

Wyandotte Creek GSA Advisory Committee Meeting

Access meeting materials at: <https://www.wyandottecreekgsa.com/>

Meeting Brief

- **Overview:** This was the fifth meeting of the Wyandotte Creek Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Advisory Committee (WAC) [[Access Meeting Recording](#)].
- **Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee Reports:** The WAC received verbal updates from the Management Committee, including next steps related to Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) development and an overview of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) completion timeline [[Access GSP completion timeline overview](#)].
- **Initial Data Gaps:** The WAC began initial discussions related to data gaps within the context of Projects and Management Actions (PMAs) and how those data gaps could be addressed in the GSP [[Access Data Gaps presentation](#)]. The WAC provided input and possible recommendations to the Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee.
- **Projects and Management Actions (PMAs) Discussion:** The WAC continued PMA discussions, provided input on draft PMA criteria, discussed potential PMAs in the Wyandotte Creek subbasin, and reviewed next steps in the PMA process [[Access PMA Criteria](#) | [PMA Submittal Form](#) | [PMA Concepts Table](#)]
- **Next Steps:** The WAC will meet again via video conference on May 6, 2021 from 9:00-12:00.

Action Items

Item	Lead Person(s)	Completion
Upload meeting recording to the website.	Chris Heindell (Thermalito Water and Sewer)	Complete Access Here
Finalize March WAC Meeting Summary and upload to the website.	Chris Heindell (Thermalito Water and Sewer)	Complete Access Here
Share the draft language developed describing the various ordinance and land use plans in the subbasin.	Paul Gosselin (Butte County)	Access in April Correspondence Document .
Reach out to constituents and submit PMA ideas, considering planned, potential, or conceptual projects and management actions. Reach out to management committee and consulting team with questions or for specific guidance.	WAC members	By April 30 th , 2021 Access PMA Submittal Form

Summary

Introductions & Agenda Review

The facilitator, T. Carlone (Consensus Building Institute, CBI) welcomed participants and reviewed the meeting agenda. WAC members and Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee representatives introduced themselves and welcomed Nicole Johansson, a prospective WAC member.

Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda
No comments.

Meeting Notes Review & Consideration

WAC members reviewed and approved the March 4th, 2021 meeting summary [[Access Here](#)].

Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee Reports

Wyandotte Creek GSA Board Update

The Wyandotte Creek GSA Board met on March 25, 2021 [[Access Materials](#)]. The board received an update on GSP progress, timeline, and schedule. The GSA Board began discussing PMAs and received updates from the WAC. In addition, the GSA Board received an overview of the Land IQ Crop Report, *20-Year Land and Water Use Change in Butte County and the Vina Subbasin (1999-2019)* [[Access Presentation](#)].

Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Completion Timeline

P. Gosselin (Butte County) provided an overview of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) completion timeline [[Access GSP completion timeline overview](#)]. Chapters will remain as drafts after undergoing public review to allow for necessary modifications in the complete draft GSP.

Basin Setting Chapter – draft completed <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems
Sustainable Management Criteria & Representative Monitoring Network Chapters <ul style="list-style-type: none">•April – 30 day public comment period•May – Water Advisory Committee Review•June – Board consideration approve the final draft
Projects and Management Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Current - Solicitation of potential projects and management actions•May – Review by Water Advisory Committee•May – Status provided to the Board•June – Board Public Workshop meeting & 30-day public comment period•July – Review of comments by Water Advisory Committee•July/August – Board consideration to approve final draft
Implementation Chapter <ul style="list-style-type: none">•May – Water Advisory Committee discuss implementation costs and approach•June – 30-day public comment period on the draft Implementation chapter•July – Water Advisory Committee review of public comments and recommendation to the Board•July/August – Board consideration to approve final draft
Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (complete) <ul style="list-style-type: none">•September – 60 day public comment period•November – Review of comments by the Water Advisory Committee and recommendations to the Board
Groundwater Sustainability Plan Approval & Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none">•December – Board hearings and approval•January – GSP Submission•January – Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation Grant

Discussion:

