

SUMMARY OF
PURE WATER MONTEREY,
SALINAS VALLEY GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY, AND
MARINA COAST WATER DISTRICT GROUNDWATER
SUSTAINABILITY
ZOOM MEETINGS
IN OCTOBER 2021

Note: This is a synopsis of information from these meetings that may be of interest to the Seaside Basin Watermaster

SVBGSA Monterey Subbasin GSP Committee Limited Participants Meeting October 5, 2021:

I was not able to attend this meeting, the intent of which was for Cal Am to provide an update on its projects as they affect the Laguna Seca Subarea, and to respond to questions from members of the consultant team that is preparing the GSP for the Corral de Tierra subarea of the Monterey Subbasin, due to a scheduling conflict. However, Emily Gardner of the SVBGSA provided this synopsis:

- There was discussion of what data that would be helpful, and they requested that Abby Ostovar send a request via email that they could consider (system boundaries, wells (if possible), well logs, extraction data). Abby will email Tim O'Halloran the request and they will forward along.
- Chris Cook noted that the Hidden Hills system should not be included in GSP pumping totals because he thinks it is included in the Seaside Basin pumping. He noted that whether or not the Bay Ridge well is in or out of the Seaside Basin has been legally disputed and he contends that it is within the Seaside Basin.
- There was discussion of how stakeholders have advocated for both demand reduction and supply increase projects and management actions. Chris noted that this area has much higher water use than on the Peninsula, so there could be conservation savings, but that won't achieve the needs.
- There was discussion of some of the projects in the draft GSP including the potential extraction barrier and desalination plant.

MCWDGSA Monterey Subbasin GSP Stakeholders Meeting October 13, 2021:

At this meeting MCWD's consultants, EKI, provided an overview and an update on progress on preparing the GSP for the Marina-Ord subarea of the Monterey Subbasin. Much of what was presented duplicated material that had been presented at a recent meeting of the GSP Committee for the Corral de Tierra subarea. However, other topics discussed at this meeting which are of interest to the watermaster included:

- The Climate Change forecasting model that has been prepared by the Department of Water Resources, and which is being used in the development of this GSP, projects that there will be higher temperatures and also higher amounts of rainfall in the future in this

vicinity, due to climate change. This means that natural recharge to this subbasin is expected to increase over time into the future.

- The Water Budget for the Marina-Ord subarea shows an increase in the amount of water that will flow out of the Seaside Subbasin and into the Monterey Subbasin, compared to the amount that is currently flowing out of the Seaside Subbasin, under both the Minimum Threshold and Measurable Objective conditions being proposed in the Draft GSP. Under the Seawater Intrusion Protective conditions, the outflow from the Seaside Basin would be slightly reduced from its current level. This is true under both the “No Projects” and “Projects” scenarios, which respectively reflect no projects being undertaken to achieve sustainability in the Monterey Subbasin, and a series of projects being undertaken to achieve sustainability. This is because groundwater levels in the portion of the Marina-Ord subarea near the northern boundary with the Seaside Subbasin are projected to decline due to pumping in that part of the subarea.
- Sustainability in the Monterey Subbasin can only be achieved if the 180/400-foot Subbasin is able to achieve sustainability. This is because there is considerable outflow from the Monterey Subbasin into the 180/400-foot Subbasin under current conditions, and unless this is remedied by achieving sustainability in the 180/400-foot Subbasin, then it will not be possible for the Monterey Subbasin to achieve sustainability.

SVBGSA Advisory Committee Meeting October 21, 2021:

Most of the agenda for this meeting pertained to administrative matters, but one topic that was discussed which may be of interest to the Watermaster was the definition of “undesirable water quality results” in the Sustainable Management Criteria section of the GSP. Changes to the language in the earlier draft version of that section were proposed and discussed by the consultant team. I questioned a part of the new language being proposed which read *“Undesirable results are not caused by (1) lack of action; (2) past harm; (3) GSA required reductions in pumping; (4) degradation that occurs but is less than if there had been a lack of management.”* My question was: How could item (4) be determined, since there would not appear to be any way of knowing how much degradation would have occurred if there had been a lack of management, if the subbasin was in fact being managed via the GSP? The consultant agreed that this would be difficult to determine. My sense of the discussion of this point was that there was a time-crunch to get the GSP completed in time to meet the submittal deadline of January 2022, and that some of the language had not been fully thought out.

