

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee**

February 27, 2014 - 16<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS

#### **Meeting Synopsis**

The Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC) held its sixteenth and final meeting on February 27, 2014. Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County, reviewed the completed Work Program/Schedule and upcoming activities and events. Mr. Phil Miller, Napa County, provided an informational update on Napa County drought conditions and how State and local water supplies affect Napa County. The Sustainability Objectives Ad-Hoc Committee and staff reviewed the changes made in November to the draft Sustainability Objectives and corresponding table. With the addition of minor edits, the GRAC unanimously approved the Sustainability Objectives recommendations summary and corresponding table. The Final Report Ad-Hoc Committee and staff then presented their Board Agenda Letter that summarized the GRAC's work and recommendations for County groundwater sustainability. The GRAC unanimously approved the Board Agenda Letter with minor edits, and the inclusion of a supplemental memo on the status of voluntary well monitoring recruitment. Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County, provided a status update on the nearly complete well owner and industry outreach for the monitoring program, which will continue over the next few months. Lastly, Chair of the County Board of Supervisors Mr. Mark Luce, along with meeting participants, shared words of appreciation for the hard work GRAC members and staff dedicated to understanding the County's groundwater system. Several participants noted that the GRAC completed its work ahead of schedule, and said the GRAC's work exemplified how diverse backgrounds and interests can collaborate to address the complex issue of groundwater sustainability. The GRAC final report presentation to the County Board of Supervisors is tentatively scheduled for April 8, 2014.

Please see the GRAC's webpage ([www.countyofnapa.org/bos/grac](http://www.countyofnapa.org/bos/grac)) for copies of the February 27, 2014 presentations and handouts.

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## Action Items

1. **STAFF** to update December 12 meeting summary and meeting minutes.
2. **STAFF** to maintain updates for regional and Napa County rain accumulation on the County website.
3. **STAFF** to replace “Make better use of” with “Optimize” in Objective 2 of the Draft Sustainability Objectives document.
4. **STAFF** to remove “...because groundwater is integral...culture of the region” from the Goal of Developing Groundwater Sustainability Objectives.
5. **STAFF** to add “Summary” to Supporting Document B’s title regarding the WAA and Groundwater Ordinance.
6. **STAFF** to include an additional supporting document to the Board Agenda Letter, “Status Update of Napa County Groundwater Monitoring Well Outreach,” that provides an overview of well monitoring progress.
7. **STAFF** to remove mentioning LSCE as the specific technical consultant in Recommendation #3. GRAC members in attendance will verbally recommend LSCE at the GRAC presentation to the Board of Supervisors.
8. **STAFF** to provide meeting information to **ALL MEMBERS** for the final GRAC presentation to the Board of Supervisors (tentatively April 8, 2014).

## Agreements

1. The GRAC agreed to adopt the proposed Groundwater Sustainability Objectives Recommendations.
2. The GRAC agreed to adopt the draft final report letter for the GRAC presentation to the County Board of Supervisors.

## 1. Call to Order & Roll Call

All members of the Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC) were in attendance, except for Peter McCrea and Don Gleason, who were excused.

## 2. Welcome & Opening Remarks

Vice Chair Michelle Benvenuto opened the session.

## 3. Organizational Items

### a. Approval of Action Minutes & Meeting Summary

Vice Chair Michelle Benvenuto invited comments on the meeting minutes and meeting summary for the December 12, 2013 meeting. The following corrections were noted: change Steve Soper's vote to be among the majority vote in the meeting summary and meeting minutes (page 7 and 2 respectively).

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to update December 12 meeting summary and meeting minutes.

With these modifications, the December 12 meeting minutes and meeting summary were unanimously approved.

### b. Review Work Plan/Schedule

Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County reviewed the completed work plan and noted the GRAC finished ahead of schedule. The County will hold community outreach meetings for vintners and later for the public on March 10. The GRAC final report presentation to the County Board of Supervisors is tentatively scheduled for April 8, 2014.

### c. Review Meeting Agenda and Process

Vice Chair Michelle Benvenuto reviewed the agenda.

## 4. Public Comment

John Pearson expressed his appreciation for the GRAC and County's efforts. Mr. Pearson posed several questions: whether the County has considered monitoring residential well use as well as agricultural, offering additional stewardship incentives, and developing a program for neighbors to collaborate in their stewardship efforts.

- **Response:** Patrick Lowe, Napa County, said the County has a number of residential wells in the well monitoring program. He also noted that Deborah Elliott, Water Resources Specialists, manages the County's outreach and education programs.

## 5. Presentations and Discussion Items

### a. Update on Napa County Drought Conditions, Water Supplies, and Drought Preparedness Planning

Mr. Phillip Miller, DPW Deputy Director, Napa County, provided an informational update on the County's drought conditions, the California State Water Project, and public outreach efforts.

