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1. Introduction & Context

The 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater resources by local authorities. It requires the development of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for all groundwater basins designated as medium or high priority. The act establishes a 20-year timeline to implement actions to achieve long-term groundwater sustainability. The primary goal of the GSP is to develop and implement sustainable groundwater management practices resulting in achievement of the sustainability goal within 20 years.

As part of GSP development and implementation, SGMA requires outreach and engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that their interests are considered. This Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan (CEP) is developed to guide local efforts to meet the SGMA requirements and to involve stakeholders in the development of an effective GSP.

The Napa Valley Subbasin is designated as a high priority basin by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). Based on DWR’s statewide scoring criteria, the Subbasin is designated as high priority based on the relatively high use and importance of groundwater. The Subbasin covers approximately 45,900 acres within Napa County. It includes the Cities of Napa, St. Helena and Calistoga and the Town of Yountville and is depicted in Figure 1. Land uses within the Subbasin include urban and developed areas, agriculture and open space.

Napa County conducted an online Groundwater Stakeholder Survey between June 2019 and July 2020 to gain an understanding of the array of community interests in groundwater-related issues and to inform and guide future outreach and engagement efforts, including the development of this Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan. A total of 79 responses were received. Responding stakeholders included domestic well owners, agricultural water users, public water system customers, environmental users of groundwater, commercial or industrial users of groundwater, representatives of public water systems, land use planning agencies and disadvantaged community organizations. Key suggestions from the survey regarding outreach and engagement included:

- Be persistent and consistent in outreach efforts
- Use multiple communication methods and platforms
- Provide regular updates to communicate basic hydrology and track and substantively report the status of the groundwater resource
- Organize and convene periodic education events, using multiple forums and formats, including podcasts, webinars and workshops

This CEP incorporates those suggestions, as described in the sections that follow. Additionally, the CEP builds on the important early work of the Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC), the Watershed Information and Conservation Council (WICC), the 2016 Alternative to a Groundwater Sustainability Plan development process and the water resources-related education efforts of the Napa County Resource Conservation District.
Figure 1 Napa Valley Subbasin Map
2. Engagement Strategy Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Napa Valley Subbasin Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan is to provide guidance for the Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (NCGSA) to create meaningful opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders (including those outside of the Napa Valley Subbasin) to learn about and share their concerns and ideas regarding groundwater management in order to develop and implement an effective GSP.

The CEP relies on partnerships with organizations that can help to reach important constituencies with interests in long-term sustainability of Napa County’s groundwater.

The CEP has the following overarching objectives:

- Build on existing partnerships with agencies and organizations, foster new partnerships, and leverage existing related efforts to reach and engage a broad range of community members
- Communicate key groundwater science and planning principles and their implications for the GSP in an accessible and compelling manner
- Build trust in the GSP development and implementation process by providing transparency and creating opportunities for stakeholders to listen to one another and develop a shared understanding of the issues and the science
- Provide inclusive and equitable opportunities for timely public comment and substantive feedback on draft GSP sections, in a manner that complements and builds on the deliberations of the GSPAC and shows stakeholders how their ideas and comments are reflected in the GSP
- Support effective development and implementation of the GSP by ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement

3. Roles, Responsibilities and Decision-making for the GSP and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency: The governing board of the Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (NCGSA) is the designated decision-making entity for the GSP process and will oversee the development of the GSP, including direction, funding and approval of the GSP. The NCGSA is also responsible for implementation of the GSP and this CEP. The NCGSA Board of Directors is comprised of the five members of the Napa County Board of Supervisors who are listed in Appendix A. The NCGSA meets monthly. Meetings are publicly noticed, are open to the public and include time for public comment. Meeting agendas, minutes and materials are available on the NCGSA’s website: https://napa.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=33

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee: The NCGSA Board appointed the Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee (GSPAC) to advise the NCGSA on matters related to GSP preparation, including policies and recommendations for groundwater management. The GSPAC has 25 members representing a broad range of stakeholders and is charged with generating and submitting a recommended GSP to the NCGSA Board of Directors.
no later than November 1, 2021. The members are listed in Appendix A. The GSPAC members also serve as a conduit of information regarding the GSP process by sharing information with community members with whom they interact and conveying stakeholder feedback back to the NCGSA and NCGSA staff. The GSPAC meets the second Thursday of every month at 1:30pm. Meetings are publicly noticed, are open to the public and include time for public comment. Meeting agendas, materials and minutes are available online at https://napa.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=35.¹

**NCGSA Staff Contacts and Consultants:** Napa County staff support the NCGSA and are engaged in GSP development, stakeholder engagement and GSP implementation. They also oversee a team comprised of technical consultants responsible for data collection, groundwater modeling and drafting of GSP sections and facilitation consultants helping to facilitate planning and meetings of the GSPAC. The staff and technical consultants are also responsible for implementation of the GSP, annual reporting of groundwater conditions and taking appropriate management actions identified in the GSP to ensure groundwater sustainability for the Subbasin.

