

MEETING SUMMARY June 20, 2017

Colusa Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) – Governance Workgroup Meeting #21

MEETING RECAP

- This was the last meeting of the Colusa GSA Workgroup. The next Colusa SGMA meeting will be a meeting of the Colusa Groundwater Authority GSA.
- The Environmental Defense Fund provided a presentation regarding development of an open data access platform for Evapotranspiration (ET), and solicited interested parties to serve on a Technical Advisory Committee. The Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA) will consider and discuss this at their first meeting.
- Davids' Engineering, Inc. provided a presentation on current status and work completed on the Proposition 1 Counties with Stressed Basins grant funded project. The County obtained this funding for a monitoring network and data management program to be integrated into a future Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).
- A list of the items that will need to be addressed as the first order of business for the CGA was distributed and discussed.

For more local information, **including all meeting materials**, visit the [Colusa County Water Resources Webpage](#). For information on SGMA visit the [Department of Water Resources SGMA Webpage](#).

MEETING SUMMARY

➤ Opening Remarks

Dave Ceppos, facilitator from the Center for Collaborative Policy, Sacramento State University, welcomed the group, provided an agenda review and asked for introductions around the room.

➤ SGMA Process Updates

Mr. Ceppos updated the group on the Glenn County progress to ratify their Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement forming the Glenn Groundwater Authority. Public hearings are underway at each of the agencies' board meetings.

Ms. Fahey provided an update on the Colusa County Groundwater Commission. A new 5-member Groundwater Commission has been seated. The Groundwater Commission by-laws were updated to be more consistent with SGMA. The Commissioners were selected by Supervisorial District: Darrin Williams, District 1; Deke Dormer, District 2, Matt LaGrande, District 3; Tom Charter, District 4; Jeff Moresco, District 5. Darrin Williams is the Commission Chair and Jeff Moresco is Vice Chair. Mr. Williams and Mr. Moresco were recommended to serve as the two Private Pumper representatives on the CGA Board. This will be ratified by the Board of Supervisors at their June 27 meeting.

Ms. Fahey provided a print-out of the Colusa Groundwater Authority public hearing schedule. The City of Colusa will hold their public hearing tonight and the City of Williams, tomorrow night. All other member agency boards have held their public hearings and unanimously passed a resolution to sign on the JPA.

Mr. Ceppos said that the newly formed Yolo Groundwater Agency held their first meeting yesterday.

Ms. Fahey reported that she has heard from DWR that they are working on an online application tool that agencies can use to apply for facilitation support services for GSP development. She has received a list of potential questions and has shared that with Glenn and Butte Counties.

- **Presentation and Discussion: Environmental Defense Fund, Open Data Access Platform for Evapotranspiration in the Western U.S.** (The presentation can be downloaded on the [Water Resources Website](#)).

Maurice Hall and Robyn Grimm from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) provided a presentation on a project they are working on regarding evapotranspiration (ET). Mr. Hall provided background about EDF and expressed that they are excited to be working in the Sacramento Valley. They are looking for partners in the development of an ET platform where information can be accessed quickly and easily at low cost. They see a potential for this type of data access to be helpful when developing water budgets for SGMA.

Ms. Grimm went on to describe the project. There were several questions from the Workgroup members:

Question: Why are you pushing for a July deadline? **Answer:** It is the timeline of the funding entity.

Question: Why is EDF doing this project? What is your use for this data? **Answer:** EDF cares about successful implementation of SGMA. The monitoring and water budgets are a big burden. They are hopeful that this project can help make that process easier for GSAs. EDF is also interested in healthy ecosystems. Science-based decision making is important to them and they would like to see groundwater management done right. They also want to help develop water trading programs which would benefit from this project.

Question: Are you going to have algorithms built for forecasting future ET? **Answer:** No, since it is a satellite-based application, only current and past ET data will be available.

Question: Are you involving DWR in the project? They are developing similar data. **Answer:** Yes, they are part of the California working group and they are aware of our work.

Question: What is your timeframe? **Answer:** The platform should be available by the end of 2020. There will be some data available from some of the algorithms as early as next year.

