick Ferriera, Mike Wackman, Mark Stretars, Lindsey Carter, Pat Hume

Regular Business Action Items

2) Consent Items

- a. Agenda – February 7, 2024
 - b. Minutes – December 6, 2023
 - c. Financial Report – January and February 2024
- *Treasurer's Report

*Director Thomas moved to approve the Agenda and Minutes.
Director Stretars seconded the motion.
The motion passed with all in favor.*

Treasurer Rick Ferriera provided a report/update on CGA Financials including current invoices, Profit and Loss statements and the Budget vs. Actuals. The Board discussed the financial report and several invoices in question regarding EKI and Downey Brand. Financial procedures were discussed as there is not currently a General Manager for CGA and it was suggested that a PO or Scope of Work for financial procedures be developed. The Board would like to know who is responsible for providing direction to consultants, in particular. An Ad Hoc Finance Committee Meeting will be held to further discuss these items.

EKI agreed to close out the original contract and move forward with the current contract. They will present the draft Annual Report at the March 2024 meeting.

*Director Thomas moved to approve the Financial Report with the stipulation that the original EKI contract be closed out.
Director Stretars seconded the motion.
The motion passed with all in favor.*

Drafted on:
February 7, 2023

Regular Business Action Items

3) CGA Cost of Service Study Development Update

Ryan Aston from SCI Consulting Group presented an update on the CGA Cost of Service Study to the Board. The Board looked over the proposed cost allocations and the implementation timeline. There was a discussion regarding the 5% contingency escalator and whether a Producer Price Index (PPI) should be utilized over a Consumer Price Index to measure inflation. Furthermore, the Board discussed keeping a Reserves Account open for each GSA to fund project and management actions (PMA's).

Final direction was provided to Ryan to move forward with the \$10 per irrigated acre fee with the 5% contingency escalator cap while utilizing a PPI indicator. Ryan will present a draft Fee Study Report to the Board at the March 2024 meeting.

Informational Items

9) Committee Reports

The Outreach and Engagement Committee Chair, Teresa Flewellyn, presented a report on the upcoming CGA BBQ to be held at Hendrickson Hall on February 28 from 12 - 2pm. Invitations were sent out to irrigators the last week of January 2024 with a QR code to RSVP on it. Board members are invited and welcome to invite anyone they personally know who has provided support to CGA over the years. This BBQ will serve as a 'Thank you' to them. The O & E Committee is preparing for the BBQ based on the RSVP's that come in.

Link to RSVP: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CGABBO>

10) CGA Staff Reports

CGA Staff provided a list of questions for the Board to consider as we head into the Fiscal year 24 - 25. These questions regard staffing changes and whether a General Manager should or can be hired for CGA. These questions will be re-presented at the March 2024 meeting and emailed to the Board to keep in mind until that time. Staff also reminded the Board that Chair and Vice Chair elections will need to be held in June 2024.

11) CGA Counsel Reports

None.

12) DWR North Central Regional Office Update

Virtual update provided via a memo in the [Agenda Packet](#)

13) Director/Member GSA Comments

None.

14) Upcoming Agenda Items

The following items were identified:

- Draft Fee Study Presentation

- -Draft Annual Report Presentation
- Staffing Services
- CGA Projects (Sloughhouse RCD's WETA project, for example)
- Financial Ad Hoc Committee Updates

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

15) Public Comment

Adjourn Meeting

Chair Hunley adjourned the meeting by consensus at 11:24am.

REGULAR MEETINGS OF CGA ARE HELD ON THE 1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH. THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 6, 2024 AT 8:30AM.

Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Balance Sheet

As of March 2, 2024

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Operational Supplies	97.96
Public Checking (4246) - 1	111,006.63
Total Bank Accounts	\$111,104.59
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	412,230.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$412,230.00
Total Current Assets	\$523,334.59
TOTAL ASSETS	\$523,334.59
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	15,813.20
Total Accounts Payable	\$15,813.20
Total Current Liabilities	\$15,813.20
Total Liabilities	\$15,813.20
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	0.00
Retained Earnings	327,685.35
Net Income	179,836.04
Total Equity	\$507,521.39
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$523,334.59

Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Accounts Payable

As of March 2, 2024

VENDOR	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	DATE
Current			
Teresa Flewellyn	CGA BBQ Luncheon Supplies	722.90	02/28/2024
Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District	February 2024 Staff Support Services	6,325.98	03/02/2024
Downey Brand	Legal Services through January 2024	384.00	03/02/2024
EKI Environment & Water	EKI January 2024 Invoice	8,380.32	03/02/2024
Total for Current		\$15,813.20	
TOTAL		\$15,813.20	

Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Budget vs. Actuals: FY 23 - 24 Budget - FY24 P&L

July 2023 - June 2024

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	REMAINING
Income				
4100 Member Contributions	440,449.72	425,730.00	14,719.72	-14,719.72
Services	7,816.64		7,816.64	-7,816.64
Total Income	\$448,266.36	\$425,730.00	\$22,536.36	\$ -22,536.36
GROSS PROFIT	\$448,266.36	\$425,730.00	\$22,536.36	\$ -22,536.36
Expenses				
5000 Staff Personnel Expenses (Contract)				
Personnel - SRCD	85,329.86	136,000.00	-50,670.14	50,670.14
Personnel - SSCAWA	6,380.00		6,380.00	-6,380.00
Total 5000 Staff Personnel Expenses (Contract)	91,709.86	136,000.00	-44,290.14	44,290.14
5010 Facilitation Support / Establish Organization		2,000.00	-2,000.00	2,000.00
5100 Legal Services	22,753.28	30,000.00	-7,246.72	7,246.72
5200 Public Outreach	1,222.90	2,500.00	-1,277.10	1,277.10
5400 Annual Report Technical Support	23,897.12	33,000.00	-9,102.88	9,102.88
5410 Data Management System	999.18	2,000.00	-1,000.82	1,000.82
5420 Other Technical Support	37,009.47	75,000.00	-37,990.53	37,990.53
5430 Monitoring	7,466.91	15,000.00	-7,533.09	7,533.09
5500 Miscellaneous. Expenses	1,869.49	3,000.00	-1,130.51	1,130.51
5600 Financial Audit and Accounting Services	9,300.00	20,000.00	-10,700.00	10,700.00
5650 Funding Study Development	42,957.06	65,000.00	-22,042.94	22,042.94
5700 Data Gaps	29,245.05	40,000.00	-10,754.95	10,754.95
Total Expenses	\$268,430.32	\$423,500.00	\$ -155,069.68	\$155,069.68
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$179,836.04	\$2,230.00	\$177,606.04	\$ -177,606.04
NET INCOME	\$179,836.04	\$2,230.00	\$177,606.04	\$ -177,606.04

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Agenda Date: March 6, 2024

Agenda Item #: 3

Agenda Item Subject: Cost of Service Study Development Update

To: CGA Board of Directors

From: Ryan Aston, SCI

Background

SCI Consulting drafted the attached memo for the March 6th CGA Board Meeting recapping the status of the development of an updated cost of service study decided at the February 7th meeting. This will serve as the foundations of outreach efforts this spring.

Attachment: [CGA Draft Rate and Fee Study](#)
[CGA Fee Study Slide Deck](#)

Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Board provide direction to SCI on Cost of Service Study so that a final Fee Study can be created and presented at the April 2024 CGA Board meeting.



Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Draft Rate and Fee Study

March 2024

DRAFT



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I. Executive Summary

Background

The California Legislature enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“SGMA”) in 2014, marking the first Statewide effort to manage its groundwater basins. The goal of this historical legislation is to ensure that groundwater is sustainably managed and protected for all beneficial users, both now and in the future. Although it was enacted at the State level, SGMA was envisioned to be carried out locally. As such, it mandates that local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (“GSAs”) be formed in medium and high-priority basins in order to develop and implement Groundwater Sustainability Plans (“GSPs”).

The Cosumnes Groundwater Authority (“CGA” or “Authority”) was formed in November 2021 for the purpose of implementing the GSP for the Cosumnes Subbasin (“Subbasin”). The Authority is comprised of seven GSAs (“the GSAs” or “member GSAs”) that manage the entirety of the Subbasin in coordination under a single GSP. The Authority submitted the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP to the Department of Water Resources (“DWR”) in January of 2022. In October 2023, DWR approved the GSP as submitted, but provided guidance for improvement of the plan. The Authority is tasked with implementing the tasks laid out by the GSP immediately.

The Authority is currently funded by member agency contributions. For the majority of those member GSAs, the contribution is funded through a regulatory fee program based on a charge per irrigated agricultural acre.

In the Summer of 2022, the Authority engaged a consultant team led by SCI Consulting Group (“SCI Team”) to develop a model Rate and Fee Study to fund the member GSAs’ future participation in CGA across the Subbasin. This effort has included comprehensive data analysis, review of funding options, evaluation of rate structure alternatives, and the development of rate and fee schedules. The Board, Authority staff, and members of the public are providing input on this process. The scope of work also includes a community meeting, to be held in spring 2024, in order to incorporate community perspective and engagement into the Rate and Fee Study.

This Study outlines the development of a fee model for funding GSA operations through the coming years of GSP implementation. It summarizes the efforts of CGA, the Member Agencies, and consultants in evaluating the financial, legal, and policy components of funding groundwater management in the Cosumnes Subbasin. This summary includes considerations of legal authority and fee methodology in support of the establishment of a new and updated groundwater sustainability fee for the Cosumnes Subbasin.

If approved by the Authority Board of Directors, the Rate and Fee Study would be advanced to the Member Agencies for their use in developing a fee program to fund their participation in CGA. Each Member Agency is responsible for implementing its own fee structure; this fee model is intended to inform that development and provide standardized assumptions across the Subbasin.

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Objectives

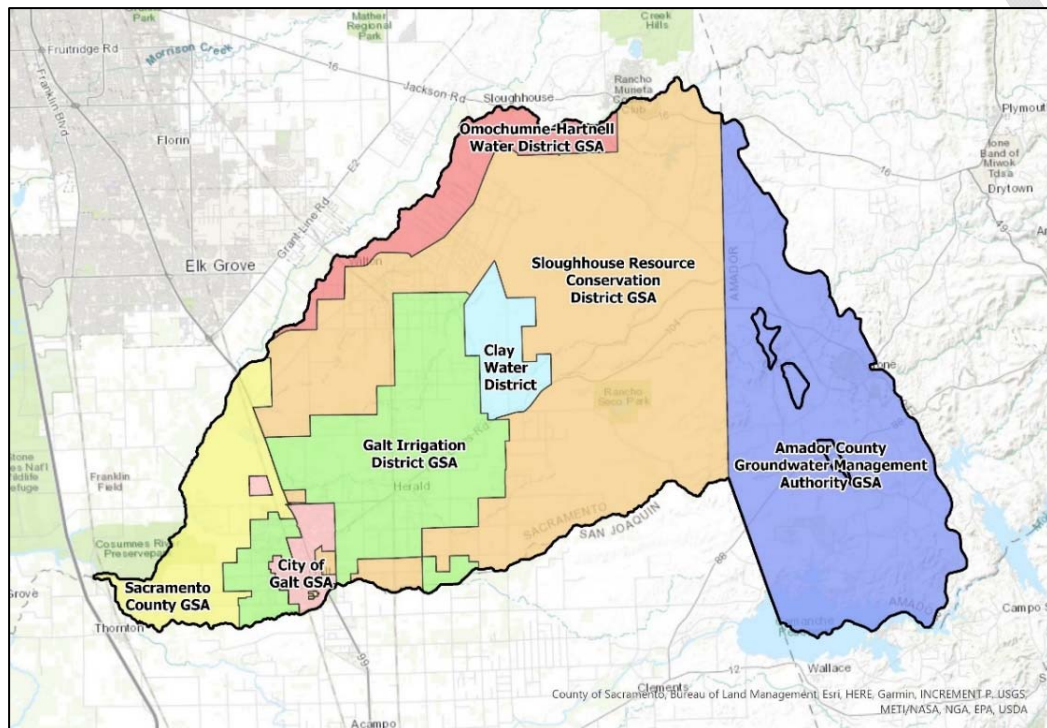
The objectives of this Rate and Fee Study include the following:

- Development of a GSP implementation budget and inflationary mechanism.
- Development and refinement of parcel-scale irrigated acreage data.
- Development and refinement of data related to groundwater-using parcels.
- Development of fee methodology and rates.

Agency Characteristics

The Cosumnes Groundwater Authority is a joint powers authority formed in November of 2021, and is comprised of seven member agencies: Omoichumne-Hartnell Water District (“OHWD”) GSA, Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District (“SRCD”) GSA, Galt Irrigation District (“GID”) GSA, Clay Water District (“CWD”) GSA, City of Galt GSA, Amador County Groundwater Management Authority (“Amador County GSA”), and Sacramento County GSA. CGA is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors (“Board”). There is a designated Board member and an alternate for each of the seven member agencies. The Subbasin boundary, as well as the boundaries of each GSA within the Subbasin is shown below for reference.

Figure 1 – Cosumnes Subbasin and Member GSA Boundaries



Subbasin Characteristics and Approach

The conditions of the Cosumnes Subbasin are discussed in detail in the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP.¹ The Subbasin underlies approximately 210,300 acres within the San Joaquin Valley Basin in Amador and Sacramento Counties, approximately one-quarter of which is irrigated agriculture – including vineyards, pasture, and grain (GSP, 2). Approximately 18,000 acres of the Subbasin comprise cities, communities, agricultural/residential use (“Ag-Res”).

Basin Prioritization

The Department of Water Resources assigns each of California’s 515 groundwater basins a prioritization rating. The Basin Prioritization rating dictates whether a basin is designated very low, low, medium, or high priority as shown below.

