

MEMO: SVGSP Planning Committee Update, TAC Update

To: SVGMD, Plumas County

From: Jenny Gant and Judie Talbot (outreach facilitator)

Date: April 14, 2021

Re: Sierra Valley GSP – Planning Committee and Technical Advisory Committee updates

The Planning Committee is submitting the following informational items as a monthly update for April 2021.

PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The SVGSP Planning Committee met on April 1, 2021 and addressed the following items:

1. Adding Dwight Smith to the Planning Committee
2. Preparing for the Public Workshop with the Subcommittee members.
3. Ensuring the all Board members comments are addressed during monthly briefings.
4. Develop agenda and preview PowerPoint presentations for April 12th TAC.
5. Look to hold May 10th TAC meeting as in-person with zoom option.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) UPDATE

February 8th TAC Meeting

The sixth meeting of the Sierra Valley GSP Technical Advisory Committee occurred on Monday, April 12, 2021 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., as a virtual meeting with a satellite location for in-person participation. There were 23 participants: 16 TAC members and 7 project team members. Eighteen people joined the meeting via Zoom and five participated in person.

The meeting consisted of:

Project Updates on First Draft of GSP Text

- The GSP document will provide three levels of drafts: First Draft, Second Draft and Public Review draft. Each draft provides and opportunity for further comment and refinement.
- First drafts were released for the sections on Groundwater Quality and Subsidence. Comments are due by April 30, 2021

Project Update on Public Workshop

The Workshop Subcommittee is comprised of Tracy Schohr, Lucy Blake, Greg Hinds and Planning Committee members. They have met three times and have decided on offering two options for the May workshop. Both sessions will be exactly the same and offer two dates for community members to participate:

- Saturday, May 8, 2021 at the Loyalton Community Park, from 10 a.m. – noon
- Monday, May 10, 2021 at the Sierra Christian Church, from 6 – 8 p.m. (following the TAC meeting)

Continued Discussion on Groundwater Levels

Rich Pauloo, LWA, recapped and expanded on the March presentation on groundwater levels and trends in Sierra Valley basin. Referencing the work of Bachand and Associates, their report suggests that, on average, about 2.5 TAF (thousand acre feet) more of groundwater is pumped than what is currently sustainable. In discussing the three primary categories of groundwater use (domestic, agricultural, ecological), meeting participants were asked to identify Undesirable Results for the different categories. The following responses were provided:

- Drying up of seasonal ponds
- Curtailment beyond normal conservation levels for Sierraville Public Utility District; inadequate water supply for fire response
- Domestic wells going dry or needing to be deepened
- Current agricultural production is not viable
- Prohibitive costs for agricultural pumping (especially with earlier pumping)
- Reduction in overall wetland habitat
- Reduced surface water quality

One hope for management actions that would increase groundwater levels is to pursue multiple-benefit projects.

Modeling and the Sierra Valley Water Budget

Gus Tolley, DBS&A, reviewed the characteristics of models:

- Drawing on a variety of information sources
- Able to analyze different spatial and temporal aspects of a system
- Consider “what if” situations

As was described at an earlier TAC meeting, a water budget describes three areas of the hydrologic system: surface water, soil (land surface), and groundwater (aquifer). Similarly, the Sierra Valley Integrated Hydrologic Model combines three different models:

- Upper Watershed Model (PRMS): which looks at precipitation and runoff (mostly surface water)
- Soil-Water Budget (SWMB): that represents soil moisture, recharge and agricultural pumping needs
- Groundwater-Surface Water Model (MODFLOW): that calculates groundwater levels and streamflow

Once the models are calibrated to conditions in Sierra Valley, they can be used to characterize conditions throughout Sierra Valley and simulate the outcomes for different management actions and projects.

Next TAC Meetings

The next TAC meeting occurs on Monday, May 8, 2021 at the Sierra Christian Church from 1 – 4 p.m. The room will be slightly reconfigured to allow for social distancing. The evening option for the Public Workshop will take place from 6- 8 p.m., after the TAC meeting and also at the Church.

April TAC Agenda Concepts

- Interconnected Surface Water (ISW)
- Groundwater Storage