Question: How do you see long-term ownership of the program? **Answer:** We have to figure out what will make the most sense. It is a Western U.S. program which will make it difficult to house it in a state agency. Part of the work is to explore options and secure the funding for long term management.

Question: Is there a preference for ownership, public or non-profit? **Answer:** We are open to the best solution. We will explore a reasonable funding stream and everyone on the team, including end-users will have a say. We are open to input. WADE, USGS, others may be options.

Question: There is currently ET data available from State monitoring stations. How will your system integrate with these existing monitoring stations? **Answer:** The CIMIS system provides reference ET data. That would be an input to the different algorithms that we would use to estimate actual ET. Landsat imagery looks at reflectance from the ground surface. Without any other data it is difficult to convert that into any precise measurement of ET. Combined with ground-based measurements of things like temperature, wind speed, etc., you can merge those two types of information to get very good measurements of actual ET. The CIMIS stations are really important data inputs into the algorithms to develop these measurements. The measurements our project will be calculating are actual ET from the ground surface and the crops as compared to taking the reference ET that can be taken from CIMIS.

Question: Are you looking for volunteers? **Answer:** If there is interest, we are looking for representative(s) from the CGA to start having conversations. We would like to have one or a couple of GSAs as partners to help shape the end use of the product. The proposal will be submitted at the end of July. If there is interest, you would be a participant in the process helping to shape the program to ensure it meets your end use. EDF could potentially provide compensation for your time, we could write in funding in the project proposal. EDF is looking for a commitment and draft of funding needs. In-kind contributions of course help the proposal. EDF would need a commitment and draft funding needs by end of July if possible.

Mr. Ceppos said that this is the last meeting of this group. The next meeting will be the CGA. That meeting date has not been set. We really could not get a commitment from the CGA until the Board is seated.

Question/Comment: Are you moving forward with or without participation from the CGA? Either we are part of it, or we are left out. Sometimes it's advantageous to be involved in these types of projects in the beginning phases. **Answer:** Yes, we are moving forward either way.

➤ **Presentation: Davids Engineering, Update on Colusa County Proposition 1 Counties with Stressed Basins grant project** (The presentation can be downloaded on the [Water Resources Website](#)).

Ms. Fahey introduced Byron Clark from Davids Engineering, Inc. (DE) She explained that Grant Davids could not be here today. Although he has been "the face" of Davids Engineering at past meetings, Mr. Clark has done much of the technical work on Colusa County's Proposition 1 grant funded project.

Mr. Clark provided a Powerpoint presentation on the County's Proposition 1 Counties with Stressed Basins grant project. Although Ms. Fahey provides brief project updates at GSA Workgroup meetings, this group has not seen an in-depth update from DE until today.

Mr. Clark explained that the Proposition 1 funding is for SGMA planning and implementation. The Colusa County project is an initial step to preparing and implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The County received \$250,000 of grant funding and they are supplying in-kind match valued at \$125,932, for a total project cost of \$375,932. The targeted completion date is December 31, 2017.

The main project tasks include assessing current and future groundwater development, evaluation of current groundwater monitoring sites, and development of a groundwater data management program. Davids Engineering has utilized well logs supplied by the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) to define existing groundwater development in the County and analyze potential future groundwater development.

Mr. Clark explained that they are holding off on work to evaluate the monitoring network while waiting for DWR to update C2VSIM. If we are able to obtain that information from DWR, it would avoid overlapping efforts. DWR is also analyzing the statewide monitoring network which could also provide valuable information for this task.

The data management program involves gathering data for reporting out for SGMA. DE will analyze what the County has available and the different types of existing data management platforms currently available.

Mr. Clark provided information regarding their work to evaluate existing groundwater development in the County and potential future demands. Through this work, we will get a better understanding of the distribution of wells throughout the county and well construction details including well depths, screen intervals, etc. This information will be valuable to assess the existing groundwater level monitoring network in order to inform the need for additional monitoring wells.

