

NOTES: Core Stakeholder Group Meeting 10

Meeting Held: Nov 17, 2020

Notes prepared by: Consensus Building Institute

Meeting in Brief

Projects Committee advancing potential Projects and Optimization

The Projects Committee briefed the Core Group on progress to date: the committee has reviewed information available on the projects submitted to the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), brainstormed new projects, and developed three scenarios based on the different ways that projects and optimization could fit together. A summary of the committee's progress is available online: [click here](#). Next, the committee will use the information gathered and the Core Group's input to recommend which project/optimization scenario should be prioritized for modeling, to be shared with the Core Group at the December 15 meeting.

Understanding Flows between Oxnard Subbasin and West Las Posas

Kim Loeb of the FCGMA briefed the Core Group on the calculation of flows between Oxnard Subbasin and West Las Posas in the GSPs. On average, over the 31-year base period (1985 – 2015), about 95 acre-feet per year (AFY) flowed from Oxnard Subbasin into the West Las Posas system in the lower aquifer system. In the upper aquifer system, flows are on the order of 35 AFY. Inter-basin flow estimates were generated by United's groundwater model.

Group members discussed how to address inter-basin connectivity and the approach to management stemming from the adjusted administrative boundary. The Core Group would like to consider further as part of potential projects / management actions, fees, and implications on sustainability due to the interconnection.

Replenishment Fee Proposal for Supplemental Water

A representative from the Legal Committee briefed the group on a replenishment fee proposal: the proposal is motivated by an interest to advance discussions to implement a fee that could be put to use in the near-term. The fee would allow for the purchase of supplemental water. The Core Group will pick up this item at its Dec. 1st meeting.

Action Items

- **All Core Group**- call or send comments and recommended modifications to the replenishment fee proposal to Jared Bouchard and Gina Bartlett.

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Projects Committee advancing Projects and Optimization Scenarios

The OPV Projects Committee briefed the Core Group on progress to date: the committee has reviewed the information available on the projects submitted to the GSPs, brainstormed options for new projects, and developed three scenarios based on the different ways that projects and optimization could fit together. A summary of the committee’s progress is available online: [click here](#). Going forward, the Projects Committee will use the information gathered to date and the Core Group’s input to develop a proposal for which project/optimization scenario should be prioritized for modeling.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Projects included in the Sustainable Yield estimate

- 9100 AF of water in the sustainable yield estimate corresponds to projects, including 4600 AF of water from the AWPf available to farmers (a 2000 AF expansion on current availability) and 4500 AF from the AWPf for basin recharge via the Saticoy spreading grounds. That is how the sustainable yield was modeled, recognizing that Oxnard may not choose to follow this approach with the AWPf.
- The project committee concluded that the Freeman Expansion was not part of the GSP modeling.

Seawater Intrusion Barrier Concept

- FCGMA is interested in exploring an injection process for seawater intrusion, partially after learning that Orange County Water District is able to recover ~95% of the water injected through its system.
- Article 21 water could possibly be leveraged for a scaled-down injection barrier, though exchanges or Table A water may be a better fit. Another concept is to pump water from the forebay for the injection barrier and then refill the forebay.
- Building a brackish water barrier “blocks a hole in the dike”; if able to address this issue then OPV could treat the basin more like a storage facility.

AWPF-related Projects

- Representatives from the city of Oxnard confirmed that the city plans to move forward with the Hueneme Pipeline.

Stormwater Recharge

- The City of Oxnard is considering additional projects (e.g. leveraging the Riverpark pit) that may prove to be more efficient means for basin recharge.

State Water Project Purchases

- There have been two opportunities to purchase Article 21 water in the last decade, including exchanges for Table A water. United expects average purchases to be around 6000 AF at a typical cost of about \$200/AF.
- Article 21 water is made available when there is conveyance available and no storage. Article 21 water is attractive at \$200 / AF, but it is not something to plan on. And, purchasing during a wet winter is not advantageous since the water will end up spilling out to the ocean.
- Most GSAs are not State Water Project (SWP) contractors and will not be able to buy Article 21 water directly from the State. So SWP water will not be the primary solution for most basins; it does provide some opportunity for bringing in additional water of high quality. That is why United suggests a combination of transfers/exchanges of SWP Table A water in addition to Article 21 as a supplementary supply.
- With adequate funding, the GMA would be able to support purchases of water.

Santa Paula Basin Purchases

- The Santa Paula Basin stipulated judgment stated that no new exports are allowed outside the basin. OPV would have to get an amendment to that agreement and all the parties would have to agree to the terms to transfer water to OPV.

