



CGA/GGA Joint Technical Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2023 | 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 1:13 p.m.

In Attendance:

Committee Members:

GGA: Shasta Banchio, Donald Bills, Emil Cavagnolo, Mark Lohse

CGA: Deke Dormer, Jim Wallace, Darrin Williams, Bill Vanderwaal (arrived 2:28)

Others in Attendance: Lisa Hunter (GGA Staff), Carol Thomas-Keefer and Denise Carter (CGA Staff), Katherine Klug, Jeff Davids and Grant Davids (Davids Engineering), Brandon Davison (DWR), Bill Davis, Pete Dennehy, Ryan Fulton, Casey Gudel, Arne Gustafson, Matt Hansen, Bruce Houdesheldt, Gene K. Lee, Christy Scofield, Susan Meeker

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. ***May 12, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes (GGA TAC Only)**
- b. ***August 11, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes (CGA TAC, GGA TAC)**

On motion made by Mr. Lohse, seconded by Mr. Cavagnolo, the GGA TAC approved the May 12, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Banchio, Bills, Cavagnolo, Lohse
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Beynon, Deadmond

On motion made by Mr. Lohse, seconded by Mr. Cavagnolo, the GGA TAC approved the August 11, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Banchio, Bills, Cavagnolo, Lohse
NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Beynon, Deadmond

On motion made by Mr. Wallace, seconded by Mr. Dormer, the CGA TAC approved the August 11, 2023 CGA/GGA Joint TAC Meeting Minutes on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Dormer, Wallace, Williams
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Vanderwaal

3. Period of Public Comment

None.

4. *Approval of 2024 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Lisa Hunter presented the draft meeting schedule for the Joint CGA/GGA Technical Advisory Committee for 2024. Ms. Carol Thomas-Keefer added that the committee may wish to consider adding some dates, beginning in January, in recognition of the effort that will be needed to complete the required revisions to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by April. Mr. Jim Wallace recommended adding the meeting dates of January 12 and April 12 to ensure that the Joint TAC would meet monthly to address work on the GSP revisions.

On motion made by Mr. Wallace and seconded by Mr. Dormer, the CGA TAC approved the 2024 Joint TAC meeting schedule with the addition of the meeting dates of January 12 and April 12, 2024.

AYES: Dormer, Wallace, Williams
NOES: None
ABTAIN: None
ABSENT: Vanderwaal

On motion made by Ms. Banchio and seconded by Mr. Cavagnolo, the GGA TAC approved the 2024 Joint TAC meeting schedule with the addition of the meeting dates of January 12 and April 12, 2024.

AYES: Banchio, Bills, Cavagnolo, Lohse
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Beynon, Deadmond

5. Presentation: United States Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grants

Mr. Gene K. Lee of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation provided an informative presentation on the various types of WaterSMART grants available, including details on the various grant programs, types of qualifying projects, amounts of grant funding available and non-federal matching funds required, and timelines for submitting applications. Of the various types of WaterSMART grant programs, Mr. Lee stated he thought

the Drought Response Program and Cooperative Watershed Management Program would be most applicable to the Colusa Subbasin GSP projects. He provided a number of tips for preparing a successful application and noted that the most successful applications are those with projects that meet the goals of the program. Mr. Lee also advised the GSAs to begin work early on writing grant applications. Questions followed regarding environmental compliance assistance for grant projects. Mr. Lee also noted that about 25 percent of new WaterSMART applications received funding annually.

6. Discussion: Colusa Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Incomplete Determination

Ms. Thomas-Keefer reviewed DWR's recent determination of "Incomplete" for the Colusa Subbasin GSP, noting that DWR has identified the following specific deficiencies that must be addressed in a revised GSP. The recommended corrective actions include:

- a) Re-evaluation of the overdraft conditions in the Subbasin using the most recent data, and include projects and management actions to mitigate projected overdraft;
- b) Providing a more detailed explanation and justification of the sustainable management criteria for groundwater levels, particularly minimum thresholds and measurable objectives, and quantify the effects of those criteria on beneficial uses; and
- c) Providing a more detailed explanation and justification of sustainable management criteria, monitoring method, and projects and management actions related to land subsidence.

Ms. Thomas-Keefer added that the revised GSP must be submitted by April 23, 2024. In preparation, CGA and GGA staff have requested a proposal from Davids Engineering to prepare the GSP revisions. The CGA board met earlier this week and approved the task order agreement as well as the Phase 1 task, which includes obtaining feedback from the GSAs to guide changes to management criteria. The GGA board will consider this agreement at its upcoming meeting.

