

NOTES: Core Stakeholder Group Meeting 6

Meeting Held: Sept 15, 2020

Notes prepared by: Consensus Building Institute

Meeting in Brief

Group to recommend Managing Basins Collectively

Group members agreed to vet the preliminary recommendation that managing the Oxnard and Pleasant Valley Basins collectively along with the West Las Posas Subbasin makes sense hydrologically, with an understanding that more work is needed to define how this approach would be implemented given conditions in each basin. The adjudication would dictate management in the West Las Posas Subbasin.

Ramp Down

The Core Stakeholder Group discussed what makes a smarter ramp down: establishing minimum allocation that supports sustainable yield, defining the end point, factoring in surface water, and establishing strategy for reducing pumping. Pumpers in Pleasant Valley may be open to shouldering additional cutbacks as part of a broader joint Oxnard-Pleasant Valley basin management strategy, understanding that the ramp down and end point may balance discrepancies around the initial allocation. The group's ramp-down recommendation would need to address concerns around the carry-over provision and treatment of conjunctive use (in particular during prolonged drought), as well as broader concerns around equity and burden sharing. The GMA can be expected to make progress on moving to a land-based allocation system within 5 years (when GSPs will be updated); this system will inform the minimum allocation and help mitigate some concerns around conjunctive use.

Replenishment Fees and Projects

Managing the basins collectively aligns with the group's goals for project development. Going forward, the group hopes to develop recommendations on replenishment fees quickly but needs more information on the level of project detail and costs.

Core Stakeholder Group available for Briefings

The Core Stakeholder Group is available to make briefings at existing bodies on the work underway. (Contact a member or Ekow at EEdzie@cbi.org) The Core Group will brief the GMA Board to: 1) provide an update on the facilitated process and brief the GMA about the Legal & Project Committees and 2) solicit feedback on the group's preliminary recommendation to manage basins collectively.

Action Items

Jennifer Ventura	Done	Will follow up with the city managers group about interest in a briefing (set for Oct. 14)
Dan/United	By 9/28	Will ask the United board about interest in a briefing

Candice / FSCR	By 9/28	Will inquire about briefing the Santa Clara River Watershed stakeholder group and will explore options for the Core Group to table at the Oxnard DAC session
Gina/ CBI	By 9/28	Will explore interest in a briefing with Port Hueneme board
Ekow/ CBI	By 9/21	Will add water market information to the list of projects on the facilitated process website
All Core Group	By 9/28	Review end points of cuts stipulated by GSPs

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Managing the Basins Collectively

Group members agreed that managing the Oxnard and Pleasant Valley Basins along with the West Las Posas Subbasin collectively makes sense hydrologically, with an understanding that more work is needed to define how this approach would be implemented. The Core Stakeholder Group would also like to incorporate the West Las Posas Subbasin, but understands that the adjudication would dictate management there. The group will vet this preliminary proposal with the GMA Board and other constituent groups before making a formal recommendation to the GMA Board.

Multiple meeting participants suggested that managing the basins collectively makes sense given the hydrological connectivity between the basins, highlighting that the GMA and United have always had this frame. A group member pointed out that common law (in addition to SGMA) would require basin coordination. Moving forward, group members want to progress working through the hard questions around implementing a joint-basin management approach.

Group members shared the following questions and concepts for consideration as the joint-basin management conversation develops:

- Do we shoot for a common sustainable yield and if so and does that mean folks who are slated for more minor cuts would shoulder additional burden?
- Intensity of current pumping levels might be an important factor to consider within the approach to cuts in the joint-basin management strategy.
- Inter-basin management agreements can be an effective tool for managing basins collectively.
- The outcome of the Las Posas adjudication will dictate management in West Las Posas.

Going forward, the group plans to vet the concepts for managing the basin collectively with the GMA (and more broadly), seek feedback, and use that information to develop a formal recommendation.

Recommending Replenishment Fees & Refining Project Committee Charge

Managing the basins collectively aligns with the group's goals for project development. Going forward, the group hopes to develop recommendations on a replenishment fee quickly but needs more information on the level of project detail to evaluate the benefits associated with fees.

Multiple group members highlighted the importance of charting a cost-effective and efficient course towards project development and replenishment fees that aligns with [Proposition 26](#), [Proposition 218](#) and [SGMA](#). Key to this work is clarifying the level of detail needed for project proposals before advancing a replenishment fee strategy. One member suggested that, at minimum, projects will need to have a budget, an explained benefit, and a project implementation sponsor. Another member highlighted the importance of having a controlled stepwise process that considers environmental impacts. Multiple participants mentioned that funding sources are available to support preliminary analysis of projects, which will help the group avoid over committing and overspending on projects that don't prove worthwhile.