Additional key points included:

- The State Water Project provides the potable water to Napa County's urban areas and the rest of Napa County during times of drought.
- This year's drought is the driest in California history, and tree ring survey analyses suggest it is the driest in 500 years.
- The major reservoirs supplying Napa County are facing extreme drought and need 37 more inches of precipitation to reach average levels.
- The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) predicts a major impact on the State's agriculture and a potential impact on tourism and hydroelectricity.
- Mr. Miller said that Napa County's agriculture will likely be less impacted since the industry relies on groundwater.
- The Save Our Water campaign is a public outreach collaboration between the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and ACWA that will use various forms of media to spread the message on water conservation.
- The Napa County monitoring data suggest Napa Valley's groundwater supply is healthy except for a few localized and anecdotal concerns.
- Mark Nordberg, California Department of Water Resources, noted the annual groundwater monitoring will begin a month earlier, because the drought report is due to the Governor by April 30.

### QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- **Updates on County Website.** Can County staff regularly update the rain accumulation for northern California as well as the County's current and average precipitation?  
**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to work to provide basic precipitation and rain accumulation updates for Napa County and Northern California on the County website.
- **Napa County rainfall and reservoirs.** Current rainfall is within a third of normal average County levels. Many reservoirs in central Napa Valley have filled since the recent storms.

- **Aqueduct system supplying cities.** Can you expand on the North Bay Aqueduct system?
  - **Response:** Lake Oroville stores water that is distributed through the North Bay Aqueduct (NBA) system. The NBA runs from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to Cordelia Forebay, where water is treated and distributed to various parts of the County.
  
- **Available water varies among cities in Napa County.** While rainfall appears adequate at the County-level, certain cities still have severe water concerns (e.g., St. Helena, American Canyon, and Angwin). Outreach should inform people that rainfall is not equally spread across all cities. The public should know which cities have water issues.
  - **Comment:** The cities have different bypass obligations to protect the river ecosystem, even during periods of drought (e.g., St. Helena and Calistoga have bypass obligations, but not Yountville).
  - **Staff Comment:** Phil Miller, Napa County, said that population growth also exacerbates water availability and needs.
  
- **Precautionary actions:** Despite current rainstorms, cities such as American Canyon and the County should consider precautionary measures (e.g., requiring drought resistant landscaping on future development projects).

## b. Groundwater Sustainability Objectives Recommendations

The facilitator Mr. Dorian Fougères explained that the GRAC had reviewed the Draft Sustainability Objectives document at its October meeting, and that the Ad-Hoc Committee (AHC) revised it in November based on the GRAC’s October feedback. In December the GRAC received the draft groundwater objectives in the form of a detailed table at their December meeting that recommended professional associations and organizations to lead implementation of the objectives; the GRAC approved this table. But they had not seen the full revised Draft Sustainability Objectives document, which provides important context for understanding the objectives. The purpose of today’s agenda item was for the GRAC to approve the Draft Sustainability Objectives document.

GRAC members shared their appreciation for the AHC’s thorough work improving the document.

### QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- **Language consistency.** Use consistent wording between the draft and table.

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to replace “Make better use of” with “Optimize” in Objective 2 of the Draft Sustainability Objectives document.

- **Absolute language.** I prefer alternative language for defining groundwater sustainability than absolute words such as “indefinitely.”
  - **AHC Response:** We believed “indefinitely” appropriately reflected the essence of sustainability. We did not want to instruct how future generations should be stewards, but we also wanted a more defined term than “long-term.”
  - **AHC Response:** We discussed the definition thoroughly, but I recommend our focus goes towards the objectives section and table.
  
- **Cities inclusion.** Since the cities primarily do not rely on groundwater, mentioning cities in the Goal statement is misleading.
  - **AHC Response:** We included cities because they rely on groundwater during drought years.
  - **Comment:** I interpreted it as part of the message that groundwater issues affect the entire community, directly and indirectly.
  - **AHC Comment:** Cities are beginning to consider groundwater for municipal use.
  - **Comment:** Cities and their shared responsibility are mentioned elsewhere in the document.

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to remove “...because groundwater is integral...culture of the region” from the Goal of Developing Groundwater Sustainability Objectives.

**AGREEMENT:** All **GRAC MEMBERS** agreed to adopt the Draft Sustainability Objectives document, with the aforementioned revisions.

### c. **Report from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Recommendations for the GRAC Final Report and Board of Supervisors Presentation**

Mr. Fougères reviewed the Final Report Ad-Hoc Committee’s (AHC) work to draft a final report letter for the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

GRAC members said the draft document was well-written. Mr. Steve Lederer, Napa County, said County staff felt similarly.

## QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- **Correction to Support Document B. Staff Comment:** Support Document B regarding the Water Availability Analysis (WAA) and Groundwater Ordinance will be a summary of the two documents rather than the full versions.

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to add “Summary” to Supporting Document B’s title regarding the WAA and Groundwater Ordinance.

- **Well Monitoring Program progress.** The BOS should have more information on the number of wells the County was monitoring prior to the Program, the current number of wells in the Program, and additional wells needed. Can County staff also include a map of wells and possibly which wells are part of the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program?

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to provide an additional supporting document to the Board Agenda Letter, “Status Update of Napa County Groundwater Monitoring Well Outreach,” that provides an overview of well monitoring progress.

- **Technical Consultant.** While Luhdorff and Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE) has produced excellent work, the GRAC should not endorse any specific technical consultant in its recommendations. GRAC members can verbally commend LSCE at the BOS presentation.

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to remove mentioning LSCE as the technical consultant in Recommendation #3. GRAC members in attendance will verbally recommend LSCE at the GRAC presentation to the BOS.

- **BOS Presentation.** What is the date and time for the BOS presentation?

**ACTION ITEM:** STAFF to provide meeting information to all members for the final GRAC presentation to the BOS (tentatively April 8, 2014).

**AGREEMENT:** All **GRAC MEMBERS** agreed to adopt the draft final report letter for the GRAC presentation to the County Board of Supervisors.

### d. Update on Industry/Public Outreach & Well Owner Outreach

Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County, reviewed updated outreach efforts with industry groups and the general public on the Voluntary Groundwater Monitoring Program.

Mr. Lowe said the County will likely begin monitoring in the third week of March because the drought report is due to the Governor’s office by April 30. The voluntary Monitoring Program gathered 35 additional wells for a total of more than 70 wells in the

Monitoring Program. The County will continue well owner outreach for a few additional months, but they currently have fairly sufficient monitoring coverage. The County will also have wells along Napa River to analyze surface water and groundwater interactions.

Mr. Lowe said the community has shown high interest in the Monitoring Program, and he expects high attendance at future County outreach meetings. He welcomed GRAC members to attend the public outreach meeting on March 10 at 5:00pm.

## **6. Other Business**

No additional business items were presented.

## **7. Announcements**

No announcements were presented.

## **8. Closing Comments**

Mr. Jim Pearson, member of the Public, complimented GRAC member Susanne von Rosenberg's presentation on the GRAC's work at the Master Gardener training workshops.

Facilitator Mr. Dorian Fougères said it was a pleasure working with the GRAC and appreciated their strong commitment to understanding the highly scientific and technical information. The members exemplify how citizens can get involved and guide public policy, and now Napa County is one of the leaders in California groundwater stewardship.

Mr. Mark Nordberg, DWR, said he valued observing the GRAC's progression, which will help inform groundwater outreach approaches elsewhere in California. CASGEM is a required statewide monitoring program, while the GRAC's work demonstrates that monitoring can also be done voluntarily and successfully at the county level. Many counties may need to develop a groundwater management plan in the future. In DWR's list of priority basins of concern in California, the county's generally stable groundwater levels and stewardship make it only a medium priority.

Mr. Mark Luce, District 2 Supervisor, on behalf of the Napa County Board of Supervisors, expressed gratitude for all of the GRAC's work on a delicate issue. The statewide drought highlighted why groundwater sustainability is critical, and why the County needs an accurate understanding of the groundwater system to responsibly take care of the resource. Due to the GRAC's work, the County and the community can take appropriate steps for collaborating and protecting Napa County's groundwater resources.

Vice Chair Michelle Benvenuto closed the meeting thanking GRAC members and staff members for their dedicated and hard work. The members represented diverse opinions and yet were still able to collaborate and reach consensus on difficult issues.

## Attendees

### Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee Members

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Michelle Benvenuto | 7. Steve Soper            |
| 2. Tucker Catlin      | 8. Marilee Talley         |
| 3. Alan Galbraith     | 9. Jim Verhey             |
| 4. David Graves       | 10. Susanne von Rosenberg |
| 5. Michael Haley      | 11. Duane Wall            |
| 6. Charles Slutzkin   | 12. Dale Withers          |

### Public Attendees

13. John Pearson
14. Mark Nordberg, California Dept. of Water Resources

### County Staff/Facilitator/Consultant Attendees

15. Deborah Elliott
16. Dorian Fougères, CCP
17. Vicki Kretsinger Grabert, LSCE
18. Stephanie Horii, CCP
19. Steve Lederer
20. Patrick Lowe
21. Mark Luce
22. Phil Miller
23. Greg Morgan