MEETING NOTES | June 13, 2013
Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel

MEETING IN BRIEF

Comments due July 8 on the Management Components Section
Members have until July 8 to submit comments to Tim Parker and Marcus Trotta on the management components section of the plan.

USGS Report Presentation July 11 at BAP and at Finlay Center Evening Workshop
USGS plans to release the characterization report in June 2013 and surface/groundwater flow model later in 2013. USGS is scheduled to present the characterization report at the July 11th Panel meeting. USGS will also present the report at an evening public workshop on July 11, 6-8 pm.

http://www.scwa.gov/srgroundwater/

Next Panel Meeting: July 11, 9:00-12:00, at 35 Stony Point Rd.
Topics: USGS Study

MEETING SUMMARY

Integrating Land Use and Groundwater Planning
The focus of the day's discussion was to learn more about land use planning and its intersection with water resources. The goal of the discussion was for the Panel to identify ways the groundwater management plan could address integrating land use and groundwater planning.

Presenters
Pete Parkinson, County of Sonoma
Lisa Kranz, City of Santa Rosa
Rocky Vogler, Town of Windsor
Vicki Parker, City of Cotati

Presentation Overview

Lisa Kranz
All cities and counties must develop long-range plans, known as general plans. General plans require cities and counties to focus 20 years into the future and to address a range of elements: land use, open space, noise, housing, conservation, safety and circulation. A general plan must meet all the requirements of state law and balance competing issues. The process to develop a general plan can span several years and typically involves lots of community involvement.

General plans include and manage for projected population and jobs within the Urban Growth Boundary. Urban Growth Boundaries are voter approved, and all cities in Sonoma

County have them. The Association of Bay Area Governments issues the Regional Housing Needs Allocation that requires that the governmental jurisdiction provide housing to meet projected needs, including a percentage of affordable housing. If more than 500 units are proposed, then the jurisdiction must complete a water supply assessment in the environmental review (SB 610 requirements). The water supply assessment addresses current and planned future water demand, projected water demand of the proposed project, and the water supply sufficiency over the subsequent 20 years.

State law notes natural resources, such as water, shall be addressed. Water issues include supply and demand, flooding, conservation, pollution prevention, and watershed protection. Santa Rosa's general plan requires new development to reduce impermeable surfaces, increase water infiltration, and minimize surface runoff. The plan also requires reducing drainage system discharge of pollutants from urban uses. It focuses on various water conservation techniques. In practice, the City has an extensive, successful conservation program. The City also has a recycled water program and requires low impact design.

Consistent with its general plan, the City of Santa Rosa also has an Urban Water Management Plan. The Urban Water Management Plan complies with state law. Water demand is based on general plan projections for future population and jobs.

Pete Parkinson
The County also has a general plan with a water element. A general plan goes through environmental review on a programmatic level. Mitigation measures are typically policies to implement with future decision. A development project, however, has an environmental review with a specific analysis of project impacts on water supply and quality. The county's general plan differs from a city's because it covers a much larger geographic area with greater diversity of landscapes. The county's general plan is less about urban growth and more about natural resources, agriculture, and rural land uses.

Sonoma County has a heavy reliance on groundwater with many small, private water systems and water companies. Estimates suggest that more than 40,000 groundwater wells exist in the county – one of the largest numbers of wells of almost any California county. The county's agricultural economy is also heavily dependent on groundwater. The County's last general plan included a water resources element that focused on surface and ground water quality, public water systems, conservation and re-use, importing and exporting, watershed management, and groundwater.

The groundwater section calls for conserving, enhancing, and managing groundwater resources on a sustainable basis, assuring sufficient amounts of clean water required for future generations. The element also calls for developing a scientifically based program to collect data needed to assess and understand groundwater conditions. It encourages new recharge opportunities and protecting existing recharge areas. It stipulates avoiding additional land subsidence caused by groundwater extraction. In water scarce areas, proof of water availability and impacts is necessary.

Pete assessed implementation of the water resources element. The plan has done a good job of monitoring commercial and industrial wells and maintaining recharge capacity. It has

had moderate success improving information and analysis. Countywide monitoring and reporting needs improvement

The county is also responsible for well permitting. An ordinance sets construction standards and avoids groundwater contamination via wells. It does not stipulate anything on volume or extraction. It does not attempt to evaluate impacts to neighboring wells or to groundwater supply. The County is the process of revising the ordinance and will share the public draft summer 2013.