Question: How are you going to go about that? Are you going to survey landowners? **Answer:** No, we are utilizing DWR's well completion report database. **Question:** How far back does that go? **Answer:** Back to the 1910's but they really start to pick up in the 1950's.

Mr. Clark displayed maps and charts that illustrate well development over time in the County for both domestic and irrigation wells.

A requirement under SGMA is to develop a water budget that includes future projections based on land use, population, climate change, etc. DE is looking at potential future groundwater development to estimate potential for future water demands. This information will support development of future water budgets. They have preliminarily approximately 10,000 acres in the County where irrigated agriculture could expand. They also

evaluated areas where cropping could shift to higher intensity water demands. Their analysis determined a potential 7% increase in ET demands on irrigated lands in the County. This translates into increased irrigation demands. This could be offset by increased irrigation efficiency by growers.

Question: What are your initial thoughts about your work in regards to EDF's presentation? **Answer:** There are likely to be high quality ET data sets that will be available to the public at no cost. EDF is putting out significant effort to do this. USGS is doing this. The University of Idaho, is doing similar work on Google Earth Engine and they have a beta version currently available. Mr. Clark said he anticipates this data will be available soon. It is important to try it out and compare with existing estimates.

Comment: In the past, there were CIMIS stations in Glenn County and Colusa County. They were maintained by DWR, but maintenance was becoming difficult because of cropping changes. There is currently no CIMIS station in Glenn County. The stations have to be around pasture and grass which is getting harder and harder to find. GCID maintains the Colusa station north on I-5 by the rest stop. If you are in Arbuckle and that is the only station you can use, it's going to be difficult.

Comment: The ET forecast is just a reference point. I don't use those numbers. As a farmer I use a weather service called Weather Cast. I don't see how a grower could use the technology presented today by EDF. It needs to be ground-truthed. If they could forecast it would be beneficial. There is so much data out there, there's not enough time to use it all.

Comment: This product will get developed with or without our input. It is always good to be involved in the early development.

Action: *Mr. Ceppos suggested that the EDF project should be on the agenda at the first meeting of the CGA. The CGA Board can make a decision then.*

➤ **Update on Colusa GSA Ratification and Public Hearing Process; and GSA Noticing Documents**

Ms. Fahey reported that Cities of Colusa and Williams are the last two public hearings still to be held for the Colusa Groundwater Authority. She asked that each agency send her a signed copy of their Resolution. Mr. Ceppos said that in Glenn County, Orland Artois holds their public hearing today and they are the last agency. He anticipates that it will pass and Glenn County's ratification process will be completed.

Ms. Fahey mentioned that the GSA application to be filed on the DWR SGMA Portal is in process. She will send the group a draft by Thursday for comment and asks that any comments are back to her by Monday. She hopes to file the Colusa Groundwater Authority with DWR by mid-week next week.

➤ **JPA First Order of Business**

Mr. Ceppos referred the group to a list of items that will be necessary for the new JPA's first order of business. He noted that many members of the new Authority board will be individuals that have not participated in the GSA Workgroup meetings over the past two years and suggested that Brown Act training for CGA Directors should be one of the first orders of business. **Action: Identify CGA Board members and Alternates that have and have not previously received Brown Act training and make sure that all get that done.**

Mr. Ceppos mentioned the Program Manager. This would presumably be Ms. Fahey, but that will need to be identified officially by the Board.

The JPA will need to have insurance. Ms. Fahey stated that she has obtained two quotes to be presented to the CGA at their first meeting.

Mr. Ceppos said that the CGA will need to start thinking about initiating a Proposition 218 process. Ms. Fahey said that the County has retained an attorney that specializes in Prop. 218.

Mr. Ceppos said that it will be important to get a good handle on the Work Plan items – get them on a calendar. Knowing what is going to go into the Prop 1 proposal will be guided by what the group agrees to fund. Writing the proposal will be a big task and will take a group effort. Details will need to be decided very soon regarding schedule, choosing consultants (RFQ, RFP, sole source or a member agency), selection criteria, etc.

