MEETING NOTES | March 13, 2014
Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel

MEETING IN BRIEF

Announcements.

- Consultant Tim Parker offered numerous announcements pertaining to state-wide water policy developments. (See Attachment A.)
- Water Agency Project Manager Marcus Trotta and Technical Consultant Tim Parker presented at Groundwater Management Workshop for Farmers and Ranchers, which was sponsored by Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Western United Dairymen, and the Farmers Guild on March 7. The workshop was attended by an audience of about 40 people who were briefed on statewide groundwater policies and actions and on the Panel's work to develop a Groundwater Management Plan (GMP). Participants listened closely and were very engaged; they are quite concerned about water reliability. Marcus believes it was a good "starting point" discussion, with many who had been unfamiliar with the Panel's work in attendance.
- Marcus and Tim will brief the North Bay Association of Realtors on March 25.

Meeting Overview.

- Tim and Marcus briefed the Panel on preliminary results from the USGS Study (Part II).
- Marcus provided a progress report on behalf of the GMP Funding Subcommittee.
- The Community Forums Planning Committee provided a progress report and elicited feedback on draft publicity materials.

The next Panel Meeting will take place April 10, 9:00-12:00, at 35 Stony Point Rd, featuring a USGS presentation! TAC members are invited.

Topics: The April Panel meeting will focus on presentation by USGS on the results of its model report (Part II of the USGS Study) In addition, we will seek Panel feedback on revised Chapter 6 of the GMP. We will also fine-tune plans for the spring community forums. As always, we welcome hearing further feedback from any additional constituent briefings done by Panel members.

MEETING SUMMARY

Progress Report on Funding Strategy

Marcus Trotta reported on the Funding Subcommittee's very substantial progress in assembling core funding for the 1st two years of implementation (primarily elements that the water code requires of GMPs). With a $600,000 pricetag, the combined efforts of the Water Agency and the Subcommittee have lined up all but $10,000-15,000 of that amount. Entities that have indicated they would likely provide a financial contribution include Sebastopol, Windsor, Santa Rosa, Cotati, Rohnert Park, Cal-American Water, the Sonoma County Agriculture and Open Space District, United Winegrowers, the Federal Indians of Graton Rancheria, and Sonoma County.

- **Discussion:**
  - Question: Are there things we can cut out of our 2-year work plan if we do not close the gap?
    Answer: Not easily; the items included are generally things required of GMPs by the state water code.)
  - Question: Have in-kind contributions been included in the tally?
    Answer: No. Offers of in-kind contributions are welcome, and are being noted, but the $600,000 represents a funding need, so right now we need to stay focused on finding cash to close that last $10-15,000 gap.
  - Suggestion: Perhaps we could tap into the $4.14 million designated for water fluoridation, since that may not be needed for its intended purpose. Answer: if those funds should become available, it seems unlikely that it would happen in the next few months; once we cover the core implementation costs, the Panel may want to establish a new Subcommittee to pursue other funding sources for specific projects.

Panel members whose organizational missions are explicitly linked to groundwater and who have not yet indicated they would request constituent or decision-maker authorization for a financial contribution were urged to consider doing so (especially those in rural areas). The more entities that contribute, the more shared ownership there will be in successfully implementing the GMP and ensuring it achieves its full potential. Marcus asked that anyone else planning to do so please contact him by March 21.

Orientation to Preliminary Results of USGS Study (Part II)

Marcus Trotta and Tim Parker provided a PowerPoint presentation[1], briefing Panel members on the preliminary results of the USGS Model Report, followed by a question and answer session. They indicated that USGS expects to be able to attend the Panel's next meeting (April 10) to brief the Panel more fully. All members of the Technical Advisory Committee are invited to attend this Panel meeting.

