



NAPA VALLEY SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

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Napa Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
1195 Third Street, Napa CA 94559

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Prepared by CONCUR, Inc.
1832 Second Street, Suite N
Berkeley, CA 94710
www.concurinc.com

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1. Introduction & Overview

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 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. 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. Land uses within the Subbasin include urban and developed areas, agriculture and native vegetation.

Groundwater Stakeholder Survey

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 Plan incorporates those suggestions, as described in the sections that follow.

2. Engagement Strategy Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Napa Valley Subbasin Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan is to provide meaningful opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders to learn about and share

their concerns and ideas regarding groundwater management in order to develop and implement an effective GSP.

The Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan is intended to build 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.¹ It relies on partnerships with organizations that can help to reach important constituencies with interests in long-term sustainability of Napa County's groundwater.

The plan 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
- Create opportunities for stakeholders to listen to one another, develop a shared understanding of the issues and the science, and build trust within the community and in the GSP development and implementation process
- Provide 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 implementation of the GSP by ensuring stakeholder engagement

3. Roles, Responsibilities and Decisionmaking for the GSP and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency: The governing board of the Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) 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 GSA is also responsible for implementation of the GSP. The GSA Board of Directors is comprised of the five members of the Napa County Board of Supervisors who are listed in Appendix A. The GSA 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 GSA Board appointed the Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee (GSPAC) to advise the GSA on matters

¹ The GRAC developed a Communication and Education Plan (2012) to serve as a strategic guide for their public communication and education activities. The goals, audiences and approaches are similar to and inform the elements of this GSP Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

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 GSA Board of Directors no later than November 1, 2021. The members are listed in Appendix A. The GSPAC members also serve as a conduit for engaging stakeholders in the Napa Valley Subbasin and will be invited to participate in GSP outreach activities. 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=35.²

Staff Contacts and Consultants for the GSA: Napa County staff are engaged in GSP development and stakeholder engagement planning 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 team is 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 the Napa County GSA, the RCD will support County staff in conducting groundwater-related outreach, 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 important for helping to reach stakeholders, particularly community participants who are not typically engaged. This includes 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 B³ *(need input from GSPAC members)*.

4. Initial Topics for Stakeholder Discussion and Input

² GSA and GSPAC meetings are also announced to the County’s groundwater email list.

³ Appendix B is a dynamic list that will build over time.

Based on input from the previous work of the GRAC, input during the Alternative development process, the recent groundwater stakeholder survey, GSPAC members and Napa County 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.
- 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.
- Groundwater supply, effects of groundwater pumping on basin groundwater conditions.
- 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 Principles:

- Provide multiple levels of information and multiple ways to participate, recognizing that stakeholders have different levels of understanding of GSP-related issues.
- 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, and social service organizations. Focus especially on organizations and individuals with connections to under-represented and disadvantaged communities⁴ to help develop and provide content and engage community members.
- Provide key documents and outreach materials in appropriate languages and provide interpretation at meetings as needed.
- Outreach and engagement should be an ongoing, iterative process to consistently involve and update stakeholders as GSP development and implementation proceeds.

Outreach and Engagement Methods:

Meetings/Workshops:

⁴ Define and provide link to DWR mapping

- 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 Napa County GSA 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 Napa County GSA 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 workshops for stakeholders in various formats—open house, small group discussions, town hall, field trips
- Presentations for stakeholders at scheduled meetings of community organizations
- Presentations at public meetings on related water resources planning efforts, e.g., Drought Contingency Plan, LAFCO Municipal Service Reviews and others.
- Ensure that meetings are held at times that support participation and in locations that are convenient and comfortable.

Website and Electronic Communications:

- Website: The GSA 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 work demands, this website should be ready for roll out in late October, 2020.
- Consider using social media platforms to provide information and solicit input

Stakeholder Distribution List: The GSA maintains an outreach list of stakeholders that is updated regularly. This list is used for email distribution of materials including meeting notices, documents and outreach and education materials. In addition, the GSA will use existing stakeholder lists from partner organizations to disperse GSP information to their members as appropriate.

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. Partner organizations may be used to help reach specific community members who may not otherwise respond to the survey.

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, consider educational opportunities at schools and potential field trips.

Engaging local print media coverage: Work with the *Napa Valley Register* and other relevant local media outlets to provide regular updates and links to the website for further information and to provide comments.

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
- Electronic newsletters with periodic 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 issues

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 GSA 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 GSA efforts. This includes non-English speaking residents, tribal members, low-income residents and disadvantaged communities (see Section 8 below for a description of disadvantaged communities). Staff will work with social service and other organizations that have connections to these community members to reach them and communicate effectively across diverse language groups. 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 GSA will encourage the participation of local tribal

organizations. The GSA will reach 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 XX. (to be added).

8. Key Audiences/Stakeholder Groups

- Agricultural Users: farmers, ranchers, dairy professionals, winery and vineyard owners
- Domestic Well Owners
- 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.
- 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 within the GSP area, accounting for native vegetation and fish species (steelhead, fall-run Chinook salmon, Pacific and river lamprey, hardhead, tule perch, and Sacramento splittail). Entities that represent the interests of environmental users of groundwater include the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Services, and non-governmental organizations, the Sierra Club, Water Audit California, the Napa County Resource Conservation District, and other organizations.
- Surface water users: There are more than 300 registered surface water diverters within the GSP area.
- California Native American Tribes – There are no tribal governments in Napa County that manage lands. The GSA 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: DACs are defined as a community 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 XX shows the locations of the DACs within the Subbasin. This includes 10.8% of the GSP area.
- 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 GSA

9. Evaluation and Assessment

In order to ensure that stakeholder engagement and communication approaches are effective, this Stakeholder Engagement plan and its activities will be evaluated periodically to assess how it is performing relative to the goal and objectives. Some questions to consider are:

- What elements of the plan were effectively implemented and worked well? What audiences were reached, what information was effectively communicated, what messages and communication formats were most effective?
- What can be improved? Which stakeholders have not been reached? What information is not clear?
- What lessons have we learned to improve future efforts?

Outreach and engagement methods will be adjusted based on the evaluation results.

Figures:

- 1. Basin Map with DACs (to be added)
- 2. GSP Roles and Decision-Making Chart (to be added)
- 3. GSP Development Process and Schedule (to be added)

Appendices:

- Appendix A: GSA and GSPAC Members
- Appendix B: List of Key Audiences/Stakeholders (need GSPAC input)
- Appendix C: Communication with Tribes (to be added)

Appendix A

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 Benevuto
Garrett Buckland
Michael Dooley
Harvest Duhig
Joy Eldredge
Geoff Ellsworth
John Ferons
Dave Ficeli
Eric Fitz
Alan Galbraith
David Graves
Mike Hackett
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 Key Audiences

(need input from GSPAC needed)

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

Environmental Groundwater Users (including entities that represent their interests)

- Groundwater-dependent ecosystems
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Services
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Napa County Resource Conservation District
- Sierra Club
-

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

-

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

Additional Stakeholders

Agricultural Organizations

- Napa Valley Grape Growers
- Winegrowers of Napa County
- Napa County Farm Bureau
- Napa Valley Vintners
-

Disadvantaged Community Organizations

-

Business and Community Interests

-

Natural Resources Interests/Organizations

- Sierra Club
- Napa County Resource Conservation District
- Friends of the Napa River
- Napa County Flood Control District
-

News Media

- Napa Valley Register
-