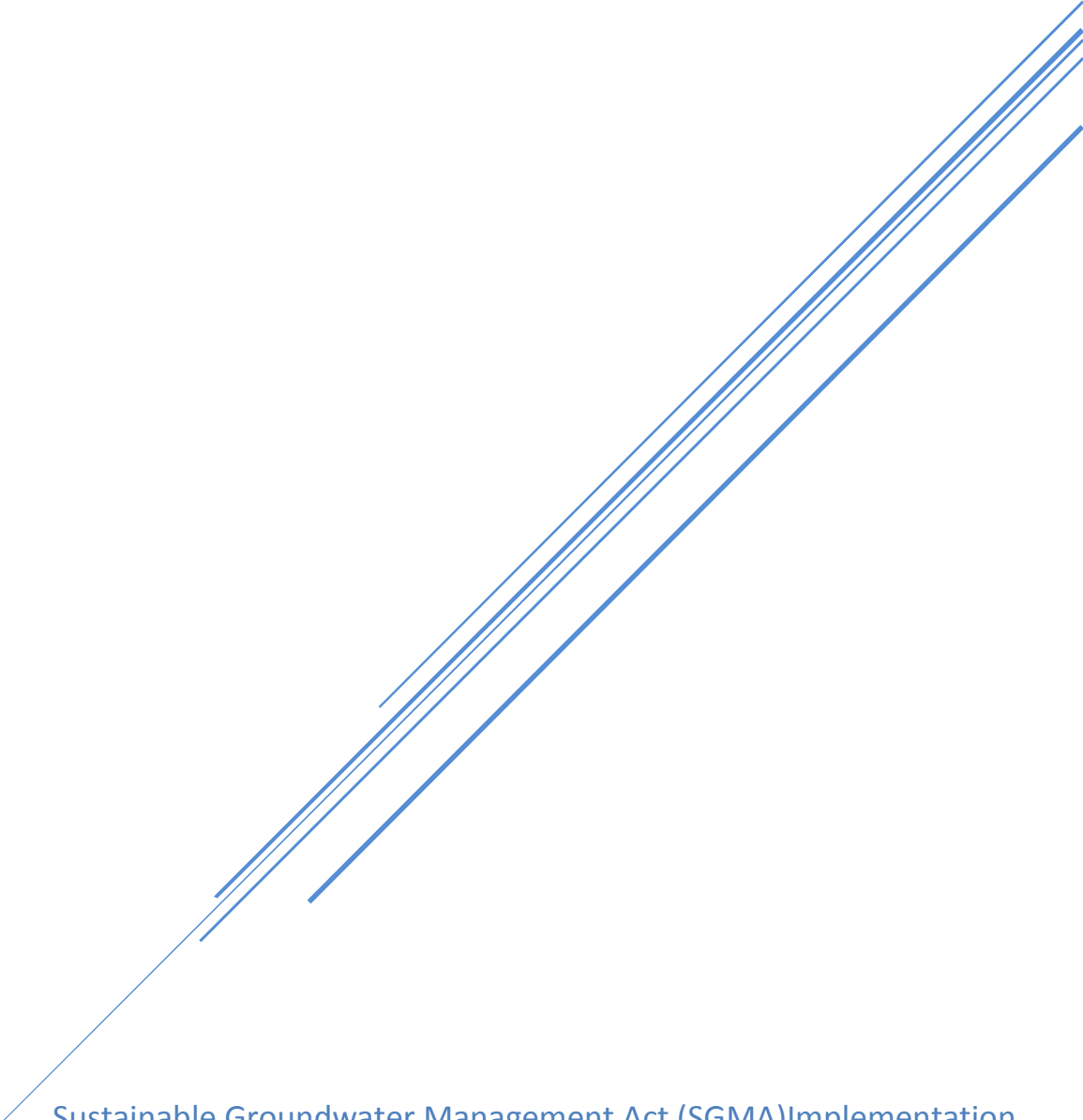


SIERRA VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN

Stakeholder Communications & Engagement Plan



Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation
Initial Version: December 5, 2019
Updated: December 30, 2020

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BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), signed by Governor Brown in 2014, is to ensure local sustainable groundwater management in medium- and high-priority groundwater basins statewide. California’s Department of Water Resources (DWR) has determined that the Sierra Valley Groundwater basin located in Plumas and Sierra counties is medium priority and subject to SGMA.

SGMA Milestones:



DESIRED OUTCOMES & GOALS OF THE PLAN

Plan Goals: SGMA requires Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to consider the interests of beneficial uses and users of groundwater and encourages involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin during Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) preparation and implementation (Water Code Sections 10723.8(a) (4) and 10723.2).

The goals of the Stakeholder Communications & Engagement Plan (Plan) are to:

1. Inform stakeholders and enhance their understanding about water and groundwater resources in the Sierra Valley basin, the purpose and need for sustainable groundwater management, the benefits of sustainable groundwater management, and the need for a GSP.
2. Engage a diverse group of stakeholders throughout the GSP preparation and implementation process and promote informed feedback from stakeholders.
3. Employ a variety of outreach methods that encourage broad participation and make participation accessible.
4. Respond to stakeholder concerns and provide accurate and up-to-date information.
5. Manage communications and engagement in a manner that provides maximum value to stakeholders and constitutes an efficient use of the GSAs’ resources.

