

**SOQUEL APTOS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SAGMC)
MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2015**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Tom LaHue called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Voting Committee Members Present:

Tom LaHue, Soquel Creek Water District
Bruce Daniels, Soquel Creek Water District
John Benich, Central Water District
Bob Postle, Central Water District
John Leopold, County of Santa Cruz
Cynthia Mathews, City of Santa Cruz
Micah Posner, City of Santa Cruz
Curt Abramson, Private Well Owner Representative
Jim Kerr, Private Well Owner Representative
Jon Kennedy, Private Well Owner Representative

Committee Members Absent:

Bruce Jaffe, Chair, Soquel Creek Water District
Zach Friend, County of Santa Cruz

Others Present:

Ralph Bracamonte, Central Water District
John Ricker, County of Santa Cruz
Rosemary Menard, City of Santa Cruz
Melanie Schumacher, Soquel Creek Water District
Ron Duncan, Soquel Creek Water District
Tim Carson, Regional Water Management Foundation
Julia Townsend, Regional Water Management Foundation
Larry Freeman, Freeman Consulting
Marci DuPraw, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSU Sacramento
Cameron Tana, HydroMetrics WRI (present on the phone)
2 members of the public

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of August 20, 2015

MOTION: Cynthia Mathews; Second; John Benich: To approve the minutes of August 20, 2015. Motion carried unanimously.
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4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (*items not on the Agenda*)

Bruce Daniels mentioned that he will be delivering a climate talk at the next Soquel Creek Water District Board meeting on October 6th.

John Leopold mentioned that California LAFCO will be offering land use and water management workshops; no dates have been set, but he will circulate details when he knows more.

Jim Kerr suggested forming a committee focused on how to deliver information to the public to communicate early and often. Jon Kennedy agreed that there is a need for a publicity committee especially in preparation for forming the GSA. Tom Lahue will agendize for a future meeting.

Tom LaHue thanked Michael Mills and Bill Wigginton for their contributions and acknowledged their efforts with the Basin Implementation Group throughout the years. Certificates of appreciation will be presented to them at the next meeting they attend.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

5.1 Elect/Appoint Chair and Vice Chair for SAGMC

Bruce Daniels suggested that for the sake of simplicity, the committee keep Bruce Jaffe as Chair. Dr. Jaffe, although not present tonight, has agreed to continue in this role if so chosen.

MOTION: Bruce Daniels; Second; John Leopold: To keep Bruce Jaffe as Chair and elect a Vice-Chair. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Bruce Daniels; Second; Cynthia Mathews: To appoint Tom LaHue as Vice-Chair. Motion carried unanimously.

5.2 Discussions Regarding Amending the JPA to Allow for SAGMC Committee Alternates

At the August 20, 2015 (SAGMC) meeting, committee members requested an item be agendized for discussing amending the Joint Exercise of Power Agreement (JPA) to allow for committee alternates.

Discussion ensued among the committee members about alternate selection.

MOTION: Cynthia Mathews; Second; Jon Kennedy: To ask the committee that selected the public members to present suggestions for alternates to the SAGMC at the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

5.3 Status Update and Discussions Regarding the GSA Formation Subcommittee Recommendations

Jon Kennedy gave a quick update mentioning that the Subcommittee has been working off the checklist provided by Russ McGlothlin.

Comments on Boundaries: Bruce Daniels mentioned that there are a lot of basins considered by the state that are not included in the Working Basin Boundary Revision Concept. John Leopold suggested the group postpone the boundary

approval process to a future meeting and noted that further discussion is slated for later in the agenda tonight.

Comments on Membership: no comments.

Comments on Powers of Agency and Members: Jon Kennedy summarized that GSA could be a coordinating body rather than an implementing. The GSA will ensure the broader picture of moving towards sustainability. John Ricker anticipated that the GSA would approve a GSP with agencies implementing tasks accordingly, and cited the Regional Water Management Foundation as a potential model.

Micah Posner mentioned the type of issues that would come to the GSA such as the City of Santa Cruz selling water to the Soquel Creek Water District. Bruce Daniels cited north Sacramento as a model where member agencies implement parts of the solution and the role of the JPA is to assign responsibility.

Mr. Daniels reported that the Soquel Creek Water District has determined their savings goals factoring in their proportional share of the basin. John Leopold added that the GSP would dictate some of these strategies and the agencies would be responsible for choosing which actions work best to meet overall conservation objectives. John Ricker added that there might be one big project like aquifer storage and recovery that could have a positive impact like the Pajaro Valley model.