Ms. Fahey asked Mr. Vanderwaal, Reclamation District 108, to discuss agency acreages in relation to updating the budget. Mr. Vanderwaal has been working with a GIS specialist from Provost and Pritchard to better define the CGA Member agency acreages. Mr. Vanderwaal explained that CGA total acreage was calculated by taking the DWR acreage information for the Colusa subbasin and West Butte subbasin, then removing Federal and Tribal lands and removing the service area of Reclamation District 1004 from the West Butte subbasin acreage total. There are many instances where the service area of Colusa Drain Mutual Water Company overlaps other Agency acreages. These overlaps have been calculated. Mr. Vanderwaal explained that this information can be further refined as the CGA develops water budgets, but this will give the CGA a good starting point.

Action: *Mr. Ceppos and Ms. Fahey will refine the list of items for the first order of business for the JPA, and potentially put it into a calendar format, and send to the group for feedback.*

Question: How is Yolo handling the staffing? **Answer:** Through Yolo Flood Control, similar to what the County is providing in Colusa.

Question: Does Yolo have a contract we could look at as an example? **Answer:** Ms. Fahey said that is covered in the JPA. Mr. Vanderwaal said that Yolo is less prescriptive than Colusa. They have a history of providing these services there through the Water Resources Agency (WRA).

Comment: Please remember to keep track of in-kind contributions for the next Proposition 1 grant funding opportunity for GSP development. We should think about developing a standardized form to share with Glenn County. The Cost Share is substantial. Cost share goes back to May, 2016.

Action: *Develop a standardized form to document match.*

Action: *Ms. Fahey will send the verbiage for the GSA filing to the group for feedback.*

Question: Who is drawing up the agenda for the first CGA meeting? **Answer:** Ms. Fahey will develop the agenda. Mr. Ceppos' services will end June 30. Ms. Fahey will reapply for a second round of facilitation. We don't know yet when that will be available.

Mr. Ceppos wrapped up the meeting. He said this is the last meeting of the Colusa GSA Workgroup and the next meeting will be with the Board of the Colusa Groundwater Authority.

Action Items from This Meeting:

- JPA Board should be actively engaged in the EDF project (development of an open data source platform for ET) – Ms. Fahey to add this item to the first agenda of the CGA Board.
- Ms. Fahey to identify CGA Board members and Alternates that have and have not previously received Brown Act training and make sure that all get that done, either in a group setting or individually.
- Mr. Ceppos and Ms. Fahey will refine the list of items for the first order of business for the JPA and send to the group for feedback.
- Ms. Fahey to develop a standardized form to document match, and coordinate with Glenn County.
- Ms. Fahey will send the verbiage for the GSA filing to the group for feedback.

➤ For copies of all meeting materials, visit the [Colusa County Water Resources Webpage](#).

Participant List

GSA Workgroup Members	
➤ Lance Boyd	Princeton- Codora-Glenn and Provident Irrigation Districts
➤ Chuck Bergson	City of Williams
➤ Denise Carter	Colusa County Supervisor
➤ Bill Vanderwaal	Reclamation District 108
➤ Thad Bettner	Glenn Colusa Irrigation District
➤ Shelly Murphy	Colusa County Water District
➤ Dan Ruiz	Maxwell and Westside Irrigation Districts
➤ Darrin Williams	Private Pumper Representative, Colusa County Groundwater Commission and Private Pumper Advisory Committee
➤ Joe Richter	Maxwell Irrigation District
Members of the Public	
➤ Byron Clark	Davids Engineering, Inc.
➤ Krystal Davis-Fadke	CA Fish and Wildlife Service
➤ Deke Dormer	Colusa County Groundwater Commission
➤ Maurice Hall	Environmental Defense Fund
➤ Robyn Grimm	Environmental Defense Fund
➤ Jeff Moresco	Colusa County Groundwater Commission and Private Pumper Advisory Committee
➤ Greg Plucker	Colusa County
➤ Mary Randall	California Department of Water Resources
➤ Vickie Newlin	Butte County

Staff

- Mary Fahey Colusa County Water Resources Manager
- Dave Ceppos Center for Collaborative Policy