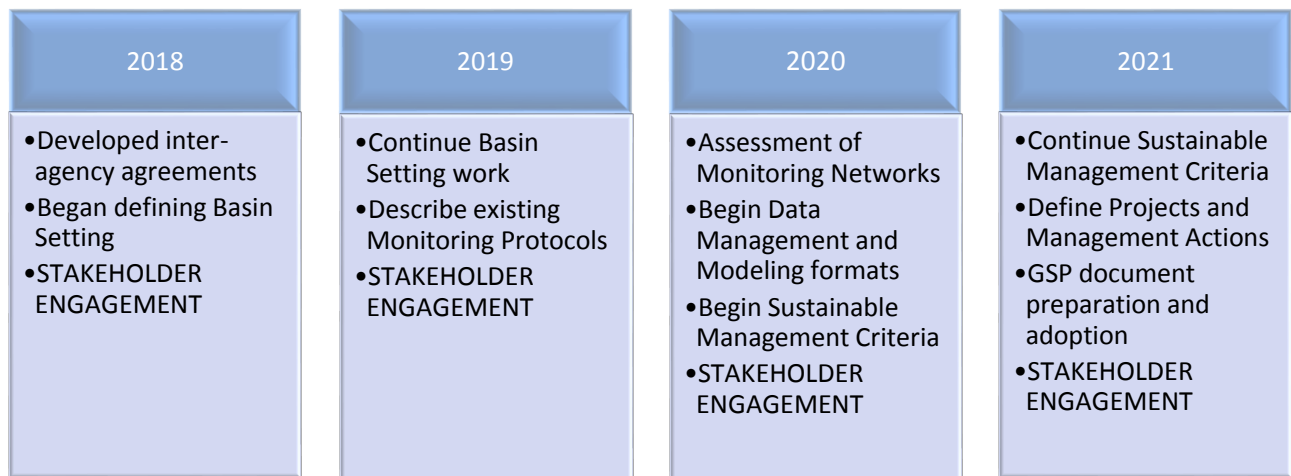
Time Period: This Stakeholder Communications & Engagement Plan is intended to cover communications and engagement through January 2022, which is when the GSP is due to be submitted to DWR. Since this is a multi-year effort, this Plan may be amended, as needed.

Outcomes: The desired outcome of this Plan is to achieve adoption of the GSP with input from stakeholders in consideration of the economy, culture, and environment within the basin. In practical terms, the GSP regulations require a communications section of the GSP that must include the following:

- Explanation of the GSAs’ decision-making process
- Identification of opportunities for public engagement and involvement
- Description of GSAs’ encouragement of active involvement of diverse elements of the population within basin
- Method the GSAs shall follow to inform the public about GSP progress

This Plan forms the basis for the communications section of the GSP.

The timelines below illustrate the concurrent processes of stakeholder engagement and other SGMA activities in the basin:



GSP Planning Timeline and Stakeholder Communication at-a-Glance

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT FOR GSP ELEMENTS

To engage the public in development of a GSP that is science-based, complex, technical, and includes achievable outcomes, the GSAs will strive to meet the following overall objectives:

- Educate the public, communicating what may often be complex concepts in a straightforward, comprehensible manner.
- Show how the input received has been incorporated into the plan or process, or explain if comments cannot be addressed in the plan or process.
- Remain focused on results and outcomes to develop a GSP that is effective and compliant with SGMA.

It is anticipated that the GSP will contain five chapters:

1. Introduction (background and administrative requirements)
2. Plan Area and Basin Setting (description of groundwater basin setting)
3. Sustainable Management Criteria (defining local sustainability)
4. Projects and Management Action (to achieve sustainability)
5. Plan Implementation (working the plan)

The process for developing the GSP will involve simultaneous efforts regarding technical and planning aspects.

Technical Considerations

The technical consulting team will lead efforts on:

- A. Data collection and analysis
- B. Development of hydrologic models
- C. Evaluation and expansion of monitoring networks
- D. Development of Sustainable Management Criteria (minimum thresholds, measurable objectives and interim milestones)
- E. Identification of planning scenarios
- F. Initial drafting of GSP text

Planning and Management Considerations

Working with the GSAs, planning partners and basin stakeholders, the technical consulting team will support:

- A. Development of a sustainability goal and definition of significant and unreasonable undesirable results
- B. Assessment and enhancement of existing monitoring networks and data management system
- C. Identification and evaluation of proposed projects and management actions
- D. Development of GSP implementation costs, detailed schedule, and annual reporting to DWR.

Each element of work will include outreach with the goal of educating and engaging stakeholders on the technical and policy aspects of the GSP elements. Outreach and engagement will include a mix of communication approaches and tools. Additional details on GSP planning processes and responsibilities are contained in Appendix C.

SGMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater as a part of GSP development and implementation. Further, as is stated in Water Code Section 10727.8, “The GSA shall encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin prior to and during the development and implementation of the GSP.” In addition, the GSP Regulations require that GSAs document in a communications section of the GSP the opportunities for public engagement and active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin.

The Plan also identifies a variety of communication methods (see page 12) that will be employed to address the distinct interests of each group and provides a schedule of activities (see Appendix A) that clearly outlines the timeline for Plan implementation.

RELEVANT PARTICIPANTS/POTENTIAL AUDIENCES IN THE SIERRA VALLEY BASIN

Participating GSAs and Interagency Coordination

There are two GSAs within the Sierra Valley Basin that are actively participating in GSP development:

- ✓ Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (District)
- ✓ Plumas County

Most of the basin is within the jurisdiction of the District. However, there is a small section of the basin outside the jurisdiction of the District and within Plumas County. Consistent with Water Code Section 10727(b), the two GSAs intend to develop a single GSP covering the entire basin.

While the GSAs are not required by SGMA to enter into a formal coordination agreement, the Sierra Valley Basin GSAs have entered into a voluntary interagency agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that specifies the GSAs’ intent to cooperatively implement SGMA.

The lands in the basin within Plumas County, but outside the jurisdiction of the District, are also within the management jurisdiction of the federal government, or more specifically, United States Forest Service (USFS) lands of the Plumas National Forest (PNF). This area within Plumas County and under the jurisdiction of the PNF is also significant to California Native Americans, including native people of the Washoe, Paiute, and Maidu Tribes, who have deep and enduring cultural connections to this area of the basin. Through stakeholder outreach and engagement, Plumas County may enter into agreements with California Native American Tribes and/or PNF, if warranted.

Interested Parties & Other Stakeholders

As required by SGMA, the GSAs must establish and maintain a list of interested parties and provide an explanation of how those interests will be considered when developing and implementing the GSP. Specifically, Water Code Section 10723.2 identifies the following parties that GSAs must consider, and these interests include, but are not limited to:

- Agricultural users of groundwater
- Domestic well owners
- Municipal well operators
- Public water systems
- Land use planning agencies
- Environmental uses of groundwater
- Surface water users
- The federal government
- California Native American Tribes
- Disadvantaged communities (including those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems).

