

FOX CANYON GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

A STATE OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCY



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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INTERIM EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Arne Anselm

January 22, 2025

Board of Directors
Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1600

SUBJECT: Executive Officer's Report – (Returning Item)

RECOMMENDATION: Receive and file this informational report.

AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN CALENDAR YEAR 2024

2024 was an extraordinary year for the Agency. The year began under a staffing crisis with key positions vacant and the loss of institutional knowledge with the resignation of the Clerk of the Board and retirements of both the Executive Officer and Groundwater Manager. The implementation of Los Posas Watermaster Adjudication Judgment had just begun in earnest, the first five-year GSP implementation evaluations were due at the end of the year, and the Agency committed to drilling multiple monitoring wells with a tight timeline under a DWR grant. All this was under the pressures of multiple lawsuits, each with their own demand on Agency resources.

Below are some of the key accomplishments of the Agency, staff and Board, last year:

- Staffing crisis addressed by filling 8 positions through 6 new hires and 2 promotions
- High frequency of public meetings, with 14 Board meetings and 8 committee meetings
- Adoption of an amended OPV Allocation Ordinance
- Entered into and managed 13 contracts to meet Board priorities and regulatory requirements
- Adopted renewal of GEMES Fee of \$20.00 per acre-foot (AF) on groundwater extractions to maintain a fund for expenses of legal actions and proceedings
- Developed the Inaugural Draft Budget Report to provide more transparency into the Agency and how our efforts are funded
 - Initiated inclusion of both Agency and Las Posas Watermaster monthly budget to actuals reports in Board Agenda packets
- Negotiated final payment for completion of FY 2020-2021 / FY 2021-2022 Biennial audit
- Conducted RFP process for upcoming FY 2022-2023 / FY 2023-2024 Biennial audit

FCGMA Board Meeting
Item 6 – Executive Officer’s Administrative Report
January 22, 2025

- Initiated Agency staffing analysis to identify staff needs to achieve Agency goals and responsibilities
- Performed functionality and user interface upgrades on both the online reporting database and the public-facing website, for both FCGMA and LPV Watermaster
- Assisted LAFCo with development of 5-year Municipal Service Review of Agency¹
- Developed new role for Agency in owning and operating infrastructure
 - Installed 19 individual casings at 8 monitoring well locations under budget and ahead of schedule
 - Completed Oxnard Well Destruction in May 2024 to eliminate liability
- First GSA to complete and submit Periodic Evaluations under SGMA for Oxnard Subbasin, Pleasant Valley Basin and Las Posas Valley Basin:
<https://fcgma.org/gsp-periodic-evaluations/>
 - Held 5 Stakeholder Workshops on Periodic Evaluation Development with routine updates to the Board for increased stakeholder engagement
- Las Posas Watermaster – FCGMA acting as court appointed watermaster to implement the judgment entered in Las Posas Valley Water Rights Coalition, et al. v. Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency, Santa Barbara Sup. Ct. Case No. VENC100509700.
 - Approved formation of Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
 - Noticed water right holders of constituency groups
 - Organized constituency group meetings for selection of PAC members
 - Approved PAC Members
 - Approved PAC Administrator contract
 - Approved insurance for PAC members
 - 21 PAC meetings (WY 2023)
 - Approved formation of Technical Advisory Committee
 - Approved TAC members
 - Negotiated contracts with TAC members
 - 5 TAC meetings (WY 2023)
 - Approved initial Watermaster Budget for WY 2023
 - Approved and collected WY 2023 Basin Assessment to fund Watermaster work to implement LPV Judgment
 - Waived second assessment to provide relief to water rights holders
 - Approved WY 2024 Budget and Basin Assessment
 - Approved quarterly invoicing
 - Established new LPV groundwater use and extraction reporting system for WY2024
 - Created public-facing Watermaster website
 - Created Watermaster reporting database (ongoing)
 - Calculated annual allocations for WY 2023 for water rights holders
 - Calculated annual allocations for WY 2024 for water rights holders
 - Updated groundwater schedule for WY 2024
 - Created a draft Basin Optimization Plan

¹ Link to Municipal Service Review: <https://s42135.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/FCGMA-MSR-Final-2025-01-15.pdf>

MONTHLY BUDGET TO ACTUAL ACCOUNTING:

FCGMA

The FCGMA monthly budget report for December 2024 is listed in the Consent Agenda. Variances of note include revenue decreasing by \$79,131.94 (49%) in December from November, due to decreases in collected pumping charges, GEMES Reserve fees and Sustainability fees. Expenses decreased by \$876,546.36 (65%) in December to work performed by WildHeron Drilling, LLC on monitoring wells in the Oxnard and Pleasant Valley Basins nearing its end.

