

Corning Subbasin Advisory Board

Wednesday, July 7, 2021, 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Pursuant to Governor Newsom’s Executive Orders N-29-20 this meeting will be conducted by teleconference / webinar

Webinar: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/249224997>

Telephone: +1 (786) 535-3211

Meeting Access Code: 249-224-997

1. Welcome and Introductions

At 1:30 p.m., Julie Leimbach (Ms. Leimbach), facilitator for the Corning Subbasin Advisory Board (CSAB), called the meeting to order. Please see meeting materials [here](#).

Roll call

Nichole Bethurem (Ms. Bethurem) and Lisa Hunter (Ms. Hunter) took the roll call for the CSAB Members.

Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (TCFCWCD)

- ✓ Bob Williams
- ✓ David Lester
- ✓ Steven Gruenwald

Alternate:

- ✓ Ian Turnbull

Corning Sub-basin GSA (CSGSA)

- ✓ Brian Mori
- ✓ Julia Violich - intermittent participation

Grant Carmon and John Amaro were not in attendance.

[Agenda Review, Review of Ground Rules](#)

Ms. Leimbach welcomed meeting participants to the fifteenth CSAB meeting. She reviewed the agenda and reminded attendees that CSAB meetings are following the Brown Act guidelines. She invited members of the public to announce their names and affiliation into the chat box to be included in the meeting summary.

2. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

- Tamara Williams (Ms. Williams) – With the public review period for the Draft GSP, I remain concerned about the public outreach to gather broad public comments. When will the summer public workshop be held and how will outreach for the workshop be conducted to ensure broad stakeholder input? The Corning Subbasin website says, “The Project Team will host two GSP workshops anticipated in Fall 2020 and Summer 2021 to provide additional information to Corning Subbasin stakeholders and allow for additional input.”

3. Action Item: Approval of the Meeting Summary

Bob Williams (Mr. Williams) made the motion: *The CSAB approves the CSAB June 2021 Meeting Summary*. Steve Gruenwald (Mr. Gruenwald) seconded the motion. Ms. Leimbach opened Board discussion on this motion. Hearing no comments from CSAB board members, she called a vote.

Roll call vote:

Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (TCFCWCD)

- Bob Williams – Aye
- David Lester – Aye
- Steven Gruenwald – Aye

Corning Sub-basin GSA (CSGSA)

- Brian Mori – Aye

The motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

4. Action Item: Approval of the Special Meeting Summary

Ms. Leimbach invited CSAB discussion on the CSAB Special Meeting Summary of 5/6/2021. There was no Board comment on the meeting summary at this time. Ms. Leimbach invited public comment on the Meeting Summary. There was no public comment at this time.

Dave Lester (Mr. Lester) made the motion: *The CSAB approves the CSAB Special Meeting Summary*. Mr. Gruenwald seconded the motion. Ms. Leimbach opened discussion on this motion. Hearing no comments from CSAB board members, she called a vote.

Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (TCFCWCD)

- Bob Williams – Aye
- David Lester – Aye
- Steven Gruenwald – Aye

Corning Sub-basin GSA (CSGSA)

- Brian Mori – Aye

The motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

4. GSA Updates

Ms. Bethurem and Ms. Hunter reported out to the CSAB on the TCFCWCD and CSGSA, respectively.

TCFCWCD (Ms. Bethurem)

- Ryan Teubert's last day with Tehama County was July 1. Ms. Bethurem is the acting Tehama County Flood Control & Water Resources Manager until the County fills the position.
- In June (6/23), the Tehama County Groundwater Commission approved the recommendations from CSAB on proposed Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs) for all five applicable sustainability indicators.

- In June (6/29), TCFCWCD Board approved the recommendations from CSAB on proposed Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs) for all five applicable sustainability indicators.
- The County will begin construction on the Thomes Creek Estates Well on July 19th. Information collected from that well will be beneficial to Corning and Red Bluff Subbasins.
- An additional multi-completion well is being installed at the Tehama County Public Works Corning Maintenance Yard on Gallagher Avenue near Callagher Road.