Stakeholder Group Interests & Engagement Purpose

The following table identifies the categories of stakeholder interests and the corresponding groups that will be the focus of the GSAs’ engagement efforts. The table also specifies the anticipated appropriate level of engagement for various stakeholder groups.

Table 1. Sierra Valley Stakeholder Group Interests & Objectives of Engagement

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Anticipated Level of Engagement
<p>General Public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens groups • Community leaders • Interested individuals • Universities/Academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested Individuals on Interested Parties List maintained by GSA (District) • Upper Feather River Watershed Group 	Inform to improve public awareness of sustainable groundwater management
<p>Land Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities • Local land use agencies • Regional land use agencies • Community Service Districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Loyalton • Plumas County (Planning Department, Public Works, Environmental Health) • Sierra County (Planning & Building, Public Works, Environmental Health) 	Consult and involve to ensure land use policies are supporting GSP, and there are no conflicting policies between the GSAs / GSP and local government agencies

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Anticipated Level of Engagement
<p>Urban/ Commercial & Non-Commercial Agricultural Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water agencies • Irrigation districts • Municipal water companies • Mutual water companies • Resource conservation districts • Farmers/Farm Bureaus • Water Districts • Water-users associations • Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumas-Sierra Farm Bureau • Plumas-Sierra Cattlemen’s Association • Plumas-Sierra Cattlewomen’s Association • Plumas-Sierra County Agricultural Commissioner • Plumas-Sierra University of California Cooperative Extension • Sierra Valley Grange #466 • Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District (RCD) 	<p>Inform and involve to ensure sustainable management of groundwater and consider viability of agricultural economy</p>
<p>Other Commercial Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial and industrial self-suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Renewable Power 	<p>Inform and involve in assessing impacts to users</p>
<p>Environmental and Ecosystem Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and State agencies • Wetland managers • Environmental groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumas Audubon Society • The Nature Conservancy • Feather River Trout Unlimited • Northern Sierra Partnership • Feather River Land Trust • California Department of Fish and Wildlife, relative to Antelope Valley, Smithneck Creek, and Crocker Meadows Wildlife Areas 	<p>Inform and involve to consider/incorporate potential ecosystem impacts to GSP process</p>
<p>Surface Water Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation Districts • Water Districts • Water users associations • Agricultural users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra Valley Mutual Water Company • Little Last Chance Creek Water District • Middle Fork Feather River Decree 3095 	<p>Inform and involve to collaborate to ensure sustainable water supplies</p>
<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers of commerce • Business groups/associations • Elected officials • State Assembly members • State Senators • Economic Development Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra Institute for Community & Environment • Sierra County Board of Supervisors • Plumas County Board of Supervisors 	<p>Inform and involve to support a stable economy</p>
<p>Human Right to Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Loyalton • Sierra Brooks Water System 	<p>Inform and involve to provide safe and secure groundwater supplies to all residents and</p>

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Anticipated Level of Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communities • Small water systems • Environmental justice groups/community-based organizations • Domestic well owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra County Water Works District #1 (Calpine) • Sierraville Public Utility District • Private well owners 	communities reliant on groundwater
<p>Tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federally Recognized Tribes • Non-Federally Recognized Tribes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washoe, Paiute and Maidu Tribes • California Indian Water Commission 	Inform, involve and consult with Tribal government
<p>Federal Lands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • U.S. Bureau of Reclamation • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers • U.S. Forest Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumas National Forest • Tahoe National Forest 	Inform, involve and collaborate to ensure basin sustainability
<p>Integrated Water Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional water management groups (IRWM regions) • Flood agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group 	Inform, involve and collaborate to improve regional sustainability

DEFINING ANTICIPATED LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

The International Association for Public Participation (www.iap2.org) provides the following definitions for the terms used in Table 1 relating to anticipated levels of engagement.

Inform: “To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.” (This will be achieved primarily through email correspondence, public workshops and other outreach activities throughout GSP development.)

Consult: “To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.” (The GSAs will keep stakeholders informed, will listen to and acknowledge stakeholder concerns, and provide feedback on how stakeholder input has been addressed in the GSP. There will be opportunities for stakeholder comments at TAC meetings, public workshops, through surveys, and at GSA meetings.)

Involve: “To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.” (This will

be achieved through TAC meetings, surveys, public workshops, GSA meetings, and targeted briefings, as warranted.

Collaborate: (Adapted definition) To partner and to seek advice and innovation in formulating solutions that can be incorporated into the GSP.

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT FORUMS

Formal Requirements

SGMA sets requirement for public hearings, public notices and documentation of how stakeholders may participate in the development and implementation of the GSP. Three requirements relating specifically to GSP development include:

- Prior to beginning to develop a GSP, GSAs must publicly release a written statement of how interested parties may participate in developing and implementing the GSP. The statement must be provided to Sierra and Plumas counties and any incorporated city in the basin. This Communication and Engagement Plan serves as the statement on opportunities for participation in the GSP process.
- Prior to adopting or amending a GSP, GSAs must conduct a public hearing.
- A notice of the hearing must be issued, at least 90 days prior to the hearing, to any city or county within the area of the proposed plan or amendment.

Briefings to the GSAs at Public Meetings

Representatives of the GSAs will be briefed on the status of GSP development and activities at monthly Board meetings of the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (SVGMD). Briefings may consist of informational items, discussions and/or requests for formal motions by the Board. Pursuant to the Brown Act, SVGMD Board meetings are open to the public. Also, Board meetings will have a virtual meeting option consistent with California Executive Order N-25-20.

Technical Advisory Committee

A key venue for GSP engagement centers on convening a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Drawing on the list of stakeholder interests found in Table 1, membership on the TAC will provide a diverse range of perspectives, interests and expertise regarding GSP content. While the GSAs have authority and responsibility for the final content of the GSP, TAC members will collectively provide advice, input and recommendations to the GSAs on all aspects of the GSP. The TAC meetings will be open to the public. The TAC is anticipated to meet on a monthly basis for a period of eight months.

