

# MEETING MINUTES

## Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Central Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin March 21, 2022

A special meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Central Management Area (CMA) in the Santa Ynez River Groundwater Basin was held on Monday, March 21, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, this meeting occurred solely via teleconference as recommended by Santa Barbara County Public Health, as authorized by State Assembly Bill 361, and Resolution CMA-2021-001 (passed on 10/20/2021, reaffirmed 2/28/2022).

CMA GSA Committee Directors Present: Art Hibbits, John Sanchez (Acting Alternate), and Meighan Dietenhofer (Acting Alternate)

Member Agency Staff Present: Bill Buelow, Marliez Diaz, Rose Hess, Amber Thompson, and Kevin Walsh

Others Present: Bryan Bondy, Doug Circle, Len Fleckenstein, Larry Lahr, Curtis Lawler (Stetson Engineers), Miles McCammon (Stetson Engineers) and Sharyne Merritt

### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

CMA GSA Vice Chair Art Hibbits called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and asked Mr. Buelow to call roll. One GSA Director and one GSA Acting Alternate Director were present providing a quorum plus one non-voting GSA Acting Alternate Director also present.

Mr. Buelow welcomed and introduced Ms. Marliez Diaz, a new staff member with the Santa Barbara County Water Agency who was hired to assist with SGMA matters in the County.

### **II. Consider findings under Government Code section 54953(e)(3) to authorize continuing teleconference meetings under Resolution CMA-2021-001**

Mr. Buelow explained that the reasonings for State Assembly Bill 361 and adoption of Resolution CMA-2021-001, passed on October 20, 2021, and reaffirmed on February 28, 2022, which authorized teleconference public meetings were still in effect. Discussion followed.

GSA Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez made a MOTION to authorize continuing teleconference meetings under Resolution CMA-2021-001. GSA Director Art Hibbits seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**III. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

No additions or deletions were made.

**IV. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**V. Receive Draft First Annual Report for the Central Management Area of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (CMA AR)**

Mr. Buelow explained the Annual Report requirement of the SGMA statute. Then, Mr. Curtis Lawler, Stetson Engineers, presented a brief summary of the Draft CMA First Annual Report for Water Year 2021, dated February 28, 2022. The scope of the Annual Report covers Water Year 2021, summarizes data collected through September 2021, and describes progress towards implementing the GSP. Discussion followed.

GSA Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez made a MOTION to accept the First Annual Report, as presented or with non-substantive corrections, and submit the report to DWR. GSA Director Art Hibbits seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**VI. Discuss and consider requesting staff to develop well registration and metering program for CMA**

Mr. Buelow introduced the GSP implementation tasks of well registration and metering or alternative measurement programs. He emphasized the importance of consistency in technical meter and installation requirements across all three GSAs within the Basin and provide a clear, smooth transition with costs defrayed. He advised that the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (District) has a well registration program and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency staff offered to review the measure and meter requirements in California, and with approval from the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, developed the Well Monitoring Assistance Program (WMAAP) providing funding to offset up to \$500 of the equipment cost of qualifying water meters.

Discussion followed. GSA Alternate Director Meighan Diethofer suggested staff complete a cost/benefit analysis of different meter types to determine the minimum cost for good information. Ms. Diaz explained the County of Santa Barbara meter rebate program and the eligibility rules including that the GSA must encourage or require metering. Discussion followed.

GSA Acting Alternate Director John Sanchez made a MOTION directing staff to develop a well registration and metering program for the Central Management Area GSA. Director Art Hibbits seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**VII. Update and discussion on future governance**

Mr. Buelow reported that staff and attorneys in all three management areas from all eight basin-wide member agencies have participated together in a few meetings, attorneys from all eight member agencies have met separately and each GSA staff and attorney groups have also met together to discuss future governance. He reported that member agency staff together with respective legal counsel are working on a draft Joint Powers Agreement, concepts on interim cost sharing and comparison of costs for different future governance model options. The future governance model options take into consideration direction and suggestions received from the GSA Committee and CAGs including to keep away from top-heavy organization, keep costs low for the constituents, consider where costs can be shared among the three GSAs while maintain local control of implementation of the GSPs. Discussion followed. No action was taken.

**VIII. Next Regular CMA GSA Meeting, Monday, May 23, 2022, at 10:00 A.M.**

Mr. Buelow announced the next regular CMA GSA meeting will be Monday, May 23, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., either in person at the Buellton City Council Chambers or via Zoom. The details will be determined closer to the meeting date based on continuing health concerns presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**IX. CMA GSA Committee requests and comments**

Mr. Buelow announced there is a press release regarding the Santa Ynez Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plans Approved written and submitted by County staff that was published in the March 15, 2022 edition of the Santa Ynez Star.

GSA Director Art Hibbits requested staff compile data on how many meters will be needed for each of the three management areas and the approximate cost for all meters. Discussion followed.

**X. Adjournment**

GSA Vice Chair Art Hibbits adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Art Hibbits, Vice-Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William J. Buelow, Secretary