

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

Stakeholder Assessment

Joint Goal Setting Process
Preliminary Findings and Recommendations
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Presentation Outline

- Assessment Process Summary
- Findings
- Draft Recommendations
- Next Steps

Relationships

- ▶ Historic relationships / effect on groundwater management / trust
- ▶ Cultural / geographic differences / perceived values about water use.
- ▶ Beliefs/ Assumptions vs Facts
- ▶ Agency creation = optimism and potential improved conditions for groundwater conditions, and stakeholder relationships.
- ▶ SGMA is acting as a “forcing function” in a way past efforts did not.
- ▶ Factors include:
 - ▶ New and Partnered leadership
 - ▶ Inclusion and support of private groundwater users and related public engagement
 - ▶ Heightened awareness of water resource risk as an outcome from the recent drought.

Agency Governance

- ▶ Historic relationships' impact on Agency management and concerns about:
 - ▶ Leadership,
 - ▶ Representation,
 - ▶ Meeting protocols/ format and perceived inconsistencies,
 - ▶ Participant behavior / 'safety
 - ▶ These sensitivities are reflected in a range of sub topics including:
 - ▶ Future financing of Agency activities and project
 - ▶ "Ownership" of past activities and the impacts said activities have had on groundwater conditions.

Agency Governance (cont.)

- ▶ Current changed conditions impact Agency management including
 - ▶ Membership volatility associated with upcoming and future
 - ▶ Demographics changes
 - ▶ Roles and authorities

Education

- ▶ Agency Education
 - ▶ Consistent alignment on current understanding of key groundwater issues
 - ▶ Consistent alignment on the need for more groundwater education.
- ▶ Internal Agency education ideas:
 - ▶ Basin water budget and water use needs
 - ▶ Aquifer complexity and associated impacts on groundwater conditions
 - ▶ Groundwater regulation (SGMA)
 - ▶ Transparency / The Brown Act / Procedural Requirements
 - ▶ General groundwater data
 - ▶ Role and authorities of the Agency
 - ▶ The needs of the various member water agencies and constituents therein including population and land use projections

Education

- ▶ Public Education
 - ▶ Almost unanimous support for significant public education
 - ▶ Topics believed important include:
 - ▶ Groundwater conditions / water budget
 - ▶ SGMA
 - ▶ The “de minimis” category of groundwater use under SGMA
 - ▶ Population and growth projections
 - ▶ Water resource integration options, costs, risks and opportunities

Groundwater Conditions

- ▶ Mutual concern about SGMA undesirable results. Primary issues:
 - ▶ Base flows
 - ▶ Groundwater elevation.
 - ▶ Secondary issue = groundwater quality
- ▶ Extensive concern about population growth and land use rates
 - ▶ Reflects need to understand impacts to groundwater conditions
- ▶ Basin aquifer complexity

Groundwater Conditions (cont.)

- ▶ Current and historic modeling - Trust and Lack thereof
- ▶ Other opinions
 - ▶ Long range water use projections and potential changes in use behavior
 - ▶ “easy fixes” vs ‘hard lift for groundwater sustainability
 - ▶ The Basin is isolated. Must be self-sufficient. No external delivery solutions
 - ▶ Climate change and the associated uncertainty

Groundwater Management

- ▶ Significant support for water resource integration throughout Basin.
- ▶ Support for integration tempered by historic concerns about:
 - ▶ Water “ownership” and rights,
 - ▶ Proportional costs,
 - ▶ Loss of water resource control
- ▶ Interest in recharge options a standalone option, and as part of an integrated system
 - ▶ Recharge seen as a logical and innovative next step to the recycled water investments made by Scotts Valley.
- ▶ SGMA Management Areas to reflect hydrogeologic diversity

Recommendations

- ▶ Two Step Approach
- ▶ Sometimes sequential / sometimes simultaneous
- ▶ Sometimes benefiting from facilitation / Sometimes not
- ▶ Draft Approach

Define Guiding Principles / Interests

- Initially broad...then...
- Member specific...then...
- Combined for full Agency

Conduct Extensive Education

- Agency
- Public

Combine Outcomes from
Principles/ Interests AND Education

Create Final Goals

Recommendations

Define Guiding Principles / Interests

1. Define initial guiding principles. Use examples from other basins to start
2. Work with individual member groups to refine and expand to reflect unique interests
3. Combine multiple sets of interests
4. Discuss and understand commonalities and differences
5. Accentuate commonalties
6. Reconcile Differences (if need be)

Recommendations

Agency and Public Education

Needs

- Member water resource needs
- Member planning tools / growth rates
- Water budget
- Roles and Responsibilities of GSA as per SGMA
- Decision-making and procedural approaches
- Private pumper rights and impacts

THANK YOU

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