



Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association
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MEETING MINUTES

July 9, 2015 (1.30 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.)

MID CONFERENCE ROOM 3A

The meeting was called to order at 1.35 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The following members of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association (STRGBA) were present:

Modesto Irrigation District (MID):	John Davids
Oakdale Irrigation District (OID):	Eric Thorburn
City of Modesto:	Glenn Prasad, Jack Bond, Jordyn Doyle
City of Riverbank:	Michael Riddell
Stanislaus County:	Walter Ward

Also in Attendance:

City of Waterford:	Matt Erickson
Agricultural Preservation Alliance (APA):	Kevin Kauffman
Member of the Public:	Ross Campbell

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approve 06/11/2015 Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes for 06/11/2015 were unanimously approved pending any comments from STRGBA Committee Members.

Mr. Kauffman requested that his public comment say that the APA is not currently going to be included in the STRGBA, that “located” be added as the third word in the last sentence, and that “and” be placed between “river” and “in”.

4. Regional Groundwater Coordinating Committee (RGCC)

Mr. Davids spoke to Stephanie Lucero with the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP). The first Stakeholder Meeting will be held Wednesday, July 15, 2015. Ms. Lucero will synthesize what she heard and present the common themes that were brought up during the interviews. However, everything will be confidential; no names will be used. The timeline for the RGCC will be discussed as the CCP has two reports to deliver when the RGCC is done, including a report on the Stanislaus Region’s RGCC and a statewide

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report. Approximately ten (10) stakeholder meetings have been envisioned within the next six (6) months. Mr. Davids pointed out that based on his conversation with Ms. Lucero, Stanislaus County is the only region exploring the concept of an overlying RGCC. Mr. Ward explained the general format of the process. He mentioned that CCP will present their initial review, provide findings, and plan their next steps. Mr. Bond inquired if some of the following meetings plan to be about reporting back to other agencies such as the Water Advisory Council (WAC) and the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Ward explained that at this moment the meetings are not laid out to that level of detail.

Mr. Ward reminded the Committee that the CPP was providing their services under a grant received from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Stanislaus County had filed the application after being approached by members of the SWRCB and the CCP. The grant was obtained from a non-competitive source of funding under a master agreement.

Mr. Ward clarified his position that he has no preconceived prediction for the outcome of the RGCC. According to Mr. Ward, the formation of the RGCC is a moldable process and can be shaped as needed. Mr. Riddell affirmed his overall support for the process. Mr. Kauffman raised concerns regarding the process, indicating that this may be providing the County unnecessary oversight over already functioning sub-basins.

Mr. Ward sees the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) and the potential RGCC as parallel bodies, with the GSAs being autonomous and the RGCC having no regulatory authority over the GSAs.

5. Governance Discussion

Mr. Davids presented the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The major changes include taking out any references to a formation of an agency. The City of Waterford has been added as a member agency. The MOU further states that the STRGBA will work together to form one or more GSA(s). The term of the MOU will be extended to December 2017, since the Committee expects to form a GSA before this date.

Mr. Bond inquired about the possibility of the STRGBA staying active after the GSAs are formed. Mr. Davids indicated that if all members of the STRGBA will be part of the latter GSA, and if the GSA will predominantly perform the functions of the current STRGBA, then it makes sense for the STRGBA to dissolve, and the GSA to supersede.

Mr. Ward presented his findings from the East San Joaquin Groundwater Basin Association (ESJGBA) and informed the Committee that the County has been approved by the DWR to be the CASGEM monitoring entity for the "White Triangle Area" in the

north section of the County. Mr. Ward was granted authorization by the County Board of Supervisors to enable the County to become the monitoring entity for the “White Triangle Area”. It only includes OID, the County, Rock Creek Water District (a private contractor), and private land owners.

Mr. Ward also spoke about his phone call with the Practitioners Advisory Panel (PAP). He learned about an early warning from the DWR about new basins that will be considered to be in critical overdraft. According to Mr. Ward, nine more basins have been added to the Bulletin 118 list. The ESJGBA is one of the original basins. He proposed that the Modesto Sub-basin move forward with a basin boundary adjustment to pull the triangle area into their sub-basin.

Mr. Kauffman pointed out that managing groundwater resources in the Modesto sub-basin, in conjunction with the “White Triangle Area” will be tough to manage. Mr. Ward stated that the DWR has been allowing boundary adjustments for Bulletin 118 based on political county boundaries. Mr. Davids mentioned that the decision of whether or not to allow the “White Triangle Area” should be discussed further in following STRGBA meetings. Mr. Prasad requested Mr. Ward to bring additional information regarding the White Triangle Area for the next STRGBA meeting.

Regarding MOU, Mr. Davids offered help with any board report needs such as background and language. However, MOU approval will be postponed until the boundary discussion is completed. Mr. Davids has already discussed the MOU with his legal counsel. Mr. Bond and Mr. Riddell both mentioned the long wait time with council. Mr. Prasad expressed concerns about projects, grants, and resources involving the “White Triangle Area”. Mr. Bond expressed concerns about sharing any Proposition 1 money with “White Triangle Area” and spreading the resources too thin.

6. USGS Groundwater Model

The City of Modesto had a meeting Todd Groundwater (Todd GW) for the Groundwater Characterization and Recharge Study. There have been new findings made from the model regarding water balance assumptions; more information will be provided to the Committee by Mr. Prasad as the project progresses.

Mr. Prasad summarized his comments from the June meeting for anybody who was not there.

Todd GW has decided to move forward using a refined version of the 2004 steady-state model. The MERSTAN Model is not fully operational still, but as part of the Water Master Plan, the City of Modesto will continue to investigate the model and improve

upon it. The member agencies would like Mr. Prasad and Mr. Davids to move forward in negotiating a price for the model update.

The main issue with the MERSTAN Model is the lack of visual output. In addition, the model needs to be updated with more recent data; nonetheless, this effort will not be conducted through the Groundwater Characterization and Recharge Study.

The public asked if the USGS Model had any value at all. Mr. Prasad replied that the output data is valuable because it simulates from 1960-2004. It shows historical data and trends. It also helps us determine underlying aquifer characteristics.

Mr. Ward suggested that the consultants and modelers helping with the basin's groundwater crisis should get together in a meeting or workshop to share data and collaborate with the different models that might be used for GSP purposes in future.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for August 13, 2015 at 3.00 p.m., after the Stanislaus County Technical Advisory Council (TAC) meeting, in the MID Conference Room 3A.

8. Items too late for the Agenda

The public commented that water agencies have no regulation in the state of California. All of the water agencies have their own definitions of beneficial water use. Stanislaus County will have to come up with a definition of beneficial water use for the County.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.58 p.m.