

TO: Water Resources Advisory Committee

FROM: Brendan Clark, Supervising Water Resources Engineer

DATE: September 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Item 6: Ongoing Updates

Recommendation

Receive updates on various ongoing efforts.

Discussion

c) Groundwater Management Efforts

On December 18, 2019, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the Final Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) 2019 Prioritization¹ that designates each groundwater basin and subbasin (collectively, basins) as high, medium, low or very low priority. Groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) are required to develop and implement groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) for each high or medium priority basin.

BASIN UPDATES:

Basin	Update:
<p>Los Osos Basin</p>	<p>Los Osos Area Subbasin (adjudicated area) is designated as a very low priority basin subject to critical conditions of overdraft. SGMA does not apply to the portions of Los Osos Basin that are adjudicated provided that certain requirements are met (Water Code §10720.8). The fringe areas of the Los Osos Area Subbasin are not subject to the requirements of SGMA due to the DWR prioritization. The Los Osos Basin Management Committee (BMC) oversees implementation of the Los Osos Basin Plan for the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At its June 21, 2023, meeting, the BMC approved the 2022 Annual Monitoring Report and authorized submission to the Court. • At its August 16, 2023, meeting, the BMC received a presentation from County Planning on the Los Osos Water Offset Study and approved re-inclusion of the 3rd Well in Program C. • At its August 29, 2023, Special meeting the BMC authorized additional funding to allow for the construction of the Skyline Monitoring Well. This new monitoring well will improve the BMC’s ability to monitor seawater intrusion in the Lower Aquifer. • The next regularly scheduled BMC meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2023.

¹ <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Basin-Prioritization>

	<p>Warden Creek Subbasin is designated as a very low priority and is not subject to the requirements of SGMA due to the DWR prioritization.</p> <p>For more information, please visit: www.slocounty.ca.gov/losososbasin</p>
<p>Atascadero Basin</p>	<p>Atascadero Basin is designated as a very low priority basin and is not subject to the requirements of SGMA due to the DWR prioritization; however, the Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Executive Committee (EC) elected to develop, and submit to DWR, a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) by January 31, 2022. The GSP was submitted on January 30, 2022 and is currently under review by DWR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional meetings are scheduled at this time. <p>For more information or to view meeting material, visit: www.AtascaderoBasin.com</p>
<p>Santa Maria Basin</p>	<p>Santa Maria Area Subbasin (adjudicated area) is designated as a very low priority basin. The adjudicated areas of the Santa Maria Basin are managed by the Northern Cities Management Area, Nipomo Mesa Management Area, and Santa Maria Valley Management Area. The Santa Maria Basin Fringe Areas – County of San Luis Obispo GSA is the GSA for the non-adjudicated fringe areas of the basin within the County. This subbasin consists of an adjudicated area and other non-adjudicated fringe areas. However, only the priority of the non-adjudicated fringe areas was assessed, which include the Ziegler Canyon Fringe Area in San Luis Obispo County and other fringe areas in Santa Barbara County.</p> <p>Arroyo Grande Subbasin is designated as a very low priority basin and is not subject to the requirements of SGMA due to the DWR prioritization; however, the County and City of Arroyo Grande as GSAs in the basin have prepared a GSP. DWR plans to fly Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Surveys over the Arroyo Grande Subbasin to collect geophysical data in April. More information can be found at the following website: https://water.ca.gov/programs/sgma/aem</p> <p>For more information, please visit: www.slocounty.ca.gov/santamariabasin or www.slocounty.ca.gov/agbasin</p>
<p>Paso Basin</p>	<p>Paso Basin is designated as a high priority basin subject to critical conditions of overdraft. The Paso Basin – County of San Luis Obispo GSA and three other GSAs within the basin entered into an agreement to develop a single GSP for the basin and coordinate via the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee (PBCC).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PBCC and Paso Basin GSAs submitted the amended GSP to DWR by the July 20, 2022 deadline which addresses deficiencies identified in DWR's initial assessment of the Paso Basin GSP. On March 3, 2023, DWR issued its recommended "approval" of the GSP and the final approval with corrective actions was received on June 20, 2023. • On June 6, 2023, the County Board of Supervisors voted to withdraw from serving as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) within the Estrella-El