Comments on assessments: The group discussed that private well owners are going to continue to be the unknown quantity. Curt Abramson suggested that a county level assessment would be required since the other entities are pretty clearly defined. He continued that the GSA Formation Subcommittee has suggested doing an official estimate with a new water model, and figuring out the role of septic recharge.

Rosemary Menard hoped that the definition of “impact on the aquifer” would emerge during the planning process. John Ricker added that the definition will be a combination of hydrology, politics, and financing with different models and regulations. Mr. Ricker expressed his hope that the Pajaro Valley model and others will inform the process, although the best working model might be different for the GSA. Micah Posner shared that the GSA Formation Subcommittee is proposing that the contribution by all parties will be based on impact. Melanie Schumacher suggested the SAGMC do an assessment study. Ron Duncan added that party contributions might not be based purely on pumping quantity, and should include other factors.

Comments on Goals and Objectives: Bruce Daniels acknowledged that with climate change, sustainability is a moving goal. The GSP will be created with the best available data at the time, but it needs to be reassessed continuously to accommodate shifting data. Others agreed that sea level rise should be included in any models.

Comments on Bylaws, Terms, Quorum: Discussion was held, bylaws were clarified to mean a general legal framework of the agency. The SAGMC then moved on to review the Items for Legal Review presented in Exhibit A.

Comments on Voting Powers: Ralph Bracamonte inquired how voting would work. John Leopold envisioned that members would think about the basin holistically while present. Bruce Daniels suggested that once the GSA has divided up responsibility, they work with a court to freeze the legal requirements rather than having the state enforce things. Ron Duncan mentioned that the Subcommittee had received legal advice that a friendly adjudication would also be a potential channel.

Comments on Governance Structure: Jon Kennedy reported that the Subcommittee is proposing that the GSA have 11 members. Staff requirements are yet to be determined. Legal counsel has emphasized that the group will need to have a clear financial process and treasury function. The Subcommittee will need to determine if that role can be farmed out.

Rosemary Menard referenced the Western Regional Water Commission as a potential governance model. They have two county-level employees contracted to the commission that manage the funds, as well as a collaborative staffing model where all of the agencies contribute to general direction setting and implementation. John Ricker proposed that the GSA formation checklist be approved before it goes to legal counsel. Mr. Ricker went on to suggest that the SAGMC adopt the GSA Formation Checklist and Items for Legal Review at a future meeting. The group agreed.

Jon Kennedy noted that it would be a good idea to have clarity and agreement from this body on the boundaries by the time the SAGMC requests permission to form the GSA. Jon Kennedy suggested members review the sections on voting powers and fee assessment specifically.

Group members should send comments on the GSA Formation Check List and Items for Legal Review to Ron Duncan by October 7th. The SAGMC will accept formal approval of those items at the next meeting in November.

The group reviewed the proposed timeline in Exhibit B. Mr. Ricker suggested that that the GSA be formed first to file the notice with the state. Jon Kennedy suggested the group hold a public meeting at that point, potentially in January or March. Melanie Schumacher mentioned that there is a checklist of public outreach procedures and requirements, and a letter of intent would be the first step according to legal counsel. Jon Kennedy proposed that the SAGMC get agreement to file a letter of intent during the January meeting.

MOTION: Tom LaHue; Second; Micah Posner: To change the next meeting of this body to November 12 th . Motion carried unanimously.

5.4 Discussion Regarding the Additional Support Services by the State Water Resources Control Board for GSA Formation and GSP Development

Ron Duncan mentioned that Marci's role could be broader with respect to aiding staff, and wanted to know it would be possible for her role to continue with GSA formation and other efforts. John Leopold asked for input from private well owners. Jon Kennedy gave his support, others echoed the benefit. Melanie Schumacher proposed that the SAGMC discuss staff needs as a future agenda item, and suggested that the group form a communication subcommittee. Cynthia Mathews suggested that Soquel Creek Water District staff accept Ms. DuPraw's help as they see fit.

5.5 Discussion on Draft Basin Boundaries

Bruce Daniels wondered if an agency such as the county or district could request changes to how the basins are organized rather than SAGMC participants, since groundwater basins are independent of the GSA. The group went on to discuss how to proceed with the boundary request.

Melanie Schumacher proposed that the mid-county basin be merged, and to remove small basins. The Subcommittee is proposing that low priority areas be kept low or no longer identified because they are not actively producing and under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act do not need to be managed.