SVBGSA Monterey Subbasin GSP Committee Special Meeting October 22, 2021:

This was a meeting at which there was some intense discussion of several topics and a display of differing opinions on some of them. Topics discussed at this meeting which are of interest to the watermaster included:

- The next version of the draft GSP will come out for review in early November.
- A special meeting will be scheduled in the last week of November (November 29 through December 3) to receive comments and discuss the updated draft GSP.
- In addition, because of changes in State requirements for the holding of remote meetings, a special meeting needs to be held within 30 days of today’s meeting to comply with the updated Brown Act legislative requirements.

- In response to a question that I raised, Emily Gardner said they are working on preparing a comment response table for the comments that have been submitted on the draft GSP to date. They will publish that once they have completed it.
- A “no-pumping” scenario has been modeled by EKI and it showed that, largely due to losses of groundwater to adjacent subbasins, groundwater levels within the Corral de Tierra subarea would continue to decline even if all pumping within that subarea was discontinued. This highlights how overdrafted the Corral de Tierra subarea is, and that it is affected by adjacent subbasins.
- There are conflicts in the model findings between the Watermaster’s modeling and the EKI modeling in terms of directions and quantities of flow between the Laguna Seca subarea and the Corral de Tierra subarea. I coordinated with Georgina King of Montgomery and Associates and submitted suggested GSP wording with regard to getting these conflicts revised early during implementation of the GSP.
- The GSP subcommittee was asked to reconsider setting the minimum threshold and measurable objective for groundwater levels in the Corral de Tierra subarea. This item was brought to the agenda by Sarah Hardgrave. The measurable objective and minimum threshold were changed in August by the committee’s action to higher levels than those that were previously proposed. Janet Brennan said she was inclined to go back to the initial ones because it seems unrealistic to try to achieve the higher groundwater levels. I highlighted the Watermaster’s concern that our modeling has shown that low groundwater levels in the Corral de Tierra subarea are making it impossible for the Laguna Seca subarea to be achieve sustainability, even with no pumping at all within the Laguna Seca subarea.
- Janet Brennan commented that a coordinated regional sponsor is needed because so many subbasins will need new water sources in order to become sustainable.
- A Corral de Tierra resident who is on the committee said he agreed with some of the other commenters that residents in the Corral de Tierra subarea are probably not aware of the severity of the groundwater overdraft problem.
- The issue of needing to include the pumping impact of *de minimis* users was again raised, a topic which has been discussed in previous meetings. Emily Gardner said that legal counsel has advised her that the Groundwater Sustainability Agency is limited with regard to what it can do to regulate *de minimis* users, but that MCWRA and the Monterey County health Department do have that authority.
- Sarah Hardgrave reported that the SVBGSA Board of Directors’ comments about the Monterey Subbasin GSP have indicated that Corral de Tierra residents need to be more informed and involved in the development of the GSP. She said that a public outreach meeting to be held in the Corral de Tierra area on the evening of November 17 is being planned. I encouraged that the meeting be publicized through the newspapers to make sure that Corral de Tierra residents were aware of the meeting so they could attend.
- Sarah Hardgrave reiterated her belief that a regional solution is needed.
- Sarah Hargrave made a motion to go back to using the earlier minimum threshold and measurable objective groundwater levels, which are lower than those that were approved by the committee at its August 2021 meeting. I voted “no “as did some others, but the motion passed.
- I raised the question of financial viability of implementing projects that will gray raise groundwater levels in the corral de Tierra subarea as it is apparent to me that an

additional water source to bring those groundwater levels up will be necessary. This was confirmed by the “no pumping” scenario described above which shows that groundwater levels will continue to fall even if all pumping in the Corral de Tierra subarea is discontinued. In response to my concerns, which were shared by Janet Brennan, Abby Ostovar talked around the issue without addressing it, and said she felt the GSP was adequately meeting DWR’s GSP requirements.

- Sarah Hardgrave reported that Supervisor Adams has started to raise the Board of Supervisors’ awareness of the magnitude of the financial needs of the various GSP projects within the Salinas Valley Basin.

Seawater Intrusion Work Group (SWIG) Meeting October 25, 2021:

I was not able to attend this meeting due to a scheduling conflict. The topics discussed were an update on progress of the Deep Aquifer Study and a continued discussion (started at the prior meeting) of Projects to control and/or manage Seawater Intrusion.

MCWDGSA Monterey Subbasin GSP Stakeholders Meeting October 27, 2021:

The topics discussed at this meeting were the same as those discussed at the October 13th meeting of this Stakeholders group, so I did not attend this meeting.