Table 1 – SGMA Priority Ranking Criteria

Priority	Total Priority Point Ranges			
Very Low	over	zero	up to	7
Low	over	7	up to	14
Medium	over	14	up to	21
High	over	21	up to	42

Medium and high priority basins are required to establish a groundwater sustainability agency and develop a groundwater sustainability plan. With a priority ranking score of 19.5, the Cosumnes Subbasin is classified by DWR as a medium-priority basin. The Subbasin’s priority point allocation is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 - Cosumnes Subbasin Priority Points

Criteria	Priority Points
1 Population	1
2 Population Growth	2
3 Public Supply Wells	2
4 Total Wells	3
5 Irrigated Acres	3
6 Groundwater Reliance	4.5
7 Impacts	2
8 Habitat and Other Information	2
Total Priority Points	19.5

¹ <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gsp/preview/106>

Sustainability Indicators

SGMA identifies six sustainability indicators, which are the effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the Subbasin that, when significant and unreasonable, become undesirable results (California Water Code § 10721). These include chronic lowering of groundwater levels, reduction in groundwater storage, degraded water quality, land subsidence, depletion of interconnected surface water, and seawater intrusion. SGMA requires that each GSA develop criteria defining the parameters of each sustainability indicator, including minimum thresholds triggering a determination that an undesirable result has occurred in the basin (and triggering a responsive action by the GSA), as well as measurable objectives under which the GSA may demonstrate progress toward sustainability. Collectively, these efforts must demonstrate that the basin will be sustainably managed within 40 years of the plan's implementation per the California Code of Regulations § 354.24.

As detailed in the GSP, it was determined that five out of the six sustainability indicators are potentially applicable to the Cosumnes Subbasin, with seawater intrusion being the exception because the Subbasin is land-locked and hundreds of miles from the Coast. (GSP, 10.) The GSP elaborates on the technical considerations associated with each applicable sustainability indicator in the Cosumnes Subbasin, and these considerations served as the foundation for establishing the criteria for sustainable management.

The GSP identifies chronic lowering of groundwater levels as potentially the most fundamental sustainability indicator, as it influences several other indicators (GSP, 8). Undesirable results related to both chronic lowering of groundwater levels and reduction in groundwater storage are defined in the GSP as negative effects related to “long-term viable access to groundwater for urban, domestic, agricultural, industrial, and other beneficial users and uses within the Basin” (GSP, 9-10). More specifically, these results could lead to well dewatering, increased well maintenance costs, and reduced groundwater supply reliability (GSP 170, 171).

Undesirable results related to degraded water quality are defined in the GSP as results stemming from water quality conditions that “negatively impact the long-term viability of the groundwater resource for beneficial users and uses” (GSP, 10). The GSP also references decreased availability to usable potable water and increased cost to treat groundwater to drinking water standards in relation to degraded water quality (GSP, 174).

Undesirable results related to land subsidence are defined in the GSP as land subsidence due to groundwater level declines that “negatively affects the ability to existing critical or non-critical infrastructure within the Basin” (GSP, 10). The GSP specially references potential damage to gravity-driven water conveyance infrastructure, roadways, bridges, and railroad tracks (GSP, 175).

Depletion of interconnected surface water caused by groundwater extractions has the potential to introduce undesirable results stemming from negative impacts on the “urban, domestic, agricultural, industrial, environmental, and other beneficial users and uses of surface water” (GSP, 10”). The GSP specifically references potential negative impacts to surface water users and environmental users.

SGMA sets out a 50-year planning and implementation over which a GSA must implement a program to achieve sustainability within its subbasin. The GSP forms the basis of that program, which requires coordinated management of and responses to the sustainability indicators. Those efforts are oriented at the sustainable management of groundwater resources in the Cosumnes Subbasin now and into the future, for the benefit of groundwater users and landowners throughout the Subbasin.

SGMA Compliance

Another aspect of the benefit provided to groundwater users within the Cosumnes Subbasin relates to compliance with SGMA. Compliance with SGMA relates to specific State-mandated requirements assessed by DWR and if found deficient, may result in referral to the State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”) for enforcement. In addition to groundwater level monitoring and reporting, the Authority must implement the actions set forth in the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP and demonstrate consistent progress toward achieving the Subbasin sustainability by year 2042.

In the event the GSAs are unsuccessful in their efforts to implement the GSP, avoid undesirable results, and achieve Subbasin sustainability, the SWRCB may intervene, in a process referred to as “State intervention.” If the SWRCB were to take control of managing the Subbasin, local input into the management of groundwater resources would be severely limited. Groundwater users would be required to register wells, and non-de minimis users would be required to install meters and submit reports to the State regarding their groundwater use. The State Water Board’s adopted schedule states that annual well registration charges are \$100 per de minimis well, \$300 per non-de minimis well, and non-de minimis pumping fees of \$40 - \$55 per AF. The State could potentially restrict pumping and assess penalties for overdraft. All of these costs would be in addition to the continued costs incurred by the Authority to implement the GSP and correct any deficiencies.

Groundwater users and landowners within the Subbasin receive a benefit from the GSAs’ efforts to maintain compliance with SGMA under local direction and control and avoid the outcome of State intervention.

Cosumnes Subbasin Sustainability Goal

The sustainability indicators described in the GSP guide CGA's efforts to achieve sustainability by 2042. As such, CGA administration and GSP implementation efforts to be funded by the proposed fee program relate directly to addressing conditions within the Cosumnes Subbasin. Page 16 of the GSP describes the Cosumnes Subbasin Sustainability Goal:

The sustainability goal of the Cosumnes Subbasin (Basin) is to ensure that groundwater in the Basin continues to be a long-term resource for beneficial users and uses including urban, domestic, agricultural, industrial, environmental and others. This goal will be achieved by managing groundwater within the Basin's sustainable yield as defined by sustainable groundwater conditions and the absence of undesirable results.

Groundwater Fees

Just as SGMA envisions groundwater basins being locally governed, it also envisions GSAs to be locally funded. The intent of this Fee Study is to provide a model rate and fee schedule for the use of CGA members in the Cosumnes Subbasin, providing a reliable stand-alone revenue source to ensure the Authority's ability to implement its GSP. While the Authority has received grant funding in the past, and will actively pursue future grant solicitations, the need for independent revenue is apparent.

One unique aspect of the proposed fee program relates to fee implementation. As a policy matter, CGA's members have historically preferred to implement their own fees and charges, rather than delegate that authority to the larger joint powers authorities. CGA will not be implementing a fee program of its own as a result of this study. Rather, individual GSA member agencies may incorporate the methodology and approach of this Study to impose fees under their statutory authority as GSAs. Alternatively, they may contribute their cost allocation in other ways. Part of the intent of this Study is to provide a foundational methodology and cost allocation across different GSA jurisdictions and across different groundwater user classes. Based on the methodology described in this fee study, total CGA member contributions are shown below in Table 3:

Table 3 – GSA Revenue and Contribution Summary

GSA	Total Revenue	% of Total Revenue	Total Contribution to CGA	Total Project Reserve Funds Held
Amador GSA	\$8,012.97	1%	\$7,578	\$438.90
City of Galt GSA	\$24,389.49	4%	\$20,031	\$4,403.64
Clay WD GSA	\$22,985.43	4%	\$17,841	\$5,144.55
Galt ID GSA	\$226,573.60	38%	\$186,249	\$40,324.19
Omochumne Hartnell WD GSA	\$37,293.62	6%	\$30,633	\$6,660.76
Sacramento County GSA	\$74,100.96	13%	\$58,274	\$15,827.36
Sloughhouse RCD GSA	\$197,973.93	33%	\$162,905	\$35,069.44
Totals:	\$591,330	100%	\$483,510	\$107,869

Following approval by the CGA Board of this methodology, CGA anticipates that its members will enter into funding agreements with CGA memorializing their annual contributions to the Authority's budget.

Fee Methodology

Currently, each CGA member's annual contribution to the Authority budget is roughly calculated based on a charge of \$10 per irrigated acre within that GSA. The fee methodology described herein expands upon that methodology, providing specific consideration for residential, commercial, and public water system use. This fine-tuning allows CGA to more accurately capture the costs and benefits associated with these users as it works to implement a groundwater management program within the Subbasin.

Over the course of 2022 and 2023, an alternative methodology was developed with the intent of more precisely incorporating the Subbasin's various groundwater user types into the fee program. This methodology includes charges based on irrigated acres, public water system extraction, and groundwater-using parcels.

Rate Components: Revenue Requirements, Irrigated Acreage, Groundwater Extraction, and Groundwater-Using Parcels

In determining the optimal approach to methodology development, the Authority's budget was analyzed to allocate portions of revenue need to various groundwater user types, or "user classes." Three primary charge types were developed that span across these user classes: an "irrigated acreage" charge assigned to irrigated agricultural acres, an "Extraction Charge" assigned to public water systems that extract groundwater, and a "Base Charge" assigned to all groundwater-using parcels. The methodology for determining the rates of each of these charges is described in more detail below.

II. Context

An effective fee methodology and successful fee implementation require thorough evaluation and input from various stakeholders. From August 2022 through March 2024, staff and consultants worked together with legal counsel to establish a comprehensive understanding of the applicable legislative and legal factors and the viability of various funding mechanism methodologies. Numerous Board workshops and progress updates were provided in order to solicit feedback and attempt to address various concerns shared by the Board, member GSAs, and staff.

In this case, member agency GSAs will consider and adopt their fee programs individually, and so will carry out additional noticing relevant to those adoptions. Additionally, the Authority is planning a Subbasin-wide community meeting in Spring 2024 to engage groundwater users and provide the opportunity for public input.

Legislative and Legal Understanding

In funding its annual contribution to CGA, member agencies may rely on authority granted through their own authorizing statutes, including California Water District Act, the Government Code, or City charters. Because each member has already been recognized as the exclusive GSA for all or a portion of its jurisdiction, two additional statutory mechanisms (Water Code § 10730 and 10730.2) are also available.

Regardless of what statute a member agency relies upon to authorize the collection of these amounts, each member agency will also need to ensure that its collection complies with relevant procedural and substantive requirements for fees collected by public agencies generally, including Propositions 26 and 218. The particular details of that compliance may vary between member agencies, depending on their approach to fee implementation. Member agencies should consult directly with counsel to ensure that all of these requirements are met prior to implementing their own fee programs.

Fee Considerations Unique to SGMA

Water Code § 10730

Water Code § 10730 authorizes a GSA to implement fees both pre- and post- GSP adoption. Fees under this section may be collected for the following purposes:

A groundwater sustainability agency may impose fees, including, but not limited to, permit fees and fees on groundwater extraction or other regulated activity, to fund the costs of a groundwater sustainability program, including, but not limited to, preparation, adoption, and amendment of a groundwater sustainability plan, and investigations, inspections,

compliance assistance, enforcement, and program administration, including a prudent reserve.

Section 10730 requires that the GSA: (1) make the information supporting the fee available at least 20 days prior to the public meeting at which the fee is adopted; and (2) Provide published notice of that meeting in accordance with the requirements of Government Code § 6066.

Because they fund programs of groundwater regulation, management, and implementation of a State-mandated regulatory program, many GSAs chose to structure levies under Water Code §10730 as regulatory fees under the provisions of Proposition 26, which is discussed in further detail below. Many of CGA's current members fund their annual contributions to CGA through fees levied under §10730.

Water Code § 10730.2

Water Code § 10730.2 offers a complementary statutory authority, available to a GSA only *after* a GSP has been adopted. Fees under this section may be levied by a GSA for the following purposes:

A groundwater sustainability agency that adopts a groundwater sustainability plan pursuant to this part may impose fees on the extraction of groundwater from the basin to fund costs of groundwater management, including, but not limited to, the costs of the following:

- (1) Administration, operation, and maintenance, including a prudent reserve.*
- (2) Acquisition of lands or other property, facilities, and services.*
- (3) Supply, production, treatment, or distribution of water.*
- (4) Other activities necessary or convenient to implement the plan.*

Unlike the shorter publication and notice requirements incorporated into section 10730, Section 10730.2 specifically requires that the adopting GSA comply with the procedural requirements of Article XIII D, Section 6(a) and (b), including a mailed 45-day notice to all fee payors prior to adoption. The fee can only be implemented if less than 50 percent of affected property owners submit written protest.

De Minimis Extractors

De minimis extractors are defined by Water Code § 10721 as those who extract, for domestic purposes, 2 acre feet ("AF") or less of groundwater per year. An important distinction is made by § 10730 regarding de minimis extractors:

A groundwater sustainability agency shall not impose a fee pursuant to this subdivision on a de minimis extractor unless the agency has regulated the users pursuant to this part.

This indicates that in order to charge de minimis extractors under Water Code § 10730, a GSA must have regulated these users according to their GSP. Water Code § 10730.2 does not list this requirement.

Member agency GSAs will be responsible for compliance with this requirement concurrent with their adoption of any fee program that collects from de minimis users. This may be achieved by registration of de minimis users through ordinance or resolution, by facilitating an exchange of information related to the GSAs' understanding of de minimis users within the Subbasin, or by other means of ensuring regulation of these users pursuant to the GSP is established.

Constitutional Requirements

An essential aspect of understanding the legal requirements of fee programs in support of groundwater management is the way in which various legal obligations interplay with one another.

As discussed above, this Cost & Fee study focuses on CGA's costs to comply with State-mandated requirements, administration and management actions, and project feasibility efforts. These categories fall under the description of "program administration." Additionally, the 5 percent contingency included in the projected budget will be utilized to generate a prudent reserve, as described above.

Propositions 26 and 218

The California Constitution requires that general taxes imposed by a public agency be approved by a majority vote of the electorate, and that special taxes be approved by a two-thirds vote of the electorate. In 1996, Proposition 218 was passed, adding Articles XIII C and XIII D to the State Constitution. While Proposition 218 outlined substantive and procedural rules for the imposition of taxes, benefit assessments, and property related fees, the definition of the term "tax" was not succinctly defined, leaving uncertainty around the sorts of charges that were subject to the general majority approval requirement versus some alternative process.

