



CGA/GGA Joint Technical Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

January 12, 2024 | 1:00 p.m.

In Person Meeting Locations:

122 Old Highway 99W, Maxwell, CA 95955
4485 Spring Meadows Circle, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Public participation was also available via Teams.

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introductions

Darrin Williams called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

In Attendance:

Committee Members:

GGA: Donald Bills, Emil Cavagnolo, Mark Lohse (Tavis Beynon and Shasta Banchio attended remotely as members of the public.)

CGA: Deke Dormer, Jim Wallace, Darrin Williams, Bill Vanderwaal

Others in Attendance: Lisa Hunter (GGA Staff), Carol Thomas-Keefer and Denise Carter (CGA Staff), Katherine Klug, Jeff Davids (Davids Engineering), Quinn Little (DWR), J R Abele, Rod Bradford, Bill Davis, Ryan Fulton, Steve Geiger, Arne Gustafson, Leah Jackson, Toni Longley, Jered Shipley, John McHugh

2. Approval of Minutes

a. ***December 1, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes (CGA, GGA TAC)**

The GGA did not take action to approve the minutes due to lack of a quorum.

On motion made by Mr. Dormer, seconded by Mr. Vanderwaal, the CGA TAC approved the December 1, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Dormer, Vanderwaal, Wallace, Williams

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

3. Period of Public Comment

None.

4. Update on Water Year 2023 Annual Report

Ms. Lisa Hunter reported that the Annual Report must be submitted to DWR by April 1. The consultant team (Davids Engineering and Luhdorff & Scalmanini) are working to compile the report and will provide a presentation to the Joint TAC at its February meeting. Ms. Katie Klug, Davids Engineering (DE), noted that they have been collecting water level data and calculating change in storage, and this data will be reviewed in detail at the February Joint TAC meeting.

5. Colusa Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

a. GSP revision schedule overview

Ms. Hunter reported that the required revisions to the Colusa Subbasin GSP must be submitted to DWR by no later than April 23, 2024. She added that this tight schedule requires the CGA and GGA board and stakeholders to quickly address the deficiencies in the Plan and provide feedback and direction to Davids Engineering in developing the Plan revisions. Ms. Klug then reported that the two GSAs held their first consultation with DWR staff on December 19, 2023. She noted that DWR had identified the following deficiencies: 1) Overdraft – the GSP does not include a reasonable assessment of overdraft conditions and reasonable means to mitigate overdraft; 2) groundwater levels – the GSP does not establish sustainable management criteria for chronic lowering of groundwater levels in a manner compliant with GSP regulations; and 3) subsidence – the GSP does not establish sustainable management criteria for land subsidence in a manner compliant with GSP regulations. She noted that DWR explained that existing conditions do not indicate that the subbasin is on track to achieve sustainability, and plans to address or mitigate those conditions must be better defined. She also stated that DWR is seeking more immediate plans for projects and management actions to mitigate subsidence, overdraft and groundwater level decline. DWR also pointed out that the GSP must address domestic well impacts, and the GSAs will be responsible for those impacts if the management criteria are set below pre-SGMA levels. Based on the meeting with DWR staff, the revisions to the GSP must ensure that the projects and management actions sufficiently address overdraft, address domestic well impacts, and address and mitigate subsidence; additionally, the method for determining overdraft must be revised based on more recent data. Ms. Klug stated that those would be the primary areas for discussion today, and future meetings would focus on groundwater levels and sustainable management criteria, as well as addressing subsidence.

b. *Discussion and potential recommendation to GSAs on approaches for estimating overdraft

Ms. Klug reviewed SGMA regulations relating to overdraft, including quantification and mitigation measures. She stated that DE is proposing that overdraft in the Colusa Subbasin be calculated based on the period of 2016 through 2021, not only because the period reflects recent conditions but also because water conditions were similar to those during the 50-year period of 1966 through 2015. It also excludes the extraordinary conditions in 2022. Ms. Klug then reviewed the proposed change to the method of determining overdraft, explaining that overdraft in the original GSP was determined through use of the groundwater model, but that model only ran data through 2015. DE now proposes to use a groundwater level approach, using actual changes in groundwater levels. Other GSAs had used this method for calculating overdraft, and DWR indicated it was an acceptable method. Ms. Klug then stated that the new overdraft calculation using the groundwater level method for the period 2016 through 2021 indicated an overdraft of -59,000 acre-feet per year (AFY), compared to -28,000 AFY as indicated in the original GSP based on the model results (nearly double the original overdraft calculation). Discussion followed regarding the proposed revision to the overdraft estimate, and it was agreed that the GSAs and DE would move forward with the proposed change in estimating overdraft and would discuss further with DWR to ensure concurrence, prior to discussing with GSA boards.

c. *Discussion and potential recommendation to GSAs on updates to Projects and Management Actions

Ms. Klug stated that projects and managements actions (PMAs) are needed to address the revised overdraft, and, while the original GSP includes a variety of PMAs, these would require revisions to add timelines, benefits and project specifics to demonstrate their impact on overdraft. She noted that PMAs would also be required for domestic well impact mitigation and to address subsidence, and stated that DWR expects to see strong commitments toward measures to mitigate subsidence and well impacts in the event that projects alone are not sufficient, especially in the near term, including demand management. Ms. Klug then reviewed three basic options for developing the required management actions, including a “do nothing” approach, a “formal agreement” approach to provide formal agreement on how and when the actions would be developed and in place, and a “fully develop” approach to have the required actions developed and ready or nearly ready to implement. She noted that a “do nothing” approach would likely not satisfy DWR’s requirements, and a “fully develop” approach may not be feasible within the short timeline in which the revisions need to be submitted to DWR. She recommended the “formal agreement approach” as the best opportunity to present a firm commitment to develop the management actions but allowing sufficient time to engage stakeholders and address legal, financial and operational issues. In response to a question from Mr. Wallace, Ms. Klug stated that a similar “formal agreement” approach was successfully presented in another basin’s GSP revisions, and the revised GSP was recently approved. She then presented a draft of a similar agreement that might serve as a basis for the Colusa Subbasin agreement structure. Following additional discussions regarding the potential sufficiency of a formal agreement to satisfy DWR’s requirements, Mr. Jeff Davids stated that he felt that a draft agreement could be presented to the group by next month if this proposed approach is acceptable. Considerable discussion followed regarding potential components of a well mitigation program as well as demand management options. Following additional discussion, the Joint TAC concurred with moving forward with the “formal agreement” approach and having further discussions with DWR at the next consultation meeting.

Ms. Klug then reviewed next steps and timelines, including the upcoming next meeting with DWR, special Joint CGA/GGA board meeting, and items for the next Joint TAC meeting.

d. *Discussion and potential recommendation to GSAs on monitoring network and basis of Sustainable Management Criteria for land subsidence

This item was held for discussion at the February 9 Joint TAC meeting.

6. Member Reports and Comments

None.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 9, 2024.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.