

NOTICE AND AGENDA OF SPECIAL MEETING

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
FOR THE EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
IN THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER GROUNDWATER BASIN

WILL BE HELD
AT 6:30 P.M. THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021

VIDEO/TELECONFERENCE MEETING ONLY
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DIAL-IN NUMBER: 1-267-866-0999
MEETING ID / PASSCODE: 1019 56 0722

Public participants can view presentation materials and live video on their device.

Website: app.chime.aws (or download *Amazon Chime* app),
“Join a meeting without an account”
Meeting ID: 1019 56 0722

You do NOT need to create an Amazon Chime account or login with email for meeting participation.

Public participant phones and microphones will be muted, and webcams disabled.
Live Chat Text (online users only) will be enabled for questions.

If your device does not have a microphone or speakers, you can also call Phone Number & log in with Meeting ID listed above to listen while viewing the live presentation online.

Teleconference Meeting During Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency: As a result of the COVID-19 emergency and Governor Newsom’s Executive Orders to protect public health by issuing shelter-in-home standards, limiting public gatherings, and requiring social distancing, this meeting will occur solely via teleconference as authorized by and in furtherance of Executive Order Nos. N-29-20 and N-33-20. **Virtual meeting is in accordance with the SB County Health Office Order 2021-12.2**

Important Notice Regarding Public Participation in Teleconference Meeting: Those who wish to provide public comment on an Agenda Item, or who otherwise are making a presentation to the GSA Committee, may participate in the meeting using the dial-in number and passcode above. Those wishing to submit written comments instead, please submit any and all comments and materials to the GSA via electronic mail at bbuelow@sywcd.com. All submittals of written comments must be received by the GSA no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, and should indicate **“April 15, 2021 GSA Meeting”** in the subject line. To the extent practicable, public comments and materials received in advance pursuant to this timeframe will be read into the public record during the meeting. Public comments and materials not read into the record will become part of the post-meeting materials available to the public and posted on the SGMA website.

In the interest of clear reception and efficient administration of the meeting, all persons participating in this teleconference are respectfully requested to mute their phones after dialing-in and at all times unless speaking.

AGENDA ON NEXT PAGE

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
FOR THE EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
IN THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER GROUNDWATER BASIN

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021, 6:30 P.M.

AGENDA OF SPECIAL MEETING

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Introductions and review of SGMA in the Santa Ynez River Valley Basin
- III. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda
- IV. Public Comment (Any member of the public may address the Committee relating to any non-agenda matter within the Committee's jurisdiction. The total time for all public participation shall not exceed fifteen minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed five minutes. No action will be taken by the Committee at this meeting on any public item.)
- V. Receive Staff Memorandum regarding letter from the Santa Ynez Water Group
- VI. Receive presentation from GSI on the Sustainable Management Criteria
- VII. Receive Draft Water Budget chapter of GSP and consider public comment period.
- VIII. EMA GSA Committee requests and comments
- IX. Adjournment

[This agenda was posted at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting at 3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101, Santa Ynez, California, and <https://www.santaynezwater.org> in accordance with Government Code Section 54954. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to review agenda materials or participate in this meeting, please contact the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District at (805) 693-1156. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the GSA to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.]

STAFF MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 12, 2021

TO: WMA, CMA and EMA GSA Committees

FROM: GSA Member Agency Staff

SUBJECT: Santa Ynez Water Group Letter of March 22, 2021

Please see the attached March 22, 2021 letter from Mr. Doug Circle, representing the Santa Ynez Water Group (Water Group).

In the letter, Mr. Circle explains the Water Group's requests to "minimize GSP implementation costs to the maximum extent possible". To date, many of the Water Group's comments have focused on the reduction or elimination of data gaps and additional data acquisition that are not required to implement SGMA or manage groundwater in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin).

The Water Group further requested that the three GSAs combine to submit one Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) instead of the planned three GSPs, indicating that a single GSP approach would save costs. However, staff advises that submitting one GSP instead of three is not feasible at this time, as it would require changing the three Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) that established the three GSAs. There is not enough time in the schedule to modify the MOAs with concurrence of the eight agencies and approval by their Boards and Councils, much less revise the current versions of the GSPs into one in the remaining time. It also must be noted that the three GSAs would need to renegotiate the various consulting agreements currently in place for preparing the three GSPs.