Proposition 26 followed in 2010, broadly defining a "tax" as "any levy, charge, or exaction of any kind imposed by a local government," and enumerating limited exceptions to that rule. Among these exceptions are:

A charge imposed for a specific benefit conferred or privilege granted directly to the payor that is not provided to those not charged, and which does not exceed the reasonable costs to the local government of conferring the benefit or granting the privilege to the payor.

A charge imposed for the reasonable regulatory costs to a local government for issuing licenses and permits, performing investigations, inspections, and audits, enforcing agricultural marketing orders, and the administrative enforcement and adjudication thereof.

Assessments and property-related fees imposed in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII D.

The costs described in this model Cost & Fee Study are incurred by CGA as a result of a regulatory program specific to groundwater management in the Cosumnes Subbasin, including adherence to State-mandated requirements, administration, a prudent reserve, non-capital management actions, investigation and updates to groundwater sustainability plans, and project feasibility studies and exploration. The three exceptions listed above provide the basis for classifying most groundwater-related charges (including the proposed fee) as non-tax levies subject to alternative approval requirements rather than the majority electorate vote of general taxes.

Proposition 26 also amended Article XIII C of the California Constitution, imposing on fee-levying entities the following requirement:

The local government bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that a levy, charge, or other exaction is not a tax, that the amount is no more than necessary to cover the reasonable costs of the governmental activity, and that the manner in which those costs are allocated to a payor bear a fair or reasonable relationship to the payor's burdens on, or benefits received from, the governmental activity.

This Fee Study provides the rationale for how the proposed fee program will comply with these requirements, including a demonstration that the proposed fees meet each of the foregoing requirements.

Financial Context

The Authority is currently funded through direct member agency contributions and grant awards.² The current CGA budget is premised on an estimated revenue of approximately \$10 per acre of irrigated land within each GSA annually. Although the Authority has made great strides in its efforts to implement a GSP and comply with SGMA in the subbasin, it has operated under a deficit budget in recent years. The current funding stream is not sufficient to support GSP implementation efforts into the future.

Implementation of the Cosumnes GSP will require more resources, and as such, the Authority will see an increased need for revenue in the coming years. While the Agency has received grant funding in the past, and will actively pursue future grant solicitations, the need for reliable and independent revenue is apparent. An increase in total member contributions, informed by this proposed Fee Study, would generate more revenue and allow member agencies to distribute the costs of SGMA implementation across various groundwater user classes.

² Development of the GSP was largely funded by a grant award from DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management ("SGM") Program in the amount of \$1.75 million. The Authority applied for the most recent SGM grant round but was not awarded any funding.

The annual budget to be funded by the fee program is intended to ensure that the Authority's revenue needs will be met in fiscal year 2024-25 and beyond. This will support the Authority's efforts to implement the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP and maintain compliance with SGMA.

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II. Revenue Requirements

The revenue requirements of the Authority stem from the cost of implementing the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP and complying with SGMA. This budget is split into three categories based on the nature of the funding needs addressed by each budget line item.

Costs related to state mandated requirements, including annual report development, data management system maintenance, GSP updates, and collection of monitoring network data, are grouped together as they all relate to requirements set forth by the State. While the Authority makes every effort to reduce costs when possible, these expenses will likely be necessary over the long-term effort to achieve Subbasin sustainability by year 2042.

Costs related to Authority administration, such as personnel, technical support services, legal services, outreach and engagement, and financial audits are categorized as administrative costs as they support the operational capacity of the Authority as it relates to all aspects of GSP implementation and SGMA compliance.

At this stage, costs related to projects and management actions are limited to planning costs, including efforts to explore project feasibility, determine optimal project approach, and identify applicability of various projects and management actions intended to achieve sustainability. These costs are intended to support implementation of management actions and future project implementation.

Two measures have been implemented to address the potential for costs to increase in the coming years. First, a five percent contingency has been applied to the budget subtotal. This will be calculated each year as a percentage of the budget and will be held as a prudent reserve in support of the Authority's GSP implementation efforts. Second, an inflationary mechanism will be used to adjust costs on an annual basis. As needed, the budget may be increased each year according to the Producer's Price Index ("PPI"), Commodity Data for Final Demand Services. In order to prevent large increases based on inflation, a five percent cap will be placed in the annual increase to the budget. With this cap in place, the budget may be increased each year by the PPI or 5 percent, whichever is less. Any increase in budget will increase the associated rates applied in this fee program.

The projected annual costs and revenue requirement is shown below in Table 4. A more detailed budget including notes on each line item is also included in Appendix A.

Table 4 - Annual Costs and Revenue Requirement

Budget Category / Task	Year 1
	FY 2024-25
<i>State-Mandated Requirements</i>	
Annual Report Development	\$ 35,000
Data Management System Maintenance	\$ 10,000
GSP Period Update (5-Year Update)	\$ 50,000
Collection of Monitoring Network Data	\$ 25,000
<i>Administration and Management Actions</i>	
Personnel	\$ 175,000
Technical Support Services	\$ 50,000
Legal Services	\$ 30,000
Outreach and Engagement Supplies	\$ 10,000
Financial Audits	\$ 15,000
Miscellaneous Operating Expenses	\$ 5,000
Data Gap Filling Projects	\$ 50,000
<i>Projects</i>	
Project Feasability Reserve	\$ 108,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$ 563,000
Contingency / 5% of Budget	\$ 28,150
Total Expenses	\$ 591,150

III. Fee Structure and Methodology

Funding mechanism methodology is the basis by which beneficiaries are charged a fee. The methodology and associated proportionality of a funding mechanism are key aspects of its character and hold implications for its implementation, annual administration, corresponding outreach, and other aspects of how a funding program is rolled out.

Essentially, a funding program's rate is determined by a simple equation. However, the work that goes into developing the inputs to this equation can be quite complex. The revenue requirement, informed by the budget, is divided by the methodological unit (irrigated acres, acre feet extracted etc.) which produces the rate. A general rate determination equation is shown below for reference:

Figure 2 - Rate Determination Equation

$$\frac{\text{Revenue Requirement (\$)}}{\text{Methodology Unit (AF, Irr. Acres, Parcels etc.)}} = \text{Rate}$$

Depending upon the entity in question, a charge per acre foot ("AF"), charge per irrigated acre, or charge per groundwater-using parcel can be produced by this equation.

Cosumnes Subbasin Fee Methodology

After months of discussion, a multi-faceted approach to fee structure was deemed appropriate for the Cosumnes Subbasin. Over the course of the last year, a fee structure has been developed that utilizes three types of charges: a "Base Charge" that charges all groundwater-using parcels and generates a portion of the Authority's operational revenue needs; a Public Water System Fee that charges public water systems based on groundwater extraction; and an Irrigated Acreage Fee that charges agricultural irrigators based on the number of irrigated acres they maintain. This structure allows for a more particularized treatment of costs and fees across different classes of groundwater users.

Groundwater User Classes

In order to optimally structure groundwater fees, groundwater users are grouped into three user classes in the Subbasin. Different approaches were used to estimate fees for each user type.

Agricultural and Other Irrigation Groundwater Users

Crop irrigation use represents a substantial portion of the total groundwater extraction in the Subbasin. Data from the best available crop map (from the California Department of Water Resources, 2019)³ has been used to assign crop-specific acreage to each parcel. This data was refined based on input from member agency GSAs.

Residential and Commercial Groundwater Users

Residential and commercial groundwater users includes all parcels that utilize groundwater for residential or commercial purposes. In light of the limited data available to support parcel-scale understanding of groundwater use in these instances, these parcels are charged a Base Charge, which acknowledges that they are provided a benefit stemming from the costs of sustainably managing the Subbasin.

Municipal and Other Public Service Providers Using Groundwater

Public water supply systems are the only user class in the Subbasin for which reported data is available regarding groundwater extraction. The Division of Drinking Water (“DDW”) collects and reports annual surface and groundwater extraction for public water systems, which is made available through the California State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”)⁴. This data, summarized in Table 8 below, was obtained and analyzed to obtain groundwater extraction from the period from 2018-2022 per water system.

Base Charge Fee

The Base Charge Fee is a parcel-based fee charged only to groundwater-using parcels. This fee brings residential and commercial groundwater users into the fee structure, incorporating all parcels that directly utilize groundwater throughout the Subbasin. This includes residential parcels, commercial parcels, and agricultural parcels.

As the methodology was developed, the development of the Base Charge was influenced by discussions surrounding the idea of costs that are tied directly to State-mandated requirements. This concept relates to the idea that some degree of costs related to the Authority’s obligations under SGMA are shared by all direct users, regardless of user class or amount of water use.

For this reason, the Base Charge methodology establishes a baseline rate per groundwater-using parcel relative to the total amount of costs stemming from State-mandated requirements.

³ <https://data.cnra.ca.gov/dataset/statewide-crop-mapping>

⁴ <https://ear.waterboards.ca.gov/>

Costs stemming from annual report development, data management system maintenance, GSP updates, and collection of monitoring network data were identified as those that should be shared by all direct groundwater users in the Subbasin. A summary of this analysis is shown below in Table 5.

Table 5 - Summary of State-Mandated Requirement Costs

SGMA Compliance Activities		
Annual Report Development	\$	35,000
Data Management System Maintenance	\$	10,000
GSP Period Update (5-Year Update)	\$	50,000
Collection of Monitoring Network Data	\$	25,000
<i>Budget to Base Charge:</i>		
	\$	120,000

In order to determine which parcels within the Subbasin utilize groundwater directly, parcels served by public water systems were removed from the Base Charge calculation. This was initially completed using spatial analysis of the DDW database on water system boundaries, though further analysis was undertaken that included obtaining data from GSA member agencies. Identification of vacant parcels, open space parcels, or other parcels that do not utilize water was also necessary. Using a combination of County use codes and aerial imagery, these parcels were removed from the Base Charge calculation. The total number of parcels identified as using groundwater directly is 5,251.

By utilizing the total projected amount of fixed costs and the total number of groundwater-using parcels, a rate per parcel can be calculated. This calculation is shown below for reference.

Figure 3 - Base Charge Calculation

$$\frac{\$120,000}{5,251 \text{ Parcels}} = \$22.85$$

While this equation provides the essential basis of the Base Charge, a slight variability was introduced to the rates based on parcel type. Parcels that have a residence are charged a small additional amount based on residential groundwater use. This additional charge is based roughly on the idea that a residence uses close to 0.5 AF annually. Parcels with commercial groundwater use are also charged slightly more for this same reason, based roughly on the idea that commercial use may require as much as 2.0 AF annually. This acknowledges the slight variation in relative benefit received from the cost of managing groundwater in the Subbasin. These variable rates are shown below in Table 6:

Table 6 – Base Charge Rates by Parcel Type

Parcel Type	Rate
Residential	\$ 23.19
Commerical	\$ 29.74
Agricultural*	\$ 21.00
Agricultural With Residence*	\$ 23.19

Agricultural parcels are charged the Base Charge and the Irrigated Acreage Fee. However, agricultural parcels that include a residence are also charged according to this additional use. Aquaculture parcels, or parcels that maintain fish farms, are currently included in the commercial category, but are also charged the Irrigated Acreage Fee based on the acreage of their ponds. A summary of Base Charges is provided below in Table 7.

Table 7 - Base Charge Summary

All Direct Groundwater-Using Parcels - Base Charge				
Property Type	Rates Per Parcel	Total GW-Using Parcels	% of Parcels	Revenue
Residential Parcels				
<i>Base Charge:</i>	\$23.19	4,287	82%	\$99,394
Commercial / Industrial Parcels				
<i>Base Charge:</i>	\$29.74	78	1%	\$2,320
Agricultural Parcels				
<i>Base Charge</i>	\$21.00	618	17%	\$19,192
<i>Base Charge With Residence</i>	\$23.19	268		
Subtotal, Agricultural Parcels:		886		
Totals				
All GW-Using Parcels:		5,251	100%	\$120,905

Public Water System Fee

The Public Water System Fee assigns a charge per acre foot to water purveyors who extract groundwater within the Subbasin. Because extraction data is available for this user class, a charge per AF was determined to be the optimal method of charging these systems.

By utilizing the total annual revenue requirement and an average groundwater extraction for the Subbasin, the appropriate rate for public water systems is determined. A five-year average (2017-2021) of groundwater use derived from the Cosumnes-South American-North American Groundwater Model ("CoSANA"), was utilized to determine the appropriate total extraction estimate to be used in this calculation. The equation below provides the calculation for the charge assigned to water purveyors, based on the amount of AF extracted.

Figure 4 - Public Water System Charge Calculation

$$\frac{\$591,150}{110,625 \text{ Acre Feet}} = \$5.34$$

Extraction data for public water systems is available through the State Water Resources Control Board ("SWRCB") in the form of Electronic Annual Reports ("EAR"). In determining how to charge water systems for their groundwater extraction, a five-year average of groundwater use by each system was selected as the optimal method for allocating charges. There are two primary benefits to this approach. First, using an average creates more uniform charges so that public water service suppliers do not incur large charges relative to previous years. Second, this contributes to revenue stability for the GSA, as changes in the cost allocation for this user class would not change as drastically from year to year as they would if a shorter range were used. As of March 2024, the most recent available EAR data is for 2022. As such, the five-year period being used ranges from 2018-2022. A summary of the average groundwater extraction and associated charges by public water systems on the Subbasin is provided below.