Corning Sub-basin GSA (Ms. Hunter)

- The CSGSA last met on June 9; the next meeting is July 14.
- The CSGSA heard CSAB updates and approved the SMCs for all five applicable sustainability indicators as recommended by the CSAB.
- The CSGSA approved the CSAB to release the complete draft GSP for public review once prepared which is estimated to be September 10.
- The CSGSA received an update on interbasin coordination.

Lisa Porta (Ms. Porta), CSAB technical consultant, usually reviews the interbasin coordination at this point. However, she is going to provide that information in the next agenda item.

5. General GSP Updates

General SGMA Updates

Ms. Porta provided a general overview of important SGMA Updates. In June, DWR released their review of 4 GSPs submitted in 2020. DWR approved two of these GSPs and deemed two GSPs as incomplete with a list of corrective actions needed, and GSAs are invited to further consult with DWR prior to DWR's final determination.

Ms. Porta reviewed the General DWR Feedback on GSPs, including these key topics: 1) Tell the Story, 2) Importance of SMC development, 3) Implementation planning, 4) Data gap descriptions and planning, and 5) Public outreach and input.

She also provided SGMA updates on the deadline for GSPs. At the Groundwater Taskforce meeting with NCWA, DWR reported that they cannot change the deadline because the deadline is legislated.

Interbasin Coordination

Ms. Porta reviewed the efforts made by the multiple technical teams and GSAs. The outreach teams are preparing summaries of interbasin coordination efforts by the Northern Sacramento Valley. The description by these GSAs will be similar and demonstrate coordination and consistency. Moving forward, we will need to distinguish between the goals and roles of the GSAs and the County jurisdictions.

GSP Schedule and Status Review

Ms. Porta reviewed the GSP development schedule. She reported that the CSAB is reviewing the Monitoring Network and Sustainable Management Criteria sections. She requested that the Board members provide their review by July 14 using the comment matrix that has been provided. Public comments will be taken by the GSA staff.

The Projects and Management Actions section will be released for review by the CSAB by mid-July.

The Plan Implementation section will be provided with the Executive Summary and the full draft GSP in September.

Input from GSA Staff

There were no comments or questions at this time from GSA staff.

CSAB Members

There were no comments or questions at this time from the CSAB.

Public Comment

There were no comments or questions at this time from the public participants.

6. Projects and Management Actions

Revised List and Purpose of Projects and Management Actions

Ms. Porta reviewed the goals of the Projects and Management Actions (PMAs) for the Corning Subbasin GSP, highlighting the emphasis on providing flexible use of water resources to overcome drought conditions, developing an array of best practices, incentivizing best practices, maximizing in-lieu recharge, identifying funding, and keeping water in the subbasin for use in the subbasin.

Ms. Porta reviewed the types of proposed project categories, purposes, and locations. She discussed the priority projects list and highlighted their connection to existing efforts.

There are some conceptual ideas, such as:

- Letting floodwaters run down the Corning Canal into streambeds to recharge the sandy interfingering areas.
- Offstream storage of winter flood flows by landowners to offset pumping in the summer.
- Recycled water use.
- Water transfers from Red Bluff Subbasin to Corning Subbasin, and other regional water transfers.
- Stormwater recharge to alleviate flood and recharge groundwater with the Counties and Cities.

Ms. Porta reviewed the PMAs section in the GSP, including describing the process for identifying and developing PMAs, Management Actions needs and incentives, project prioritization and description, and funding and collaboration opportunities.

Input from GSA Staff

There were no GSA staff comments at this time.

Discussion CSAB

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Brian Mori (Mr. Mori) – Referring to the list of priority management actions slide, it lists policies and ordinances starting in Tehama County. There is a well moratorium for 45-days for new agriculture wells in Glenn County. At the Board level, we are considering looking at what Tehama County is doing regarding policies and ordinances. In order to provide consistency and limit duplication, the SGMA process could support consistency and coordination between Counties to support similar policies and

ordinances consistent with SGMA for the short-term. This moratorium does not really solve the issue in the long term; it is something that needs to be solved with new well criteria. How could that be coordinated and piggy-backed on the SGMA process for the PMAs?