**Napa County Resource Conservation District:** Under a Joint Powers Agreement with Napa County, the RCD will support County staff in conducting groundwater-related outreach, monitoring, planning, education and engagement. The RCD has many decades of experience in the County working with community members to enhance understanding of stewardship of natural resources. They are a trusted source for information and science and have strong networks with the community.

**Watershed Information & Conservation Council (WICC):** The WICC was created by the Napa County Board of Supervisors in 2002 to assist the Supervisors in their decision-making process and serve as a conduit for citizen input by gathering, analyzing and recommending options related to the management of watershed resources countywide. Its mission is to improve the health of Napa County’s watershed by informing, engaging and fostering partnerships within the community. As such, the WICC is an important partner in providing groundwater information to stakeholders.

**Partner Organizations:** Partner organizations will be critical for helping to reach stakeholders, particularly community participants who are not typically engaged in groundwater management and planning. Partner organizations include tribal organizations, social service organizations, Latinx community service organizations, the agriculture industry, environmental groups, and others. Organizations that have been identified so far are listed in Appendix B.²

4. **Initial Topics for Stakeholder Discussion and Input**

Based on input from the previous work of the Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC, 2011-2014), input during the Alternative development process, the recent groundwater

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¹ NCGSA and GSPAC meetings are also announced to the County’s groundwater email list.
² Appendix B is a dynamic list that will build over time.
stakeholder survey, GSPAC members and NCGSA staff, below are some topics of interest to stakeholders that have been identified so far and are expected to be subjects for stakeholder discussion and input.

- **SGMA and the GSP**: Establish a common base of understanding about the impetus for SGMA and the purpose of the GSP.
  - Communicate the overall structure of the GSP, the content and status of the evolving draft GSP, and adoption and implementation
  - Explain the GSP in context of other laws and regulations for protection of water resources and the environment
- **Hydrology and Groundwater “101”**: Provide a clear presentation of baseline information on key topics that are essential to understand so that stakeholders can contribute their ideas and concerns during the GSP development process. For example:
  - What is groundwater and where does it come from?
  - How are groundwater and local geology related? What is the Napa Valley Subbasin? What does it mean to be high priority?
- **How groundwater and surface water are connected; groundwater-dependent ecosystems; impacts of groundwater pumping on the Napa River**
- **Past and present groundwater conditions including groundwater supply, groundwater use and groundwater quality**
- **The impacts on people of the status of groundwater relative to conditions of sustainability, costs of effective and ineffective groundwater stewardship**
- **Groundwater stewardship practices, current and future**
- **Data gathering, analysis, synthesis and evaluation**: Data collection and transparency in dissemination and disclosure is a key concern. Public outreach and engagement will be an important element of the collection, review and evaluation of empirical data that will form the basis of the GSP and its implementation
- **Sustainability goal, monitoring objectives, development of sustainable management criteria, regular monitoring for and avoidance of undesirable results, and annual reporting of groundwater conditions**

5. **Potential Outreach and Engagement Methods**

Outreach and engagement will occur throughout the GSP development and implementation phases as indicated in the conceptual graphic that follows.
To achieve the goals and objectives of this CEP, the NCGSA will be guided by the principles described below.

**Outreach and Engagement Principles:**

- Strive for accessibility by providing multiple levels of information and multiple ways to participate. Ensure that meetings are held at times that support participation and in locations and formats that are convenient, accessible and comfortable.
- Provide key documents and outreach materials in both English and Spanish and provide Spanish interpretation at meetings as needed.
- Focus initially on virtual engagement opportunities due to pandemic and current health concerns.
- Partner with organizations and community leaders to help reach a diversity of stakeholders, including those not traditionally participating in water management issues. This can include the agriculture industry, environmental groups, public health and social service organizations and local municipalities and elected officials. Focus especially on organizations and individuals with connections to under-represented and disadvantaged communities\(^3\) (e.g., Latinx communities, tribal members, low income populations) and work with these organizations to develop and provide content and engage community members.
- Outreach, and engagement should be an ongoing, iterative and adaptive process to consistently involve and update stakeholders as GSP development and implementation proceeds and as outreach and engagement lessons are learned.
- Outreach and engagement should foster dialogue among stakeholders and offer community members ways to meaningfully provide input into the process and the GSP.