Dedicated Outreach to Tribal Interests

Plumas County is serving as the lead entity for outreach to Tribal interests, providing information on the GSP process and inviting Tribes to identify how they would prefer to be involved with, or updated on, the GSP effort. A description of Tribal outreach efforts and resources are provided in Appendix B.

Public Workshops

The GSAs will convene public workshops to share information and receive feedback on the GSP content and process. These workshops provide opportunities for people to learn about groundwater, SGMA, and GSP elements. Workshops can be organized in a variety of ways, including open houses, “stations” where people can ask questions one-on-one, and traditional presentations with facilitated question-and-answer sessions. Workshops may also include small group breakout discussions, comment cards and other techniques. Whatever format is used, workshops will be designed to maximize opportunities for public input.

Workshops will occur at key points in the planning process to ensure that stakeholders have opportunities to provide input and give feedback on the GSP. Workshops also serve as a venue to respond to stakeholder comments on the GSP. The following table outlines the approximate number of workshops, the estimated timing of the workshops, and the expected purpose/topics that will be addressed at each workshop, which is aligned with the scope and sequence in the development of required GSP elements.

Adjustments to Stakeholder Outreach Due to the Coronavirus

Throughout 2020, cases of COVID-19 flared and subsided across California and the United States. COVID protocols and restrictions have impacted the ability to hold, or participate in, public hearings. Subsequently, the TAC meetings occur as either in-person with virtual meeting options or as a meeting with virtual participation only. To promote an active exchange of ideas and perspectives during and after TAC meetings, materials such as worksheets and online surveys will be structured to enhance TAC discussions.

Table 2. Anticipated Workshop Schedule

Workshop Number	Estimated Timing of Workshop	Primary Topics/Purpose
1	October 2018	SGMA overview and milestones, SGMA implementation activities to date, GSP planning process timeline/work plan overview, identification of opportunities for stakeholders to participate in GSP planning (such as, siting of monitoring wells on property, registration of inactive wells, etc.)
2	Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the community on the planning grant, work plan, and schedule • Presentation summarizing basin conditions and other relevant information that form the basis for preliminary basin setting • Solicit community input on preliminary basin setting results
3	Early Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input on sustainable management criteria, including sustainability goals, undesirable results, minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and interim milestones • Begin discussion on projects and management actions
4	Summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue discussion on projects and management actions • Solicit comments on draft GSP sections
5	Fall 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to stakeholder comments on draft GSP • Provide comments/feedback on refined draft GSP

METHODS FOR STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Outreach and communication efforts will take many forms, depending on the need (e.g., provide general background information, provide notice of upcoming public meetings). Communication methods include, but are not be limited to the following:

- Traditional media: When required or appropriate, press releases will be distributed to the media list in time to meet deadlines for local newspapers to inform the general public (see Table 3).
- Website: Background information, notice of public meetings, and information on GSP process and content will be posted on the District website at: www.sierravalleygmd.org/sierra-valley-groundwater-sustainability-plan.
- Email updates to interested parties: The District will collect the names and contact information of interested parties at monthly District board meetings and public workshops, at a minimum. Through targeted outreach, GSAs will build and refine the Interested Parties List. Information will be sent via email, via post or phone, as appropriate, to those who have provided their contact information.
- Personal communication: Local GSA representatives, consultants and GSA officials will communicate directly with stakeholders (via email, telephone, U.S. mail, in-person), as appropriate and necessary.
- Meetings and workshops: Meetings and workshops will be conducted at various locations within the basin, and for various purposes (e.g., work groups, public meetings), as needed and appropriate. Meetings and workshops may be a combination of in-person and/or virtual participation.
- On-line surveys: To provide the greatest access possible to the greatest number of people, on-line surveys may be a useful stakeholder engagement tool to get a sense of stakeholder values as they relate to the development of sustainable management criteria and may be employed throughout the GSP development process.
- Printed materials: Printed materials will be used throughout the GSP development process for increasing awareness and understanding. Materials may take many forms, including flyers to be posted and otherwise made available in public places at key milestones, educational materials provided at meetings, a limited number of hard copies of GSP documents as they become available, and meeting handouts to facilitate public understanding and participation.

Table 3. Print & Online Media Sources & Contact Information

Media Source	Contact
Mountain Messenger	(Carl Butz) carl@themountainmessenger.org https://mountainmessenger.com/
Plumas/Sierra Sustainable Farmers Guild	Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/groups/132658446885231/
Portola Reporter (Plumas News)	(Eva Small) esmall@plumasnews.com ; (Debra Moore) Managing Editor, Feather Publishing dmoore@plumasnews.com https://www.plumasnews.com/
Sierra Booster Newspaper – Sierra Valley News Portal	(Jan Buck) jbuck@psln.com https://www.sierrabooster.com/
Sierraville.org	http://www.sierraville.org

REFERENCE MATERIALS

DWR has developed various reference materials about SGMA and GSP development. While not comprehensive, the below table lists some essential SGMA reference materials to aid with successful GSP development.