The three GSP documents are scheduled to be ready for review this summer. Changing the format of the documents and coordinating with the three GSAs and two consultant teams would put the submission of the GSPs by the SGMA deadline of January 31, 2022 in jeopardy.

- **Staff recommendation:** Maintain current structure under the MOAs to submit three GSPs.

Additionally, the Water Group asked that the three GSAs consider consolidating into a single GSA to further reduce costs for meetings and other administrative requirements. The GSAs will consider potential options for future governance of SGMA in the Basin once the GSPs are submitted.

- **Staff recommendation:** Prior to submittal of the GSPs, Staff from each of the eight agencies in the Basin will discuss various governance options and present the topic to each of the GSA Committees.

Santa Ynez Water Group
c/o Doug Circle
Rancho Cañada de Los Pinos LLC
doug@circlevision.com

March 22, 2021

Board of Directors, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Eastern Management Area GSA
Chair: Brett Marymee, SYRWCD (Cindy Allan, Alternate)
Brad Joos, SYRWCD Improvement District #1 (Paeter Garcia, Alternate)
Mark Infanti, City of Solvang (Ryan Toussaint, Alternate)
Joan Hartman, County of Santa Barbara (Meighan Diethofer Alternate)
Citizens Advisory Group, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Eastern Management Area

Board of Directors, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Central Management Area GSA
Chair: Ed Andrisek, City of Buellton (John Sanchez, Alternate)
Art Hibbits, SYRWCD (Cindy Allan, Alternate)
Joan Hartman, County of Santa Barbara (Meighan Diethofer Alternate) (*non-voting member*)
Citizens Advisory Group, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Central Management Area

Board of Directors, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Western Management Area GSA
Chair: Chris Brooks, Vandenberg Village CSD (Katherine Stewart, Alternate)
Jim Mosby, City of Lompoc (Kristin Worthley, Alternate)
Bruce Nix, Mission Hills CSD (Myron Heavin, Alternate)
Steve Jordan, SYRWCD (Art Hibbits, Alternate)
Joan Hartman, County of Santa Barbara (Meighan Diethofer Alternate) (*non-voting member*)
Citizens Advisory Group, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Western Management Area

c/o William (Bill) Buelow
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101
Santa Ynez, CA 93460

Transmitted via email attachment to bbuelow@syrwcd.com

Re: Request to Consolidate GSPs and GSAs to Mitigate SGMA Implementation Costs

Dear Directors and Staff:

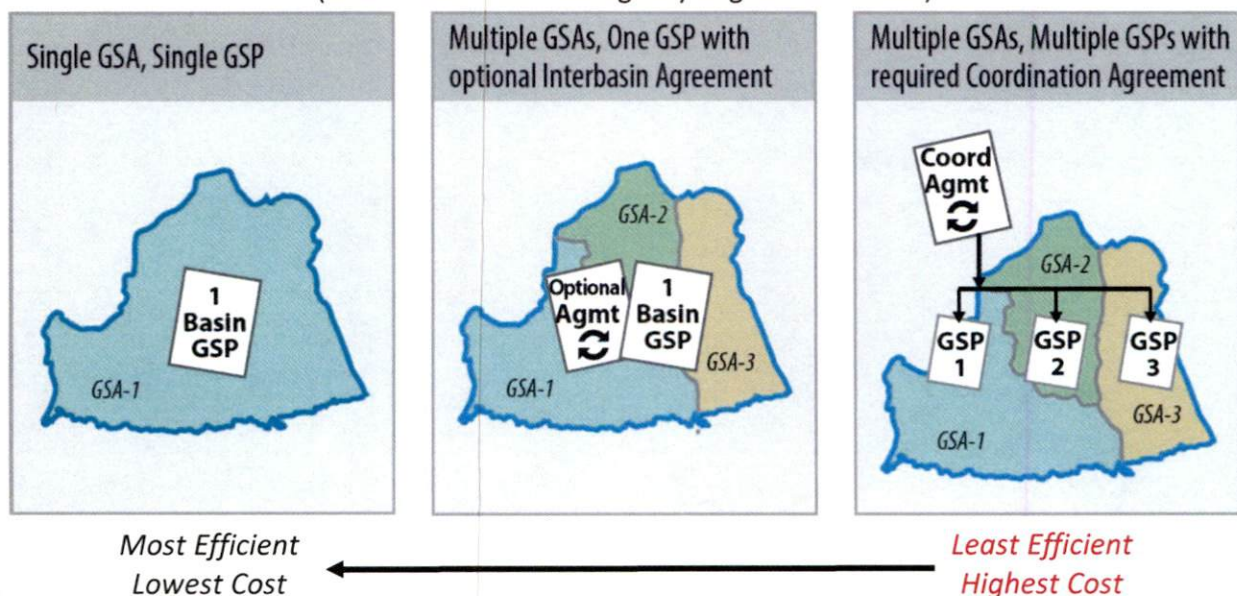
As you know the Santa Ynez Water Group (SYWG) was recently formed to engage on behalf of landowners with the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) concerning development of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). SYWG includes, vineyards, vegetables, and other interests and currently represents 54 landowners and 7,853 acres in the Santa Ynez River Valley Basin. SYWG desires to work cooperatively and collaboratively with the GSAs on planning issues that will impact sustainable management of the groundwater basin and our business.

