

# FOX CANYON GROUNDWATER FACILITATED PROCESS OXNARD AND PLEASANT VALLEY STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETING

FEBRUARY 16, 2021

## Meeting Minutes

### PRESENT:

Anselm, Arne  
Bouchard, Jared  
Broome, Alden  
Detmer, Dan  
Dubois, James  
Ferro, Terri L.  
Kirby Brill – *Representative for City of Oxnard*  
Gramckow, Jurgen  
Gramckow, Martin  
Klima, Shiri  
Lewis, Greg  
Mathews, John  
Munoz-McGovern, Lucia  
Prichard, Ian  
Remson, E.J.  
Loeb, Kim – FCGMA Staff  
Beck, Jim – OPV Stakeholder Group Facilitator  
Blakslee, Taylor – OPV Stakeholder Group Facilitator

### ABSENT:

Meneghin, Candace  
Gaglione, Rosemarie  
Krist, John  
Tribo, Jennifer

#### 1. Purpose

Mr. Beck discussed the purpose of the Oxnard Pleasant Valley (OPV) Stakeholder Group and reminded the Members that the Board is looking for a stakeholder recommendation on the ramp-down and minimum allocation for the FCGMA Board meeting on April 28, 2021.

#### 2. Timeline and Schedule

Mr. Beck provided a summary on the timeline and schedule and noted that the schedule had been updated to reflect previous comments regarding the timing of modeling by United Water

Conservation District (UWCD). Stakeholder Group Member Detmer said that they expect modeling to occur in late March 2021 and subsequent review with the Fox Canyon Project Committee.

### **3. Review of Initial and Ending Basin Allocations**

#### **a. Basin Initial Allocation (sum of initial well allocations)**

Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA) staff Kim Loeb provided a brief presentation on the initial allocation estimated at 92,500 acre-feet (AF) for the combined Oxnard and Pleasant Valley basins.

Mr. Loeb provided a presentation on the variance request and noted that there have been roughly 1,000 AF requested for “standard” variances, 2,800 AF for “non-reporting” variances and 21,700 AF for “new water” variance requests. He said the combination of standard and non-reporting variances, if approved, could increase the initial allocation by 3,800 AF.

Stakeholder Group Member Terri Ferro asked if the “new water” variance would increase the initial allocation. Mr. Loeb Ms. Ferro that the “new water” variance is not additive to the basin allocation but can potentially redistribute the 92,500 AF.

Mr. Loeb reminded the Stakeholder Group that a review committee will be processing these variance requests and there will be opportunities to review these requests.

Stakeholder Group Member Greg Lewis said the group needs more information on whether the 21,700 AF of new water variance requests are new water or distribution of a purveyor’s allocation.

#### **b. Basin Sustainable Yield (by 2040)**

Mr. Loeb reminded the Stakeholder Group that the ending basin sustainable yield is estimated at 50,600 AF and UWCD is modeling projects that may increase the yield by 33,500 AF, but these projects will likely be very expensive and additional studies are needed to determine the feasibility and reliability of potential projects.

Stakeholder Group Member Jared Bouchard asked if the 2,300 AF Conejo Creek allocation is a projection. Mr. Loeb replied that the 2,300 AF is the amount of Conejo Creek allocation that was granted to Pleasant Valley County Water District in the ordinance less the projected average Camrosa deliveries. He said it is a projected net amount and depends on how much is delivered to Pleasant Valley by Camrosa.

#### **4. Ramp-Down and Minimum Allocation**

Mr. Beck explained the Mr. Loeb will give an overview of the three options under agenda item no. 4 and then we will have more detailed discussions of each item.

##### **a. Review of Minimum Allocation and Discussion of Options**

Mr. Loeb provided a brief review of the OPV Allocation Ordinance which states it is the Board's intent to establish a minimum allocation for agricultural operators based on sustainable yield. He said the AF/acre minimum allocation would be based on sustainable yield of the basins and area of irrigated farmland. Minimum allocation could be adjusted to correspond with 5-year GSP updates of sustainable yield and project implementation.

He said some of the options that have been discuss include establishing an evapotranspiration (ET) by zone, and/or establishing a maximum AF/acre cap ("floor and ceiling").

Stakeholder Group Member Jurgen Gramckow said he is in favor of a proportional ramp-down and thinks equal burden is the appropriate why to manage the reduction which takes into consideration the historic use and economic value of water.

Stakeholder Group Member Alden Broome said he thinks you need to account for correlative water rights and agrees with an initial minimal allocation starting at current use and a linear reduction for the ramp-down.