The briefing focused on construction and the primary results of the model (i.e., water budget for baseline and under four alternative scenarios for how climate change will affect local conditions). The four alternative scenarios are grouped into relatively drier and wetter changes in climate:

- Two drier scenarios – labeled GA2 and PA2 -- that assume medium to high carbon dioxide emissions and more temperature change through 2040, with higher uncertainty related to cumulative effects; and

- Two wetter scenarios -- labeled PB1 and GB1) that assume lower carbon dioxide emissions and more modest temperature changes.

[1] Information related to the USGS surface water/groundwater flow model of the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed included in the following draft sections is released to you as preliminary information. As preliminary information it is subject to revision and is provided to meet the needs for timely best science. The information is provided on the condition that neither the U.S. Geological Survey nor the U.S. Government may be held liable for any damages resulting from the authorized or unauthorized use of the information.

The baseline was set using historic data from 1981 through 2010. Urban groundwater use is based on local agencies' measured and reported values. Rural domestic and agricultural groundwater use actually are not measured or reported, so the model relied on estimates for these inputs.

A number of different graphs were presented, showing precipitation change, groundwater evapotranspiration , streamflow that recharges groundwater , and storage change . Inflows to the modeled groundwater system include boundary flows, surface infiltration, and streambed recharge, while outflows includes estimated pumping, boundary outflows, discharge to springs and wetlands, discharge to streams, and evapotranspiration.)

Staff noted the trend under most scenarios is toward continued additional decreases in storage, in streamflow, and in groundwater discharge to streams. One of the primary concerns under future climate scenarios could be the conversion of gaining streams to losing streams and associated declines in streamflow.

- **Discussion:**
  - Observation. The graphs seem to show a lot of variability and volatility. It would be helpful to be able to see the range for each year.
    Response: Yes, there are other graphs in the report that convey the year to year variability and convey the ranges. In managing our water resources it is important to note that the past is not always a good predictor of the future, so we need to consider extremes in our planning.)
  - Observation: It might be helpful to see variability by storage unit. Response: It will be helpful and if that is something that is not included in the USGS report it is something that will be developed by the project team once the model is provided by the USGS.
  - Question: Have both unconfined and confined aquifers been incorporated in this data?
    Response: Yes.
  - Observation: The data certainly seems to reinforce the need for the GMP!
    Response: Yes.
  - Question: A water budget is like a profit and loss statement, in terms of showing how much we have in reserves, right?
    Response: Yes. Our reserves are a function of many factors, including water quality, economic factors, well depth, and the energy that goes into pumping. Also, it is important to keep the groundwater level up so it does not disconnect from surface water. If that happens, we lose habitat and we lose surface water flows.
  - Question: Can the model inform recharge areas?
    Response: Yes; the model will help identify recharge areas that can then be incorporated into future various management scenarios.)
  - Question: What would be the reason for increased pumping? (Response: Projected growth; increased temperatures, which in turn increases irrigation pumping needs; on these graphs, it appears more extreme than it is due to simplifying the data for summary purposes.)
  - Question: All the scenarios are based on current management practices, correct?
    Response: Yes.
  - Observation: Streambed recharge data under all four scenarios seems to reveal a drop in groundwater levels, an increase in stream recharge, and reduced levels of surface discharge to springs and wetlands and discharge to streams.

Response: Yes this is correct, as groundwater levels are lowered due to increased pumping each of these responses is observed in the model results

