

FOX CANYON GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

A State of California Water Agency



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eugene F. West, Chair, *Director, Camrosa Water District*
David Borchard, Vice Chair, *Farmer, Agricultural Representative*
Kelly Long, *Supervisor, County of Ventura*
Lynn Maulhardt, *Director, United Water Conservation District*
Bert Perello, *Councilperson, City of Oxnard*

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jeff Pratt, P.E.

September 27, 2023

Board of Directors
Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1610

SUBJECT: Groundwater Sustainability Plan Five-Year Evaluations – (New Item)

RECOMMENDATION: Receive an update from Agency staff on Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) five-year evaluations.

BACKGROUND:

Your Board adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for the Las Posas Valley Basin, Oxnard Subbasin, and Pleasant Valley Basin on December 13, 2019. The GSPs were submitted to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on January 13, 2020. After a thorough review of the submitted GSPs over a two-year period, DWR approved the Agency's GSPs, finding they were based on the best available science and information. DWR made its determinations approving the GSPs for the Oxnard and Pleasant Valley (OPV) Basins on November 18, 2021, and the GSP for the Las Posas Valley (LPV) Basin on January 13, 2022. DWR's GSP Assessment Staff Report for each basin includes recommended "corrective actions that should be considered by the GSAs for the first five-year assessment of its GSP." DWR recommended five corrective actions for the Las Posas Valley GSP, four for the Oxnard Subbasin GSP, and five for the Pleasant Valley Basin GSP.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires that Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) periodically evaluate their GSP(s) to "assess changing conditions in the basin that may warrant modification of the plan or management objectives and may adjust components in the plan." The GSP Emergency Regulations require that GSAs conduct GSP evaluations at least every five years and whenever the GSP is amended. The GSP evaluations are due to DWR no later than January 13, 2025. At the December 9, 2022, meeting, your Board approved a new contract with Dudek for technical consulting services and to conduct the 5-year GSP evaluations.

DISCUSSION:

Staff provided an update on the 5-year GSP evaluations at the August 23, 2023, meeting including the following outline of tasks and schedule:

1. Stakeholder Engagement / Outreach – ongoing through January 2025
 - a. Workshop No. 1 – August 30, 2023
 - b. Workshop No. 2 – November 2023
 - c. Workshop No. 3 – March 2024
 - d. Workshop No. 4 – July 2024
2. Modeling and Data Analysis – July 2023 through February 2024

800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1610
(805) 654-2014 or 645-1372 FAX: (805) 654-3350
Website: www.fcgma.org

Item 4 - Page 1 of 3

3. Report Preparation – November 2023 through June 2024
 - a. Monitoring Network Review
 - b. New Information
 - c. Projects and Management Actions
 - d. Current Groundwater Conditions
 - e. Plan Element Review
 - f. Agency Action and Coordination
4. Report Review – July 2024 through December 2024
 - a. Public Review – July 2024
 - b. Report Revisions – August 2024
 - c. Final Report to FCGMA – September 2024
 - d. FCGMA Board Adoption of Evaluation & Amendments – October 2024
 - e. Reports Submitted to DWR – December 2024

The kick-off stakeholder workshop was held on August 30, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the Ventura County Board of Supervisors Hearing Room. Dr. Jill Weinberger of Dudek gave an overview of the SGMA; the groundwater basins; the GSPs including sustainability indicators in each basin; spring 2023 water levels in each basin and progress toward meeting minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and interim milestones; GSP implementation including projects; management actions, and reporting; GSP re-evaluation including projects, numerical groundwater monitoring, DWR's corrective actions, timeline, and opportunities for stakeholder involvement. Following the presentation there was a panel question-and-answer session with Agency and Dudek staff. Approximately 30 people attended. A video of the workshop, an audio recording of the question-and-answer session, and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation are available in the GSP section on FCGMA.org. The kick-off workshop included all three groundwater basins. Separate workshops will be held for the LPV Basin and OPV Basins for the remaining workshops.

Agency staff and Dudek have met several times with United Water Conservation District (UWCD) staff to discuss numerical groundwater flow modeling of future conditions in the West Las Posas Management Area and OPV Basins. The modeling will be conducted by UWCD using its updated Coastal Plain Model which is built in the US Geological Survey MODFLOW-NWT modeling platform. This is an updated version of the model used for the GSPs. The future groundwater conditions modeling incorporates updated groundwater conditions, improved understanding of coastal aquifer hydrostratigraphy, and updated project information.

The updated projects to include in modeling will be selected through the project prioritization process approved by your Board at the June 28, 2023, meeting. That process consists of an annual solicitation for new and updated project information which must be submitted by September 30th of each year. The Agency sent out the solicitation on September 5 and a reminder on September 19. Projects will be evaluated and ranked by the Operations Committee at a public meeting according to the process and criteria approved by your Board. The Operations Committee's recommendations will then come to your Board for approval. Information about project solicitation, evaluation criteria, and forms for submission are available at FCGMA.org.

Future conditions modeling will be based on four scenarios:

- Baseline – This scenario will set the baseline for future groundwater conditions if no new projects or management actions are implemented.
- No Projects – This scenario will evaluate pumping reductions that would be required to achieve sustainable groundwater management by 2040 if no new projects are implemented.
- Projects Without the Proposed Extraction Brackish Barrier (EBB) Water Treatment Project – This scenario will evaluate the sustainable yield and pumping rates required to achieve sustainable

groundwater management by 2040 with the new suite of projects to be selected as previously described, but without UWCD's proposed EBB project.

- Projects With the Proposed Extraction Brackish Barrier (EBB) Water Treatment Project – This scenario will evaluate the sustainable yield and pumping rates required to achieve sustainable groundwater management by 2040 with the new suite of projects including UWCD's proposed EBB project. Note the suite of projects may be different between the scenarios with and without the EBB project.

The groundwater modeling and GSP evaluations will include revised estimates of sustainable yield, minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and interim milestones to achieve sustainable groundwater management by 2040 and beyond as required by SGMA. It should be noted that that these metrics are likely to differ between the scenarios.

Agency staff is working with UWCD to develop the scope and costs for conducting the numerical groundwater modeling. Staff anticipates the agreement will come to the October 25, 2023, meeting for your Board's consideration of approval. Dudek will conduct numerical groundwater flow modeling of future conditions in the East Las Posas Management Area utilizing the model developed by Calleguas Municipal Water District used for the GSP.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that your Board receive and file this report and provide feedback as appropriate. This letter has been reviewed by Agency Counsel. If you have any questions, please call me at (805) 650-4083.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Loeb', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kimball R. Loeb, PG, CEG, CHG
Groundwater Manager