

Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Agency
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES
Monday, JUNE 15, 2020, 3:15 p.m.
Meeting held via Teleconference
34274 State Highway 16, Woodland, CA 95695

- 1. CALL TO ORDER and DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:** Meeting called to order at 3:15 p.m. by Roger Cornwell, Chair.
Kristin Sicke conducted a roll call and determined a quorum was present.

The following Board members and (alternates) were in attendance:

California American Water, Dunnigan: Evan Jacobs
Colusa Drain Mutual Water Co. – Lynnel Pollock
City of West Sacramento: Martha Guerrero, (William Roberts)
City of Winters: Jesse Loren, Vice-Chair, (Kurt Balasek)
City of Woodland: Xóchitl Rodriguez
Dunnigan Water District: (Bill Vanderwaal)
Environmental Representative: Ann Brice
Esparto Community Service District (CSD): Charles Schaupp (arrived after Roll Call at Item #2)
Madison Community Service District (CSD): Leo Refsland (arrived after Roll Call at Item #2)
Reclamation District (RD)108: Hilary Reinhard (arrived after Roll Call at Item #2)
RD 307: James Johas
RD 537: Tom Ramos
RD 787: Roger Cornwell, Board Chair
RD 827: Dan Ramos
RD 999: Tom Slater
RD 2035: (Mike Hall)
University of California Davis (UCD): Camille Kirk
Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation: Emily Drewek (arrived after Roll Call at Item #2)
Yolo County: Gary Sandy
Yolo County Farm Bureau (YCFB): Stan Lester (Denise Sagara)
Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (YCFC&WCD): Tom Barth,
(Tim O'Halloran)

Absent: City of Davis, RD 150, RD 730, RD 765, RD 785, RD 1600 (Arrived after Roll Call at Item #2: Esparto CSD, Madison CSD, RD 108, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation)

- 2. APPROVE AGENDA:** The Board approved the March 16, 2020 agenda as posted. Motioned by City of West Sacramento to approve the agenda, seconded by Yolo County Farm Bureau and unanimously approved.

Absent: City of Davis, RD 150, RD 730, RD 765, RD 785, RD 1600

- 3. PUBLIC FORUM:** No comments from the public.
- 4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR and EXECUTIVE OFFICER:** Chair Cornwell did not have

anything to report. Kristin Sicke reviewed the information provided in the written Executive Officer's report in the agenda. She gave a current water conditions report as detailed in the illustrations included with the agenda.

5. CONSIDERATION: CONSENT ITEMS

- a. Approved March 15, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes
- b. Received Fiscal Year End 2019-2020 Financial Statements: March 2020 to May 2020
- c. Approved Budget Amendment #2 for FY2020-2021
- d. Received minutes of Executive Committee: 3/8, 4/13/20
- e. Received minutes of Working Group, 4/3/19

Motioned by the City of West Sacramento to approve all consent items, seconded by YCFC&WCD and unanimously approved.

Absent: City of Davis, RD 150, RD 730, RD 765, RD 785, RD 1600

6. UPDATE ON WATER LEGISLATION, REGULATORY & DELTA ISSUES,

Adam Robin, Legislative Affairs Director gave updates on the following pertinent legislative and regulatory issues related to water and groundwater.

Regulatory Updates

Bay-Delta

State and Federal Administration worked over a period of years to develop voluntary agreements to implement the required update to the State Water Board Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. These voluntary agreement would be adopted in lieu of the impaired flow proposals previous recommended by the State Water Board staff. Currently the voluntary agreements are on hold. In late February, the Trump Administration issued new biological opinions in response to lawsuits from the Newsom Administration and a variety of NGO groups and that litigation process continues. While a preliminary injunction was granted in part through the end of May, the elements of that injunction has run its course and the buyouts are now in effect. A supplemental briefing may result in additional orders, but Adam did not have an update at this time. It's important to note that both the State and Federal administration have expressed an interest in going back to the voluntary agreement approach. Coordination is still happening at an operational level and the parties are discussing other ways that they could return to the table. Legal counsel O'Brien added debriefing has been completed on the supplemental order issued a couple of weeks ago and a final decision on the preliminary injunction is expected any day.