LPV WATERMASTER

The LPV Watermaster monthly budget to actual accounting report for December 2024 is listed in the Consent Agenda.

AMI RINCON UPDATE

In 2024, facing a staffing shortage, FCGMA contracted with Rincon Consultants Inc., (consultant) to provide Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Data Services to the Agency for \$78,977.88 until December 2024. Staff expected to fill the vacancy by the end of the contract and in November 2024, the position was filled. Staff have taken over AMI Data Services and will no longer require support from consultant, leading to the termination of the contract. Staff is grateful to Rincon Consultants Inc., for the support during the existence of the contract.

LPV WATERMASTER ASSESSMENTS:

2024-1 BASIN ASSESSMENT UPDATE

On September 25, 2024, the Watermaster Board adopted a Basin Assessment for Las Posas Valley Basin for Water Year (WY) 2024 of \$64.58 to be invoiced quarterly at \$16.145. The first quarterly Basin Assessment (BA) invoices for Water Year 2024 were sent to water right holders via email on October 2, 2024, with payments due November 1, 2024. Payments not received within a month of the due date are considered delinquent and shall bear interest at the current real property tax delinquency rate for Ventura County.

Two notices of delinquency were sent to delinquent Water Management Identifications (WMIDs) on December 11 and December 21, 2024. As of January 15, 2025, \$30,235.52 is delinquent from 15 WMIDs, \$26,950.75 in BA invoice payments and \$3,284.77 in interest charges. A list of delinquent WMID's is available on the Watermaster website at: [LPV-Basin-Assess-Delinq-Report-2024-1 2025-01-15.pdf](https://fcgma.org/annual-assessments-wy-2024-1-2025-01-15.pdf).

On January 6, 2024, Watermaster released the second quarterly BA invoice with a due date of January 30, 2025.

Adopted Annual Allocations for WY 2024 and the schedule of quarterly installments are available on the Watermaster website at: <https://fcgma.org/annual-allocations-wy-2024/>.

2023-1 DELINQUENT BASIN ASSESSMENTS

As of January 15, 2025, staff have processed \$1,287,217.90 from LPV Basin Assessments for WY 2023. Delinquent payments for WY2023 as of January 15, 2025, amount to \$23,242.72 from 10 WMIDs. Staff is taking the next steps consistent with its enforcement

FCGMA Board Meeting
Item 6 – Executive Officer's Administrative Report
January 22, 2025

authorities to collect remaining amounts. Each quarterly installment results in database development to administer a minimum of four (4) additional notification batches.

MEETINGS

February Board Meetings: Due to availability in February, staff recommends cancelling the Board Regular meeting scheduled for February 26, 2025, and instead holding the special meeting tentatively scheduled for February 12, 2025.

Committee Meetings:

The Executive Committee met on Thursday, January 9, 2025, and discussed recommendations for the recruiting process for the Executive Officer role, starting with approving the job description and pay range. Agency staff will work closely with the Ventura County Executive Office of Human Resources (CEO HR) department in creating the appropriate position for a full-time Executive Officer. This topic is discussed in further detail in another Item in today's agenda.

The Executive Committee discussed the importance of forming a selection panel with stakeholder involvement for the first round of interviews to recommend finalists for final candidate interviews with the Board. The Committee suggests that the selection panel consist of representatives from the Las Posas, Oxnard, and Pleasant Valley Basins, and that it includes a range of stakeholders including agriculture, municipal and local water agency representatives as well as FCGMA and CEO HR.

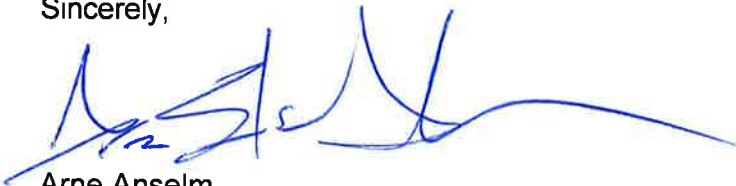
Stakeholders are invited, starting now, to suggest names for the selection panel. Please email your nominations and their contact information to FCGMA@ventura.org with "EO Selection Panel Nominee" in the email subject line at your earliest convenience.

For more information about Board and Committee meetings, please see the list of Scheduled Meetings for Calendar Year 2025 (attached as Item 6A).

CONCLUSION:

This letter has been reviewed by Agency Counsel. If you have any questions, please call me at (805) 654-3942.

Sincerely,



Arne Anselm
Interim Executive Officer

Attachment:

Item 6A – Scheduled Meetings for Calendar Year 2025