Tile Water Project

- The proposed tile water project has a number of constraints that would need to be considered: the water would have to be run through a brine line, water quality would have to be monitored, and State Water Project requirements exclude agricultural runoff water. One potential option would be if there was a direct pipeline to blend the tile water with Oxnard recycled water. However, that approach could still prove technically challenging and would likely be expensive.

Arundo Removal

- A meeting participant highlighted that Arundo removal merits further consideration as part of the OPV projects. Arundo removal is around \$500/acre.
- The Core Group is not aware of the invasive species Arundo in OPV so while helpful, the group is unsure where Arundo removal would apply. Note: a series of Arundo removal reports that discuss benefits and potential locations in OPV has been posted online: [Link](#).

Project Committee Process

- When looking at cost-benefit analysis, operations and maintenance costs as well as the probability of producing the water are important parts of the analysis.

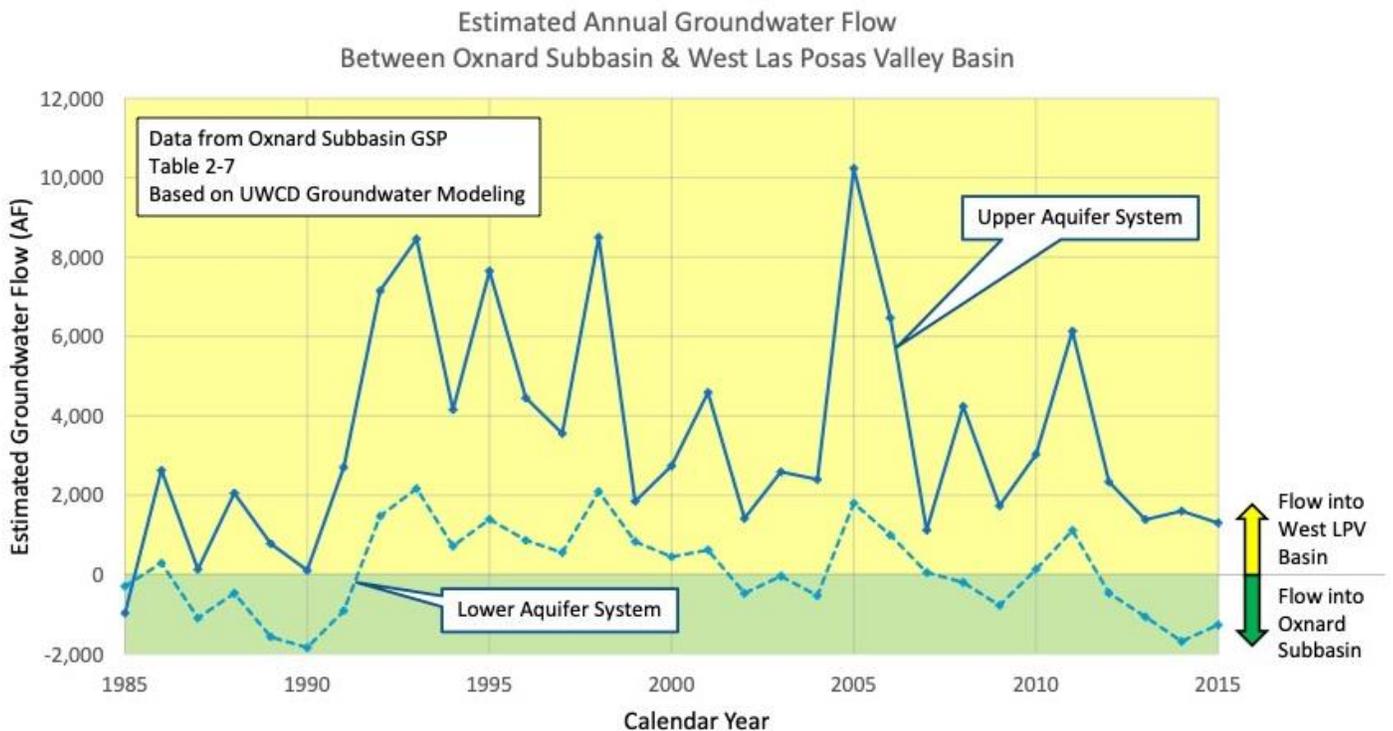
- Some sets of projects depend on the same infrastructure and optimization measures. Those projects should be linked as the project committee discusses selection criteria. One goal for the project committee might be to minimize the need for new infrastructure.
- The project committee should share the policy hurdles for the projects discussed.

