

Funding – Frequently Asked Questions

The Wyandotte Creek (WC) Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) has determined that Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation costs (not including projects and management actions) can be funded through the GSA long-term fee setting process. This will ensure that the GSA has adequate revenues to cover the costs of GSP implementation and SGMA compliance.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

Does state funding exist to help with SGMA and GSP implementation?

The State provided planning grants to assist with covering the costs of preparing GSPs; the Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation managed the grant and consultant team that prepared the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin GSP that was submitted to the State in December 2021.

Ultimately, the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin GSAs are responsible for covering costs for GSP implementation and SGMA compliance. However, the [Budget Act of 2021](#) provided \$200 million in General Funds and Proposition 68 provided additional funds for SGMA Implementation projects. Round two of the SGM Grant Program closed on December 16, 2022. The Wyandotte Creek GSA applied for SGM grant funds for projects totaling approximately \$7.3 million. DWR is currently reviewing and scoring applications. The Wyandotte Creek GSA will continue to evaluate and pursue other grant funding sources as they become available.

- [SGMgrantpackage_WydCrk.pdf](#)

Can grants cover all the GSA costs?

Wyandotte Creek GSA costs include both GSA administrative costs and GSP implementation/SGMA compliance costs. GSA administrative costs are not included under the SGM grant program. As a result, the Wyandotte Creek GSA has initiated this long-term funding process to focus on the revenue needs to cover the GSA administrative costs and SGMA regulatory compliance activities.

The Wyandotte Creek GSA is working hard to keep landowner fees as low as possible by relying on grants to cover the costs of groundwater sustainability projects that were identified in the GSP and included in the SGM grant application. While grants are being sought to cover many of the costs of GSP implementation and SGMA compliance, 82 grant applications from groundwater subbasins throughout California have been submitted for the same limited pool of grant dollars.

LONG-TERM CHARGE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Why is the GSA going through this process?

Wyandotte Creek GSA needs to generate revenue by collecting fees from landowners within the basin rather than rely on member agency contributions and in-kind staff services going forward. By implementing a long-term funding process including landowner fees the Wyandotte Creek GSA will be able to adequately administer the daily activities of the agency and manage groundwater resources within the basin.

How come I haven't heard about this GSA charge?

This charge will be the first considered by the Wyandotte Creek GSA. To stay up to date on the fee setting process, check the Wyandotte Creek GSA website regularly at wyandottecreekgsa.org and register for the Wyandotte Creek GSA at www.wyandottecreekgsa.com/sign-up-for-the-sgma-email-list.

How was the fee determined and how much will it be?

The fee has not yet been determined. Wyandotte Creek GSA is working hard to ensure that any fee implemented is equitable and as low as possible. The Wyandotte Creek GSA Stakeholder Advisory Committee (WAC) and the Wyandotte Creek GSA Board of Directors are considering various options for determining fees for landowners. Charges could be a simple per acre fee, a fee based other parcel-based data such as irrigated and non-irrigated land or land use, or a combination of the two. Some options may require additional data and analysis prior to imposing the fee. The more complex the data needed to determine the fee for each parcel or acre, the higher the administrative cost.

To keep up to date on the fee setting process register for the Wyandotte Creek GSA email list at www.wyandottecreekgsa.com/sign-up-for-the-sgma-email-list.

When will landowner fees be put in place?

The Wyandotte Creek GSA anticipates that charges will be approved in July 2023 and implemented in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Is the GSA Charge Fixed or Variable?

The charge may be variable but will have a maximum limit during the period in which the charge is in effect. Once the GSA fees are in place, the Wyandotte Creek GSA Board could annually approve a reduced fee based on the proposed GSA budget each year or charge the maximum amount as identified and approved in the fee study. The Wyandotte Creek GSA Board's goal is to keep GSA charges as low as possible.

What is the Fee Report?

The Fee Report is a document that justifies any proposed fees or charges for a specified purpose. It considers the revenue projections over the planning period, evaluates fee options, considers cost allocation for those subject to the fee and provides and communicates the rationale for recommended fees the Wyandotte Creek GSA may approve that provide a nexus between fees paid and benefits received. The Fee Report is submitted to the Wyandotte Creek GSA Board for review and approval prior to the establishment of any fees being implemented. The Fee Report will be available on the GSA website and will be updated as needed over time to reflect any changes in future charges.

COST SHARING

Why are landowners responsible for groundwater fees?

SGMA requires that the cost of GSP implementation is shared between all landowners, except for Federal, Tribal, and State lands which are exempt from SGMA. The GSA will be imposing charges upon landowners subject to the fee to cover the cost of GSA administration, GSP implementation, and SGMA compliance. The Wyandotte Creek GSA is working to keep costs down, including pursuing state and local agency funding.

How do I benefit from the fee if I don't use groundwater?

In the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin, although both surface and groundwater are used for domestic, municipal, and agricultural use, groundwater replenishes and moderates the temperatures of streams, rivers, and wetlands and supports groundwater dependent ecosystems. Therefore, to varying degrees everyone benefits from sustainable groundwater management.

Ensuring that the Subbasin manages groundwater sustainably and complies with SGMA not only ensures future water availability but also prevents the State Water Resources Control Board from intervening in local groundwater management and decision-making processes.

Can I file for an exemption from this charge?

Only Federal, Tribal, and State lands are exempt under SGMA. There are no exemptions for other landowners including cities, counties, residential, agriculture, and other land uses. Wyandotte Creek GSA is working hard to keep SGMA compliance charges as low as possible for those subject to the Wyandotte Creek GSA charges.

Why can't the County or member agencies continue to pay the fee?

Parcels on county lands subject to the charge will pay their share of the total Wyandotte Creek GSA administration, GSP implementation, and SGMA compliance costs. The County, along with the other Wyandotte Creek GSA member agencies have provided member agency contributions to cover GSA administration costs and legal services temporarily until the Wyandotte Creek GSA could pursue and implement a funding mechanism. In addition, the County allocated one-time funding to be used by the County Department of Water and Resource Conservation for GSA administration services (SGM grant application and long-term funding mechanism) and SGMA compliance activities (preparation of annual reports). The County is providing additional funds to the Wyandotte Creek GSA through the 2022/23 fiscal year but does not anticipate any future funding.

Do I have to pay a fee if I get my water from CalWater, Thermalito Water & Sewer District, South Feather River Water and Power Agency, or the City?

All landowners in the Subbasin will contribute their share of the Wyandotte Creek GSA costs based on the fee method selected. How fees are collected may be different for those who receive water from the Thermalito Water & Sewer District, South Feather River Water and Power Agency, or Cal Water. Fee collection for those located within the service boundaries of these jurisdictions will be determined as part of the fee approval process.