Table 8 - Groundwater Extraction and Revenue of Public Water Systems

Groundwater Extraction of Public Water Systems in the Cosumnes Subbasin										
Data Obtained Through Electronic Annual Reports (SWRCB)								Average Extraction (AF)	Revenue	
Name	PWS ID	Estimated Population	Reported Annual GW Extraction (AF)					5-Year Rolling	Rate Per AF	Revenue
			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022			
Hope Foundation/Moriah Heights	CA0300062	30	27.46		47.60	27.51	33.99	34.14	\$5.34	\$182.30
Ione Band of Miwok Indians	CA0300078	62	5.90		5.93	7.49	7.78	6.77	\$5.34	\$36.18
MP Associates, Inc.	CA0300524	170	0.15	0.14	0.06	0.08	0.12	0.11	\$5.34	\$0.58
Camanche North Shore Inc	CA0310008	255	51.33	52.24	59.18	58.93	52.72	54.88	\$5.34	\$293.06
AWA - Camanche Village	CA0310021	2,384	239.89	244.06	262.31	258.69	244.06	249.80	\$5.34	\$1,333.947
Laguna Del Sol Inc	CA3400181	470	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.92	23.61	9.51	\$5.34	\$50.76
Rancho Seco NGS (SMUD)	CA3400232	27.00	1.00	0.35	0.39	0.23	0.61	0.51	\$5.34	\$2.75
Dillard Elementary School	CA3400254	350	1.74	1.67	1.30	12.83	14.54	6.42	\$5.34	\$34.26
Arcohe Elem School - Main Campus	CA3400271	465	0.00	0.94	0.10	0.00		0.26	\$5.34	\$1.39
Wilton Bible Church	CA3400273	125	0.13	0.13	0.09	0.12	0.12	0.12	\$5.34	\$0.62
Rancho Seco Park	CA3400302	40	4.88	7.18	7.11	8.88	9.39	7.49	\$5.34	\$39.98
Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor	CA3400432	300	0.36	0.31	0.21	0.13	0.22	0.25	\$5.34	\$1.33
Church of Latter Day Saints, Galt	CA3400460	800			0.03	1.14	1.14	0.77	\$5.34	\$4.10
River City Recovery Center, Inc	CA3400464	60			0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	\$5.34	\$0.08
City of Galt	CA3410011	26,536	4,500.91	4,266.45	4,780.04	4,602.85	4,313.46	4,492.74	\$5.34	\$23,991.25
RANCHO DEL ORO MHP	CA0300053	44	8.50	8.69	7.63	6.84	5.65	7.46	\$5.34	\$39.85
Richard A. McGee Training Center	CA3410802	300	42.55	39.54	31.69	33.10	19.21	33.22	\$5.34	\$177.38
Totals:								4,904	\$26,190	

Note: Cells in grey indicate years in which a water system did not report any data.

Throughout the fee development process, the possibility of directly charging parcels served by public water systems that utilize groundwater was discussed. Questions surrounding the legal process for implementing such charges remain an issue with this approach. Should this type of charge be considered, there are both policy and legal questions that would need further exploration. At this time, this approach has not been deemed viable. Consideration is also being given to charging public water systems an additional amount based on the number of parcels they serve. This would also require further evaluation.

Irrigated Acreage Fee

The Irrigated Acreage Fee assigns a charge per irrigated acre to all irrigated lands within the Cosumnes Subbasin. This portion of the fee methodology currently being considered is quite similar to the Authority's current fee program, implemented in 2021.

DWR crop maps from 2019 were used to establish irrigated acreage totals and assign those irrigated acres to specific parcels. As of March 2024, the 2020 and 2021 crop maps were still listed as provisional, and have not been finalized. Extensive analysis has been conducted to identify potential inaccuracies in this data, largely utilizing aerial imagery and County use codes. Modifications to irrigated acreage that have been incorporated into the Authority's current fee program were also brought into this analysis.

A key element of this process is reviewing surface water use within the Subbasin. Within Amador County GSA, many parcels utilize surface water only for agricultural irrigation. After a thorough review of irrigated acreage conducted in conjunction with Amador Water Agency, the vast majority of agricultural parcels' irrigated acreage was removed from the fee calculation due to surface water use. The total irrigated acreage within the Subbasin utilized for this fee program is approximately 45,000 irrigated acres. This spans across both Amador and Sacramento Counties.

By subtracting the total revenue estimated to be collected from the Base Charge and the Public Water System Fees, we can determine the total revenue requirement to be assigned to the Irrigated Acreage Fee.

Table 9 - Determination of Irrigated Acreage Revenue Need

Total Budget:	\$ 591,150
Base Charge Revenue:	\$ 120,905
Public Water System Fee Revenue:	\$ 26,190
Revenue Assigned to Irrigated Acreage Fee:	\$ 444,055

By utilizing the total annual revenue requirement assigned to the Irrigated Acreage Fee and the total estimated irrigated acreage in the Subbasin, we can determine the appropriate rate per irrigated acre. The equation below provides the calculation for the charge assigned to irrigators.

Figure 5 - Irrigated Acreage Rate Calculation

$$\frac{\$444,055}{44,423 \text{ Irrigated Acres}} = \$10.00$$

The total revenue derived from the Irrigated Acreage Fee is shown below in Table 10.

Table 10 - Irrigated Acreage Fee

Agricultural Irrigators - Irrigated Acreage Charge			
Revenue Type	Rate Per Irrigated Acre	Total Irrigated Acres	Revenue
Irrigated Acreage Fee	\$10.00	44,423	\$444,235

Revenue Summary

A summary of the three elements to the fee structure is provided below in Table 11. This structure assumes an annual revenue need of \$591,150 in Year One.

Ultimately, CGA's ability to obtain this budgeted revenue will be dependent on contributions by member GSAs. These member contribution commitments should be separately memorialized by CGA and its members concurrent with, or shortly after, the Board approves a proposed fee methodology. A clear commitment to specific contribution amounts from each CGA member will be necessary in order for the entire group to move forward successfully.

Member GSAs are not required to adopt the proposed fee structure and may choose to fund their participation in other ways. Still, this Cost and Fee Study is intended to provide a base methodology through which members may allocate fees and understand total costs of CGA participation, both as between members and across all groundwater users.

Table 11 - Summary, Fee Structure Revenue

All Direct Groundwater-Using Parcels - Base Charge				
Property Type	Rates Per Parcel	Total GW-Using Parcels	% of Parcels	Revenue
Residential Parcels				
Base Charge:	\$23.19	4,287	82%	\$99,394
Commercial / Industrial Parcels				
Base Charge:	\$29.74	78	1%	\$2,320
Agricultural Parcels				
Base Charge	\$21.00	618	17%	\$19,192
Base Charge With Residence	\$23.19	268		
Subtotal, Agricultural Parcels:		886		
Totals				
All GW-Using Parcels:		5,251	100%	\$120,905
Public Water Systems - Extraction Charge				
Revenue Type	Rate Per AF Extracted	Average AF Extracted Annually	Revenue	
Public Water Systems	\$5.34	4,904	\$26,190	
Agricultural Irrigators - Irrigated Acreage Charge				
Revenue Type	Rate Per Irrigated Acre	Total Irrigated Acres	Revenue	
Irrigated Acreage Fee	\$10.00	44,423	\$444,235	
		Total Revenue, All Sources: \$591,330		

Project Feasibility Reserve

As noted above, the Project feasibility Reserve budget, in the amount of \$108,000 total, will be held by respective member GSAs annually in support of project planning and management actions. These costs are allocated to public water systems on a charge per AF basis, and to

agricultural irrigators on charge per irrigated acre basis. The amount of reserve held by each GSA will be calculated in the same manner of apportionment as other costs, with the number of average AF extracted by public water systems and the number of irrigated acres within each GSA's jurisdiction determining the amount of reserve generated within each GSA.

For public water systems using groundwater, this amount can be calculated by applying the Project Feasibility Reserve budget to the total average extraction in the Subbasin, as shown below:

Figure 6 – Project Feasibility Reserve PWS Calculation

$$\frac{\$108,000}{110,625 \text{ Acre Feet}} = \$0.98$$

The amount of \$0.98, applied to the average AF extracted by public water systems, will determine the amount of revenue generated for the Project Feasibility Reserve budget for each member GSA. The remainder of the public water system charge will contribute to CGA costs. Essentially, \$0.98 of the total \$5.34 charge per AF extracted by public water systems will be held in reserve to support project planning at the GSA level.

For agricultural irrigators, the amount of Project Feasibility Reserve revenue generated as a portion of the \$10.00 charge can be calculated by first determining the budget amount applied to this portion of the fee. Subtracting the public water system revenue allocated to the Project Feasibility Reserve (\$4,806) from the total revenue requirement (\$108,000), determines the Project Feasibility Reserve budget to be applied to irrigated acres: \$103,194. Dividing this number by the total irrigated acres, the portion of the Irrigated Acreage Fee that is allocated to the Project Feasibility Reserve is calculated, as shown below:

Figure 7 – Project Feasibility Reserve Irrigated Acre Calculation

$$\frac{\$103,194}{44,423 \text{ Irrigated Acres}} = \$2.32$$

The amount of \$2.32, applied to the irrigated acres within each GSA, will determine the amount of revenue generated for the Project Feasibility Reserve budget for each member GSA. The remainder of the irrigated acreage charge will contribute to CGA costs. Essentially, \$2.32 of the total \$10.00 charge per irrigated acre will be held in reserve to support project planning at the GSA level.

Data Sources

The process of evaluating rate and fee options and developing the preliminary methodology has relied on data from the State, technical studies, and available local data. At this time, using the best available sources to guide allocation of costs is the most optimal path forward for funding the Authority's efforts to implement its GSP. A variety of data sources were used to develop the preliminary methodology. Below is a complete list of data used, followed by the source of the data in parenthesis, and a brief description of the data.

- Sacramento County parcel spatial database (Sacramento County): GIS-based spatial database of polygons that delineate parcel boundaries in Sacramento County as of March 2023. The most recent available database will be utilized for the final Fee Study.
- Sacramento County lien roll database (Sacramento County): characteristic database of Sacramento County Assessor's parcels and related information as of February 2023.
- Amador County parcel spatial database (Amador County): GIS-based spatial database of polygons that delineate parcel boundaries in Amador County as of 2012. The most recent available database will be utilized for the final Fee Study.
- Amador County lien roll database (Amador County): characteristic database of Amador County Assessor's parcels and related information as of February 2023.
- Cosumnes Subbasin boundaries (Bulletin 118 Groundwater Basin Boundary Assessment Tool): Basin boundary spatial polygons that delineate boundaries of the Cosumnes Subbasin as of September 2023.
- Crop mapping (CA-DWR): Crop layer polygons from the Department of Water Resources as of 2019. The most recent non-provisional layer will be utilized for the final fee study (either 2020 or 2021).
- Water system boundary information (State Water Resources Control Board): spatial polygons that delineate water system service boundaries as of September 2023.
- Public Water System Use (CA Division of Drinking Water): reported groundwater extraction per PWSID, between 2018-2022.

Appendices

Appendices include the following:

- A. Detailed Cosumnes Groundwater Authority Budget.

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Appendix A – Detailed Cosumnes Groundwater Authority Budget

Table 12 – Detailed Budget

Budget Category / Task	Year 1	Notes
	FY 2024-25	
<i>State-Mandated Requirements</i>		
Annual Report Development	\$ 35,000	Development of required Water Year Annual Reports (due annually on April 1.)
Data Management System Maintenance	\$ 10,000	Estimated cost to input data and generate semi-annual reports.
GSP Period Update (5-Year Update)	\$ 50,000	Due to DWR by 1-27-27. Assumes \$150,000 for GSP update process.
Collection of Monitoring Network Data	\$ 25,000	Semi-annual collection of groundwater, surface water, and subsidence data.
<i>Administration and Management Actions</i>		
Personnel	\$ 175,000	Staffing for Board and GSA management, DWR coordination, contract management, and outreach.
Technical Support Services	\$ 50,000	On-call support from technical consultants for regular authority work.
Legal Services	\$ 30,000	Legal support for regular business and SGMA implementation.
Outreach and Engagement Supplies	\$ 10,000	Costs associated with public workshops and other outreach efforts.
Financial Audits	\$ 15,000	Yearly financial audits of public funds.
Miscellaneous Operating Expenses	\$ 5,000	Office supplies and other regular operating expenses.
Data Gap Filling Projects	\$ 50,000	Specific projects TBD.
<i>Projects</i>		
Project Feasibility Reserve	\$ 108,000	Funds held by member agency GSAs for use in project feasibility exploration and preparation.
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$ 563,000	PPI Index Optionally Applied to Subtotal Each Fiscal Year (5% maximum increase).
Contingency / 5% of Budget	\$ 28,150	5% Contingency applied each year to Subtotal.
Total Expenses	\$ 591,150	Revenue Need to be applied to fee program.

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Agenda Date: March 6, 2024

Agenda Item #: 4

Agenda Item Subject: Water Year 2023 Draft Annual Report

To: CGA Board of Directors

From: EKI

Background

Staff and EKI have worked to complete Water Year 2023 (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023) Annual Report as required by SGMA. The Annual Report shall be submitted to DWR before April 1st of each year. The WY 2023 report is summarized below:

Lowering Groundwater Levels: No Undesirable Results are reported. Undesirable Result is defined when minimum thresholds are exceeded in 25% or more of the RMW-WLs (5 out of 19) for two consecutive years. Minimum Thresholds (MT's) declined in two wells in the Fall but increased to above the MTs in the Spring.

Land Subsidence: No Undesirable Results reported. Estimated subsidence was between –0.1 ft and 0.1 ft and remains a low concern for the Basin.

Degraded Water Quality: No Undesirable Results reported. Undesirable Result is defined when MTs are exceeded 25% or more of the RMW-WQ (4 out of 14) for two consecutive years. One well exceeded the MT for Arsenic and one other well exceeded the MT for Arsenic and TDS.

Interconnected Surface Waters: No Undesirable Results reported. Water levels in two wells declined below the MT's in the Fall but increased to above the MTs in the Spring.