Rocky Vogler
The Town of Windsor relies most on Russian River surface water, some groundwater and other supplies. The Town has maximized its ability to use recycled water. To increase the use of recycled water, the town would have to increase storage or partner with the Sonoma County Water Agency. Storage is very expensive. The Water Agency has more water than demand, and Windsor has more demand then recycled water, but some challenges exist in connecting the systems.

Land use and groundwater resources intersect through the application process. A proponent files an application with the Town to get a permit. The permit requires studies, reports, and a public hearing. Public Works receives information and reviews it for acceptability. Some projects require a water demand analysis. When approved, known as an entitlement, it can have conditions of development. Once the project meets the conditions and has signed plans, the town issues a permit for construction.

Public Works tracks all current and future water demand. Well abandonment follows the county's PRMD requirements.

Vicki Parker
The City of Cotati goes through a similar application process for individual development projects. The application is referred to the appropriate departments. Projects require an environmental analysis. The City then issues conditions of approval and holds a public hearing, and then implementation, as conditioned, moves forward. Planners must confer that a project is consistent with the general plan and with zoning and development codes. The city has a number of zoning / development codes that integrate water. These include minimizing impermeable surfaces and provisions for water efficiency and conservation. Landscape design is also stipulated to restore native vegetation, less than 50% turf, 75% use of native or drought tolerant species, and irrigation requirements. The city also has an ordinance to increase rainwater capture and infiltration for irrigation purposes. Since 2010, all projects must use low impact development standards. Common features include rainwater harvesting, vegetated buffers, and vegetated swales.

Questions and Discussion
The Panel asked some questions that yielded the following clarifications.

Cities generally discourage residents from putting in groundwater wells to ensure water quality and conservation. The County typically issues about 300 permits per year for new or replacement wells.

The Town of Windsor uses ultraviolet for disinfection and can discharge to a creek because there are no DBPs from chlorination. The Town is in the process of applying for a new discharge permit to explore tying into another recycled water system. Because SCWA uses chlorine to treat its recycled water, and the Town uses ultraviolet treatment, the Town would have to treat SCWA's recycled water.

The cities in the Santa Rosa Plain are very successful in their conservation programs. The City of Santa Rosa estimates that it saves 4500 acre-feet of water each year or a 17% reduction in demand due to water conservation measures. Rohnert Park per capita water demand was 178 gallons per day in 1997 and is 80 gallons per day in 2011. Sebastopol is 90-95 gallons per day per capita. In the United States, generally, water use is much higher than use in European cities, primarily because of trees and landscaping. Someone suggested that California's movement toward growing local produce also increases water demand locally.

Insights for the Groundwater Management Plan
At the close of the discussion, Panel members discussed how they would like to incorporate insights into the groundwater management plan.

Low impact development is currently law, and builders are required to follow these policies. The groundwater management plan can reference these practices and requirements as an existing tool.

The plan would also identify and promote protection of **recharge areas**.

The plan should emphasize the importance of **monitoring** and reporting.

When talking about water reuse, the plan should emphasize that reuse should be **appropriate reuse** to preserve water quality.

The plan could create and support **conservation incentives** to convert lawns to conserve water. Many cities already have these problems, but they are often not available to rural well owners. The plan could support extending these conservation incentive programs.

Feedback on Management Components Section

[Section 5.0, dated 2013_06-07]

Panel members reviewed and provided feedback on the management components section. The Technical Advisory Committee developed the section for Panel review. Feedback included:

- When discussing low impact development, describe existing projects and measures as an informational tool.
- Identify best management practices for unincorporated areas.
- Gray water systems: include local agency permitting processes
- Correlate water monitoring with climate adaption studies and insight over time
- 5.4.2 (page 5-20), change wording from "explore" to "*develop" additional water conservation measures for agricultural operations*
- Note under the table that BMO 10 and 13 include water quality monitoring.

Feedback on Groundwater Primer

The concept of basin yield is unclear. Staff should revisit and clarify.

The Panel recommends adding the map of water availability.

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members

Keith Abeles
Jennifer Burke
Michael Burns
Mark Calhoon
Elizabeth Cargay
Ezra Chaaban
Nick Frey (Alternate)
Rue Furch
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Other Participants

Kathy Pons
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Staff

Tim Parker, Technical
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Gina Bartlett, Facilitator