

**EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: October 24, 2019

TO: EMA GSA Committee

FROM: EMA Citizen Advisory Group

SUBJECT: Draft Communication and Engagement Plan for the EMA

Eastern Management Area (EMA) Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Members

Gay Infanti, Sam Cohen, Mary Heyden, Elizabeth Farnum, CJ Jackson, Tim Gorham, Kevin Merrill

Introduction

The EMA GSA Committee requested staff for the GSA agencies to coordinate meetings of the EMA CAG. Through a coordinated effort, the CAG held meetings on September 5, and September 30, 2019. At the first meeting, the CAG discussed the goals, purpose and guidelines of the CAG. The CAG also began its review of the Draft Communication and Engagement Plan (CEP) prepared by the EMA Consultant Team. During the second meeting, the CAG continued its review of the CEP. The CEP is a requirement of SGMA and the Draft CEP was released for review and comment by the CAG and the public. The Draft CEP is available on the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency's websites. A specific website for the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) is soon to be released and will host all SGMA related documents. The new website will be the main portal for the public to sign up for communications, meeting agendas, notices, and other SGMA information in the future. The public can access various Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) documents through the website and can provide comments on each document. The website is currently scheduled to be available in the coming weeks.

Below is a summary of the CAG's comments and recommendations regarding the Draft CEP for the EMA.

CAG Comments to the Draft Communication and Engagement Plan for the EMA:

Preface. The CAG suggested adding a few sentences to the first paragraph that introduce SGMA to stakeholders and other members of the public that may not be familiar with SGMA and its goals. Additionally, the CAG suggested adding additional text to explain what precipitated the passage of SGMA and further suggested modifying the Engagement Process flow diagram to clearly identify the link between the stakeholder survey and mapping step and the messages and talking points step, shown on the Engagement Process diagram. The new proposed addition shows the identification of stakeholder issues.

Section 1 – Introduction. The CAG requested additional language in the text to describe the history of how and why the single Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin was divided into three Management Areas. Additional language on the SGMA required Coordination Agreement between the three Management Areas is also requested. The map of the Basin shown in Figure 2 shows the three Management Areas. An additional figure is requested for this section that includes a blow-up view of the EMA, for clarity.

Section 2 – Goals and Desired Outcome. The section describes stakeholder engagement in GSP development via multiple venues for communication, however, these methods were not identified. The CAG requests additional examples of outreach and communication to be included, e.g., CAG meetings, workshops, websites, and publicly noticed GSA meetings where additional public comment can be provided.

Section 3 – GSP Participants and Decision – Making Process. Reference is made to a Table 2, which lists the MOA parties. However, Table 2 is missing from the document.

Section 4 – Stakeholder Identification. The CAG recommends that the list of Stakeholder Groups is modified to include additional EMA-specific stakeholders that are currently not on the list. These include but are not limited to Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) and Mutual Water Companies. The CAG also recommends that Urban and Agricultural Users are split into two separate Stakeholder Groups because their water usage is very different. The CAG further recommends updating the list to include all DWR-identified Stakeholder Groups for the purpose demonstrating this document’s compliance with DWR requirements.

Section 5 – Stakeholder Survey. The CAG recommends adding several questions to the survey, which would elicit helpful information and enable better understanding of the barriers/challenges to achieve groundwater sustainability in the EMA. These additional questions are consistent with the statewide survey reported by UC Davis in a report entitled “Implementing SGMA - Results from a Stakeholder Survey”. Also, this section should be updated to match the schedule for distributing the survey within the EMA GSA.

Section 6 – Venues and Methods: Opportunities for Engagement. The CAG recommends removing Figure 3, due to the pending status of the Tribal annexation of Camp 4 lands into Federal Trust. Additionally, the City of Solvang needs to be added to the map shown in Figure 4.

On page 9, under Organizational Groups, the CAG recommends changing the first sentence from “*may attend or host meetings with organizational groups such as mutual water companies, etc...*” to “*will attend or host meetings...*”.

The CAG was concerned that methods of outreach were not specific enough in the current plan and should be clarified. The CAG suggested that an “FAQ” document is developed and added to various methods of outreach that may include a newsletter that could be distributed in agency mailings or posted throughout the community in places such as the local post office. The CAG discussed social media as a possible means for distributing information related to SGMA. The CAG also cautioned about the downsides of most social media platforms which often end up being forums for “op-ed” type posts, which may distract from the purpose of circulating the information. The CAG also suggested performing outreach to business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Farm Bureau, Vintners Association, Cattlemen Association, women’s associations and other organizations.

Section 7 – Evaluation and Assessment. The CAG suggested adding dates to the proposed activities outlined in Table 3 and expanding on the items, especially “Conduct Stakeholder Survey” and “Outreach Schedule”. The CAG discussed where information on SGMA could be posted, as well as who would be doing the posting, summarization and analysis of the results of the survey.