Chair Williams then expressed frustration with the requirement to reevaluate overdraft conditions based on most recent data rather than historic data, since recent data shows a narrow snapshot of water use and conditions. Mr. Jeff Davids, Davids Engineering, added clarification, noting that DWR is considering the overall change in storage along with continuing evidence of subsidence in key areas, and is requiring the GSAs to better identify how those issues will be addressed and mitigated. Discussion followed regarding DWR's comments and expectations in the revisions. In response to Chair Williams' question, Mr. Davids stated that his firm is assisting various other basins with "Incomplete" or "Inadequate" determinations, include Chowchilla, Madera, Kern Groundwater Authority, and several other local subbasins in coordination with Luhdorff & Scalmanini. He noted that domestic well mitigation and demand management are common issues that the GSPs must address. Ms. Katie Klug, Davids Engineering, added that meetings with DWR staff will assist CGA and GGA in understanding the extent to which the GSAs must address the deficiencies and what timeframes will be acceptable for implementing certain management criteria. She also stated that, in working with various other basins that have received "Inadequate" determinations, she believes that achieving DWR's approval and remaining within DWR's oversight will ultimately be less stringent than having the State Water Resources Control Board assume control.

Additional discussion followed regarding domestic well mitigation, with questions regarding depth, age and condition of impacted wells, appropriate percentage of wells that could be impacted under specific

minimum thresholds, and level of required mitigation. Ms. Klug stated that this was a common concern in other GSPs under revision, and the matter of domestic well mitigation should be further discussed with DWR in developing the Plan revisions. Ms. Hunter suggested that any questions for DWR from TAC members should be addressed to her or to Ms. Thomas-Keefer so they could be included in those discussions. Several meetings with DWR were expected, probably on a monthly basis between December and March or April. The Joint TAC would also continue to review the proposed GSP revisions and provide feedback and recommendations to the GSA boards and to Davids Engineering over the next few months.

7. Discussion: Prioritization of Technical Tasks through Groundwater Sustainability Plan five-year update

Ms. Hunter reported that the purpose of this agenda item was to continue the review that the committee began in May to assist the GSAs in prioritizing GSP implementation tasks; however, the TAC and the GSAs now have a new immediate focus in preparing the revisions to the GSP. Although many of the prioritized items will be required for compliance or will be changed or modified based on GSP revisions, Ms. Hunter recommended that this item be temporarily removed from the TAC agenda until the GSP has been updated and the prioritization of technical tasks can be re-evaluated. The committee concurred.

8. Update on Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Application Feedback

Ms. Thomas-Keefer reported that the CGA and GGA chairs and staff met with DWR representatives to review the unsuccessful SGMA Round 2 Implementation grant application and received considerable feedback from DWR. Chair Williams stated that the meeting was lengthy and very informative, with DWR explaining various errors and omissions in the application, including use of an incorrect template and lack of appropriate maps and attachments. DWR also indicated that, just before the awards were made, the available grant funding was reduced by \$69 million. Ultimately, DWR explained that the Colusa Subbasin project components were good, but errors and missing information reduced scores, and the grant process was so highly competitive that only the highest-scoring applications were successful.

Chair Williams also reported that DWR staff also underscored that the GSAs should work as best they could to update GSPs and remain under DWR's oversight, as State Board control would be much more stringent and potentially costly.

9. Update on Water Year 2023 Annual Report

Ms. Hunter reported that she and Ms. Thomas-Keefer are now meeting regularly with Davids Engineering on preparation of the 2023 Annual Report. Since the GSP work is being conducted at the same time, there is some common collection of data that will result in some cost savings. Ms. Hunter also added that DWR has released a new guidance document with a new template for annual reports, so the 2023 report will reflect this guidance and look somewhat different from the 2022 report.

10. Member Reports and Comments

Chair Williams reported that he has reviewed the 2023 California Water Plan update; he indicated that it is interesting reading. He also pointed out that there is minimal public participation in the local GSA board meetings, and he had looked into public outreach activities by other GSAs. He noted that some larger or more complicated basins had formed various committees or advisory groups to engage various community

stakeholder groups. Discussion followed regarding community engagement activities, and Ms. Denise Carter mentioned the potential for requesting outreach support through DWR's Facilitation Support Services. Ms. Hunter and Ms. Thomas-Keefer agreed that was an option, if the GSAs could identify the specific needs and assistance to request.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 12, 2023.

12. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

DRAFT