

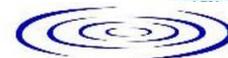
Sierra Valley Board of Directors

GSP Public Comments

December 20, 2021



Kennedy Jenks



Stillwater Sciences

115 Public Comments received

TAC

- Lucy Blake
- Jill Slocum
- Michael Hogan
- Kristi Jamason
- TAC (Bill Coprin, Ken Roby, Jill Slocum, Michael Hogan)

Other organizations

- NGO Consortium
- Shaundra Cashdollar, CDFW

SV Residents/ Organizations

- Carl Butz, Mountain Messenger
- Steven and Susan Roberts
- John Preschutti, Plumas Forest Project
- Donna Lindquist, Lindquist Environmental Services
- Cindy Noble, Feather River Trout Unlimited
- Kim McKinney
- Kevin Starr
- Cindy Noble
- Cesi Dale-Cesmat, Rangelands West Inc. Consulting
- Aubrey Pickerell, Feather River Land Trust
- Piers Strailey, Plumas Audubon Society
- K Tanner
- Tom Dotta
- Mike and Jennifer Blide

Major Topics of Concern

- Outreach/Engagement and GSP Process
- Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs)/
Interconnected Surface Water (ISW)
- Subsidence
- Design & Implementation of Monitoring
Networks
- Data Gaps and GSP Implementation
- Demand Management
- GSA Rate Structure

Other Topics Covered

- Water Budget
- Climate Change
- Identification of Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes
- Projects and Management Actions

Positive comments

- Chapter 1 is clear & comprehensive
- Chapter 2 Figures are very helpful
- I'm nowhere near qualified to assess much of the information presented in this GSP. That said, I believe the document accurately reflects what I have learned from attending SVGWMD meetings the past several years. I appreciate that you're trying to present multiple possible options for protecting SV groundwater rather than locking management into a minimum of choices. Going forward, the GSP will be a resource for me as a de minimis user
- We applaud the SVGMD for the foresight to organize around the concepts of self-regulation and sustainability when it formed in 1980. The District's subsequent work to learn about Sierra Valley's groundwater systems, through installation of monitoring wells, metering systems and studies has provided a solid basis for the discussion and approach to groundwater levels contained in the plan.

Discussion



ADDITIONAL SLIDES IF NEEDED

Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

- Uncertainty in depth to groundwater map due to sparse well network and few shallow wells
 - Note 30 ft depth to water is conservative (most GDEs have much shallower rooting depths)
 - We will work with LWA to identify best metric for uncertainty (i.e., mean+/- standard error or standard deviation) and add potential GDE veg types that fall within that depth range. The revised map will be completed after the GSP is submitted
- GDE mapping (will be updated following GSP submittal)
 - Where groundwater connection is unknown label as potential GDE
 - Springs: included and mapped as ISW. This will be clarified in the GSP

Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

■ Special status species

- Uncertainty in the species list (any additional data from the TAC would be welcome)
- Assess the impacts of ISW/groundwater on special status species
- Split GDEs into units to assess impacts of GW and ISW management on GDEs and special status species.

■ Monitoring

- Better describe monitoring
- NDVI too coarse (we can monitor this at a much smaller scale)
- Adaptive management

Subsidence

- Large-scale subsidence in the northeast corner near the town of Vinton as presented by the CA Department of Transportation.
- Should be of great concern to both agricultural water users and domestic well owners in the area.
- The Plan should have adequate provisions for timely measuring and preventing of any groundwater overdraft and subsidence.
- The Plan needs to commit to more direct actions to monitor and manage for subsidence.

Demand Management

- There is little in the Plan to address constraints on groundwater over-drafting.
- A market-based program for limiting the number of agricultural wells in Sierra Valley and gradually reducing the number of wells over a 20-30-year period.
- Implement pumping limits and rate structure based on quantity of water used.
- Pumping limits to be only used if other PMAs are ineffective.

Domestic Wells

- Domestic wells running dry would have severe, negative economic impacts to property owners.
- Annual groundwater overdraft should be addressed now and not wait for domestic wells to run dry.
- Digging deeper wells does not address groundwater overdraft.
- Is it unreasonable to let one or more domestic wells run dry?
- Poorly designed wells may be first impacted.
- Available programs for domestic well owners:
 - RCAC Household Water Well Loan/Grant Programs (<https://www.rcac.org/lending/household-water-well-septic-loans/>)
 - USDA Rural Development Drought Assistance ([drought-assistance.pdf](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/drought-assistance.pdf) (tehamacountywater.org))
 - DWR <https://mydrywell.water.ca.gov/report/>

Public Outreach/Governance

- All members of the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District need to be briefed regularly on the status of water usage in the basin in an easily digestible format.
- Lack of outreach to some groups - DACs, drinking water users, tribes, and environmental stakeholders.
- A Plan of this scope and size should be a multi-year process with numerous opportunities for public engagement.
- What are the roles of the TAC and Directors and how should they interact with the public and each other?

Monitoring Network

- Uncertainties in the Plan, including reliance on proxies, necessitate a much more robust monitoring effort.
- Monitoring should dictate PMAs to implement.
- Increase the number of RMPs in the shallow aquifer prioritizing locations adjacent to DACs, domestic wells, GDEs, and ISWs.
- Plan reports any chronic long-term impacts are manageable; additional analysis is needed to better understand the sustainability of current extraction practices.

Project and Management Actions

- Proactive (not reactive) management practices are needed.
- Prioritize multi-benefit projects improving the environment, habitat, available water supplies, etc.
- Consider all economic impacts including for ranching and recreation.
- Develop management actions that incorporate climate and water delivery uncertainties to address future water demand and prevent future undesirable results.
- It is not realistic or responsible to count on “new” water supplies to solve severe groundwater overdraft.

Disadvantaged Communities/Tribes

- Describe direct and indirect impacts on DACs, drinking water users, and tribes when describing undesirable results and defining minimum thresholds for chronic lowering of groundwater levels.
- For DACs and domestic well owners, include a discussion of whether potential impacts to water quality from projects and management actions could occur and how the GSAs plan to mitigate such impacts.

Climate Change

- Calculate sustainable yield based on the projected water budget with climate change incorporated.
- Incorporate climate change scenarios into defining sustainable management criteria and projects and management actions.

Climate change is now incorporated into the GSP.