Table 4. Reference Documents for SGMA Implementation

Reference Document Titles	Publishing Entity	Date/ Year of Publication
Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Emergency Regulations Guide https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I74F39D13C76F497DB40E93C75FC716AA&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&bhcp=1	DWR	July 2016
Best Management Practices Documents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring Protocols Standards and Sites 2. Monitoring Networks and Identification of Data Gaps 3. Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model 4. Water Budget 5. Modeling 6. Sustainable Management Criteria https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management/Best-Management-Practices-and-Guidance-Documents	DWR	2016-2018

Reference Document Titles	Publishing Entity	Date/ Year of Publication
<p>Guidance Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource Guide for Climate Change Data and Guidance 2. Guidance for Climate Change Data Use During Sustainability Plan Development 3. Stakeholder Communications and Engagement 4. Engagement with Tribal Governments 5. GSP Annotated Outline 6. Preparation Checklist for GSP Submittal <p>https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management/Best-Management-Practices-and-Guidance-Documents</p>	DWR	2016-2018
<p>SGMA Portal</p> <p>This portal allows local agencies, groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs), and watermasters to submit, modify, and view the information required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and enables the public and interested stakeholders to view submitted information and provide comments, where applicable. No login is required for public access.</p> <p>https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/</p>	DWR	website
<p>Other SGMA websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Water Boards Website: www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/sgma The home page has links for SGMA Compliance, State Intervention, Reporting and Fees, and Resources for GSA (which includes a Past Events section, with videos of past workshops) • UC Davis SGMA Website: http://groundwater.ucdavis.edu/SGMA The opening page contains an extensive list of links to information on aspects of SGMA 		
<p>Other related websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNC website with information and resources on Groundwater-Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs): https://groundwaterresourcehub.org 		

EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

Any communication strategy should include opportunities to check in at various points during implementation to ensure that it is meeting the communication and engagement goals and complying with SGMA. This plan is a living document that can be modified to accurately reflect changing conditions or approaches related to GSP communications and engagement. First drafted in December 2019, the Plan was revised in December 2020. At the conclusion of the GSP process, the C & E Plan will be finalized to document the stakeholder process. The final version will also include an assessment to reflect on lessons learned: what worked, what didn't go as planned and – in hindsight – what might have been done differently?

APPENDIX A

SGMA IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

**Sierra Valley Groundwater Basin
Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation
2019-2022 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

Acronyms:

- C= Consultant(s)
- DWR= California Department of Water Resources
- GSA= Groundwater Sustainability Agency(ies)—Referring to SVGMD and Plumas County
- PT/PC= GSP Project Team/Planning Committee
- Sub= SVGMD Board Subcommittee
- TAC= Technical Advisory Committee
- TSS= Technical Support Services Program (DWR)
- PW= Public Workshop

Month/Year	Meetings/Milestones	Key Topics & Actions
January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PT: Clarify GSP Work Plan priorities and next steps 2. PT: Refine work plan to incorporate draft GSP development progress
February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • Tribal-FS Meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA: Approve coordination agreement between SVGMD and Plumas County 2. PT: Review GSP draft sections (Chapter 1 and Land Subsidence) to help identify data, technical, and resource gaps to inform development of GSP grant application work plan.
March-April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • SVGMD Board Planning Subcommittee • Initiating Planning Grant 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C: Bachand & Associates recharge study report findings presentation to SVGMD Board of Directors at March board meeting. 2. PT/GSA: GSP Project team present preliminary subsidence presentation to the SVGMD Board of Directors at April Board meeting.
May-August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • SVGMD Board Planning Subcommittee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining Programs and Priorities for funding 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PT with Burkhard Bohm: Compile existing basin setting information (technical information associated with basin conditions) to compare to GSP requirements and identify data, technical, and resource gaps to inform development of GSP grant proposal. 2. C/PT/Sub: Establish schedule for subcommittee meetings (to begin meeting in June). 3. PT/Sub/GSA: Present PSP requirements and activities and timeline for completion of proposal to SVGMD Board of Directors at June-July Board meetings. 4. PT: Prepare draft comments to DWR on draft PSP 5. PT/GSA: Present draft PSP comments to SVGMD at June board meeting and receive input. 6. PT/GSA: Incorporate SVGMD and Plumas County comments and finalize comments on draft PSP and submit to DWR. 7. DWR: Release Phase 2 final Basin Prioritization results.

Month/Year	Meetings/Milestones	Key Topics & Actions
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. TSS (GSA/DWR): Complete agreement with landowners for entry permit on land for TSS multi-completion well installation. 9. TSS (GSA/DWR): Complete environmental documentation for TSS multi-completion well application.
September-October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) • SVGMD Board Planning Subcommittee 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TSS (DWR): Prepare agreements with landowner, drilling contractor, SVGMD. 2. TSS: Begin construction on multi-completion well. 3. DWR: Release of final PSP for GSP planning grant program (release date 9/9/19). 4. C/PT/GSA/Sub: Attend DWR informational webinar (9/18/19), draft GSP grant proposal, present progress updates and receive input and comments at SVGMD monthly board meetings and subcommittee meetings, incorporate GSA input. 5. Pass SVGMD board resolution for GSP planning grant submission (October SVGMD board meeting).
November-December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Mtg. (monthly) • Finalizing Planning Grant • Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit GSP planning grant to DWR (November 15, 2019). 2. GSA/PT: Plan for fall public workshop. 3. PW: Public workshop (early December).
January-March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C: Release of groundwater study report. 2. DWR: Announce draft & final GSP grant awards, work with DWR on pre-contracting. 3. GSA/PT: Draft and review RFP(s) for any needed GSP consulting services as per the GSP grant application and determine process for consultant selection. 4. DWR: Release Project Solicitation Package for GSP Implementation Grants.
April-June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA/PT: Finalize RFP(s) for consulting services and release. 2. GSA/PT: Respond to consulting team questions before proposal submission. 3. GSA: Receive consultant proposals
July-September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Project Team (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meeting (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GSA: Conduct interviews and select consultant(s) 2. GSA: Contract with selected consultant(s) 3. C/PT/GSA: Launch GSP development process.
October-December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP Planning Committee (monthly) • SVGMD Board Meetings (monthly) • TAC Meetings (Nov., Dec.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C/PC/GSA: Convene TAC 2. C/PC/GSA: Foundational work on data management system and modeling approach 3. C/PC/TAC/GSA: Groundwater quality 4. C/PC/TAC/GSA: Subsidence 5. C/PC/TAC/GSA: Evaluating sustainability (sustainability goal, SMCs, measurable objectives, minimum thresholds, undesirable conditions) 6. C/PC/TAC/GSA: Monitoring networks 7. C/PC/TAC/GSA: Roles & Responsibilities document 8. C/PC/TAC/GSA: Revised C & E Plan