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\(^3\) Disadvantaged communities (DACs) are defined in the California Water Code based on income as communities with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80 percent ($51,026) of the Statewide annual median household income ($63,783) (Water Code §79505.5)
Outreach and Engagement Methods:

The NCGSA will use a variety of methods to engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of the GSP. The approaches listed below reflect a range of options that the NCGSA may choose from in order to effectively engage as many stakeholders as possible.

Meetings/Workshops:
- Regularly noticed public meetings of the 25-member Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee (GSPAC), scheduled to meet at monthly intervals to provide stakeholder perspectives and information integral to the representation of the beneficial users and uses of groundwater
- Regularly noticed public meetings of the NCGSA Board of Directors (usually keyed to the schedule of the Napa County Board of Supervisors)
- Opportunities to provide focused public comment during GSPAC meetings and online as the NCGSA releases draft GSP sections for public review and comment, with meetings structured around draft GSP sections, and post hoc surveys to elicit comments on the clarity and completeness of the draft
- Public meeting(s) and 60-day comment period on the compiled final Draft GSP
- Community meetings and workshops for stakeholders in various formats—open house, small group discussions, town hall, field trips
- Presentations and dialogue with stakeholders at scheduled meetings of community organizations
- Presentations at public meetings on related water resources planning efforts, e.g., Drought Contingency Plan, State Water Project Supplies, LAFCO Municipal Service Reviews and others
- Work with municipalities to provide opportunities for engagement at city/town meetings
- Provide webinars on key GSP topics
- Consider holding drop-in office hours or short brown bag events for community members to talk informally with NCGSA staff about the GSP

Website, Social Media and Electronic Communications:
- Website: The NCGSA is developing a website that will include information on the GSP development process such as existing groundwater information from the WICC and Napa County webpages, a calendar of key events and meetings, a document library, links to relevant reports and plans, fact sheets/ brochures and Frequently Asked Questions. Given current resources and work demands, this website should be ready by the end of 2020. The website is intended to be easily navigated, approachable and frequently updated. It will be located at this link: www.countyofnapa.org/groundwater. The website will include a link to sign up for electronic communications and clear information on how to get involved.
- Electronic news distribution list: The NCGSA maintains an outreach list of stakeholders that is updated regularly. The current link to join this list is here:
http://eepurl.com/bWgdin. This list is used for email distribution of materials including meeting notices, documents, news and outreach and education materials. In addition, the NCGSA will use existing stakeholder lists from partner organizations to disperse GSP information to their members as appropriate.

- Work with partner organizations to present GSP-related content electronically to their networks that relates to partner goals and objectives.
- Work with public information officers of Napa County municipalities to help disseminate information and request feedback; encourage elected officials to share information with their constituencies via their newsletters, websites and social media.
- Consider using social media platforms to provide information, advertise engagement opportunities and solicit input. Examples include using NextDoor to disseminate information about the GSP, upcoming meetings and how to get involved; posting information on County and municipal Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.

Surveys:
Surveys will be used to gather ideas and feedback on key issues and draft sections of the GSP. These surveys will be distributed to GSPAC members and the broader community. Staff may collaborate with partner organizations to ensure surveys are relevant to their constituents and to help reach underrepresented community members.

Do It Yourself Groundwater Level Monitoring:
Napa County has a groundwater self-monitoring program that offers training and a special hand-held sonic measuring device to well owners to engage in constructive citizen monitoring by determining the depth to groundwater. This program will help engage residents in groundwater data collection to better monitor and track groundwater levels and improve the understanding of groundwater conditions. See https://www.napawatersheds.org/DIY-monitoring-program for more information.

School Outreach:
Building on the RCD’s experience and partnership with the Environmental Education Coalition of Napa County (EECNNC), consider educational opportunities at schools and potential field trips.

Engaging Local News Media:
- Work with the Napa Valley Register (and local subsidiaries) and other relevant local media outlets to provide regular updates and links to the website for further information and to provide comments.
- Develop and distribute press releases at key points in the GSP development and implementation process
- Consider interviews with broadcasting outlets such as KVON and local podcasts

Supporting Materials:
• Accessible communication tools explaining key groundwater science and planning principles, such as short videos, infographics, interactive displays, etc. Efforts will be made to produce bilingual tools.
• A Frequently Asked Questions tool to communicate key terms and topics, including commonly used acronyms, and key definitions to create an accessible “vocabulary” for stakeholders with an interest in groundwater sustainability. To be posted on websites, social media, as handouts and distributed through partner organizations.
• Periodic electronic newsletters with updates on the GSP as well as useful information about groundwater conditions and related topics.
• A concise and accessible summary document that characterizes key comments and input from the GSPAC and stakeholders and indicates how the input is reflected in the GSP.
• Fact sheets/brochures on key GSP topics and issues.
• Create short videos with key messages about the GSP in English and Spanish to post to social media and distribute broadly.