Understanding Flows between Oxnard and West Las Posas

Kim Loeb of the FCGMA briefed the Core Group on the calculation of the flows between Oxnard and West Las Posas in the GSPs (See [Oxnard GSP](#) Chapter 2, Table 2.7 (pp. 2-90 to 2-94)).

The flows between the basins cannot be directly measured. For the GSPs, the flow estimates were generated by United’s groundwater model. Using the model’s outputs, technical analysis conducted by the GMA’s technical advisory group, and SGMA regulations, the GMA established a 31-year based period (1985 – 2015) and developed a water balance of flows into and out of the basins.

The graph plots the data from the inter-basin flow table published in the Oxnard GSP. The yellow area represents flow into the Las Posas Basin and the green area is flow into the Oxnard basin (i.e., positive numbers on the Y-axis represent flow into West Las Posas and negative numbers on the Y-axis represent flow into Oxnard Subbasin). The solid line represents flow from the upper aquifer system and the dashed line represents flow from the lower aquifer system. Of note, some periods of high flow were during el Niño events when flows were diverted to the forebay for recharge.



On average, over the 31-year base period (1985 – 2015), 95 AF has flowed from Oxnard Subbasin into the West Las Posas system in the lower aquifer system. In the upper aquifer system, flows are on the order of 35 AF. West Las Posas does not really have an upper aquifer system; flows generally percolate into the lower aquifer system.

Dan Detmer of United Water Conservation District reminded the group that the administrative boundary between the basins is not the same as the geological boundary, and a lot of the upper aquifer system flux is related to United spreading and basin-filling events.

Also, the true nature of flows between the basins is more nuanced than what is represented in the graph. For instance, the upper aquifer system does have a pumping depression, but it is more in the northern areas where there is likely more flow from the mountains.

Meeting participants shared the following questions and comments about the flows between Oxnard and West Las Posas (answers provided by reps from United and FCGMA):

Q: In 2013 diversions were stopped, yet the graph indicates continued inter-basin flow. Why?

A: United was still spreading in the forebay (though less in drought periods).

Q: Do you have sense of the amount of pumping between the Bulletin-118 boundary and United boundary? I'm wondering about the payment of assessments to support basin replenishment, relative to the level of flux between the basins.

A: The boundary extends roughly 1/3 of the way into the West Las Posas basin in areas north of HW 118 as defined by the service area of Del Norte pumping. This area is subject to Zone B Freeman charges. United has a pretty clear sense of the area of influence, and folks receiving benefits pay the appropriate fees.

Q: Are there agreements between the basins in the GSPs?

A: There are no formal coordination agreements between the GSPs, but the Las Posas GSP does acknowledge that pumping in West Las Posas Basin impacts Oxnard Subbasin's ability to achieve sustainability, and that operations in West Las Posas indirectly affect seawater intrusion. So, connectivity is addressed in the GSPs, but no coordination agreement is included because the GMA is the GSA for both basins.

Q: Does the GSP for Las Posas make recommendations for management actions to address impacts on Oxnard Subbasin?

A: The basins are interconnected – Oxnard, Pleasant Valley, and Las Posas – regardless of the location of the basin boundary. As such, the basins were all modeled together. Minimum thresholds in measurable objectives for sustainability in West Las Posas were set mindful of the need to avoid adversely impacting Oxnard Subbasin's ability to achieve its sustainability.

A meeting participant suggested that there was a prior agreement with the GMA that if the administrative boundary change affected the relative level of cuts required in Oxnard as compared to cuts under the prior boundary, the differential would be corrected for.

Another meeting participant reaffirmed the statement above, suggesting there was general agreement existed that there would be a reconciliation of sorts when more information was known about the level/amount of connectivity between the basins. This participant noted that the challenge is that there is still not a great understanding how far water travels, to what specific areas/zones, and under what conditions.

A third meeting participant reminded the group that the administrative boundary was set by DWR, agreed that there had been discussion about how to manage the flows between the basins and impacts to Oxnard, but suggested that the intention of the agreement was to manage the issue via coordination agreements.

The facilitator recommended that group members consider possible next steps to advance agreement on how to manage flows between the basins as part of sustainability planning efforts.

Suggestions for Next Steps on Managing Flows between Oxnard and West Las Posas

A meeting participant suggested that to the extent that water is moving from the Oxnard Subbasin into the West Las Posas Basin, users in WLP should pay replenishment fees. Another meeting participant suggested that it would only make sense for Las Posas users to pay replenishment fees on projects that affect water availability in Las Posas.

