

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose

In September 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a three-bill legislative package composed of Assembly Bill (AB) 1739 (Dickinson), Senate Bill (SB) 1168 (Pavley) and SB 1319 (Pavley), which is codified in Section 10720 et seq. of the California Water Code. The legislation provides a framework for long-term sustainable groundwater management across California. The intent of SGMA is to provide local and regional agencies the authority to sustainably manage groundwater resources to help preserve water supplies for existing and potential beneficial uses and to protect communities, farms, and the environment against prolonged dry periods and climate change.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) provide primary oversight for implementation of SGMA. DWR adopted regulations that specify the components and evaluation criteria for groundwater sustainability plans, alternatives to Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), and coordination agreements to implement such plans. To satisfy the requirements of SGMA, local agencies must do the following:

- Locally controlled and governed Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) must be formed for all high- and medium-priority groundwater basins in California.
- GSAs must develop and implement GSPs or Alternatives to GSPs that define a roadmap for how groundwater basins will reach long-term sustainability.
- The GSPs must consider six sustainability indicators defined as: groundwater level decline, groundwater storage reduction, seawater intrusion, water quality degradation, land subsidence, and surface-water depletion.
- GSAs must submit annual reports to DWR each April 1 following adoption of a GSP with the first report due April 2022.
- Groundwater basins should reach sustainability within 20 years of implementing their GSPs.

The Butte Valley groundwater basin (Basin) is a medium priority basin in Siskiyou County in Northern California. A description of the Basin, including a summary of the jurisdictional areas, water resources monitoring and management, land use, and groundwater conditions are presented in Chapter 2.

In accordance with SGMA, this GSP was developed and will be implemented by the GSA representing the Basin, the Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

Per SGMA requirements, the GSA is responsible for developing and submitting a GSP, by January 31st, 2022. The GSA feels the GSP will provide long-term sustainability for all beneficial uses and users of water. The GSA also anticipates these plans will be a tool used for the overarching watershed goal of improving water management in the watershed bringing multiple interests to the table to resolve water conflicts in the Basin.

1.2. Sustainability Goal

The overall sustainability goal of groundwater management in the Basin is to maintain groundwater resources in ways that best support the continued and long-term health of the people, the environment, and the economy in the Basin, for generations to come. Further description of the sustainability goal, as it relates to the sustainability indicators, is included in Chapter 3.

1.3. Agency Information and Management Structure

1.3.1. Agency Information

Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
190 Greenhorn Road
Yreka, CA 96097

1.3.2. Organization and Management Structure

The Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is the sole GSA for the Basin. The Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Act (Cal Uncod. Water Deer, Act 1240 §§ 1-38) was adopted by the State Legislature in 1959. This Act established a special district of the same name, and of limited powers that could provide flood protection, water conservation, recreation and aesthetic enhancement within its boundaries. At the time of its creation, the jurisdictional boundaries of the Flood District were smaller than those of the County. In 1983, following County of Siskiyou Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) action, the balance of the County was annexed into the District, making its jurisdictional boundaries coincide with the County. The District is governed by a Board of Directors that is composed of the Board of Supervisors; however, the District is a separate legal entity from the County, with independent rights and limited powers set forth in its originating act. The District's purpose is the conservation and control of storm, flood, and other waters and ensuring beneficial use thereof.

1.3.3. Legal Authority of the GSA

Approved by the District Board on April 4th, 2017, the Siskiyou County Resolution FLD17-01 authorized the District to act as the GSA for the Butte, Scott and Shasta Valley groundwater basins.

1.3.4. Contact Information for Plan Manager

The Siskiyou County Natural Resources Department is designated as the plan manager, and can be reached at:

1312 Fairlane Rd
Yreka, CA 96097

1.3.5. Estimated Cost of Implementing GSP and GSA's Approach to Meet Costs

The GSA will pursue all available grant funding opportunities to assist in covering the yearly costs. The GSA utilized a consultant to conduct a fee study, in case the GSA feels funds need to be raised publicly to pay for yearly management of the plans. It is expected that the GSA will manage implementation and reporting of the GSP, with support from other entities as needed.

1.4. Notice and Communication

1.4.1. Notice

GSP information, GSA Board and Advisory Committee meeting schedules, and useful links can be found at the County of Siskiyou Website.¹

The GSA holds publicly noticed public Board and Advisory Committee meetings to allow stakeholders to engage and provide input throughout the process, as well as meetings with specific working groups in the Basin to address specific technical topics or questions. As the GSP is developed and implemented, the website will be updated accordingly with new information for public comment. Notices of public hearings are communicated through multiple methods including local newspapers and postings on the County of Siskiyou website. A SGMA email outreach list exists to inform the public on meeting information, subjects, and how to provide comments.

1.4.2. Decision Making Process

The Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is governed by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors and covers the entire boundaries of each of the three medium priority basins. The District was enacted in 1957 to provide for the control and conservation of flood and storm waters and the protection of watercourses, watersheds, public highways, life and property from damage or destruction from such waters; to provide for the acquisition, retention, and reclaiming of drainage, storm, flood, and other waters and to save, conserve, and distribute such waters for beneficial use within the District boundaries, and to replenish and augment the supply of water in natural underground reservoirs. The District's Board of Directors is composed of the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, which are elected by the citizens of Siskiyou County. The District operates under the authority of the Board of Directors and Siskiyou County Natural Resources staff manages the GSP development and implementation.

¹ {<https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/naturalresources/page/sustainable-groundwater-management-act-sigma>}

Decisions of the District are completed pursuant to a majority vote. Actions of the Board are informed with input of the Butte Valley Advisory Committee, a community based organization who's members are appointed by Board members. Meetings of the Advisory Committee are publicly noticed consistent with the Brown Act. The public, stakeholder working groups, non-profit organizations and other users and uses of groundwater are encouraged to participate in GSP implementation at publicly noticed Board and Advisory Committee meetings.