- Question:What is the relationship between groundwater and surface water use?
  Response: Groundwater represents about 50% of water use in the Basin.
- Observation and Question: The pumping data could be way off, since it's just an estimate. Would it help if folks could share data from the private well world?
  Response: Yes, that would be tremendously helpful in better calibration the model.
- Observation: It would help inform our discussion if we could know the margin of error in this data – at least the order of magnitude.
- Observation and Question: Different types of wells recharge at different rates. How is that factored in?
  Response: We'll factor that into the management scenarios.
- Observation: You'll need well depths.
  Response: We have that.
- Observation: Each layer has its own storage.
  Response: The model gets into those specifics for each cell and layer.
- Suggestion: For the community forums, we should boil it down to the implications – i.e., "If it rains less, we have less of a decrease in groundwater storage." Or "The streams are drying up, so we're losing ecosystems and the riparian zone."
  Response: Yes – something like that, looking at the trend over time.
- Suggestion: For the community forums, don't leave graphs up on the screen such a long time. Get the point across, but move on. Maybe use a picture of normal levels compared to a picture of low levels of flow.
- Suggestion: Add a row for "surface water changes" the community forums, to show other impacts.
- Suggestion: Review USGS presentation in advance; do a dry run.
- Observation: With respect to loss of ecosystem and habitat, there can be a real big difference between minus 1,000 acre feet per year and 2,000. Just one well-owner pumping for 3 weeks straight can pump a lot! We should not "nerd out" too much, but there is a serious story to tell here.
- Question: At what point do we lose the ability to pump?
  Response: When the wells go dry; initially, you can drill deeper wells.
- Observation: Residential wells dry up first because they are shallower.
- Question: Total streamflow reflects loss to groundwater, but not precipitation; why is that?
  Response: The total streamflow varies with precipitation under future climate scenarios with the two drier scenarios showing lower streamflow compared to baseline and the two wetter scenarios showing higher streamflow compared to baseline. Under all scenarios, additional streamflow is also lost (recharged to groundwater) due to the lowering of groundwater levels caused by increased pumping. We we will ask USGS to speak to this further at the April 10 Panel meeting.
- Question: Can we see climate data for the last 30 years to look at variability?
  Response: Yes; that will be in the report.
- Suggestion: For the community forums, it would be good to tailor this kind of information to show how it will affect the specific community.

Planning for Spring 2014 Community Forums

With support from Rich Wilson, Facilitator of the Community Forums Planning Committee, Committee members collectively updated the Panel on progress in planning a set of four community forums to orient the public to the draft GMP. Key points:

- The purpose of the GMP community forums is to orient the community to the proposed GMP and stress the importance of groundwater planning.
- The Water Agency will be the convener of each forum. A Panel member is serving as the lead organizer of each forum.
- The Water Agency has identified possible dates for each GMP forum, on which at least one Water Agency board member can attend and speak. The Santa Rosa forum will be May 28 at 6pm. It will take place in the same room in which the Panel regularly meets, at the Utility Field Office, but with the folding doors opened up. It has a capacity of a couple hundred people. Sonoma County Supervisors Shirlee Zane and Susan Gorin and Santa Rosa City Council Member Darin Carlstrom will likely make introductory remarks.
- The Rohnert Park/Cotati forum will take place either May 21 or 22. Sonoma County Supervisor David Rabbit and either Rohnert Park Mayor Joe Callinan or City Councilman Jake Mackenzie will likely speak; they are selecting the final date.
- Dates under consideration for the Sebastopol forum are May 8 and 12.
- Windsor and Cotati are checking calendars.
- The League of Women Voters, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (whose members include many small farmers), and the Sonoma Resource Conservation District will co-sponsor all the forums; more such co-sponsors are welcome.
- The Center for Collaborative Policy will facilitate the GMP forums.
- **Note:** In April, there will also be separate Drought Town Hall Meeting forums (one in each Board district), which the Water Agency will be leading co-hosted by Sonoma Resource Conservation District, County of Sonoma, Cities of Cloverdale and Healdsburg, members of the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership, including the City of Santa Rosa, City of Rohnert Park, City of Petaluma, and the Town of Windsor. For dates of the drought forums, please see the following link: http://www.scwa.ca.gov/public-notices/

Pam Kuhn (the Water Agency) oriented the Panel to initial draft GMP publicity items (a flyer and press release). She noted that the press release should go out in late April. She plans to develop an invitational flyer and a paid ad as well. She asked for Panel feedback on the draft flyer and press release by the end of March. Panel comments include:

- Add quotes, such as a strong statement of support from the Farm Bureau.
- Use quotes from a broader array of groups (not just the County) – i.e., farming, rural, and residential entities.
- Should have less governmental flavor, and emphasize it's a voluntary effort.
- Mention the array of hosts and co-sponsors to expand the community of interest.
- Spell out "USGS" the first time it is used.
- Population, pressures, and water availability is quite different.
- Use "voluntary" vs. "non-regulatory." We want to convey that we are seeking to engage people in ways they do not feel are onerous.
- Use logos of co-sponsors on the first slide.
- Create a separate flyer for the USGS Model Report.
- Include a photo of a diverse urban community, not just rural scenes (maybe 3rd St. Park or the "re-use" site next door).
- The flyer is missing the "Component 3"header.
- Use "plan," not "GMP."

- Use the SRP Panel's logo!
- Put a map of the Basin on the publicity materials.
- The reference to the timeline for adoption makes it seem like it's happening too fast for stakeholder engagement. Explain the 2-year GMP development process and all the briefings to date.
- Convey that it is a living document, not static.
- In the press release:
  - See the 3 paragraph, the 4th word; it should be "underscored."
  - On p. 2, top paragraph, do we want to mention that the state water code dictates minimum elements of a GMP, but we are following the path of the Sonoma Valley Plan (conveying it's been a money magnet)?
- Not sure it helps us to reference the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Plan, since the Santa Rosa Plain is much more complex.
- Plans are helpful to reference in grant applications, but probably the greatest value of the plan and program is the collaborative process of doing groundwater and communicating well about all this (which takes time and can't be rushed).

Action Items

- The CCP facilitation team will doodle for the next Community Forum Subcommittee conference call date.
- Panel members are encouraged to provide comments on the draft flyer and press release for the community forums to Pam Kuhn (the Water Agency) by March 31; they are also encouraged to submit names of quotable agencies or organizations and suggestion for impactful quotes.
- The Water Agency will provide Rue Furch (via facilitator Rich Wilson if convenient) with a copy of the press release as early as possible to use in recruiting forum co-sponsors.

Attachments *(attached as separate files):*

A. Announcements Regarding Overall Status of Legislative and Policy Climate in California *(Provided by Consultant Tim Parker)*

Participants

Panel Members

- Mark Calhoon, Fircrest Mutual Water Company
- Jay Jasperse, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Gary Mickelson, California Groundwater Association
- Margaret DiGenova, Cal American Water Company
- Elizabeth Cargay, Well Owner & Foothills of Windsor Homeowners Association
- Keith Abeles, Community Alliance of Family Farmers
- Tito Sasaki, Sonoma County Farm Bureau
- Curt Nichols, the Construction Coalition
- Rue Furch, Sebastopol Water Information Group (SWIG) and Sierra Club
- Jane Nielson, Sonoma County Water Coalition and O.WL. Foundation
- Bill Keene, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District
- Pete Parkinson (retired), County of Sonoma permit and resources Management Department
- Rocky Vogler, City of Santa Rosa

- Garrett Broughton, Town of Windsor
- John McArthur, City of Rohnert Park
- Joe Gaffney, City of Sebastopol & Sonoma County Alliance
- Maureen Geary, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
- Kara Heckert, Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Michael Burns, Resident, Santa Rosa
- Dawna Gallagher, Well Owner & Clean Water Sonoma Marin
- Lloyd Iversen, Local Well Owner

Observers

- Len Holt, Resident
- Bath Lamb, NCRWQCB
- Bob Anderson, United Winegrowers

Staff

- Marcus Trotta, Water Agency (Project Manager)
- Tim Parker, Parker Groundwater (Technical Consultant)
- Marci DuPraw, Center for Collaborative Policy (Facilitator of Panel & Funding Subcommittee)
- Rich Wilson, Center for Collaborative Policy (Facilitator of TAC and Community Forums Planning Committee)
- Pam Kuhn, Water Agency