Stakeholder Group Member Shiri Klima asked if the minimum allocation applies to just ag or the whole basin. Mr. Loeb said the ordinance applies to the ag operators, but the methodology for applying that has not been adopted by the Board yet, and hopefully these discussions will help shape answers to how the ramp down will be implemented.

Stakeholder Group Member Greg Lewis said he believes we should allocate equal share based on land. He said he has tried to meet in the middle with those opposed to this and develop initial allocations partially based on historic water use.

Stakeholder Group Member Martin Gramckow commented that there are two type of water to consider: native yield and project water. He said roughly 20,000-25,000 AF is native and if the basin was litigated, likely the 20-25,000 AF would be parsed out and the remaining project water has heavily invested in would need to be allocated based on history and investment. He said allocating the native yield by acreage would result in 0.39 AF. He suggested if we end up allocating by acreage, we should consider the different types of water.

Mr. Beck asked how irrigation efficiencies are accounted for and Stakeholder Group Member Jurgen Gramckow said that the efficiencies are only marginally different.

Local citrus grower John Grether commented that the argument that certain crops add more value should not be part of the analysis, but we should be looking at how to minimize impacts to agriculture and loss of jobs.

Mr. Beck asked if the Stakeholder Group Members agree with using ET zones.

Stakeholder Group Member Jurgen Gramckow said there is not a wide variation of ET in the Oxnard Plains and little variation in the Camarillo Plains and did not think it was worth considering.

Stakeholder Group Member James DuBois commented that he believes there is still room to be more efficient and the minimum allocations should have slight modifications by ET zone.

Stakeholder Group Member Martin Gramckow said one of the bigger drivers to water use is rotations. He said trees are not a big driver crop in the basin and one solution is to create a multiplication factor if growers wanted to transition to a different crop. He wanted to make sure that policies are not created around tree growers but think of this around crop rotations.

Stakeholder Group Member Lucia Munoz-McGovern said M&I's allocation has been a set number and has already had to comply with a 25 percent reduction. She said ag has benefited from the flexibility of variable water use via the Irrigation Allowance Index and argued that if M&I has a set number, ag should have a set number.

Mr. Loeb said the reporting necessary to provide the information to transition to a land-based allocation system is required under the allocation ordinance. He agreed that administrative changes need to be made and the system was designed to be land-based and they recently hired a consultant to conduct an analysis of the current system and future requirements to inform procurement or development of a new data management system.

**b. Review of Ramp-Down Allocations (individual well allocations in 2040) and Discussion of Options**

Mr. Loeb reported that several options for determining the ramp-down allocation include (1) a percent reduction for all operators (to minimum allocation), (2) a reduction to flat AF/acre, and (3) a middle approach (e.g., OPV Landowners' "hybrid" ramp-down).

**c. Review of Ramp-Down Path (straight-line, stair-step, etc.) and Discussion of Options**

Mr. Loeb discussed several options for achieving the ending allocation and include the following options: (1) linear, (2) stair step, and (3) variable. He discussed several of the pros and cons of each approach from previous Stakeholder Group discussion.

Stakeholder Group Member Alden Broome said he would advocate a linear reduction of the excess of the minimum and adjust for projects.

Stakeholder Group Member E.J. Remson agreed with the linear approach for simplicity and said 5-year adjustments make sense.

Stakeholder Group Member Lucia Munoz-McGovern also agreed with the linear approach for simplicity but clarified that 90,200 AF is what is being allocated (not Conjeo Creek).

Stakeholder Group Member Martin Gramckow also advocates for the linear option since it may advance progress on the projects. He said he is concerned that those who are not impacted by minimum allocations will cause splintering of the Stakeholder Group.

Stakeholder Group Member Jared Bouchard said he does not oppose the linear concept but can appreciate the concept of the variable approach to create more funding for projects.

Stakeholder Group Member John Mathews asked for staff to quantify how much of the 20,700 AF of new water variance requests are new transfers vs new water. Mr. Loeb replied that he believes that most of the variance requests are aspirational requests for groundwater allocation for water that has been provided by a purveyor. He said many of the applications do not have complete information and additional information has been requested. Additionally, Mr. Loeb said that if allocation is transferred, then it would not be a variance as it would not increase net pumping.

Stakeholder Group Member Alden Broome said they have a lot of background data and offered to share that if it would be helpful to anyone.

**5. Next Steps**

Mr. Beck let the Stakeholder Group Members know our goal for the next meeting is to document specific Stakeholder Group Member positions on the minimum allocation and the ramp-down methodology.

**6. Public Comment**

No additional public comments were made.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am.

### **To-Dos:**

- None