6. Engaging Underrepresented and Disadvantaged Communities:

In order to develop a GSP for the Napa Valley Subbasin that reflects the concerns and ideas of all stakeholders, it is important for the NCGSA to engage disadvantaged communities, tribal members, other underrepresented populations and people and groups who are not currently active in the groundwater management process.

This Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan aims to engage community members that may be harder to reach or may face barriers to participating in NCGSA efforts. This includes non-English speaking residents, tribal members, Latinx communities, and disadvantaged communities. Disadvantaged communities (DACs) are defined by the California Water Code as communities with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80 percent ($51,026) of the Statewide annual median household income ($63,783) (Water Code §79505.5). Figure 2 shows the locations of DACs and Economically Distressed Areas within the Subbasin identified by the DWR using U.S. Census data. This includes 10.8% of the GSP area. Figure 2 also shows the location of farmworker housing centers, which are publicly-owned centers that primarily serve migrant and temporary farmworkers. Most of the mapped DACs fall within incorporated cities/town that are served by municipal water. However, the mapped DAC in the City of St. Helena is served by a municipal water system that uses both surface water and groundwater. In addition, there are other, limited DAC areas in the unincorporated areas of the Subbasin presumably served by groundwater.

Staff will work to identify barriers to participation for these groups and find ways to overcome them. Staff will build relationships with social service and other organizations that have connections to these community members to reach them and communicate effectively in
Figure 2 Napa Valley Subbasin Disadvantaged Communities

Explanation
- Napa Valley Subbasin
- City Limits
- Farmworker Housing Center

Disadvantaged Communities
- Severe/Severely Disadvantaged Community (MHI < $38,270)
- Disadvantaged Community ($38,270 < MHI < $51,026)

Economically Distressed Areas
- Census Block
  - Low Population Density (Less than or equal to 100 persons per sq. mile)
  - MHI and Population Tract (<85% MHI and Population less than or equal to 20K)

Census Tract
- MHI and Population Places (<85% MHI and Population less than or equal to 20K)

Note
- Farmworker Housing Centers are publicly-owned centers that primarily serve migrant and temporary farmworkers.
- MHI = Median Household Income

Data sources:
- ESRP - Surface Water Areas, Cities, Counties; DWR - Subbasin Boundary, Disadvantaged Community and Economically Distressed Areas

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English and Spanish. NCGSA staff will work with Spanish-speaking staff at the RCD and will use translation resources available through DWR where possible.

While there are no federally recognized tribes within Napa County, there are members of tribes who reside in Napa County. The NCGSA will encourage the participation of local tribal organizations. The NCGSA is actively reaching out to the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, which is a federally recognized tribe in proximity to Napa County and the Napa Valley Subbasin, to identify whether and how they would like to be involved in GSP development and implementation.

7. **GSP Development Schedule**

The schedule for GSP development is included in Figure 3.

8. **Key Audiences/Stakeholder Groups**

The NCGSA will engage a range of audiences and stakeholder groups as described below.

- **Agricultural Users:** farmers, ranchers, dairy professionals, winery and vineyard owners
- **Domestic Well Owners:** There are approximately 1,450 domestic well owners in the Subbasin.
- **Municipal Well Operators and Public Water Systems:** This includes the City of Napa, the Town of Yountville, City of St. Helena, City of Calistoga, State of California and other non-community water system purveyors. Non-community water systems include a large number of wineries, but also account for schools, hospitals, and other businesses. The City of St. Helena is the only municipality in the Subbasin that utilizes groundwater in their municipal supply portfolio.
- **Local land use planning agencies:** This includes the County of Napa, the City of Napa, the Town of Yountville, the City of St. Helena and the City of Calistoga.
- **Environmental users of groundwater and interconnected surface water:** including entities that represent the interests of environmental users of groundwater: This includes groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) and species that rely on interconnected surface waters within the GSP area. Entities that have expressed concern about the viability of these groundwater-dependent ecosystems include the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Services, the Sierra Club, the Napa County Resource Conservation District, Friends of the Napa River, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, Pepperwood Preserve, and other organizations. See Appendix B for a more detailed listing.
- **Surface water users:** There are more than 300 registered surface water diverters within the GSP area.
## Figure 3 Napa Valley Subbasin GSP Development Schedule

### Updated Draft September 28, 2020

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• California Native American Tribes – There are no tribal governments in Napa County that manage lands. The NCGSA will conduct outreach to tribal organizations and tribal members within the County
• Disadvantaged communities, including but not limited to, those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems (see definition in Section 6).
• Entities listed in Water Code Section 10927 that are monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or part of a groundwater basin managed by the NCGSA.