Project Committee Charge

The facilitation team reviewed the draft [Project Committee Charge](#) and high-level sequence of work and displayed where on the facilitated process website to find [the list of identified projects](#) that the Project Committee is using as a starting point. The Project Committee will refine its charge based on the Core Group's and Committee's discussions.

Ramp-down Strategies

The Core Stakeholder Group discussed what makes a smarter ramp down; topics included establishing minimum allocation, confirming the end point, managing high and low water users, and establishing a strategy for reducing pumping. The group seemed to agree that the

approach to ramp down would likely feature a minimum allocation. Pumpers in PV may be open to shouldering the burden of additional cutbacks as part of a broader joint-basin management strategy, understanding that the ramp down and end point may serve to balance discrepancies around the initial allocation. Additional work is needed to address concerns around the carry-over provision and treatment of conjunctive use (in particular during prolonged drought). The GMA expects to make progress on moving to a land-based system within 5 years (when GSPs will be updated); this system will inform the minimum allocation and help mitigate some concerns around conjunctive use.

Minimum Allocation

The GMA intends to have a minimum allocation feature within the ramp down. The purpose of a minimum allocation is to ensure that folks with lower initial allocations have a workable amount of water at the end of ramp down to preserve land use. This minimum allocation has yet to be established but will need to support the sustainable yield. The move to a land-based allocation system would inform the minimum allocation. Calculating a minimum allocation is also possible (stakeholders in Las Posas considered hiring a consultant for this purpose).

Ramp Down Concepts & Concerns

Core Group members shared the following concepts, strategies for conjunctive use, and concerns around the approach to ramp down:

Ramp-Down Concepts

- A smart approach to ramp down would motivate funding support for **projects**. It shares the burden of cuts rationally and fairly and ensures a minimum allocation. It would be designed to support the future of agriculture and cities.
- The path forward might be to embrace an **adaptive management strategy**, where the minimum allocation could be adjusted upward or downward based on refinement of the sustainable yield as more information becomes available.
- The ramp down may serve as a **compromise between folks with higher initial allocations and folks with lower initial allocations** since the end point of ramp down is generally the priority concern.
- **Reducing pumping in certain areas might have a greater impact** on groundwater levels so the ramp down should incorporate this strategy.
- The state of California's approach to implementing a 25 % reduction for potable water could serve as an effective model for ramp down: the state took into account a minimum amount of water and **set into place conservation standards** resulting in reduction and conservation.
- Given inter-basin connectivity, some PV pumpers suggested that it would make sense for **PV to potentially shoulder additional burden of cuts and fees beyond what would be required in a single-basin management scenario**.

Strategies for Conjunctive Use

- **Consider embracing the one water approach**, such as the PV proposal to track Santa Clara River diversions, rather than direct deliveries.
- **Consider adjusting the language in the carry-over provision**, without going all the way to a one water approach.

Concerns

- If the different basins have different end points, then the ramp-down strategy might not **align with the broader “managing the basins collectively” approach**.
- **Addressing financial risk concerns of folks relying on conjunctive use is important**, in particular assurances around supply during prolonged droughts.

GMA Perspective on the Ramp Down

In response to concerns expressed during the ramp down conversation, a GMA staff member offered the following perspective for the group’s consideration:

- In the case of a prolonged drought, the GMA would consider accommodation for conjunctive use operators.
- The GMA can reasonably be expected to progress the land-based allocation system around the 5-year time frame, on a similar timeline as the GSP updates.
- Going forward, if the Core Group develops a reasonable plan, projects, a process to implement and fund the projects, and an idea of how that will affect sustainable yield in 2040, then the board would agree to those recommendations. Otherwise, the guiding framework will be the GSPs.

Briefing the GMA Board and Other Constituent Organizations

At the GMA Board briefing Core Group reps will 1) Provide an update on the facilitated process and brief the GMA about the Legal & Project Committees; 2) Inform the GMA of the group’s preliminary recommendation to manage the basins collectively; and 3) Request GMA direction on how managing basins collectively would be applied and the implications for the ramp down.

The purpose briefings is to keep constituents informed and to gain feedback to benefit the Core Group’s deliberations. The facilitator mentioned that it is likely too early in the process to solicit detailed board input on specific proposals, though by the next briefing the group should have sufficient information to inform proposals. Once the group has developed recommendations, the GMA Board will generally be happy to move forward on those recommendations so long as they are unanimous, suggested a GMA staff member.

Juergen and Jennifer will co-deliver the GMA board briefing on 9/23 on behalf of the Core Group; going forward the group will plan to rotate who presents.

Core Stakeholder Group Members Present

Arne Anselm, Jared Bouchard, Alden Broome, Dan Detmer, James Dubois, Terri L. Ferro, Rosemarie Gaglione, Jurgen Gramckow, Martin Gramckow, Greg Lewis, Candice Meneghin, Lucie Munoz-McGovern, Ian Prichard, E.J. Remson, Jennifer Tribo

Absent: John Krist