Attachment: [EKI Technical Presentation on 2023 Water Year Annual Report](#)

EKI TECHNICAL PRESENTATION #42

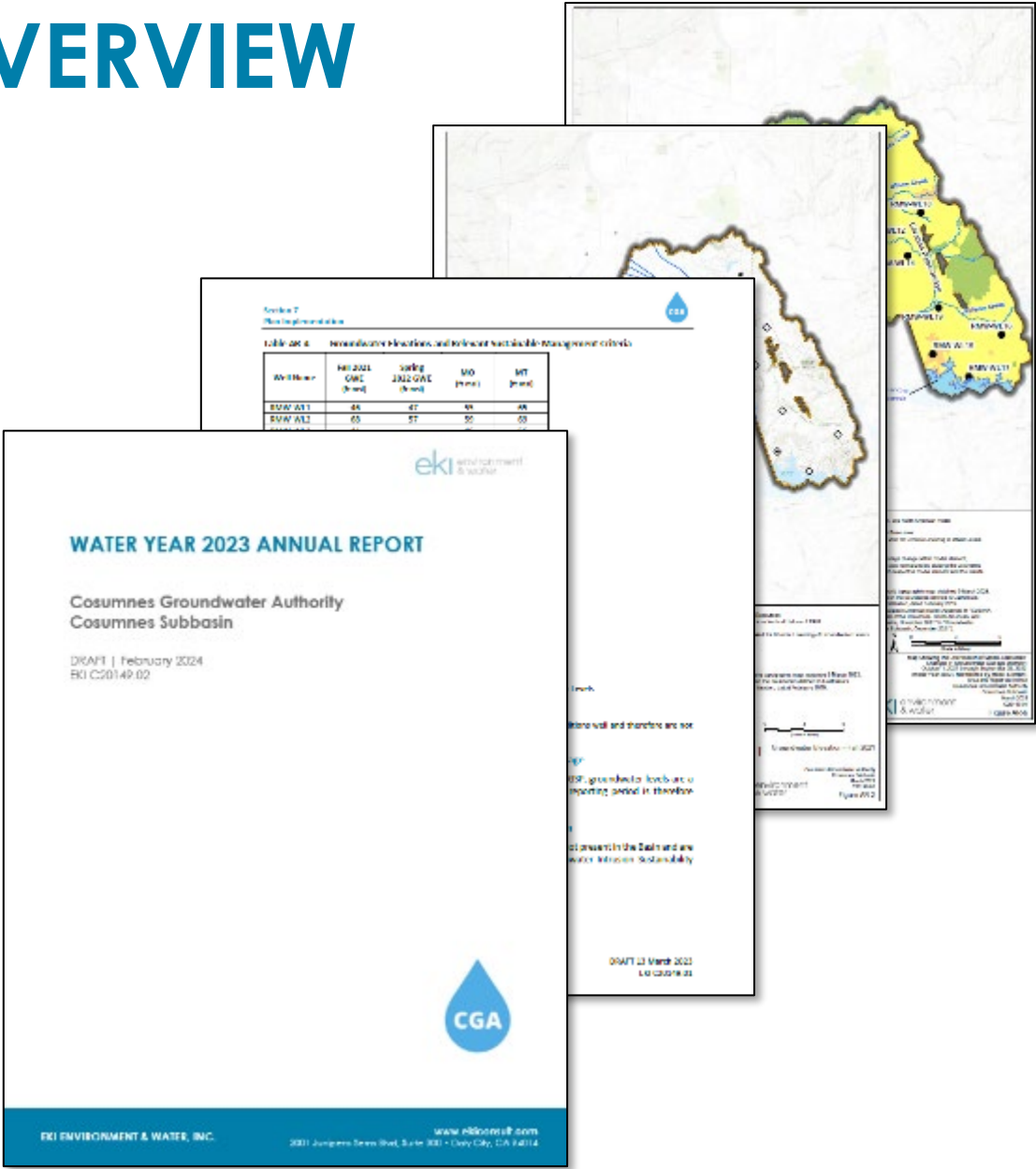
COSUMNES SUBBASIN GSP IMPLEMENTATION

6 MARCH 2024

COSUMNES GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

WY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT OVERVIEW

- Focus is Water Year 2023 (1 October 2022 through 30 September 2023).
- Report outline modified to conform to DWR guidance document (*GSP Implementation: A Guide to Annual Reports, Periodic Evaluations, & Plan Amendments*, October 2023).
- Key Take-Aways:
 - No Undesirable Results* (see slide 14)
 - ~41,800 AF estimated increase in groundwater storage.
 - Decrease in groundwater pumping by 19,000 AF compared to WY 2022.



ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

- WY 2023 Annual Report has new sections, figures, and modified tables to comply with DWR October 2023 guidance document^(a)
- New sections include progress on:
 - DWR’s Recommended Corrective Actions.
 - Stakeholder Outreach/Engagement.
 - Public Comments Received.
 - Additional Information and Accomplishments.
 - Anticipated Implementation Activities.

New sections per
DWR’s guidance

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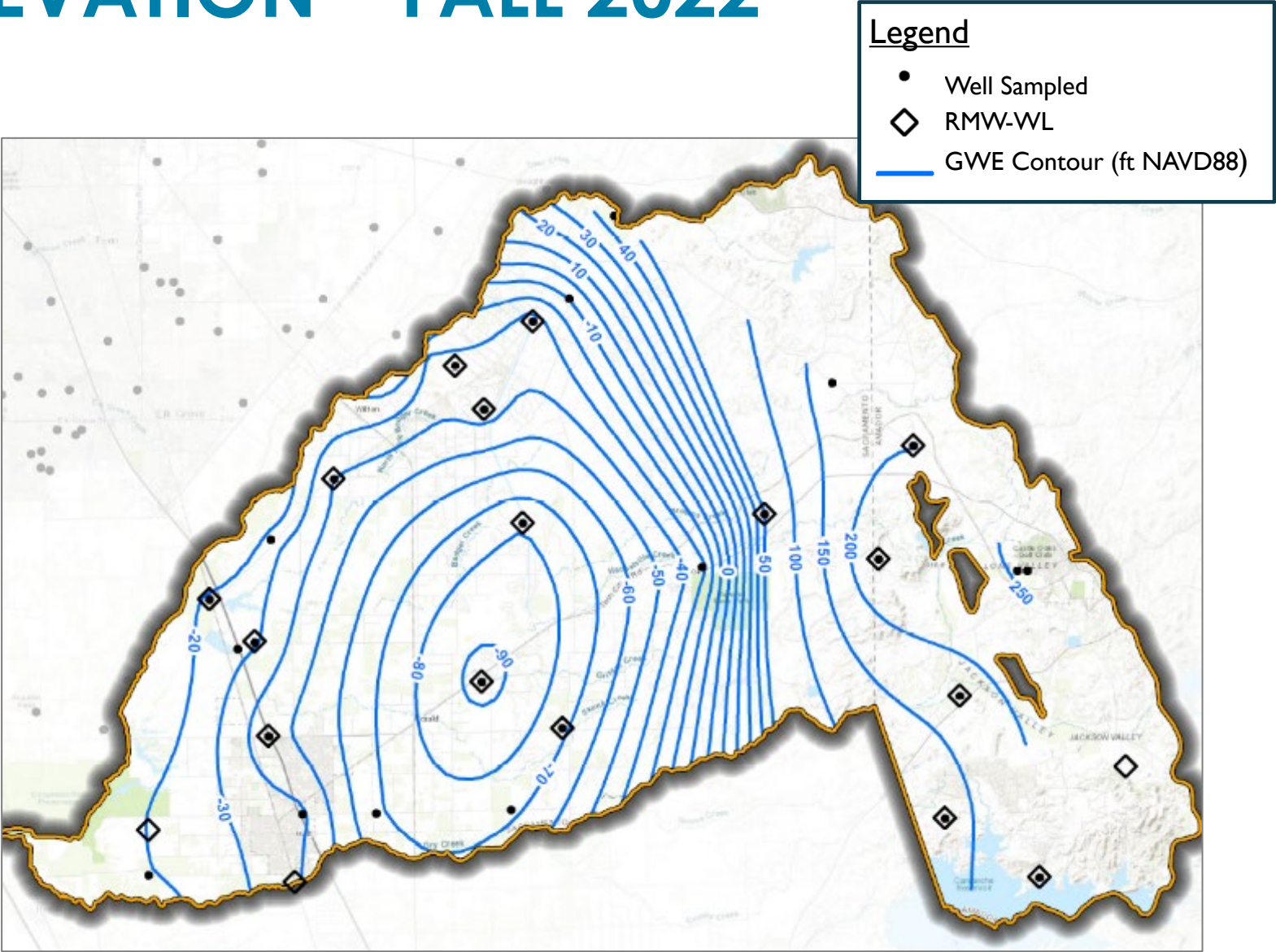
8 REFERENCES 8-1

a) [Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation: A Guide to Annual Reports, Periodic Evaluations, & Plan Amendments \(ca.gov\)](#)

GROUNDWATER ELEVATION – FALL 2022

Contours of equal groundwater elevations based on measured water levels in 32 wells within the Basin and additional wells outside the Basin for control.

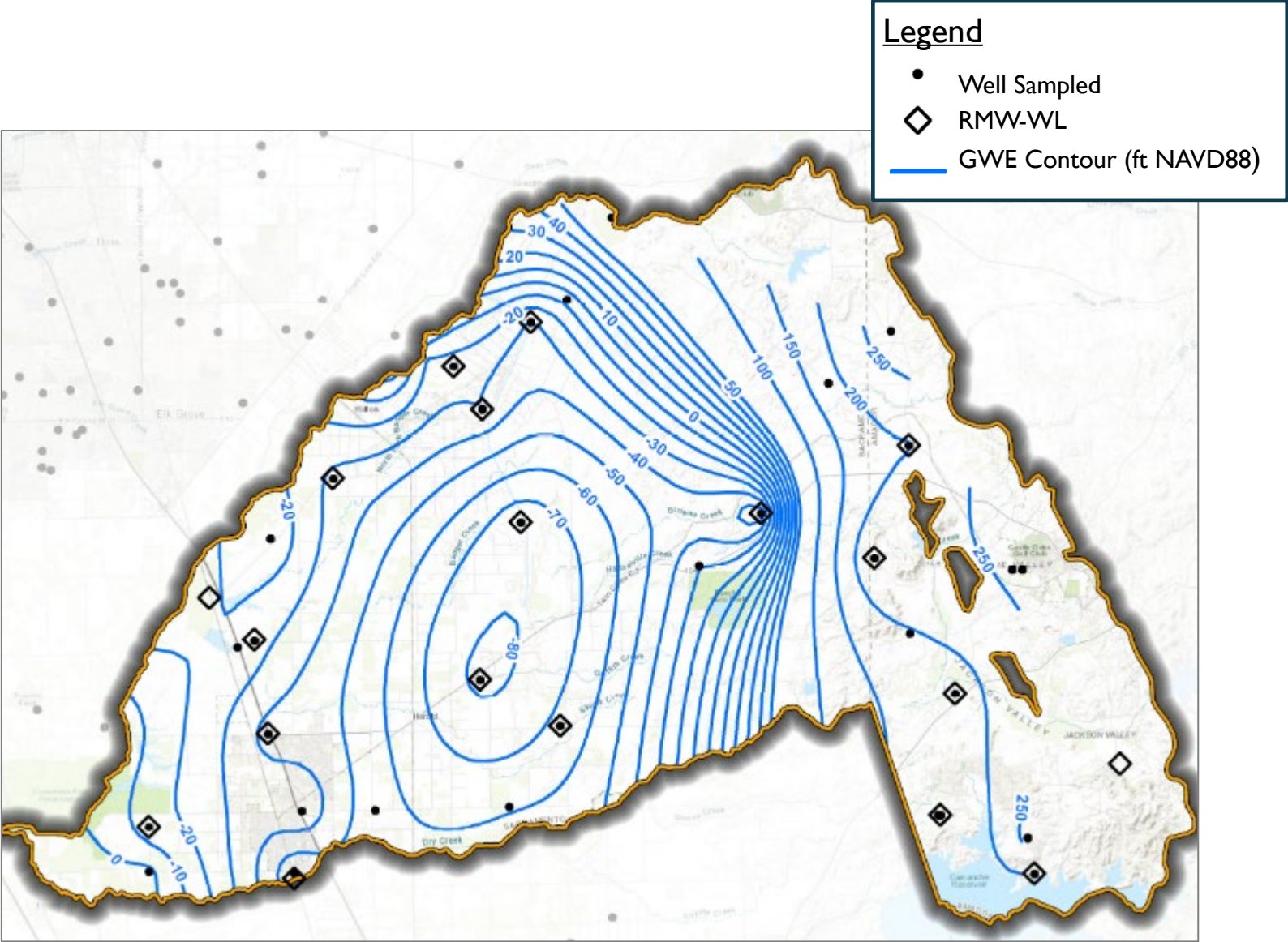
- In the Foothills, groundwater flow is to the west toward the Plain.
- In the Plain, groundwater flow is towards the groundwater low (“cone of depression”).
- On average, WY 2022 and WY 2023 Fall groundwater elevations were about the same (<1 ft increase in WY 2023 relative to WY 2022).