- A WAC member expressed concern that public participants may not get engaged until there are financial impacts or implications at the end of GSP development. He suggests bringing the public along the way, illustrating where the GSA has been and where it is going. This could be done by sharing estimates and information highlighting the status, future projections (at 5, 10, and 20 years), and possible PMAs to encourage public participation and comments early on.
- A. Hussein (Geosyntec) shared that the GSP will be released in sections to allow for review as the GSP is developed. Chapter 6, focused on PMAs, is likely to have the most significant financial impacts. Each PMA will include the estimated budget, as well as potential funding mechanism. Chapter 7, implementation, will require funding the Wyandotte Creek GSA itself. The board will have to make some decisions regarding funding the administrative portion of the GSA and the level of engagement desired in the development, implementation, and management of PMAs in the subbasin. These decisions will be very important moving forward and are likely to occur at the very end of GSP development, when drafting the implementation chapter.
- P. Gosselin (Butte County) shared that while the initial GSP needs to be submitted by January 2022, the GSA will manage to a 20-year horizon and will be able to adapt along the way. The GSA will need to demonstrate not only the costs of certain PMAs but also the benefits to water supply reliability and sustainability.
- WAC members asked for clarification on how PMAs will be identified and evaluated. The GSA is currently actively soliciting projects through an PMA submittal form and by reaching out to individual agencies [[access PMA Submittal Form](#)].

Initial Data Gaps Discussion

J. Turner (Geosyntec) gave a presentation focused on data gaps, within the context of Projects and Management Actions (PMAs). The WAC began initial discussions and how those data gaps could be addressed in the GSP [[Access Data Gaps presentation](#)]. The WAC provided input and possible recommendations to the Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee. Initial data gaps identified are summarized below.

- **Groundwater Quality:** Further evaluate the bottom of the subbasin, which is defined as the base of freshwater. The technical consulting team suggests setting PMAs to accurately define SMCs related to saline water. This could be done by conducting general water quality analysis to assess if reported elevated specific conductance values are from agriculture or underlying brackish water (Ione Formation). The GSA could also conduct an isotope study to determine where the water is coming from. In addition, a new well in construction can near 28L001M that can be used to assess elevated specific conductance values reflected in the data in 1986.
- **Groundwater Levels:** Develop approach for improving groundwater monitoring network within the Subbasin. Potential ways to address include the installation of new well(s) under DWR's Technical Support Services, particularly targeting the southern part of subbasin. In addition, Geosyntec suggests conducting a survey of active domestic wells to assess the SMC.
- **Stream Aquifer Interactions (biggest data gap):** Geosyntec shared this is the biggest data gap. The GSA cannot develop the SMC for surface water depletion and will set up a process to establish the SMC in the future and to fill data gaps. To address this data gap, Geosyntec suggests installing stream gauges and shallow groundwater monitoring wells near key locations (Feather River, Honcut Creek,

etc.). The goal will be to measure water levels and temperature changes to develop appropriate SMCs.

- **Groundwater Recharge Assessment:** To evaluate where water recharge is coming up, the GSA can expand isotopic analysis completed in the Vina Subbasin and characterize recharge source with general water quality.
- **Refine Hydrogeologic Model:** To refine the model, Geosyntec suggested the following steps:
 - ✓ Develop a nomenclature to log future wells
 - ✓ Digitize and utilize well completion report database to refine hydrogeologic conceptual model
 - ✓ Conduct aerial electromagnetic (AEM) survey as conducted in Vina Subbasin
 - ✓ Conduct aquifer testing to improve understanding of aquifer parameters and hydraulic connections (priority for southern part of basin)
- **Refine Estimates of Surface Water Diversions/Groundwater Pumping (Water Budget):** Geosyntec suggested working with stakeholders to better document surface water diversions and identify opportunities to cooperate with landowners to verify and refine groundwater pumping estimates.

Discussion:

- A WAC member asked how the technical consulting team is incorporating data gaps that are already being monitored by environmental groups using existing gages. J. Turner (Geosyntec) shared that the team is aware of specific gages available and clarified that what is mainly lacking is data on the groundwater portion. The technical team will try to identify wells located near bridges or levees.
- The consulting team asked whether the GSA would like to collect data for additional areas, streams, and creeks to monitor in the subbasin. A WAC member suggested looking at Wyman Ravine for future monitoring. K. Peterson (Butte County) suggested overlaying the revised GDE map indicating likely and non-likely GDEs to identify additional water bodies and target priority areas.
- A. Hussein (Geosyntec) emphasized that when looking at how to fill the data gaps, the GSA needs to take funding into account.
- A WAC member would like the consultants to guide the GSA on how to position priorities to enable the subbasin to successfully obtain grant funding (e.g., shallow aquifer monitoring).
- A. Hussein and J. Turner (Geosyntec) shared they will make sure to prioritize the data gaps and timelines in line with potential funding options, including DWR opportunities and others.
- Another WAC member suggested looking beyond SGMA for collaborative opportunities with other entities for multi-benefit projects, such as local hazard mitigation efforts to access additional funding opportunities.
- A member of the public asked if monitoring wells are managed, calibrated, and funded by DWR or by the GSA. P Gosselin (Butte County) replied the County will likely incorporate monitoring into the ongoing monitoring and reporting activities.