Federal Waters

The definition of waters of the U.S. under the Federal Clean Water Act has been under discussion for decades. A series of Supreme Court decisions had led to a variety of regulatory definitions. During the 2nd Obama Administration there was a proposed Federal definition that raised a lot of consternation from the agricultural community. In late April, the Trump Administration finalized a navigable waters protection rule that updates the definition of Federal waters. This matters to a wide variety of regulated parties, such as agriculture, because it defines the scope of Federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. On May 1st, seventeen states, including California, challenged the proposed final Federal rule on a variety of procedural and substantive ground. No resolution is expected in the short-term. Adam explained how California's rule builds on Federal definition that can include not only surface water but groundwater protection as well. This is relevant for agriculture because it does include a variety of exemptions and exceptions for ordinary farming activities and prior converted wetlands.

2020 Legislative Updates:

State Budget

The Legislature adjourned unexpectedly for 5-6 weeks in mid-March in response to COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place mandates. This came at a time when they are typically very engaged in developing the details of the coming fiscal year State budget. Right now Sacramento leaders are grappling with how to close a \$54 billion budget deficit, in the context of a State budget that was proposed to be just over \$220 billion. Today is the deadline for the legislature to adopt a budget in order to meet the Governor's deadline to sign and approve a budget by July 1st. Adam noted that the budget that is adopted today will not likely be the final budget. This will be a dynamic conversation until August as it relates to the broad outlines of the State budget. Hard choices will have to be made with a \$54 billion deficit.

Groundwater - GSA Related Legislative Updates

In the overall grim budget picture there are a few positive items of note:

- DWR will be receiving \$9 million in general funds to provide 37 new positions to fill field technical assistance and GSP evaluation roles.
- An additional \$130 million in combined Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 funds are available for multi-benefit flood projects. There are five named projects and three of them are in Yolo County: Yolo Bypass Phase 1 Implementation, Knights Landing Outfall Gates Improvement, and \$2 million for DWR's work in the Cache Creek Settling Basin.

Bonds

- Conversations are ongoing for a potential resources bond for the November 2020 ballot. It is less likely because it is unclear whether anyone wants to take on additional debt at this point. The last bond voters rejected in March was a \$15 billion school construction bond. Adam should have more information in September.
- There has been a notable pivot from talking about these as climate resilience bonds to economic stimulus bonds due to the jobs associated with these types of investments. NCWA continues to lobby for Northern California water priorities. NCWA wants to ensure that any planning or implementation money provided to GSA's not be limited to critically overdrafted basins.
- The majority of non-COVID-19 related policy measures have been shut down for the year. NCWA is tracking about 10% of the measures that they were previously tracking.

Adam answered questions from the Board about Chrome-6 MCL updates and DWR's Cache Creek Settling Basin (CCSB) funding. The State Water Resources Control Board issued a white paper a few months ago accepting technical and economic feasibility for future MCL. Adam did not have a specific updates at this time, but can be prepared to give an update to the Board in September. CCSB funds will be used to address sedimentation issues and a Regional Water Board Compliance order.

7. **PRESENTATION: CAPSTONE OF CIVIC SPARK FELLOW**, Brooke Ely

Kristin informed that Civic Spark is an AmeriCorps program that matches fellows with project partners to serve on at least one project that benefits at least one local public agency. Max Stevenson submitted an application on behalf of the YSGA. Brooke Ely is an Environmental Engineer who has been working for the YSGA for the past nine months. Her work with the groundwater monitoring program is concluding soon. Brooke will give a presentation on what she has accomplished. The main goal has been to improve the well monitoring network through coordination and communication with entities in Yolo County to identify current and future monitoring plans. She assisted with collecting data from entities and populating that information in the WRID, creating well location maps and systematically identifying and labeling representative wells in the network. She elaborated on the specifics of her activities. Jim Frame continues to survey and benchmark wells for the database as

well. She displayed some of the maps created to illustrate this information for the GSP. Next steps were outlined for well database management, stakeholder engagement and future tasks. Brooke's PPT is included in the June Board presentation materials on the YSGA website - <https://www.yologroundwater.org/board-of-directors>. Kristin commended Brooke on her excellent work during her fellowship.