SYWG is sending this letter to express its concerns about future costs for GSP implementation and to recommend steps that can be taken to reduce those costs. We are very concerned about implementation costs because we assume that those costs will be borne by the groundwater users in the basin through one of the fee mechanisms allowed under SGMA. Given the relatively small amount of pumping in the basin, those costs will result in significant per acre-foot pump fees that will impact our businesses and the local economy. For example, all the SGMA implementation costs for the CMA will be spread across only ~2,500 acre-feet of pumping. Assuming average annual GSP implementation costs of \$200,000, the outlook is a \$80 per acre-foot pump fee, which is very significant.

SYWG desires to minimize GSP implementation costs to the maximum extent reasonably possible. To date, our comments on draft GSP materials have focused on eliminating data collection recommendations that are not necessary for sustainable management of the Basin. We encourage the GSAs to carefully consider data needs and only commit to data collection efforts that will truly be necessary to sustainably manage the Basin. Looking ahead, we are also very concerned about the significant costs for implementing SGMA in a triplicate fashion with three GSAs and three GSPs.

GSP implementation costs will be significant. At a minimum, each GSA must develop and submit annual reports each year and update the GSP at least once every five years. The costs alone will be significant. Given the current management structure (three GSAs and three GSPs), a significant amount of effort will be triplicated. Clearly, preparing three annual reports and updating three GSPs will be significantly more expensive than preparing one annual report each year and updating one GSP. As shown in the DWR graphic below (Figure 1), it is perfectly acceptable for the three GSAs to adopt a single GSP for the Basin, which would eliminate the triplicated efforts going forward. In fact, DWR prefers this approach in basins that have multiple GSAs.

Figure 1
GSA and GSP Options for SGMA Implementation
(Source: DWR GSP Emergency Regulations Guide)



SYWG strongly recommends that the GSAs change their approach to a single GSP. The single GSP would incorporate differential management in WMA, CMA, and EMA by establishing three management areas¹ and specific objectives each, as is provided for in SGMA. A single GSP would reduce annual reporting and GSP update costs going forward because only one annual report and one GSP updated would be needed, instead of three. Additionally, we recommend exploring whether the three GSAs could eventually be consolidated into a single GSA to further reduce costs for meetings and other administrative activities.

It is not too late to decide to adopt a single GSP for the Basin. It is important that a decision to prepare and adopt a single GSP for the Basin be made now, as there is still time to implement this change before GSP adoption deadline in January 2022. If a single GSP is not adopted, it may be difficult or impossible to consolidate the GSPs later.

We respectfully request that the GSAs place an agenda item on the next Board meeting agendas to discuss this and that the three GSA Boards come together in a joint meeting as soon as possible to discuss switching to a single GSP.

Please let us know if there is anything SYWG can do to further the recommendations communicated in this letter.

Sincerely,



Doug Circle

cc: SYWG Members

Bryan Bondy, Bondy Groundwater Consulting, Inc.

¹ GSP Emergency Regulations § 354.20(a): Each Agency may define one or more management areas within a basin if the Agency has determined that creation of management areas will facilitate implementation of the Plan. Management areas may define different minimum thresholds and be operated to different measurable objectives than the basin at large, provided that undesirable results are defined consistently throughout the basin.