Outcomes & Next Steps:

- WAC members were encouraged to identify and share their ideas regarding specific PMAs and opportunities for collaboration with the Management Committee.
- The WAC will revisit data gaps and prioritization (data improvement, data gap, and future research opportunities) in the next meeting.

Projects and Management Actions (PMAs)

A. Hussain (Geosyntec) gave a presentation focused on draft criteria to evaluate PMAs. The WAC continued discussion of potential PMAs in the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin, and reviewed next steps in the PMA process [[Access PMA Criteria](#) | [PMA Submittal Form](#) | [PMA Concepts Table](#)].

A. Hussein shared that the GSA could include very specific projects (e.g., a specific recharge basin, canal improvement, stormwater capture, etc.) and then evaluate the projects. Another option is to list potential opportunities and projects that could be implemented in the future, without getting into very specific details. Both of these approaches are acceptable.

Draft PMA Criteria

Geosyntec shared a list of required details that need to be included in the plan, as well as some lessons learned through past experience with DWR evaluating projects for funding from Proposition 68 Implementation Grants ([link](#)).

Project Criteria Initial Assessment:

1. Project addresses one or more of the Undesirable Results
2. Project is implementable with respect to technical complexity, regulatory complexity, institutional consideration, and public acceptance
3. Project is implementable within the SGMA timeframe
4. Project benefits Underrepresented Communities (URCs) – more emphasis on grants & funding
5. Project has an identified Funding Source
6. Project is located in an area where water quality is suitable for use

Project Categories:

Planned Projects	Potential Projects	Conceptual Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Projects planned to be operational prior to 2042 and the projected supply is considered as offsetting the projected 2042 supply imbalance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Projects in the planning stages and are likely to move forward when funding becomes available. •Potential Projects represent a “menu of options” for the Subbasin to achieve long term sustainability and offset the remaining imbalance above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Projects in the early conceptual planning stages requiring additional work to implement.

Lessons Learned from Implementation Grant

A. Hussein shared lessons learned from his work in the last round of Proposition 68 Implementation Grants ([link](#)). DWR had very tight scoring criteria. The second round will be available in January 2022, \$77 million for medium-and high priority basins. It will be key to submit a proposal. A. Hussein shared the following lessons learned:

- **Benefit to Underrepresented Communities (URs):** DWR emphasized benefits and outreach efforts to underrepresented communities (URs). Letter of support from communities highlighting benefits from a given project were very beneficial.

- **Keep it simple:** The more complex the application, the harder for DWR to score it. For subbasins that submitted more than one project, DWR scored each project individually and then averaged them all.
- **PMA's in GSP become eligible for funding.**

Discussion:

- A WAC member asked further clarification on what Underrepresented Communities (URCs) have been identified in the Wyandotte Subbasin. A. Hussein clarified that URCs, used to be referred to as disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities. P. Gosselin (Butte County) clarified that most of the subbasin falls under that category.
- Another WAC member asked how technical consultants are planning on ranking public acceptance. He suggested using narrative classification, rather than “likely, maybe, not accepted” classification that may backfire in the future. The consulting team shared the GSA will want to make sure there has been substantial outreach conducted and feedback received and considered when scoring the projects.

Review of PMA Brainstorm Exercise

A. Hussein reviewed basic PMA information and reviewed ideas WAC members identified in a brainstorm activity to identify possible PMAs, in relation to the various sustainability indicators. Main ideas emerging from the presentation and discussion are summarized in the table below. The purpose of the exercise was to identify a variety of potential PMAs. Some of these ideas may not be desired or pursued by the Wyandotte Creek’s GSA. The technical consulting team will take ideas from discussion and conduct further analysis.