9. Evaluation and Assessment
The NCGSA will use an adaptive approach to implement and revise this CEP in order to ensure that stakeholder engagement and communication approaches are effective. The intent is that the CEP and its activities will be evaluated periodically to assess how it is performing relative to the goal and objectives. This evaluation will include feedback from stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of outreach and engagement activities.

Outreach and engagement methods will be adjusted based on feedback received and the results of post-event evaluations. Implementation efforts and their effectiveness will be summarized and reported annually as part of required annual GSP reporting.

The following metrics can be used to measure the success of the NCGSA’s stakeholder engagement efforts:

Quantitative Metrics:
• Extent of participation in GSP-related events, with a focus on community members who have not been engaged in groundwater-related issues in the past
• Subscriptions to the NCGSA’s electronic distribution list
• Traffic (number of visits) to the NCGSA’s website
• Number of outreach events and outreach materials offered in Spanish
• Participation in groundwater-related data acquisition and monitoring, with a focus on community members who have not previously participated

Qualitative Metrics (measured based on post-event surveys):
• Community members gained a greater understanding of groundwater-related issues and their importance
• Community members felt that their participation and/or input was valued and considered in the GSP development or implementation process
Appendix A

Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee Members

Groundwater Sustainability Agency Members:

Brad Wagenknecht
Ryan Gregory
Diane Dillon
Alfredo Pedroza
Belia Ramos

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee Members:

Connor Bennett
Michelle Benvenuto
Garrett Buckland
Michael Dooley
Joy Eldredge
Geoff Ellsworth
John Feron
Dave Ficeli
Eric Fitz
Alan Galbraith
David Graves
Mike Hackett
Jeri Hansen
Lester Hardy
Jim Lincoln
Amber Manfree
Beth Milliken
Peter Nissen
Derek Rayner
Chris Sauer
Patrick Tokar
Suzanne Von Rosenberg
Paul Warnock
Johnnie White
Robert Zlomke
Appendix B
Initial List of Potentially Interested Parties to Engage

Note: This is an initial listing of potentially interested parties that will be targeted for engagement as part of the implementation of this CEP. This is not an exhaustive list and additional interested parties will be added as they are identified.

California Water Code Section 10723.3 Stakeholders

Agricultural Users and Domestic Well Owners

Municipal Well Operators and Public Water System Operators
- County of Napa
- City of Napa
- City of St. Helena
- City of Calistoga
- Town of Yountville
- State of California

Local Land Use Planning Agencies
- County of Napa
- City of Napa
- City of St. Helena
- City of Calistoga
- Town of Yountville

Entities Representing the Interests of Environmental Groundwater Users
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Services
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Board Region 2
- Sierra Club
- San Francisco Estuary Institute
- Pepperwood Preserve
- Friends of the Napa River
- Napa Vision 2050
- Institute for Conservation Advocacy Research & Education (ICARE)

Surface Water Users (if there is a connection between surface and groundwater)

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4 This category includes agencies and organizations that work to support and/or protect groundwater-dependent ecosystems and species

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Federal Government Agencies
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Services

Native American Tribes
- Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities (as identified by DWR)

Other State and Local Agencies that Monitor and Manage Groundwater Usage
- Department of Water Resources
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Region Water Quality Control Board Region 2
- Napa County Resource Conservation District

Additional Stakeholders

Agricultural Organizations
- Napa Valley Grape Growers
- Winegrowers of Napa County
- Napa County Farm Bureau
- Napa Valley Vintners
- Growers/Vintners for Responsible Agriculture
- Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation

Organizations Serving Underrepresented Communities
- Suscol Intertribal Council
- Cope Family Center
- UpValley Family Center
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Puertas Abiertas
- St. John’s Catholic Church
- Latinos Unidos

Public Health Organizations
- Ole Health
- St. Helena Hospital

Business and Community Interests
- Napa Coalition for Change
- League of Women Voters
- Interfaith Councils
- Rotary Club
- Napa County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Napa County Hispanic Network
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- 4H Club
- Fair Housing Napa Valley
- Rotary Club
- Local real estate agents and developers
- Well drilling contractors

Natural Resources Interests/Organizations
- Napa County Flood Control District
- Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
- Refugia Project
- UC Davis stream evaluation project

News Media
- Napa Valley Register
- Yountville Sun
- St. Helena Star
- KVON Radio