

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Planning

Governance Proposal

Panel Approved on June 7, 2012

(Two Members Opposed – See Meeting Summary 6/7/2012)

Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to propose a governance structure for implementing a Groundwater Management Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain under AB 3030¹. The Basin Advisory Panel will consider approving this proposal on June 7, 2012.

Legal Framework for the Groundwater Management Plan

The Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel came together to develop a voluntary, non-regulatory groundwater management plan. The Panel has selected to develop an AB 3030 Plan for the Santa Rosa Groundwater Basin providing a comprehensive framework for managing groundwater developed through a collaborative process and enhancing funding opportunities. The legal framework for the groundwater management plan would be an “AB 3030” Plan with the governance structure for implementation consisting of a Lead Agency, Basin Advisory Panel, and Technical Advisory Committee. The governance structure for implementation would be consistent with the following.

Governance Structure for Plan Implementation

Lead Agency Role

The Lead Agency has ultimate responsibility for Groundwater Management Plan implementation and funding, including studies, projects, and programs it directly or indirectly finances. The Lead Agency role is to:

- Adopt and implement the groundwater management plan consistent with Basin Advisory Panel agreements and direction
- Participate in the Basin Advisory Panel
- Sponsor the Basin Advisory Panel by providing project support, coordination, and facilitation as needed
- Coordinate and garner funding to implement the groundwater management plan
- Be accountable and responsible to implement the groundwater plan in accordance with the water code and to remain eligible for state funding
- Provide in-kind staff support via a project manager to support implementation
- Contract with technical consultants as necessary to support implementation of the plan

¹ Groundwater Management plan in compliance with the provisions of SB 1938 and AB 359 and with Water Code Sections 10750-10755.4

- Coordinate, as appropriate, with the cooperating funders to ensure continued support and involvement in implementing the Groundwater Management Plan
- Develop and adopt only in collaboration with and with the concurrence of the Basin Advisory Panel proposed rules or regulations where necessary to achieve the objectives of the Groundwater Management Plan as provided by AB 3030
- Explore options for funding groundwater management activities. In exercising this role, the Lead Agency would only propose fees and assessments if the Basin Advisory Panel recommended and approved

Basin Advisory Panel Role

The Basin Advisory Panel is the advisory body with regards to implementing the groundwater management plan and will remain in existence as long as the plan is being implemented. The Panel discusses, provides input, and develops consensus recommendations for all activities that move forward to implement the plan. The Panel has a collaborative governance structure: the lead agency and other agencies with jurisdiction within the Santa Rosa Plain will join with community organizations, business associations, and individuals to determine the best way to implement the Groundwater Management Plan. All activities associated with implementing the Plan would be subject to consensus of the Basin Advisory Panel consistent with its charter. Basin Advisory Panel meetings would be open to the public. The Panel's decisions would be identified prior to a meeting in an agenda and recorded in the meeting summary, including Panel member attendance. Members would be responsible to attend in person or request that an alternate or Panel member represent his or her viewpoint in decision-making. The Basin Advisory Panel would solely be responsible for amending the Groundwater Management Plan.

Basin Advisory Panel Composition

Upon approval of the Santa Rosa Basin Groundwater Plan, the Basin Advisory Panel will continue to provide guidance for its implementation and any amendment of the Plan. The composition of the Basin Advisory Panel will continue to make decision through the collaborative approach of the Plan with representatives from each of the identified stakeholder or interest groups. Each interest group will select their representative(s) for the Panel who must be able to commit to the working agreements in the Basin Advisory Panel Charter regarding process and defined consensus decision-making. The Basin Advisory Panel can modify its charter using its decision-making protocols. Panel members must either live or have jurisdiction in the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed. Panel members would typically serve 2-year terms. Members could serve multiple terms. The Panel would formally revisit its membership each fall when planning its work plan for the following year. An effort would be made to avoid having all new members in any one year.

The exact continuing composition for implementation would be similar to the Basin Advisory Panel during plan development. The Basin Advisory Panel would identify the panel composition by interest group, continuing to seek diversity of representation as part of plan development and prior to plan adoption. The Panel would be composed of representatives of the Lead Agency, General Public, Agricultural Groundwater Users, Business & Developers, Residential Groundwater Users, Government (Tribal, County and City), Environmental Organizations, Natural Resources Management Organizations, Water Suppliers, and Groundwater Technical Expertise.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Role

The Panel will designate an ad-hoc Technical Advisory Committee to work on specifics of implementation of the Plan goals and objectives; advise the Panel on technical matters; and to develop recommendations on general Plan implementation for the Panel's consideration. TAC participation is not limited to Panel members; others with groundwater or technical expertise can also participate. The TAC will assist the Panel on the following activities:

- Working with the technical consultant on Plan implementation,
- Reviewing technical data and analyses and/or recommending data analyses,
- Determining if data is adequate to address the basin management objectives, and
- Reviewing annual reports on plan implementation.