Potential PMA Concepts	Sustainability Indicators Potentially Benefiting		
	Groundwater Levels (proxy for Storage and Subsidence)	Surface Water Depletion	Water Quality
Projects			
Data gathering, sharing, and analysis	x	x	x
Domestic well mitigation (e.g., deepening wells)	x		
Education/outreach	x	x	x
Efficiency improvements (surface water, irrigation, conveyance, etc.)	x	x	
Flow control/stormwater projects	x	x	x
Fuel reduction projects	x	x	
Habitat restoration		x	x
In-lieu recharge	x	x	
Infiltration basins/ponds	x	x	
Injection Wells	x		
Land retirement/fallowing	x	x	
Managed aquifer recharge (ASR)	x	x	
Management aquifer recharge (infiltration)	x	x	
Removal of non-native species	x	x	
Shallow monitoring wells	x	x	
Surface water imports	x	x	

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Water Conservation & Efficiency	x	x	
- Water Loss Improvement Projects			
- Canal lining			
Water reuse	x		
Well surveying (ID abandoned domestic wells)	x		
Management Actions			
Allocation/pumping restrictions	x	x	
Coordinated land and water-use planning	x	x	
Drought mitigation and scenario-planning	x	x	
Establishing monitoring requirements	x		
Groundwater reporting (e.g., metering)	x	x	
Recommendations - Land-use ordinances (e.g., promote permeable surfaces to improve recharge, LID, etc.)	x		
Pumping fees	x		
Setting criteria for well depth based on salinity			x
Survey of agricultural pumping (practices and barriers of irrigation efficiency)			
Increased understanding of water loss, illegal water use, and per capita water use			
Water availability assessments	x	x	x
Well construction guidelines by problem areas			x
Wellhead protection requirements			x
Incentives to participate in voluntary recharge projects (e.g., FloodMAR)			
Incentives to increase efficiency			

Discussion:

- **In-lieu recharge:** P. Gosselin (Butte County) suggested connecting ideas for in-lieu recharge with Butte County’s 2018 Study identifying recharge opportunities [[Access Here](#)].
- **Water Conservation:** WAC members suggested including Water Loss Improvement Projects identified in the Urban Water Management Plans to offset pumping, manage wetlands, and target per capita water use. In addition, they highlighted the pending urban water regulations.
- **Climate Resilience:** WAC members suggested looking at Drought Contingency Plans and Hazard Mitigation Plans that have identified projects and have already conducted public perception assessments.
- **Agricultural Pumping:** A WAC member suggested including lessons and findings from the survey of agricultural pumping practices and barriers for irrigation efficiencies to be conducted in the Vina Subbasin. These lessons can inform the Wyandotte Subbasin.
- **Existing Ordinances:** The WAC would like to consider existing well ordinances.
- **Incentives for Voluntary Participation:** WAC ag. representatives shared that agricultural users would prefer voluntary, incentive-based programs that encourage conservation and recharge. Further, supply enhancement is preferred over demand reduction.
- **Illegal Water Use:** Quantifying illegal draws from canals is very difficult, particularly in areas that historically have lacked meters.
- **Cannabis Water Use:** WAC representatives expressed concern with water quality and unregulated cannabis water use. Exact measurements are very difficult to quantify.

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- **Data Gaps:** The WAC identified projects to fill stream depletion data gaps and to enhance understanding of groundwater withdrawal.

Next Steps

- The PMA solicitation form is available online through April 30, 2021 [[Access Here](#)].
- WAC Members were encouraged to submit ideas as soon as possible. Agencies can draw upon existing plans to identify and share PMAs. Further, K. Peterson (Butte County) will reach out to each WAC member individually to identify possible PMAs and work through the details together.
- The Management Committee is reaching out to organizations, member agencies, and other stakeholders to solicit ideas. Ideas gathered will be presented during future WAC meetings. In addition, Butte County is revising the General Plan and identifying actions related to SGMA that will be brought forth.
- Butte County is sending out postcards in the next few weeks to individual well owners, inviting them to participate in the process.
- The WAC will meet again via video conference on May 6, 2021 from 9:00-12:00.

Meeting Participants

Participant	Representation/Affiliation	Present
Wyandotte Creek GSA Advisory Committee (WAC) Members		
David Kehn	California Water Service	Y
Darin Williams	Agricultural Water User	Y
Duke Sherwood	Agricultural Water User	Y
Kristen McKillop	South Feather Water and Power	Y
Nicole Johansson	Prospective WAC member	Y
Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Member Agency Staff		
Paul Gosselin	Butte County	Y
Kelly Peterson	Butte County	Y
Matt Thompson	City of Oroville	N
Chris Heindell	Thermalito Water and Sewer	Y
Technical Consultants		
Joe Turner	Geosyntec	Y
Amer Hussein	Geosyntec	Y
State Agencies		
Debbie Spangler	Department of Water Resources (DWR) Northern Region Office (NRO)	
Facilitator		
Tania Carlone	Consensus Building Institute	Y
Mariana Rivera-Torres	Consensus Building Institute	Y

1 member of the public participated.