- Ms. Porta – The well moratorium, for example, is an emergency item and is not a long-term planning item that would be put forth in the GSP. The GSP is only for long term planning. In terms of coordination, the consultants are exchanging information right now. But it is information developed by the County and the consultants are summarizing that information. Our technical team is linked to the other technical consultants. There is a triangle between the Counties, GSAs, and consultants. There is a benefit of the shared staff in this County and GSA.
- Ms. Hunter – Mr. Mori, that is a really good point. The more coordination, the better. This particular management action of coordination is more long-term.

Public Comment

- Latisha Miller (Ms. Miller), Vice Chair Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
 - Please, coordinate with local tribes to help with water issues. I have been working on traditional ecological knowledge for land management to address water management. We are doing traditional land management, and it has been proven. The partnership among tribes we are trying to create will support sustainability. We are utilizing traditional practices using fire to manage watersheds in a way that will sustain water availability. It is important for everyone to work with the tribes when creating the policies, future rules, and legislation. Point of contact: Keith Ray and Latisha Miller. A coalition of tribes is being formed.
 - Ms. Porta – Please send any comments and documents to the GSA staff for reference and inclusion in the GSP.
- Ms. Williams - In reference to slide 15, Priority Management Actions
 - 1. Clarify the definition of "Domestic Wells" -- Suggest including domestic/small ag well users.
 - 2. Request that an "Agricultural Well Management" action similar to "Domestic Well Management" be added.
 - Purpose: Better understand the impact of agricultural wells on local and subbasin-wide groundwater conditions. Avoid over-pumping.
 - Location: Subbasin-wide? Areas of declining water levels, and areas where agricultural wells may be affecting shallower wells.
 - Description: Conduct aquifer testing (single well pumping (constant Q or step test) with observation well/piezometer data collection) to characterize aquifer and aquitard properties, boundaries, recharge sources, and pumping effects.
 - 3. Expand "Well Registration Program" to be "Well Registration and Groundwater Use Monitoring." Include estimating and tracking of pumping rates and volumes for all wells (not just new wells). Develop a methodology to estimate groundwater extraction by well or property area over time. This could be done based on current land use, satellite imagery techniques, power usage records for pumping, direct metering, or a combination of methods.

Introduction to Funding Mechanisms

Ms. Porta introduced Bryce McAteer (Mr. McAteer), WestWater Research, to present potential SGMA funding needs and mechanisms for consideration in the Corning Subbasin GSP. Joining Mr. McAteer was Matthew Payne (Mr. Payne), WestWater Research.

Mr. McAteer reviewed WestWater's staff and qualifications, potential SGMA funding needs, potential approaches and mechanisms, the GSA's legal authorities, examples of funding approaches implemented in other basins, and next steps. A key goal of the agenda item is to solicit comments and input from the CSAB and public for incorporation into the funding approach.

Initial Presentation on Funding Needs and Potential Approaches

Mr. McAteer identified four primary areas in need of potential funding to support SGMA implementation: Program Administration, Studies & Investigations, Projects & Programs, and Monitoring & Data Collection. Examples of individual items under each category of funding were discussed, as well as areas for further evaluation to support the development of a funding strategy.

Mr. McAteer discussed the five major types of funding approaches for GSAs. The GSA could consider any or a combination of these approaches given the timeline and needs for funding.

1. Member agency cost-sharing
2. Self-funding – assessments & fees
3. Grants
4. Bonds and borrowing
5. Public-private partnership

Some amount of local self-funding through fees and/or assessments is a prerequisite to other outside funding and financing sources. GSAs need revenues to service debt. Grants require agency cost-share, and private partners require a commitment to future investment even if they make initial investments.

He outlined the GSA's funding authority through the program administration, implementation, and other funding authorities. GSAs have broad funding authority to accomplish their goals. He presented a diagram describing the types of funding structures for self-funding, including: 1) fees, 2) assessment, and 3) taxes. The three most likely mechanisms for the Corning Subbasin will be the Prop 218 Cost of Service, Prop 26 Regulatory Fee, and/or Prop 218 Special Benefit.