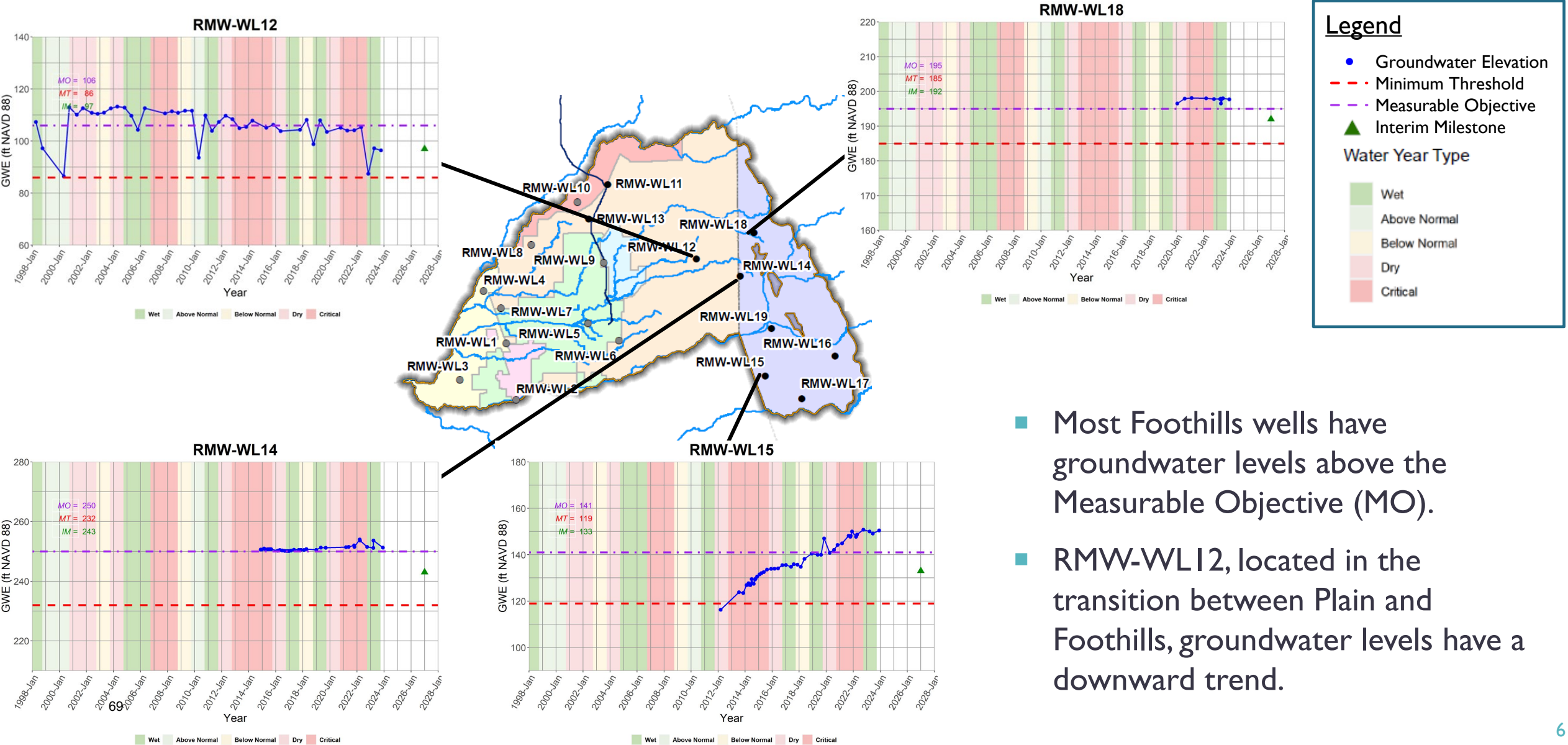
GROUNDWATER ELEVATION – SPRING 2023

Contours of equal groundwater elevations based on measured water levels in 41 wells within the Basin and additional wells outside the Basin for control.

- Groundwater flow directions are generally the same in Fall and Spring.
- On average, Spring groundwater elevations increased 4 ft relative to Fall.

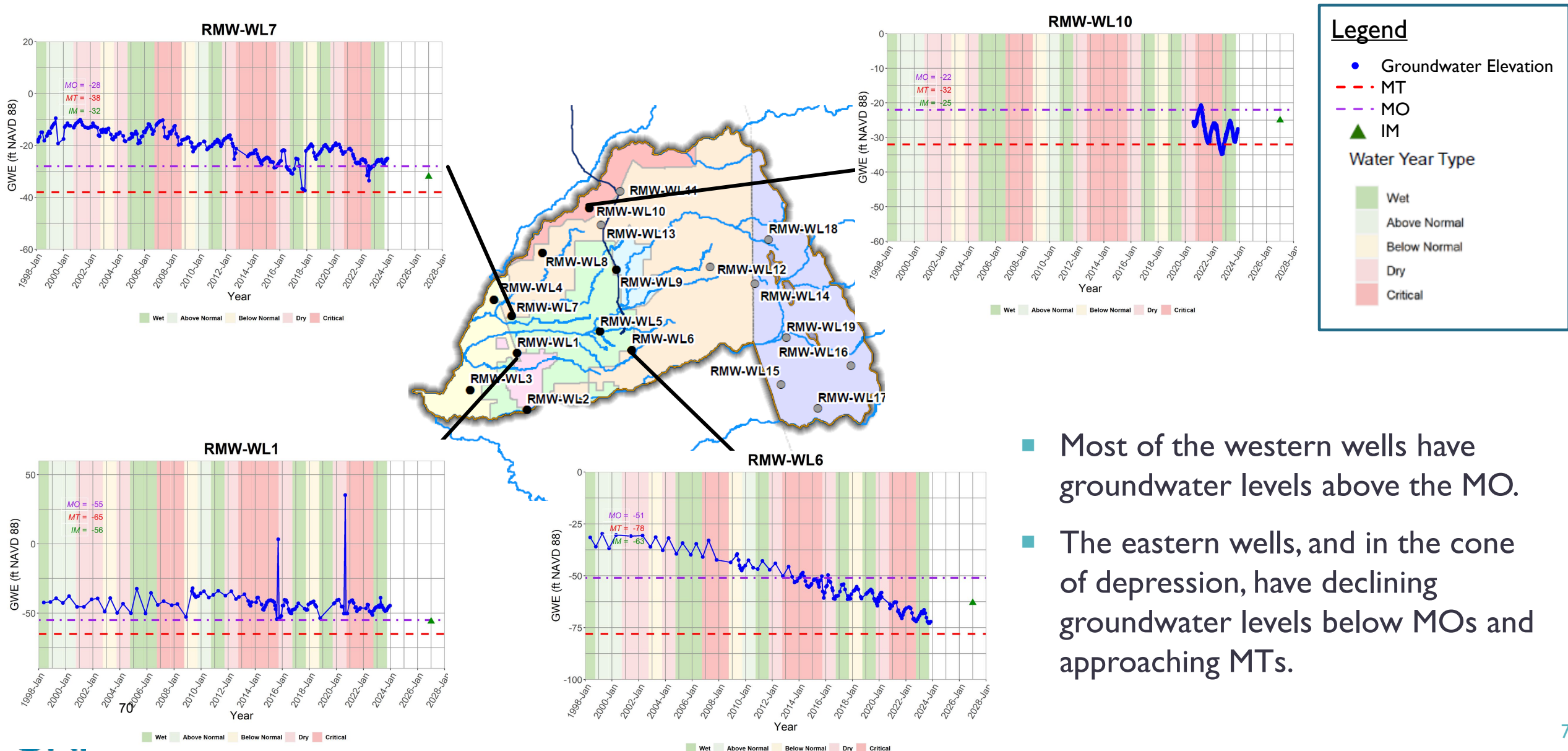


REPRESENTATIVE HYDROGRAPHS - FOOTHILLS



- Most Foothills wells have groundwater levels above the Measurable Objective (MO).
- RMW-WL12, located in the transition between Plain and Foothills, groundwater levels have a downward trend.

REPRESENTATIVE HYDROGRAPHS – BASIN PLAIN



- Most of the western wells have groundwater levels above the MO.
- The eastern wells, and in the cone of depression, have declining groundwater levels below MOs and approaching MTs.

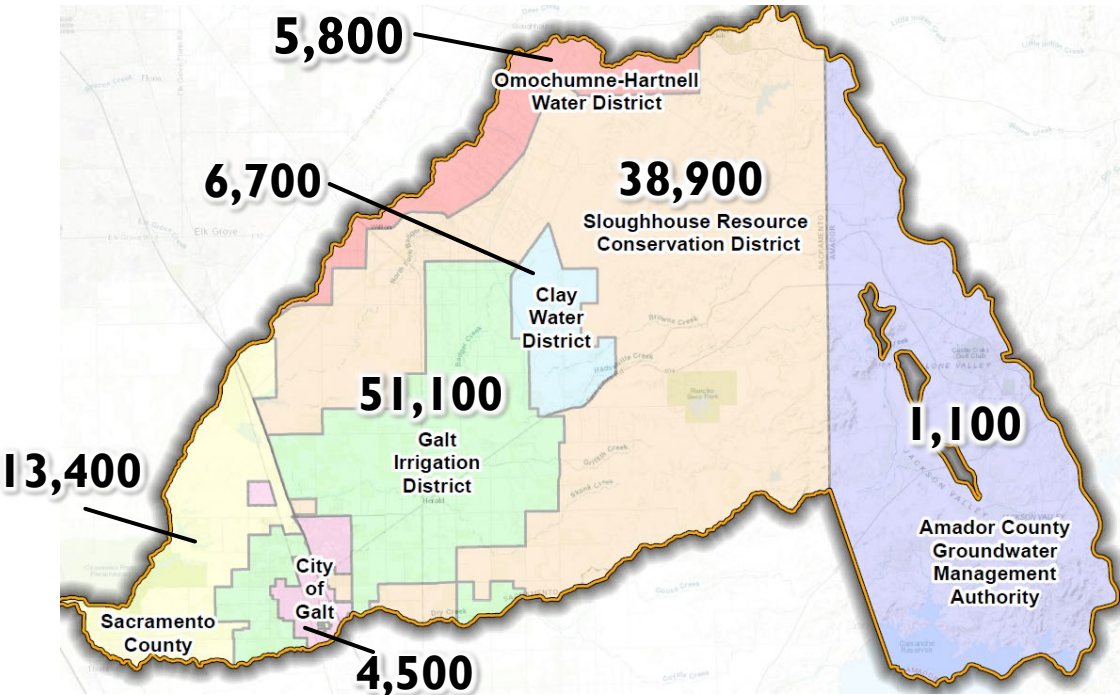
GROUNDWATER USE BY SECTOR AND GSA

- 121,600 AF total extractions
 - 87% for Agricultural Sector (includes Ag-Res)
 - 9% for Industrial Sector (aquaculture)
 - 4% for Urban Sector (municipal and public water systems)
- Total pumping decreased by 19,000 AF between WY 2022 and WY 2023.

Table AR-I. Summary of Groundwater Extraction Data by Sector (AF)*

Water Year	Agricultural	Industrial	Urban	Total
2021	134,100	11,000	5,200	150,300
2022	124,800	11,000	4,700	140,500
2023	105,900	11,000	4,700	121,600

From Figure AR-5. General Locations and Volumes of Annual Extractions (AF)*



*Totals in Table AR-I by Sector and GSA values posted above differ by 100 AF due to rounding.

WATER USE BY SUPPLY SOURCE

Total WY 2023 water use was 144,000 AF

- Total WY 2023 use decreased 17,300 AF relative to WY 2022.
- Groundwater was the primary water source.
 - 84% groundwater extractions.
 - 15% surface water (imported and diversions).
 - <1% from recycled water.

Table AR-3. Total Water Use by Source Type (AF)

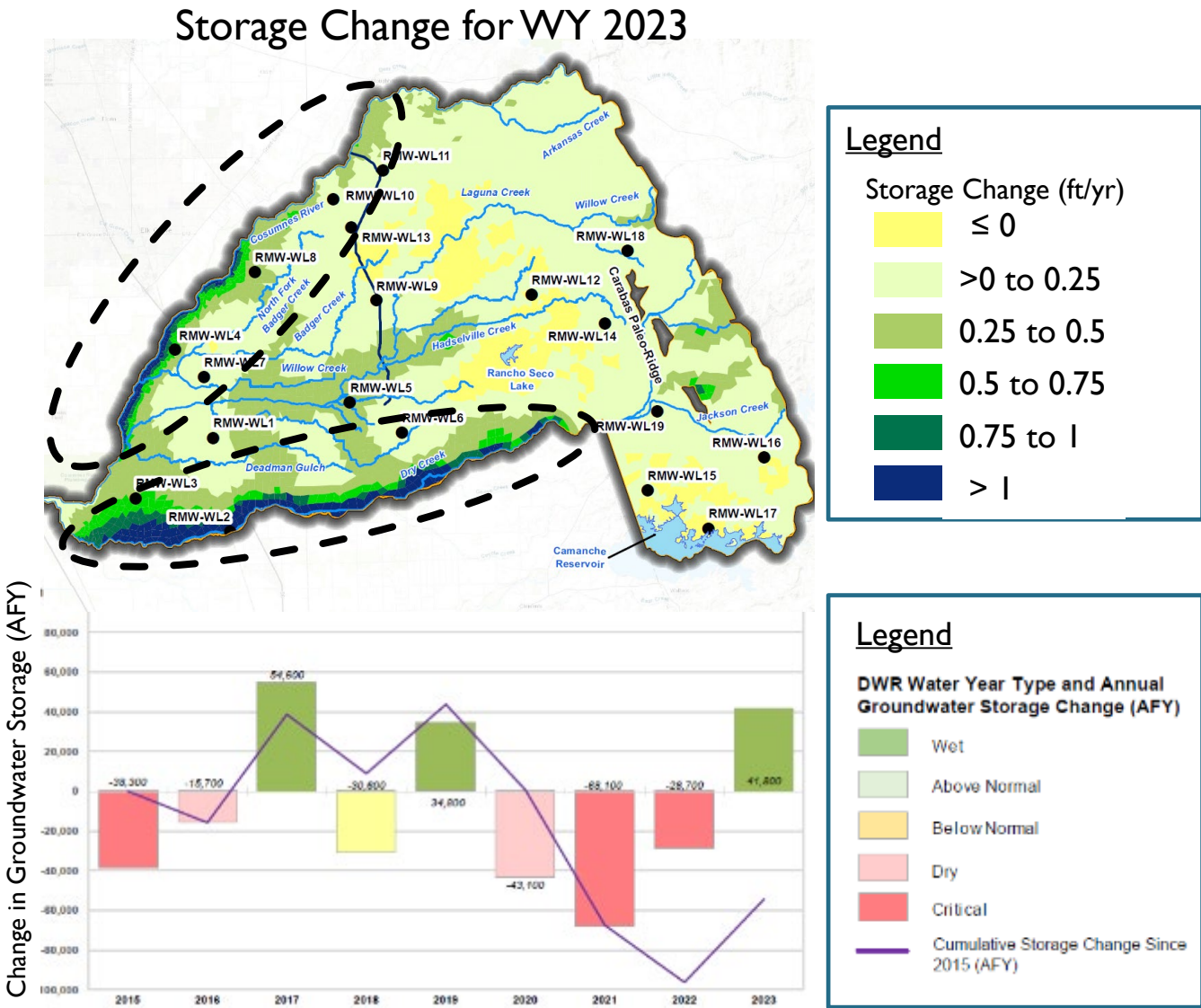
Water Year	Groundwater	Surface Water	Recycled Water	Total
2021	150,300	15,300	1,300	166,900
2022	140,500	19,600	1,200	161,300
2023	121,600	21,300	1,100	144,000

Figure AR-8. Total Water Use by Source Over Time (AF)



CHANGE IN GROUNDWATER STORAGE

- Groundwater storage increased across most of the Basin with the greatest increases near the Cosumnes River and Dry Creek.
- A small decrease in storage (-0.1 ft/yr or less) was estimated in the transitional area between the Plain and Foothill subareas.
- The calculated net change in storage across the entire Basin during WY 2023 was an increase of **41,800 AF**.
- The net change in Basin storage since WY 2015 is -93,300 AF (-10,400 AFY).