As a first step towards addressing these issues, one approach the group could explore is to focus on advancing agreements that elaborate on the language in the GSPs.

It was noted that discussions about potential scenarios for Las Posas users to pay replenishment fees will require broader participation from the Las Posas user community. Going forward, any proposals for how West Las Posas users might participate in a replenishment fee would have to be further vetted with WLP operators and guided by input from the GMA. Additionally, any fee proposals would need to comply with Propositions 218 and 26.

Replenishment Fee Proposal for Supplemental Water

The Core Group briefly discussed the uniform replenishment fee proposal developed by the Legal Committee, intended to allow for the purchase of supplemental surface water when available.

A representative from the Legal Committee briefed the Core Group on the details of the proposal. The replenishment fee proposal was motivated by an interest to advance the discussions needed to implement a fee and to lay the groundwork for how replenishment fees could be put to use in the near-term.

The replenishment fee could be used to purchase Article 21 water when it is available (mindful of that fact that as GSAs across the state get established, Article 21 water will become more competitive to access).

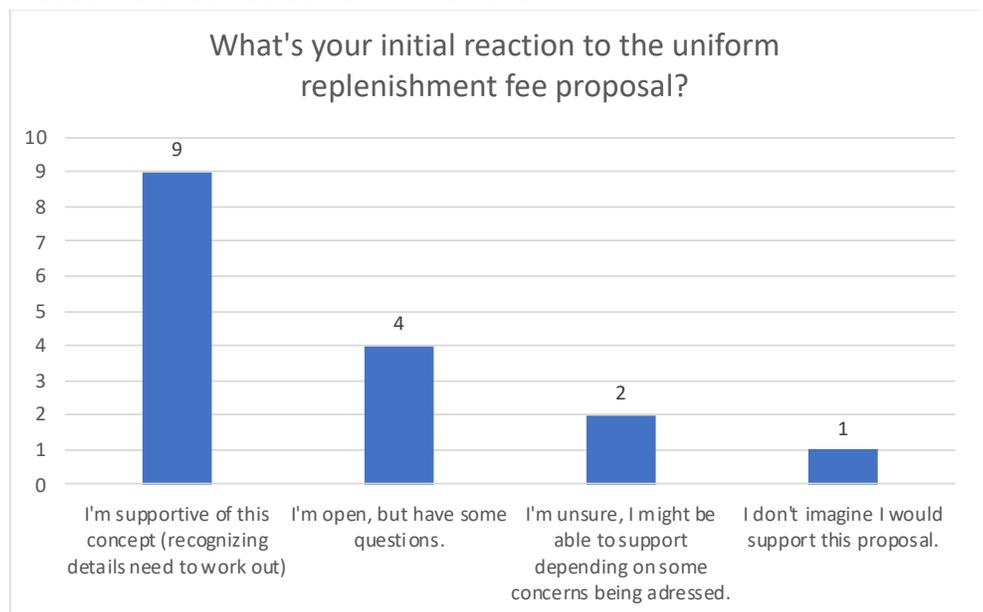
The GMA (as the GSA) would serve as the administrator of the funds, working with United to secure the supplemental water.

The Legal Committee is mindful that requirements under Proposition 218 and 26 will need to be considered. As a project, the purchase of Article 21 water and State Water Project water might help satisfy the requirements under Propositions 218 and 26 (projects must be well defined). The committee’s thinking is that if the Core Group can start building support around the replenishment fee concept it will make it easier to work through these types of issues. Additionally, in December the GMA will be seeking a professional consultant to provide assistance in fee implementation.

The fee would be uniform across all water pumped in the basin. The proposal includes some level of assessment on Santa Clara surface water – though perhaps not 1:1. There may have to be a differential on surface water to recover the investment and ongoing fixed costs associated with maintaining those facilities so water can be delivered when available.

Meeting participants expressed the following “pulse check” / responses to the replenishment fee proposal, via a live poll conducted during the meeting/

Meeting participants shared the following comments and suggestions with regard to the proposal.



Folks will need clarity about how replenishment fees connect to their specific benefits, and assurances that resources do not advantage users in one basin over another. Given the potential stipulated judgement, some operators will want to wait before getting behind a universal replenishment fee proposal. As a solution, the group may need to keep the door open to future revisions.

Next Steps on the Replenishment Fee Proposal

The Core Group will discuss at its Dec. 1 meeting; participants should send If you have concerns / and or amendments to the proposal, please send to or call Jared and Gina.

Core Group Members Present

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