Month/Year	Meetings/Milestones	Key Topics & Actions
January-March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSP Planning Committee (monthly) SVGMD Board Meetings (monthly) TAC Meetings (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> C/PC/TAC/GSA: Data management, modeling approach C/PC/GSA: Assessment and improvement of monitoring network C/PC/TAC/GSA: Representative monitoring C/PC/TAC/GSA: Basin Settings, Hydrologic Conceptual Model C/PC/TAC/GSA: Groundwater Storage C/PC/TAC/GSA: Draft GSP chapters on groundwater quality, subsidence
April-June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSP Planning Committee (monthly) SVGMD Board Meetings (monthly) TAC Meetings (monthly) SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> C/PC/TAC/GSA: Surface Water-Groundwater Interactions (GDEs) C/PC/TAC/GSA: Groundwater Levels C/PC/TAC/GSA: Draft GSP chapters on basin setting, HCM and groundwater storage, PW: Sustainability Indicators (5 areas) and related SMCs (May?)
July-September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSP Planning Committee (monthly) SVGMD Board Meetings (monthly) TAC Meetings (TBD) SGMA Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> C/PC/TAC/GSA: Draft GSP chapters on surface water-groundwater interactions (GDEs), groundwater levels C/PC/TAC/GSA: Projects and Management Actions C/PC/TAC/GSA: Draft GSP text on Projects and Management Actions PW: Projects and Management Actions (early Sept.?) C/PC/TAC/GSA: Final monitoring network
October-December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSP Planning Committee (monthly) SVGMD Board Meetings (monthly) TAC Meetings (TBD) GSP Public Workshop 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PW: Draft GSP for public Comment (mid-October?) C: Incorporate public comments and prepare final review draft GSP PC/GSA: Final review of GSP C: Prepare final draft of GSP GSA: GSAs adopt resolutions in support of GSP
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSP Planning Committee (monthly) SVGMD Board Meetings (monthly) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> GSA: Submit GSP to DWR via SGMA Portal

APPENDIX B

TRIBAL OUTREACH GUIDANCE

Tribal Outreach Efforts and Resources

Consistent with Water Code Section 10720.3, the federal government or any federally recognized Indian Tribe, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a GSP through a joint powers authority or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. A participating Tribe shall be eligible to participate fully in planning, financing, and management. Additionally, SGMA identifies California Tribes (including those that are not federally recognized) as possible beneficial users whose interests shall be considered in GSP development and implementation.

The Plumas National Forest lands within Plumas County but outside of the District's boundary are considered important to area Tribes. During the stakeholder assessment, Plumas County clarified that it would take the lead on Tribal outreach and engagement. Those activities may include the following:

Outreach Steps—Phase I

Plumas County will contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to request a Native American Contacts List of Tribes with known traditional lands or cultural places located within the boundaries of the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District, Basin Boundary, and Watershed Boundary in Plumas and Sierra counties.

Plumas County will then conduct an initial communication with Tribal primary points of contact through both mail and electronic mail (email) formats to provide information on the SGMA GSP planning process and to invite and clarify Tribal interests in participating. Tribal engagement will be directed by individual Tribes, with interested Tribes communicating their preferred methods of contact and pathways of engagement. Engagement could solely be in the form of updates as an interested party or could be more involved with direct participation on a committee, at meetings, and/or during public workshops. Per DWR's Engagement with Tribal Governments guidance document, a follow up to the Tribal primary points of contact by telephone will also be conducted by Plumas County within two weeks of the initial contact. In the event a Tribal representative cannot be contacted within a responsible timeframe, Plumas County will consult with DWR's Office of Tribal Policy Advisor for guidance (Anecita Agustinez, DWR Tribal Policy Advisor).

Following successful initial communication with the Tribes, Plumas County will facilitate the implementation of actions that may include preparation of a formal letter from the Plumas County Board of Supervisors to each of the Tribes, involvement of the District with the Tribes, development of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) if requesting full participation per the Water Code, and/or establishing an engagement framework.

Outreach Steps – Phase II

Contingent on Phase I outcomes.

Relevant DWR Information

SGMA Section 10720.3. ...any federally recognized Indian Tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a groundwater sustainability plan or groundwater management plan under this part through a joint powers authority or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. A participating Tribe shall be eligible to participate fully in planning, financing, and management under this part, including eligibility for grants and technical assistance, if any exercise of regulatory authority, enforcement, or imposition and collection of fees is pursuant to the Tribe's independent authority and not pursuant to authority granted to a groundwater sustainability agency under this part.

Must a local agency exclude federal and Tribal lands from its service area when forming a GSA?

No, federal lands and Tribal lands need not be excluded from a local agency's GSA area if a local agency has jurisdiction in those areas; however, those areas are not subject to SGMA. But, a local agency in its GSA formation notice shall explain how it will consider the interests of the federal government and California Native American Tribes when forming a GSA and developing a GSP. DWR strongly recommends that local agencies communicate with federal and Tribal representatives prior to deciding to become a GSA. As stated in Water Code §10720.3, the federal government or any federally recognized Indian Tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a GSP or groundwater management plan through a JPA or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. Water Code References: §10720.3, §10723.2, §10723.8

Tribal Outreach Resources

The following are links to Tribal outreach resources and considerations, each of which captures important principles and resources for Tribal outreach. A short summary of key outreach principles can be found below.

- ◆ [Guidance Document for Sustainable Groundwater Management: Engagement with Tribal Governments \(January 2018\)](#)
- ◆ [CalEPA Tribal Consultation Policy Memo \(August 2015\)](#)
- ◆ [DWR Tribal Engagement Policy \(March 2016\)](#)
- ◆ [CA Natural Resources Agency Tribal Consultation Policy \(November 2012\)](#)
- ◆ [SWRCB Proposed Tribal Beneficial Uses](#)
- ◆ [CA Court Tribal Outreach and Engagement Strategies](#)
- ◆ [Traditional Ecological Knowledge \(TEK\) resources](#)
- ◆ [Water Education Foundation Tribal Water Issues](#)

Key Outreach Principles

- ◆ Engage early and often.
- ◆ Consider Tribal [beneficial uses](#) in decision-making; identify and seek to protect Tribal cultural resources.
- ◆ Share relevant documentation with Tribal officials.
- ◆ Conduct meetings at times convenient for Tribal participation with ample notifications.
- ◆ Request relevant process input/data/information from Tribes.
- ◆ Empower Tribes to act as Tribal cultural resources caretakers.
- ◆ Designate a Tribal liaison(s) where appropriate.
- ◆ Share resources for Tribal involvement as is feasible.
- ◆ Develop MOUs where relevant.
- ◆ Be mindful of the traditions and cultural norms of Tribes in the area.