Cameron Tana contributed from HydroMetrics by phone, and shared that some of the concept is based off of jurisdictional as well as hydrologic boundaries. The group discussed various scenarios. Mr. Tana stated that once the boundaries are drawn, the SAGMC would manage what is inside the boundary, and the county would manage what is outside. The areas left out would not have to be managed. Tom LaHue mentioned that the remaining question is the small piece of the Central Water District.

Cynthia Mathews inquired about the timeline for resolving the basin question. Tom LaHue said that first the SAGMC will submit proposed boundaries, and then Cameron Tana will produce a draft and work with the state to request removing low priority areas. The state would like all the entities in the region to come together to create one request. Mr. Ricker clarified that the SAGMC can submit intent before forming the GSA. Cynthia Mathews requested that Mr. Tana present the pros and cons of including the Central Water District sections at the next SAGMC meeting. Ralph Bracamonte requested information from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on whether the proposed boundary would be approved. Melanie Schumacher recommended the group clarify content to send to the DWR with the letter of intent and application.

Cameron Tana shared that the plan is to submit materials in early January to give the state the opportunity to revise aspects of the package.

The group decided that Cameron Tana will bring the package forward for approval at the next SAGMC meeting on November 12th.

MOTION: Micah Posner; Second: John Leopold; To empower Ralph Bracamonte to work with Cameron Tana, John Ricker, Ron Duncan, and Melanie Schumacher to come up with draft basin boundaries. Motion carried unanimously.

Cynthia Mathews asked for clarification regarding gathering letters of support. Mr. Tana clarified that letters should come from affected agencies, public water systems that meet the minimum requirement for the number of connections and population, member agencies, and Scotts Valley and Pajaro Valley. There will also be requirements for public meetings and stakeholder notification so interested parties can weigh in on the boundaries. Mr. Ricker offered to send out a formal mailing when the time comes to smaller agencies.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

7. REPORTS - Oral – time for any SAGMC member to report out.

7.1 Central Water District

Ralph Bracamonte updated the group that the highest usage within the district was in 2007 at 687 acre-feet, and they are now down to 385 acre-feet as of last month for a 12 month period. Ron Duncan asked if those changes were sustainable. Mr. Bracamonte said that they have educated a lot of people, and anticipate a 50-75% bounce back.

7.2 City of Santa Cruz

Rosemary Menard reported that the city council has voted to approve the agreement for the sale of water this winter in the event of rain, and the CEQA process will be done soon. With respect to water supply issues, the San Lorenzo River is at one of the lowest levels ever. The good news is that the city did not have to use Loch Lomond until recently, and the lake is in a better spot than last year. The City's Water Supply Advisory Committee (WSAC) is looking at passive recharge using winter flows, and is focusing on recycled water with backup in the form of desalination if ASR is not feasible. The city has a 2 billion gallon gap in the worst year, and needs a reservoir of 3-5 billion gallons bigger than Loch Lomond to get through a multi-year drought. Whether the city can get that much water in and out of the ground is a big issue that will be explored in the next five years. The WSAC prefers recycled water, and has discussed storage options without finding any great options. The city is interested in groundwater storage and the regional benefits of solving over-drafting problems. Improving aquifer conditions and base flows might be a better strategy than other options.

7.3 Soquel Creek Water District

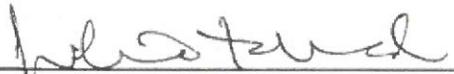
Bruce Daniels reported that the Soquel Creek went to zero flow for a few hours last week. John Ricker observed that midnight tends to be the lowest point, and the low

flow was tied with the recent heat spell. He continued that evapotranspiration seemed to be the greatest factor, and with the east branch drying up over a month ago it would be great to restore flow to Soquel Creek as part of group management. He concluded that the creek is doing better than during the 1990s, and a small number of Coho salmon spawned there this winter through the fish monitoring program. Melanie Schumacher shared that on October 14th the Association of California Water Agencies will host a regulatory summit in Ontario, California focused on SGMA. Soquel Creek staff will speak on a panel. There will also be a panel focused on creating and sharing data for groundwater management. Soquel Creek will also be sending a representative to the “Water in the West” program at Stanford on November 16th.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

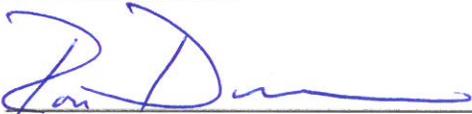
Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. The next meeting of the SAGMC will be November 12, 2015.

SUBMITTED BY:



Julia Townsend, Program Associate
Regional Water Management Foundation

APPROVED BY:



Ron Duncan, Interim General Manager
Soquel Creek Water District