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (1 OF 4)

Semi-Annual Monitoring

- Semi-Annual Monitoring efforts were incomplete:
 - Fall 2022: water levels were not measured in five monitoring wells (RMW-WL2, RMW-WL3, RMW-WL16, RMW-ISW2, & RMW-ISW3)
 - Spring 2023: water levels were not measured in four monitoring wells (RMW-WL4, RMW-WL16, RMW-ISW2, & RMW-ISW3).
 - Complete water quality data (i.e., Arsenic, Nitrate as N and TDS) were not collected for five monitoring wells (RMW-WQ1, RMW-WQ2, RMW-WQ3, RMW-WQ13, & RMW-WQ14).
- Actions to resolve data gaps in monitoring efforts:
 - CGA will update access agreements to all monitoring wells.
 - CGA will find a replacement well for RMW-WQ3 and work with the PWSs to ensure samples are analyzed for the necessary constituents.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (2 OF 4)

Current Conditions – Sustainability Indicators

■ Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels

“Undesirable Results occur when MTs are exceeded in 25% or more of the RMW-WLs (5 out of 19) for 2 consecutive years.”

- Water levels in two (2) wells declined below the MTs in the Fall, but increased to above the MTs in the Spring.
- **No Undesirable Results in WY 2023.**

■ Groundwater Storage

“Undesirable Results occur when MTs are exceeded in 25% or more of the RMW-WLs (5 out of 19) for 2 consecutive years.”

- Groundwater levels used as a proxy for groundwater storage.
- **No Undesirable Results in WY 2023.**

■ Seawater Intrusion

- Not applicable to the Basin.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (3 OF 4)

Current Conditions – Sustainability Indicators

■ Degraded Water Quality

“Undesirable Results occur when MTs for a constituent of concern are exceeded 25% or more of the RMW-WQ (4 of 14) for 2 consecutive years.”

- One (1) well exceeded the MT for Arsenic (RMW-WQ11); previous samples were below the MT.
- One (1) well exceeded the MT for Arsenic and TDS (RMW-WQ9), but no previous data available to determine if water represents natural conditions or has been degraded.
- **No Undesirable Results in WY 2023.**

■ Land Subsidence

“Undesirable Results occur when MTs are exceeded in 25% or more of the RMW-WLs (5 out of 19) for 2 consecutive years.”

- Groundwater levels used as a proxy for land subsidence potential.
- Estimated subsidence was between -0.1 ft and 0.1 ft and remains a low concern for the Basin.
- **No Undesirable Results in WY 2023.**

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (4 OF 4)

Current Conditions – Sustainability Indicators

■ Depletions of Interconnected Surface Water –

“Undesirable Results occur when water levels fall below the MTs for one (1) or more of the RMW-ISWs for 2 consecutive years.”

- Water levels in two (2) wells declined below the MTs in the Fall, but increased to above the MTs in the Spring (RMW-ISW4 & RMW-ISW6).
- Water levels in one (1) well were below the MT for a second consecutive year (RMW-ISW5). However, measured water levels were not available to calculate the SMCs for the GSP and estimated values were used with the intent to revise them in the future based on measured data from the Monitoring Program.
- **No Undesirable Results in WY 2023**

IMPLEMENTATION OF PMAs

- PMA #1: OHWD Agricultural Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR)
 - OHWD GSA secured a 5-year temporary water right allowing up to 2,444 AF diversion until 2027;
 - 77 AF of Cosumnes River water was diverted for recharge in WY 2023.
- PMA #2: Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) Flood-MAR
 - The SAFCA and OHWD GSA groundwater storage and recovery project feasibility study tested infiltration of 89 AF of groundwater by dry wells at the Laguna Del Sol Resort Project site.
- PMA #4: City of Galt Recycled Water Project
 - The City of Galt GSA applied to the SWRCB Clean Water Revolving Fund for a Water Recycling Facilities Planning Grant to assess plans for expanding recycled water use.
- PMA #5: Voluntary Land Repurposing
 - The SRCD GSA secured two grants from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to support
 - On-farm conservation plans that enhance water use efficiency, soil health, and carbon farming.
 - The addition of a Water Efficiency Technician to assist farmers in implementing water-saving practices.

PROGRESS ON ADDRESSING DWR RECOMMENDED CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- DWR approved Cosumnes GSP on 26 October 2023.
- Approval letter included six corrective actions.
- Work addressing corrective actions will commence in WY 2024.

Recommended Corrective Actions:

1. Assess potential impact of the established minimum thresholds for chronic lowering of groundwater levels on domestic wells.
2. Revise the undesirable results definition for chronic lowering of groundwater levels to be based on impacts due to lowering of groundwater levels (i.e., the number or percentage of wells that the GSAs deem acceptable to impact due to lowering of groundwater levels) and update the minimum thresholds accordingly.
3. Conduct the necessary investigations or studies to better understand the relationship between groundwater levels and degraded water quality.
4. Establish sustainable management criteria for land subsidence based on direct measurements of land elevation changes.
5. Implement DWR guidance on evaluating surface water depletions, when available. Recent guidance confirms GSAs are only responsible for depletions caused by pumping within the GSA.
6. Expand the land subsidence monitoring network to provide sufficient coverage of the Subbasin.

OTHER INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

- Stakeholder outreach included:
 - Monthly public CGA and GSA Board of Directors Meetings.
 - PMA Committee meetings.
 - Citizen Advisory Committee meetings.
 - Stakeholder/Technical Workshops.
 - CGA solicited landowner surveys.
- Additional Information or Accomplishments included:
 - Utilized proposition 68 award and data gap filling funds to begin construction of two groundwater monitoring wells.
 - CGA is working on long-term funding strategies to support GSP implementation.
 - Clay Water District GSA, Galt Irrigation District GSA and SRCD GSA are verifying land use and irrigated parcels.

RECOMMENDED WY 2024 GSP IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

- Monitoring network improvements.
 - Update all access agreements.
 - SRCD GSA pilot monitoring and telemetry reporting system.
 - Direct PWSs to analyze their water samples for required constituents.
 - Replace RMW-WQ3 (lacks sampling port).
 - Investigate MT exceedances (e.g., investigate conditions at RMW-WQ9 and resample RMW-WQ11).
 - Develop and implement metering Best Management Practices with data reporting schedule.
- Develop plan to respond to DWR’s recommended corrective actions (approaches and progress must be summarized in future Annual Reports).
- GSAs continue their PMA implementation plans.
- Continue posting recordings of the Board of Directors meetings, which include public comment periods, on CGA’s website.

QUESTIONS?

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Agenda Date: March 6, 2024
Agenda Item #: 5
Agenda Item Subject: SG Implementation Update

To: CGA Board of Directors
From: CGA Staff

Background: Groundwater Monitoring

In recent years, CGA's semi-annual groundwater monitoring has been conducted by a CGA Staff member and EKI and/or consultant staff member. This has been conducted via our contract with EKI to assess groundwater elevation readings and water quality samplings in the Spring and Fall of each Water Year. This excludes Amador and City of Galt GSA's who have consistently collected and submitted their data on their own.

In total, there are 25 wells that CGA is responsible for monitoring out of the 44 in our Cosumnes Well Monitoring Network. Recent discussions surrounding CGA budget and cutting costs has prompted further discussion on individual GSA's taking over the monitoring of their own wells instead of EKI.

An email was sent out to the GSA's on February 16, 2024, asking for an update on whether each GSA wants to work with EKI to conduct the monitoring or conduct their own monitoring, starting in Spring 2024. CGA Staff received back emails from Sloughhouse RCD, Galt ID and Clay ID indicating that they would like to conduct their own monitoring. Sacramento County is open to conducting their own monitoring if need be.

A Board decision is needed to proceed if GSA's wish to conduct their own well-monitoring starting in Spring 2024. If that is the case, the EKI Contract will need to be amended to reflect these changes.

Attachments: [Spring Well Monitoring by GSA Example](#)

Recommendations: Provide EKI and CGA Staff with direction on Groundwater Monitoring efforts by individual GSA's beginning in Spring 2024.

Example: Spring Well Monitoring

For Clay ID, Galt ID and SRCD

Cost:

Clay ID	1 Well	\$200.00
Galt ID	2 Wells	\$400.00
Sloughouse	12 Wells	\$2400.00

Procedures:

1. All landowners will be notified prior to monitoring.
2. One member from each GSA will be present when the well from their GSA is monitored.
3. A Sloughouse representative will be present for all well monitoring.
4. Pictures will be taken of the results from each well. The data results will be entered on a spreadsheet and sent to the appropriate consultants and entered in the well monitoring binder.
5. All wells will be measured at above ground level. A new spreadsheet will be created to show the wells depth above ground and mean sea level.

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Agenda Date: March 6, 2024

Agenda Item #: 6

Agenda Item Subject: CGA Staff Report

To: CGA Board of Directors

From: CGA Staff

CGA Staff Report

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Work Plan and Staffing Needs:

CGA Staff and leadership have begun to discuss a Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Work Plan to inform the development of key operational documents such as the yearly budget and staff services agreement (Sloughhouse RCD staff services agreement expires annually on June 30, 2024). To inform a draft Work Plan, staff/leadership are looking for feedback on what should be included. The following questions were developed to spark discussion regarding next years Work Plan:

- How often should the Cosumnes Groundwater Authority Board of Directors meet?
- What staff and technical support would the Board like to have next fiscal year?
- What advisory committees (ex: Projects and Management Actions Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, Outreach and Engagement Committee) does the Board want to maintain? How often should these groups meet? What deliverables does the Board want from these committees? What staff/technical support will these committees need?
- What public outreach and engagement measures does the Board want to see completed in the next fiscal year?
- What data gap filling efforts does the Board want to prioritize for the next year?
- What technical or staffing support for the development and implementation of projects (ex: conservation or recharge) and management actions (ex: permitting and land use) does the Board want to prioritize for the next year?
- What are the grant opportunities that the CGA Board wants to explore?
- What facilitation, technical, and planning support will be needed to prepare for the required 5-year period review and/or GSP amendment this next year?
- Recognizing that with a limited budget, the ability to do everything on the 'wish list' may not be feasible, what are the top priorities of the CGA Board for this coming year?

Link: [Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Work Plan](#)

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Agenda Date: March 6, 2024

Agenda Item #: 7

Agenda Item Subject: Committee Reports

To: CGA Board of Directors

From: CGA Staff

[Link: Committee Meeting Materials](#)

Outreach and Engagement (O&E) Committee

The O&E Committee will serve an advisory role to the CGA Board of Directors, to provide the Board feedback/recommendations and support in the implementation of the Cosumnes Subbasin GSP's Outreach and Engagement Plan and to support CGA Staff's outreach efforts.

This Committee held the CGA BBQ Luncheon at Herald Fire Station on February 28 from 12pm – 2pm. This event was a success with 32 people who signed in (more attended as only one per household signed in) and 20 new and completed surveys were collected.

Many members of the CGA Board also attended and volunteered (thank you!) We want to say a huge Thank you to Supervisor Pat Hume who has graciously donated \$1,000 to support this event as well as to Sloughhouse RCD who donated \$500.

Next Meeting: March 14, 2024 at 2:00pm (location: Galt City Hall + Zoom)

Upcoming Committee Activities/Discussion Topics:

- Farmers Survey
- BBQ Luncheon Recap
- Spring Newsletter Topics

Staff Recommendations

- Identify which aspects of CGA work the Board would like the committee to provide recommendations/insight on ahead of our next CGA Board Meeting.

**Cosumnes Groundwater Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Agenda Date: March 6, 2024

Agenda Item #: 8

Agenda Item Subject: CGA Staff Report

To: CGA Board of Directors

From: CGA Staff

CGA Staff Report

3 Month Look Ahead

April: Final Fee Study from SCI
Final Annual Report from EKI
Draft FY 24-25 Work Plan
DWR Presentation on GSP 5-Year Period Review

May: Implementing the Fee Study
FY 24-25 Work Plan
Draft FY 24-25 Budget
Spring Groundwater Monitoring Results

June: Final FY 24-25 Budget
Final 24-25 Staffing Services and Work Plan

Form 700's

As a reminder, each GSA is responsible for completing their own Form 700. Please submit a copy of each Board Member's Form 700 to CGA Staff by April 1, 2024.