Mr. McAteer reviewed the Funding Strategy Goals, including being efficient, coordinated, and equitable.

He provided a diverse set of examples of funding approaches from other regional GSAs:

- Salinas Valley Basin GSA
- McMullin Area
- Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority
- Montecito Groundwater Basin GSA
- Glenn Groundwater Authority

Discussion CSAB Staff

The CSAB members discussed the following:

- Ms. Hunter – I wanted to clarify for the folks in the meeting that what WestWater is being asked to do is come up with these approaches. By the time we finish the GSP, we are not going to have a funding mechanism in place. But the GSP will include a funding approach.
- Ms. Porta – We are taking into consideration the efforts being made in other basins through interbasin coordination.
- Ian Turnbull (Mr. Turnbull) – Asked to clarify slide 34. Can a fee be charged to domestic users?

- Mr. McAteer – It depends on the approach you are looking to implement. Are we regulating minimis users? If not, this approach may not be applicable. Under Prop 26 and 218, you can levy charges. In a lot of GSAs, they are considering equity and protecting de minimis extractors. Protecting de minimis extractors does not count as regulation.
- Mr. Mori – Regarding the Prop 218 funding mechanism, if that is being assessed throughout Glenn County, why would that funding source not be available?
 - Ms. Hunter – That is only assessed to the parcels within the Glenn Groundwater Authority area. Some parcels are even split along the jurisdictional lines, and they are only charged for what is included within the GSA’s jurisdiction.
 - Ms. Porta – There are two GSAs here, and each has its own funding mechanism.
- Mr. Gruenwald – Do you have an estimate of irrigated acres in Corning Subbasin? Are we considering encompassing non-irrigated acres? Are we only looking at irrigation with groundwater, or surface water also?
 - Mr. McAteer - The number of acres is included in the Plan Area section of the GSP. We need to think about the types of services we need to fund. The basin includes irrigated and non-irrigated acres. We need to think through the projects and actions that would address the groundwater and users that include everyone. That could include fees and charges for the whole basin or focused on certain types of uses.
 - Mr. Payne – We are still getting up to speed about irrigated acres. We get that question a lot. The question of whether to assess all the types of users does not need to be resolved for the GSP. However, the approach can say that the mechanism is being considered.
- Mr. Lester – Especially on the westside, where there is rangeland, they say we pump no water, what should they pay? What’s happening in the Glenn Authority? Are they charging per acre or water pumped?
 - Mr. Payne – We do not know of other basins that have the same diversity of rangeland and irrigated land that have imposed an acreage-based fee. Some basins are considering an acreage-based fee, but in those cases almost all the land is irrigated.
 - Mr. Lester – Glenn Groundwater Authority has the same diversity of land use.
 - Ms. Hunter – Yes, it does include the rangeland acres which has been challenging and it is a GSA-wide acreage fee for all the area within the GSA. This is true of the Colusa Groundwater Authority also.
 - Mr. Gruenwald – One of the slides had examples from other counties; it looks like the revenue generated by Glenn County is relatively low compared to some of the other Counties. Glenn County is the lowest revenue generation in the list. What is the estimated annual budget? We are having this discussion of equity, but it’s not equitable for someone who is not even irrigating. I would be opposed to that.
 - Mr. McAteer – That depends on the goals and the partners willing to share the cost. The Salinas Valley GSA manages 6 separate subbasins and they had to develop a GSA as a new agency with no existing infrastructure. Many of the examples also exist in critically over drafted basins, which may have greater need for projects and management. The Glenn Groundwater Authority has existing staff and lower costs in general and does not overlie a critically over drafted basin. These are the types of things we will evaluate with the County staff.
 - Ms. Porta – We are developing the proposed budget, but it really depends on the funding needs. One of the issues in Salinas is they have seawater intrusion. They will be

developing models for seawater intrusion which are costly. Here, we are looking at a domestic well management program that helps the users and management in the subbasin, but it may be a lot less than in the Salinas Valley which has bigger, more costly problems.