8. PRESENTATION: LESSONS LEARNED FROM YUBA SUBBASIN, Jim Blanke

Kristin introduced Jim Blanke, Woodard & Curran, who is the consultant working with the Yuba Subbasins to develop their GSP. Kristin asked Jim to share Yuba's observations and lesson's learned in developing their GSP that has been submitted to DWR. Jim's detailed PPT is available as part of the June Board materials posted on the YSGA's website. He compared Sacramento Valley conditions to the very different issues in the San Joaquin Valley subbasins. Sacramento Valley focus is related to healthy aquifer conditions vs critically overdrafted basin issues: shallow wells, groundwater dependent ecosystems, interconnected surface water, and subsidence and water quality.

He emphasized the importance of sequencing activities: establish outreach, develop a shared understanding of the subbasin, accept the tools/models needed for analysis, develop management, and develop project and management actions. Regionally accepted groundwater models are critical for quantification and early buy-in on the tool is beneficial. Models can support a variety of other planning efforts as well and they benefit from coordinated development and maintenance. A key component in SGMA is proactive outreach to a broad spectrum of stakeholders to ensure that they are heard either in a public or one-on-one setting. Being open and transparent on assumptions and limitations is also important for future communications. It is important to follow through on data gaps. He discussed the challenging data gaps with domestic wells. He commended the YSGA and Brooke Ely for her work in this regard.

In the Yuba subbasin, identifying groundwater dependent ecosystems was challenging when the dataset had no knowledge of the source of water. They had to consider using the best available science through other State and local agencies for identification. DWR's Natural Communities Commonly Associated with Groundwater, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy and other non-governmental organizations have developed guidance tools and documents to assist with identification. Jim also discussed depletion of inter-connected surface water and the challenges to identifying what is "significant and unreasonable".

Jim explained how developing projects and management actions to incorporate activities could achieve both sustainability, fill data gaps and address issues from the GSP process. He recommended setting up a structure for implementation and beginning annual reporting early (April 1st deadline). Partnering with the State, other entities and neighboring subbasins is essential and identifying activities with multiple purposes and possible cost sharing opportunities.

Jim was asked whether they had to consider issues of intermittent streams and the depletion of inter-connected surface waters. Yuba did not have this issue. One Board member commented that she appreciated the consideration of adding a non-regulatory threshold to guide management. It is very sensible, practical and it's something that the Yolo GSP should consider doing. Jim summarized some of the comments received since their GSP was submitted to DWR.

9. UPDATE ON GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (GSP) DEVELOPMENT, Kristin Sicke, YCFC&WCD, discussed the written agenda report on the items outlined below. The GSP technical team, GEI and SEI, are continuing to write content for sections of the Plan. Monitoring wells are being videologged and new wells are being installed through DWR Technical Support Services. The well surveying effort will be complete by the fall. We are expending our DWR Grant funds for the well monitoring component. We are still working with entities for the selection of representative wells for the monitoring network. A Technical Advisory Committee was established by the Working Group in May to work through some focused technical aspects of the Plan. Their first meeting will be the week of July 6th. The draft Communication and Engagement Plan should be posted to the website by the end of June. This will be a living document that will be updated regularly. The Sustainable Management Criteria workshops have been pushed back to August/September 2020.

- a. Water Budget
- b. Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model
- c. Stakeholder Communication and Engagement
- d. Groundwater Monitoring and Report
- e. Surface Water and Groundwater Modeling
- f. Sustainable Management Criteria

10. MEMBERS' REPORTS and FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – Nothing discussed.

- a. "White" Area Annexation
- b. White Paper on Areas of Special Concern

11. NEXT MEETING – Monday, September 21, 2020, 3:15 pm

12. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Cornwell adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna L. Gentile

Board Secretary & Administrative Coordinator