March 2024 DWR Updates (from DWR's North Central Region Office)

Grants

California Grants Portal

The California State Library, in partnership with the Department of Water Resources and other state grantmaking agencies, has launched the California Grants Portal – your one destination to find all state grant and loan opportunities provided on a first-come or competitive basis. Visit grants.ca.gov to find funding opportunities for you and your community.

SB552: DWR's County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance for state small water system and domestic wells **DWR will provide financial or direct technical assistance to counties (up to \$125,000)** for developing their County Drought Resilience Plan per SB 552 to provide needed water shortage protection and emergency response for state small water systems and domestic wells. [Applications and additional information can also be found here.](#) For questions, email CountyDRP@water.ca.gov or call Julie Ekstrom at 916-612-4371. Applications for financial assistance are closed, but **applications for technical assistance are open until May 2024 for direct.**

DWR's Underrepresented Communities Technical Assistance Program

The mission of the Program is to determine the needs, risks, and vulnerabilities with the implementation of the SGMA for underrepresented communities and small farms in medium and high priority basins, including critically overdrafted (COD) basins. The types of services provided include, but are not limited to: Groundwater level monitoring; Aquifer testing to determine long-term yield and supply; Identifying Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs); Analyze well interference; Identifying additional water supply; Analyze existing well condition using downhole video log; Rehabilitation of water storage tank; Long-term water supply and demand analysis; Analyze and help to facilitate water transfers. [More information is available on the webpage.](#) **Local entities can request services by emailing SGM_TA@water.ca.gov.**

Other state & federal grant websites for resources that may be helpful are:

- California Financing Coordinating Committee -- <https://cfcc.ca.gov/>, and
- CalOES grants -- <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/cal-oes-divisions/grants-management>
- US EPA -- <https://www.epa.gov/grants/specific-epa-grant-programs>, and
- Economic Development Administration -- <https://eda.gov/funding-opportunities/>

Upcoming conferences, webinars, new reports and data

Groundwater Awareness Week: March 10th - 16th

DWR is celebrating the 25th Anniversary of National Groundwater Awareness Week with a series of mid-day virtual activities:

- Monday (3/11) 11 am: will kickoff with the state of groundwater management in California and introduce the week's activities. [Register here.](#)
- Tuesday (3/12) and Wednesday (3/13) will feature trainings tailored to GSAs who are working on Outreach and Engagement as they progress with SGMA implementation. [Register here](#) for Tuesday's interactive workshop focused on how GSAs can engage or re-engage with interested parties in their basin to enhance local relationships. And [register here](#) for Wednesday's training focused on how GSAs can address challenging situations and will provide tools for GSAs navigating difficult dialogue.
- Thursday (3/14) will include a presentation focused on the reporting process and expectations for GSA's submittals. [Register here.](#)
- Friday (3/15) will showcase DWR's technical assistance, datasets, and tools, wrapping up with an overview highlighting the year ahead. [Register here.](#)

Governor Newsom releases new California salmon strategy

March 2024 DWR Updates (from DWR's North Central Region Office)

Governor Newsom has announced [a series of actions and efforts](#) to restore California's salmon population. [California Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future: Restoring Aquatic Ecosystems in the Age of Climate Change](#) specifies six priorities, including modernizing infrastructure for salmon migration and protecting water flows in key rivers. A [fact sheet](#) summarizing the strategy has also been released.

DWR Releases First Paper on Depletions of Interconnected Surface Water: An Introduction

To help Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) appropriately address depletions of interconnected surface water (ISW) in their Groundwater Sustainability Plans, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) today released the first in a series of three papers that will discuss the technical aspects of ISW and quantification of depletions of ISW due to pumping. These three papers will form the basis for a guidance document that DWR will publish for GSAs to consider when establishing ISW sustainable management criteria to manage depletions in their groundwater basins. Paper 1 and all subsequent ISW documents will be posted on [DWR's Best Management Practices and Guidance Documents](#) webpage under the heading of Guidance Documents.

DWR Releases Groundwater Recharge Guidance Documents

DWR has developed an [On-Farm Recharge Methods Manual](#), [District Recharge Program Guidance](#) and [Central Valley Groundwater Recharge Incentives and Strategies](#). The On-Farm Recharge Methods Manual, a summary of strategies and challenges. This document gathers observations and lessons learned from over a decade of Sustainable Conservation working directly with growers and irrigation districts to implement on-farm recharge, including methods to enhance recharge, avoid crop health problems, manage recharge events, and minimize nutrient leaching. This document summarizes in-field practices with 10 grower case studies to provide practical information about on-farm recharge from growers to growers.

The two guidance documents will help water districts, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), and their technical consultants design and implement effective multi-benefit recharge programs and projects. These documents include a summary of necessary considerations, publicly available tools, and examples to design new or refine existing recharge and incentive programs that address the specific needs and priorities in a subbasin.

DWR launches permit portal for Delta Conveyance Project

DWR has launched a "[permit portal](#)" to help with plans and projects for the [Delta Conveyance Project](#). The portal includes access to information and resources related to some of the more critical environmental [compliance and permitting processes](#). The new website has all relevant California Environmental Quality Act information, along with the [final environmental impact report](#). New [fact sheets](#) are available in English, Spanish and Chinese and cover topics such as soil testing, seismic resilience and project features. Several companion [videos](#) are also now available. **A Final EIR for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project was issued and approved in December of 2023.**

Now that the environmental review is complete and the project has been approved, DWR will take the next steps to pursue numerous state and federal permits or authorizations, including those required by the State Water Resources Control Board, the Delta Stewardship Council, and compliance with state and federal Endangered Species acts. DWR will also continue to develop a Community Benefits Program. The Delta Construction Authority will provide a new cost estimate and a benefit-cost analysis in mid-2024.

Executive Order N-7-22

On March 28, 2022 Governor Newsom signed [Executive Order N-7-22](#), updated in 2023 to [EO-N-3-23](#), which **included new well permitting requirements (Action 9) as well as CEQA exemptions and permit streamlining for FloodMAR projects (Action 13)**. The materials including a fact sheets, recording and presentation materials from the April 13th and a self-certification form for the CEQA waiver are now posted on DWR's Drought Webpage, under the 'Drought Well Permitting Requirements' and the 'CEQA Suspension on Groundwater Recharge Projects' accordion dropdowns: <https://water.ca.gov/water-basics/drought>.

California's Groundwater Live: Up-to-date data on groundwater conditions, well installations and subsidence

March 2024 DWR Updates (from DWR's North Central Region Office)

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the final [California's Groundwater – Update 2020 \(Bulletin-118\)](#), containing information on the condition of the State's groundwater, DWR has also developed a companion web-based application called [California's Groundwater Live](#) (CalGW Live), leveraging the [California Natural Resources Agency Open Data Platform](#) (Open Data) to improve the access and timeliness of statewide groundwater information. The easy-to-use interface will make many of the data sets used in CalGW Update 2020 available in an interactive map format that will be updated regularly for viewing and downloading. For more information, visit the updated [California's Groundwater website](#) Contact: CalGW@water.ca.gov.

SGMA & Drought

Update Your GSA and GSP Manager Point of Contact Information in DWR's SGMA Portal

If your GSA and/or GSP Plan Manager Point of Contact (POC) is not current, or you are not sure, please visit the SGMA Portal to ensure that your contact information is up-to-date. When logged in, the Portal allows edits to be made to previously submitted contact information. If you have SGMA Portal questions, please email them to: GSPSubmittal@water.ca.gov.

Water commission approves white paper on drought strategies

The California Water Commission has approved a [white paper](#) outlining four strategies to protect communities, fish, and wildlife in the event of drought. The list of strategies includes a scale-up of groundwater recharge, which is seen as a key element of dealing with a hotter, drier future. Details are available in this [news release](#).

Release of New Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation

On October 30, 2023, DWR released its [Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation: A Guide to Annual Reports, Periodic Evaluations, and Plan Amendments](#), which provides guidance to GSAs preparing these documents under SGMA and the GSP Regulations. The Department also released a [Frequently Asked Questions and Available Resources](#) document that provides commonly asked questions and answers about Annual Reports, Periodic Evaluations, and GSP Amendments. These resources do not create any requirements or obligations for GSAs; the information is intended to clarify the necessary content of the documents already required by SGMA and the GSP Regulations.

Fall 2023 Groundwater Sustainability Agency Forum - Event Recording Available

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted the Fall 2023 Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Forum on November 9, 2023. The theme of the event was Well Management Approaches: from Enhancing Local Understanding to Leveraging Local Coordination. A recording of the [event is now available on DWR's YouTube channel](#).

SGMA Overview Brochure Available Online

DWR released a new SGMA Overview Brochure that provides useful information for those interested in learning more about SGMA and local groundwater management, DWR's assistance resources, and DWR's SGMA Program benefits. You can view or download the SGMA Overview Brochure in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), in both an online version and an 11-inch by 17-inch printable version ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)).

DWR Releases 'Be Well Prepared' Initiative and Website

May 17, 2023, DWR released the [Be Well Prepared initiative](#). DWR is providing tools and resources to help communities that are dependent on groundwater and experiencing climate-driven weather extremes, to prepare for potential impacts to household water supplies. The Be Well Prepared initiative focuses on domestic well owners and residents that use and maintain their well. [The website includes resources and information](#) that every well owner should know and understand about: groundwater conditions, well maintenance, water quality, assistance, and additional articles, videos and resources. [A new flyer](#) from DWR provides the four initial steps for well owners to take if they think their well has gone dry. This flyer is also available in [Spanish](#) and [Hmong](#).

March 2024 DWR Updates (from DWR's North Central Region Office)

DWR Releases 'Drinking Water Well Impacts' Guidance and 'Water Shortage Planning' Brochure

April 7, 2023: DWR released the [Considerations for Identifying and Addressing Drinking Water Well Impacts](#) guidance document and technical assistance. This guidance document supports GSAs to fully consider and appropriately address potential impacts to drinking water well users during SGMA implementation. There is an [online accompanying toolkit](#). The Department also released a brochure, called [Alignment and Coordination: Water Shortage Planning](#) for Rural Communities and Sustainable Groundwater Management. This brochure encourages voluntary collaboration between counties and GSAs as they coordinate their respective responsibilities for drought and water shortage planning efforts, for rural communities under Senate Bill 552, and the long-term sustainability goals of groundwater basins under SGMA.

SB552: DWR's Water Shortage Vulnerability Scoring and Tool

As part of its technical assistance to support SB 552 implementation, DWR developed the [Water Shortage Vulnerability Scoring and Tool](#) to provide the foundational data and information statewide to counties for their water shortage risk assessment.

Dry Well Susceptibility Map

The DWR, in coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board, has developed an interactive mapping tool, called the Dry Well Susceptibility Tool. This tool identifies areas within groundwater basins that may be prone to water supply shortages in drinking water wells. State and local agencies and well owners can use this tool to anticipate where wells may go dry based on historical conditions to inform drought preparedness decision-making. To use this tool, navigate to [California's Groundwater Live website](#) and click the [Dry Domestic Well Susceptibility tab](#). A fact sheet on this tool, as well as DWR's Dry Well Reporting System, [is available here](#).

Dry Well Reporting Site

There is a website available to [report private wells going dry](#). Information reported to this site is intended to inform state and local agencies on drought impacts on household water supplies. The data reported on this site (excluding personal identifiable information) can be viewed on the [SGMA data viewer](#) or downloaded on the [CNRA Atlas](#). Individuals or local agencies can report water shortages and [a list of resources are included on the webpage](#). The reporting forms are available in both English and Spanish. Local agencies can now sign up to receive notifications of any dry wells reported in their area. To sign up please email sgmps@water.ca.gov.

DWR is developing eight Proposition 68-funded technical projects

Fact sheets on each project can be viewed under the "Prop 68" tab [here](#).

- [AEM webpage](#) contains information on the how the process works, safety, schedule, data submission by GSAs, TAC, pilot study data and more. The final Data Reports, AEM data interpretations, and supporting data are available for the Central San Joaquin Valley groundwater basins (Survey Area 5) and the Northern San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sacramento Valley groundwater basins (Survey Area 6). All reports and datasets are available for download on the [California Natural Resources Agency Open Data Portal](#) and AEM data can be viewed online on the [AEM Data Viewer](#). For more information about AEM, visit the AEM Project Webpage or check out "DWR's Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Surveys: The AEM Method" video in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). **Statewide AEM survey data collection is now complete.**
- **2020 Statewide Crop Mapping data** was released in March of 2023 and includes multi-cropping information. The **2020 final and 2021 and 2022 (new Feb 2024) provisional** datasets includes agricultural land use and urban boundaries for all 58 counties in California. The data can now be accessed at the following locations: [CA DWR Land Use Viewer](#) (viewing and downloading); [CNRA Webpage](#) (viewing and downloading); on the [SGMA Data Viewer](#) (viewing) and the [California State Geoportal](#) (viewing and downloading).
- **InSAR subsidence data is now available through Oct 1 of 2023** and can now be viewed on the [SGMA data viewer](#). The updated GIS services and data reports are also available [online](#).

March 2024 DWR Updates (from DWR's North Central Region Office)

Facilitation Support Services (FSS): Funding still available

- GSA's developing GSPs are eligible to receive funding for identification and engagement of interested parties, meeting facilitation, interest-based negotiation/consensus building, and public outreach facilitation
- More information [can be found here](#). Written translation services available in 8 languages for outreach materials (5,000 word maximum).
- DWR has a **new Verbal Interpretation service available to GSA's**. Real-time interpretive services are available to GSAs for virtual, hybrid, or in-person meetings in support of GSP implementation with the goal of engaging underrepresented communities within basins and encouraging equal access for non-fluent English speakers during the implementation of GSP's. If you are interested in learning more or receiving support from an interpretation team email sgmps@water.ca.gov.