	<p>Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD) boundary and on July 26, 2023, the EPCWD GSA participated in the PBCC meeting as a Member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) for the 1) Expanded Monitoring Network, 2) Blended Irrigated Water Supply, and 3) Multibenefit Irrigated Land Repurposing (MILR) Program continue to meet to provide guidance and feedback on implementation of grand-funded projects and programs. TAC reports and recommendations are provided at PBCC meetings. • The County submitted an application for \$8.89M of grant funds under the California Department of Conservation (DOC) Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program block grant to develop and implement a MILR Program, however, on June 12, 2023, the DOC informed the County the proposal was not selected, but encouraged the County to reapply should the program receive additional funding. • The PBCC will be developing responses for review at its September 7, 2023 Special meeting in response to the Grand Jury report entitled “Can One Year Wash Away the Paso Robles Basin’s Water Worries?” which are due September 21, 2023. • The County Board of Supervisors approved a response this Grand Jury Report on August 22, 2023. Item 4 of the agenda: https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/meeting/Details/1590 • On July 26, 2023, the PBCC approved the submittal of a request for proposals (RFP) for the Blended Irrigation Water Supply Project feasibility and preliminary engineering study. Proposals were due August 28, 2023 and this project is grant-funded. • On July 26, 2023, the PBCC directed staff to develop an RFP to review fee structure and rates for the MILR and Blended projects, including an administrative fee component and implementation schedule. • A Special PBCC meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2023, and the next regular PBCC meeting is on October 25, 2023. <p>For more information, please visit: www.slocounty.ca.gov/pasobasin</p>
<p>Cuyama Basin</p>	<p>Cuyama Basin is designated as a high priority basin subject to critical conditions of overdraft. The Cuyama Basin GSA was formed through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and is an independent agency governed by a Board of Directors for Cuyama Basin. An amended GSP was submitted to DWR on July 20, 2022 and on March 3, 2023, DWR issued a recommended “approval” of the GSP. The final approval with proposed corrective actions was received on May 25, 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GSA is implementing pumping reductions for 2023 and 2024 in the Central Management Area and set final allocations at the May 3, 2023, Board meeting. • On July 12, 2023, the GSA Board reviewed a plan/schedule for GSP policy items to be updated by January 2025, including public workshops. • The GSA Board adopted a well registration program. • Implementation of grant-funded projects continues including the planned installation of up to seven dedicated monitoring wells and 3-4 piezometers. • Efforts to identify potential un-reporting pumpers in the basin continue.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next Cuyama Basin GSA Advisory and Board meetings are scheduled for August 31, 2023 and September 6, 2023, respectively. <p>For more information, please visit: www.cuyamabasin.org</p>
<p>San Luis Obispo Basin</p>	<p>San Luis Obispo Basin is designated as a high priority basin. The County and City of San Luis Obispo GSAs, in coordination with other basin partners through the Groundwater Sustainability Commission (GSC) developed and submitted a GSP for the SLO Basin to DWR by the January 31, 2022 statutory deadline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 27, 2023, DWR issued an “approved” determination for the SLO Valley GSP. DWR proposed five corrective actions and staff will be addressing these ahead of the next five-year GSP review due January 26, 2027. The next scheduled GSC meeting is September 14, 2023. <p>Interested parties are encouraged to participate in the basin specific efforts by attending workshops and meetings of the GSC for the San Luis Obispo Basin.</p> <p>For more information, please visit: https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/slobasin</p>
<p>Adelaida Area</p>	<p>The Adelaida Area is not a DWR designated groundwater basin; however, the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is coordinating with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resources Conservation District (RCD) to conduct a hydrogeologic study within the Adelaida area. The goal of the study is to provide a better understanding of the of the groundwater conditions in the Adelaida area so that informed decisions can be made about managing local water resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On June 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to proceed with Task 2 which consists of new data collection, including but not limited to: groundwater level data, water quality sampling, and surface-water monitoring. Staff returned to the Board on January 25, 2022 to authorize a Joint Funding Agreement between the District and USGS to begin work on Task 2. County Staff, USGS, and the RCD are currently working with landowners in the study area to complete Task 2, which includes establishing a groundwater level monitoring network, water quality sampling, and surface water monitoring. USGS has established the initial groundwater level monitoring network, installed a stream gage along the Paso Robles Creek, and will continue to collect groundwater and surface water data. <p>For more information, please visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/adelaidastudy https://www.usgs.gov/centers/ca-water/science/evaluation-groundwater-resources-adelaida-area-san-luis-obispo-county?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects

County SGMA website – The County has a SGMA website with an interactive mapping tool available for each medium and high priority basin in the county. Residents can verify whether a specific parcel is within a priority basin boundary and, therefore, whether the parcel is subject to SGMA requirements. The following websites include other informative materials, such as SGMA fact sheets and recent presentation materials. Visit the websites and basin-specific page links to learn more and to sign up for the County's SGMA email list.

WRAC members and interested stakeholders are encouraged to join the various mailing lists for groundwater basin management efforts:

San Luis Obispo County's SGMA Website and Mailing List Sign-up

<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/sgma>

California Department of Water Resources (DWR) SGMA Website and Mailing List

<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management>