- Mr. Gruenwald – Does the McMullin GSA have only irrigated acres?
 - Mr. McAteer– The McMullin GSA does not cover an entire County. McMullin is one of multiple GSAs in the Kings Subbasin area and overlies a critically over drafted basin in the San Joaquin Valley. They have relatively high costs for the programs to reduce demand and increase supply to their local area.
 - Ms. Porta – Of course, these examples are primarily from the critically over-drafted basins because they are the ones that had to submit their GSPs earlier. So, these fees are designed to fund larger areas.
- Ms. Porta – There are some areas that have beneficial users that do not irrigate that will benefit from the GSA and the program. They may not use the water the same way, but they will accrue benefits from the program.
- Mr. Mori – A big priority should be domestic wells in every drought cycle. There needs to be regulation for more sustainable domestic wells in the subbasin. This has been a big point of contention in other meetings. I know it’s listed in the PMA actions but in terms of a funding source, I feel that should be a priority.
 - Ms. Porta – We do need to prioritize the funding because every project will not be able to go forward at once. We have heard that management actions are a priority before the projects.

Discussion CSAB

Board members and staff discussed the following:

Public Comment

- Kristina Miller (Ms. Miller), City of Corning and Tehama County Groundwater Commission, City of Corning Representative – The City of Corning does not have an elaborate stormwater system. An elaborate stormwater project would not capture more than what is already being recharged to groundwater.
- Ritta Martin (Ms. Martin), landowner - I am a representative of dryland area, west of Black Butte. First, I have talked with some landowners and that fee funding mechanism would be difficult for dryland ranchers. The fee could equal more than a third of their rent costs. They are not drawing a drop of groundwater. I do appreciate the priority projects but there are very few that would benefit that dryland area. Ms. Martin read a comment from a dryland rancher from the westside If the intention is to levy a \$2/acre tax, that would impact my ability to make my ranch self-sufficient. This tax would account for 1/3 of my income on the property.
 - Second, I want to call the Board’s attention to the March 2020 report by the Westside Ad Hoc Committee of the Glenn Groundwater Authority written by a team of landowners and Glenn Groundwater Authority. The report includes a range of five options for funding mechanisms that separate the irrigated and non-irrigated acres.
 - Ms. Porta – I will take that as an action item for us to review the report.

8. Review Action Items and Adjourn

Ms. Porta reviewed the upcoming key meeting topics and proposed objectives for the CSAB.

Ms. Leimbach thanked Ms. Porta, CSAB members, and the public for participating in this great discussion and adjourned the meeting at 3:31 PM.

Meeting Participants

CSAB Members

- Bob Williams, Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Board Member)
- Brian Mori, CSGSA
- David Lester, Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Groundwater Commissioner)
- Julia Violich, CSGSA
- Steven Gruenwald, Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Private Citizen)

CSAB Alternates

- Ian Turnbull (Alternate), Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (TAC Member)

Other Participants

- Allan Fulton
- Brandon Davison, DWR Northern Region
- Brooke Davis, Glenn County
- Don Rust
- Erin Smith, Engineering Geologist, DWR, Red Bluff Office
- Holly Dawley, GCID
- Jaime Lely, landowner
- John McHugh, LSCE
- Keith Ray, Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- Kristina Miller, City of Corning and Tehama County Groundwater Commission, City of Corning Rep.
- Latisha Miller, Vice-Chair Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- Leland Meibeyer
- Lisa Humphreys
- Lisa Hunter, CSGSA
- Martha Slack, Rio Alto Water District
- Nichole Bethurem, Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- Ritta Martin, landowner
- Tamara Williams, landowner
- Todd Hamer, Vice Chairperson, Los Molinos Community Services District

Consultants and Project Team

- Julie Leimbach, Kearns & West
- Lisa Porta, Montgomery & Associates
- Bryce McAteer, WestWater
- Matthew Payne, WestWater