Key Outreach Partners/Liaisons

The following are potential partners to Plumas County and the District for Tribal outreach:

- ◆ [California Indian Water Commission, Inc.](#)
- ◆ [DWR Office of Tribal Advisor](#)
- ◆ DWR Northern Region Office

Appendix C

Roles and Commitments

ROLES & COMMITMENTS
Sierra Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (SVGSP)
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
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Section 1. Background

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), enacted in 2014, created a “framework for sustainable, groundwater management” that balances use and recharge. Medium- and high-priority groundwater basins across California are required to create and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) with measurable objectives and milestones in increments of five years in order to achieve sustainability over a 20-year timeframe. The Sierra Valley groundwater subbasin in Plumas and Sierra counties was ranked by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as medium priority and is required to prepare and submit a GSP by January 31, 2022.

Although DWR provides guidance and identifies required elements for the GSPs, local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) develop the GSPs for their respective groundwater basins and subbasins. This allows local entities to create GSPs that address local interests, conditions, and priorities within the required elements of the GSP. In Sierra Valley, the two GSAs for the subbasin are the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District (District) and the County of Plumas (Plumas). These GSAs entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on January 8, 2019 to develop a single GSP for the Sierra Valley groundwater subbasin.

SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests relating to the uses and users of groundwater. The GSAs must state how the perspectives of interested parties will inform the operations of the GSAs, as well as the development of the GSP. These interested parties include a wide range of governmental entities, water users, water systems, California Native American tribes, and economic and environmental considerations. Also, GSAs “shall encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic” perspectives. In addition to holding public workshops, the Sierra Valley GSAs established a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to bring multiple perspectives into the development of the GSP.

Section 2. GSP Process Timeline, Purpose and Activities

For the Sierra Valley groundwater subbasin, the GSP must be developed, released for public comment, approved by the GSAs, and submitted to DWR no later than **January 31, 2022**. The GSP must meet SGMA requirements.

This process is established to incorporate input from different interested parties to create a GSP that will be adopted by the GSAs. The resulting GSP will provide a more complete understanding of the groundwater subbasin, and of strategies and options, to support sustainable long-term use and stewardship of groundwater supplies.

A technical consultant team, led by Larry Walker and Associates, is assisting the GSAs in developing information and the GSP itself. This may include, but is not limited to, the following elements:

- data sets, analyses and modeling efforts
- descriptions of local groundwater basin conditions (Basin Setting)

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- targets or “Sustainable Management Criteria” relating to:
 - i. groundwater levels and storage
 - ii. land subsidence
 - iii. groundwater quality
 - iv. surface water-groundwater interactions (including groundwater-dependent ecosystems)
- potential projects and actions addressing the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs) to enhance long-term stewardship of groundwater

Section 3. Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

NOTE: The Roles and Commitments document is intended to provide guidance for the Sierra Valley GSP planning effort. It is drafted as a living document that may be revised as needed.

GSA: The GSAs – Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District and Plumas County – will:

- Retain authority and responsibility for the final product and the decisions contained within
- Contract for technical support and facilitation services
- Participate in the Planning Committee and TAC to provide information on policy, operational, and regulatory matters

Planning Committee: A Planning Committee – consisting of representatives from the two GSAs, the technical consulting team, and planning partners – will meet to:

- Identify individuals and parties with interests or expertise related to GSP development
- Develop draft proposals for work plans and timelines
- Anticipate and help address data needs
- Prepare agendas and materials for all meetings and public workshops, ensuring that materials are understandable and provide enough information for meaningful discussion
- Share insights on issues and developments that arise
- Advise on implementing and updating the Stakeholder Communications and Engagement Plan
- Review and discuss progress to date and next steps

Generally, the Planning Committee will meet once each month for two hours.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): Collectively, members of the TAC will provide advice, input, and recommendations to the GSAs on all aspects of the GSP. TAC members also have responsibilities to:

- Carefully review, discuss and refine the GSP chapters
- Identify, assess, and review data needs and provide resources that are appropriate for each task
- Help anticipate and describe near- and long-term future conditions and planning efforts that will influence factors related to the GSP
- Respond to GSP-related questions and queries from the District
- Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss agenda items; this includes reviewing materials and information distributed in advance of the meeting

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- Participate in a problem-solving approach based on respectful and constructive dialogue, where the interests of all members are considered
- Keep their organizations and constituents informed about the process, discussions and recommendations; and to seek and report back on feedback received as a result of informational briefings

It is expected that eight (8) TAC meetings will be scheduled, each about 3 hours long. The dates and times will be reviewed for each meeting. For 2020, TAC meetings were held on November 4th and December 7th.

The District Board will be regularly updated on the development of the GSP and discussions of the TAC.

Work Groups: Ad hoc work groups may be created as needed to address specific tasks, technical aspects, or issues. Additional participants may be invited to join to provide necessary perspectives or expertise.

Public Workshops: Public workshops will be scheduled several times, to provide updates, share ideas, and solicit input on the GSP contents and process.

