

Board Meeting Recap: Feb 2021

SMGWA board seeks new well owner representative, progresses on Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency's February board meeting was held Thursday, Feb. 25, and was conducted via all-remote, web- and phone-based access due to the coronavirus prevention guidelines. At the meeting, Director Jeff Koopman, who represents private well owners, was advanced from an alternate to a voting member of the board. An ad-hoc committee was formed to select the well owner representative to fill the seat of a vacant alternate position.

Continuing its work to develop the state-mandated Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that is due in early 2022, the board reviewed the narrative of focus areas for addressing groundwater sustainability, which has been called the "basin problem statement" in the past. The problem statement has evolved into an updated summary document, driven by comments and suggestions made by board members at earlier public meetings. The document emphasizes on groundwater problem conditions that will be addressed in the GSP with projects and management actions.

For the second meeting in a row, the board reviewed results of groundwater modeling scenarios for possible solutions that would help the basin achieve sustainability. Consultants provided a new projection scenario during the February meeting after the modeling projections shared in January resulted in an undesirable future outcome for the basin. The board had requested a less extreme climate forecast be presented, and the new scenario represents a greater variability in both temperature and precipitation than the first scenario considered by the board.

In developing the GSP, SMGWA must identify projects and management actions that will achieve long-term sustainability for the basin. Director Koopman presented a conceptual project idea and the board directed the staff to include this on the list of potential projects and management actions in the GSP. The agency also can rely on programs and projects that will be undertaken by member agencies, rather than executing these efforts directly.

The agency is seeking interested individuals to serve as an alternate (non-voting) Well Owner Representative. A position description and application are now available on the SMGWA website. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on March 19.

The next SMGWA Board of Directors meeting will be held Thursday, March 25, at 5:30 p.m. More information at www.smgwa.org.