

MEETING SUMMARY | July 24, 2013

Santa Rosa Plain Technical Advisory Committee

Summary of USGS Findings

The TAC received a summary report of the USGS presentation that had been provided to both the Basin Advisory Panel and wider public in early July. Some TAC members voiced disappointment at the technical nature of the USGS presentation given at the public meeting. The group discussed “take home” messages and offered strong support for the Project Team to conduct future presentations with highly condensed material and a targeted message.

Review of Refined Sections 2 and 3

The TAC continued the iterative process of GMP development by closely reviewing the water resources section as well as current management and planning efforts. Several members noted that overall the water resources section in particular looks comprehensive and well done. As such, only a moderate amount of substantive feedback was provided on both sections 2 and 3.

Next Steps

Refined versions of GMP sections 1-5 will be provided to the TAC in September for review and discussion, and subsequently to the Basin Advisory Panel in November. The TAC will soon focus on section 6 (implementation) and thus begin to prioritize management activities, consider costs and identify potential funding opportunities that advance GMP goals and objectives.

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

Next TAC Meeting

Upcoming TAC Meeting Dates: September 25, 2013 at the Sonoma County Water Agency office, 404 Aviation Blvd, Santa Rosa.

Action Items

Timeframe	Name	Action Item
August 7	TAC Members	Provide feedback on section 2 (water resources) and section 3 (current management activities)
Late July	Project Team	Circulate USGS summary presentation provided to TAC members

Summary Findings From The USGS Characterization Report

The Project Team prepared and delivered a condensed summary report of the USGS presentation that had been provided to both the Basin Advisory Panel and wider public in early July. Technical Consultant Tim Parker briefly reviewed the study objectives and scope, then provided summary findings relative to geohydrology, surface water, groundwater and water quality in the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed. He described lines of evidence utilized to develop the conceptual model. He pointed out data gaps and described how the USGS adapts to still develop a workable model that enhances understanding of the region’s water budget. Publication of the model -- the second part of the USGS report -- will be critical to complete the GMP and instrumental for implementation. TAC members will work at

upcoming meetings to prioritize a portfolio of management options. Model scenarios forecasting future actions will be prioritized and developed during the early stages of implementation.

One member inquired as to why the Russian River was not incorporated into the study area. Several responses from other members and the Project Team illuminated the rationale behind the project scope and noted that, although Russian River water is imported into the study area, the river is not within the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed. Many highlighted the technical nature of investigating a specific area, in this case the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin and surrounding watershed. Inclusion of the Russian River would require incorporation of the entire hydrology of the river watershed, thus significantly broadening the scope of the study. The model will simulate groundwater flow between the boundary of the Healdsburg area groundwater subbasin (which contains the Russian River) and the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin; initial estimates indicate that flow across this boundary is a relatively minor component of the overall water budget.

A number of TAC members voiced disappointment at the highly technical nature of the USGS presentation given at the public meeting. Specific criticism centered on poor visibility of graphics, excessive use of data and generally providing more information than was needed. Some felt it was a missed opportunity to garner improved understanding among a larger audience on fundamental groundwater issues. One member distinguished that his criticism was focused on the overly technical content of the presentation and not the USGS presenter, whom he thought did a good job. A few noted positive conversations they had with members of the general public regarding the ongoing multi-stakeholder groundwater management planning process. During the TAC meeting, members discussed “take home” messages and offered strong support for the Project Team to conduct future presentations with highly condensed material and a more targeted message. A specific request was made for the Project Team to review the USGS model presentation prior to the next public meeting. Some key messages discussed by the group included the following:

- The existence of the USGS characterization report allows the GMP to be high level, non-technical and easily readable to interested parties
- The report, along with recent water agency storm water and recharge studies, show that the most favorable recharge areas lie on the east foothills of the basin
- Basin zones are described well in the report; ensure the GMP also captures the zones concept given the importance of considering localized versus general conditions
- There is currently no conclusive evidence of groundwater extraction-related inelastic subsidence in the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed; the current draft of the GMP does describe available information regarding subsidence and includes plans for subsidence monitoring

Water Resources Section Review

Limited comments were received on the latest version of the water resources section distributed at the June meeting. The TAC therefore continued the iterative process of GMP development by again closely reviewing this section, which incorporates pre-publication information from the USGS characterization report. Certain additions, such as revised figures from the USGS report, will be included in the next version, which will be circulated prior to the September TAC meeting as part of a nearly complete package of Sections 1 through 5. Additionally, information regarding the water budget and future climate change

scenarios will need to be incorporated into Section 2 after the USGS model report is published at the end of 2013.

Several TAC members noted that overall the water resources section looks comprehensive and well done, and thus offered only a moderate amount of substantive feedback, including the following:

Background and Physical Setting

- 2.2.4 – Include 1-2 paragraphs to discuss flood control; alternatively reference other sections where issue is already addressed

Groundwater

- 2.4.8.1 and 2.4.8.2 – Sections might flow better if the order is switched
- 2.4.8.4 – Section starts abruptly; needs introduction
- Clarify whether Rohnert Park/Cotati depression “disappeared” or “recovered”; recovered may be best language

Surface water

- 2.5.5 – Need more exploration of groundwater pumping for export; note that information can only be qualified and not quantified

Zones

- Building on descriptions in the USGS report, consider highlighting zones from the Conceptual Model portion of the USGS report early in the water resources section
- General discussion of water quality should reference zone applicability

Agriculture

- Ensure descriptions of agriculture show increase in irrigated acreage and changes in crop type over time

General comments

- Define terms and spell out acronyms where appropriate, especially uncommon terms; consider use of footnotes
- Include citations where needed through the GMP sections 1-5

Current Management And Planning Efforts Section Review

The TAC continued the review process by looking at section 3 (current management and planning efforts). As with the water resources section, TAC members only had a moderate amount of feedback compared to previous meetings.

Water conservation

- Add more information about rural users; Resource Conservation District can help supply relevant information
- Add the “Pay As You Save” program established by the Town of Windsor

Water reuse

- Add the Community of Family Farmers “Dry Farming” project with wine growers

Storm water management

- 3.4.1 – Clarify the phrase “using an iterative approach”

General comments

- Ensure reader understands that the regional water board has specific requirements for treatment (e.g. storm water and recycled water)

Next Steps

Refined versions of GMP sections 1-5 will be provided to the TAC prior to the September meeting with the goal of sharing with the Basin Advisory Panel in November for review and discussion. Ideas or issues that the Panel feels need to still be addressed in these sections may come back to the TAC for consideration and further development. The TAC will soon focus on section 6 (implementation) and thus begin to prioritize management activities, consider costs and identify potential funding opportunities that advance GMP goals and objectives.

TAC Meeting Attendees

TAC Members

Kevin Cullinen
Matt O'Conner
Rocky Vogler
Gary Mickelson
Jane Nielson
Mark Calhoon
Dawna Gallagher
Michael Burns

Project Team

Project Manager, Marcus Trotta
Technical Consultant, Tim Parker
TAC Facilitator, Rich Wilson

TAC Visitors

Karl Adelman