- Several public workshops will take place in 2021
- A public hearing is required prior to adoption of the final GSP

Facilitator: The facilitator's primary responsibility is to maintain an opportunity where all perspectives, views and opinions are heard and thoughtfully considered. The facilitator will:

- Design and conduct a consensus-seeking process where the TAC can best assist the GSAs in developing a GSP within required regulatory guidelines and timeframes
- Facilitate all meetings that are part of the GSP process, generating agendas and meeting summaries
- Capture the range of views and ideas presented by TAC members and reporting on where there are areas of both agreement and differences
- Develop draft proposals and recommendations for the GSAs that reflect TAC discussions

Technical Consultant(s):

- Research technical issues
- Inform and engage the Planning Committee on GSP development
- Develop draft text for the GSP, including but not limited to:
 - i. Basin Settings and Hydrologic Conceptual Model
 - ii. Monitoring networks and associated evaluations and analyses
 - iii. Sustainable Management Criteria
 - iv. Projects and Management Actions
- Present and discuss draft text, and incorporate input from the GSAs, Planning Committee, TAC meetings, and public workshops
- Prepare memoranda and/or technical reports as needed to document work products

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Section 4. TAC Composition

To bring a diverse range of perspectives into GSP development, a core group of individuals serve on the TAC who have interest or expertise regarding GSP content. Members are invited to identify alternates, in case the original member is unable to attend a TAC meeting.

It is proposed that the following interests, organizations, and/or individuals serve on the TAC. Membership can be updated as needed.

- GSA: Sierra Valley GMD
- GSA: Plumas County
- Planning Partner: Feather River Land Trust
- Planning Partner: Greg Hinds
- Agricultural Uses: Sierra Valley RCD
- Agricultural Uses: UC Cooperative Extension
- Tribal Uses: TBD
- Integrated Water Management: Upper Feather River IRWM
- Small Water Systems: Sierra Brooks Water System, Sierraville Public Utility District
- Land Uses: City of Loyalton, USFS Plumas National Forest
- Economic Development: Sierra County, Plumas County
- Environmental and Ecosystem Uses: Plumas Audubon Society
- Water Quality: Departments of Environmental Health (Sierra Co., Plumas Co.)
- Soils, Subsidence: Integrated Environmental Restoration Services
- Groundwater: Sierra County Public Works
- Domestic Well Users (those who rely exclusively on domestic wells for water supply)

DWR and CDFW have been invited to participate in TAC meetings as ex-officio agency members.

Consultant Support

The TAC is supported by core members of the LWA consulting team:

- Laura Foglia, Project Manager
- Cab Esposito, Assistant Project Manager – Technical
- Betsy Elzufon, Assistant Project Manager – Administrative
- Judie Talbot, Outreach and Engagement Facilitator

Section 5. Decision Making

The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have responsibility and authority for all decisions regarding the final GSP and its adoption.

In its work, the TAC will strive to find agreement on suggestions and recommendations related to the GSP. As needed, participants could be asked to show their level of support for suggestions being developed, and to submit ideas for improving those suggestions being developed.

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Those areas that receive substantial agreement will receive the highest possible consideration for inclusion in the GSP. However, group consensus alone does not determine whether an item will be incorporated into the final GSP. For those areas where differences remain, the full range of perspectives will be submitted to the GSAs for their review. The GSAs, with assistance from the Planning Committee, will determine the priorities and preferred forums for resolving those differences. Ultimately, the GSP must be reviewed and adopted by the GSAs (the District and Plumas) and DWR.

Section 6. TAC Meeting Approach

Hybrid Meeting Options:

Standing TAC members and consultants are encouraged to participate at in-person meetings. TAC meetings will have a webinar option to support involvement of TAC members who cannot attend in-person, as well as encourage participation by TAC liaisons and ad-hoc TAC members. During the pandemic, there may be times when the only option for meeting participating will be online.

Attendance: Given the volume of information that needs to be considered and developed, regular attendance by TAC members or their designated alternate is essential. Alternates must be identified in advance, fully briefed and able to represent the member when making suggestions and recommendations related to the GSP.

Open Meetings: TAC meetings are open to the public. Public comments are welcome during the meetings as time allows. Ideas, comments, questions, and suggestions can also be submitted via email to sierravalleygmd@sbcglobal.net or by postal mail to SVGMD – GSP at .O. Box 88, Chilcoot, CA 96105, or through the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District’s ‘Contact Us’ webpage at <https://www.sierravalleygmd.org/contact-us> and note ‘GSP Public Comment’ in the ‘Subject’ line.

Problem-solving: All TAC participants agree to:

- Listen for understanding and openly share information with others who hold diverse views
- Not ascribe motivations or intentions to the statements or actions of others
- Work to develop creative proposals, suggestions, and recommendations that address the interests of all
- Keep commitments once made
- When appropriate, distinguish between personal versus organizational perspectives (i.e., for an organization that a TAC member represents)

Good faith: All participants agree to act in good faith in all aspects of this consensus-seeking process and to communicate their interests in TAC meetings, public workshops, Planning Committee, District Board meetings and Plumas County Board of Supervisors meetings. Comments and suggestions made in open and honest conversations about creative options, approaches, or strategies will not be used against any party in litigation or public relations campaigns. This provision will not restrict the ability of participants to pursue legal remedies.

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Good faith also requires that participants or their organizations not make commitments they do not intend to follow through with. Participants must act consistently in the GSP process and in other forums where the issues under discussion in the GSP process are also being addressed. Good faith provisions continue to apply to participants who withdraw from the process.

Section 6. TAC Communications

In planning processes, ideas may become fully formed over the course of several meetings. Subsequently, when members discuss the work of the TAC, care should be taken to distinguish new concepts from those recommendations adopted by the full group. When discussing the process with others, TAC members should present their own perspectives, without characterizing the positions and views of any other party or attributing comments to other members. TAC members are encouraged, and will be facilitated, to develop common statements about their work for release into newsletters and similar publications.

GSA Briefing Summaries will be prepared and distributed, providing updates on discussions. This will allow GSA parties to anticipate what types of materials will be included in packets for monthly District Board meeting discussions.

Meeting Summaries will be provided via email to TAC members, including the GSAs, and posted on the SVGMD GSP website at <https://www.sierravalleygmd.org/tac-meetings> for public viewing within seven (7) working days of TAC meetings.

Related Data: TAC members are encouraged to contribute and share information (excluding privileged or confidential materials) that help inform discussions and clarify questions of fact. As appropriate, support materials that explain, interpret or analyze data or policies can also be provided.