1.4.3. Public Outreach

1.4.3.1. Communication and Engagement Plan

The Siskiyou County Groundwater Sustainability Agency developed a Butte Valley Basin Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan (C&E Plan) to educate interested parties about local SGMA implementation, describe the phases of GSP development, encourage public participation in the process, and address noticing and communication requirements in the law (Appendix 1-A).

The C&E Plan describes how the local GSA was formed in Siskiyou County, the support role played by technical and facilitation consultants, and the process by which the GSA board of directors (GSA Board) — with support from a stakeholder advisory committee — gathers, considers, and responds to needs and interests of constituents throughout the community. Consensus building is a foundational principle of all committee discussions, and membership is intended to reflect the diversity of beneficial groundwater uses and users in the Basin.

The GSA maintains a government-to-government relationship with any Native American Tribe in Siskiyou County or the larger Klamath River watershed which expresses interest in SGMA. Tribal representatives have been appointed to the advisory committees in the Scott Valley, Shasta Valley and Butte Valley groundwater basins. Moreover, Siskiyou County and the Karuk Tribe formalized good faith communication protocols around SGMA through an established memorandum of understanding.

The Butte Valley C&E Plan includes the following overarching public outreach goals:

- Provide the GSA, Advisory Committee, community leaders and other beneficial users a roadmap to ensure broad understanding and consistent messaging of SGMA requirements.
- Foster information sharing, communication and collaboration, and opportunities for stakeholders to have meaningful input on the GSA decision-making process.
- Provide reasonable opportunities for interested stakeholders to receive and understand the technical groundwater information developed as part of the GSP process.
- Ensure a collaborative GSP development and implementation process that is widely seen in the community as fair and respectful to the range of interested or affected stakeholders.
- Assist the GSA in meeting all SGMA communication and engagement requirements.

Specific objectives which help the GSA achieve these overarching goals include the following:

- Educate stakeholders on:
 - Important SGMA requirements, events and milestones.

Butte Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan

- The role, authorities and responsibilities of the local GSA in Siskiyou County.
 - The advisory committee’s role and how the public can stay informed or involved.
 - The benefits of having a technically robust and broadly supported GSP.
 - Potential changes to groundwater monitoring and management under SGMA.
 - How the interests of beneficial uses and users will be considered under SGMA.
- Develop strategies and communication mechanisms for obtaining broad stakeholder input and feedback that informs GSP development.
 - Coordinate outreach and engagement activities that foster information sharing, raise awareness, and encourage public engagement in SGMA.
 - Ensure the needs, interests, and perspectives of all beneficial uses and users are identified, documented and considered by the GSA Board.
 - Support local beneficial users to identify, preempt or otherwise proactively address and resolve different perspectives or conflicts over groundwater use and management.
 - Track all input received by beneficial users during the GSP development process and document GSA Board responses as input is considered.
 - Develop strategies and communication mechanisms for long-term GSP implementation.

A comprehensive list of identified stakeholder groups in the Basin is included in the C&E Plan. Initially developed by GSA staff, the list was reviewed and expanded by the local SGMA advisory committee. The list may be improved and updated at any time during the GSP development or implementation process. Stakeholder groups included in the list represent a priority target audience for SGMA-related communication and engagement.

The final section of the C&E Plan describes outreach strategies which the local GSA employs to effectively advance SGMA implementation. Specific tools and forums include the following:

- Advisory committee meetings
- Constituent briefings with local organizations
- Tribal engagement
- Public meetings and workshops
- GSA Board meetings
- Coordination with local resource conservation districts
- Coordination with state and federal agencies
- Integration of relevant studies and materials
- Interested parties list
- Informational materials
- County SGMA website
- Local media and public service announcements

The local GSA will evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of its C&E Plans for each SGMA groundwater basin in Siskiyou County. Evaluations will likely occur at or near key milestones, such as the completion of a major phase of work or shortly before or after submission of the GSP for evaluation by DWR. As needed, the C&E Plan will be updated to best serve Siskiyou County, its constituents, and all its collaborative partners in the SGMA implementation process.

1.4.3.2. Butte Valley Basin Beneficial Uses and Users

Groundwater in the Basin serves the needs of communities, farms, and businesses and provides high quality drinking water to urban and rural residents, in addition to helping to sustain vital ecosystems. Beneficial uses of groundwater include water for irrigation, agriculture, domestic use, municipal use, and water for the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife. Beneficial uses and users of the Basin have been identified as the following:

- Agricultural users (farmers, ranchers, dairy professionals).
- Rural, Agricultural, and Domestic well owners.
- Municipal well operators.
- Public water systems.
- Local land use planning agencies.
- Environmental uses and users of groundwater, including but not limited to habitat that supports fish, birds, animals and insects; endangered species protection; protection of beneficial habitat for recreation and other societal benefits.
- Surface water users.
- Tribal Governments.
- Disadvantaged communities (the entire Basin is a DAC or SDAC, see map in Chapter 2 - Section 2.1.1).

1.4.3.3. Public Engagement Opportunities

The GSA is committed to encouraging the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the Basin. The County of Siskiyou website provides information regarding GSA Board Meeting frequency, background information, documents, status updates, and contact information. GSP updates will be included as noticed per GSA respective meeting agendas that are published in advance. Meetings providing updates on GSP development are scheduled regularly, typically once a month, to inform the public and Interested Parties and provide opportunities to ask questions and make suggestions. These meetings are posted on the County of Siskiyou website and announced via email. A full list of public meetings where the GSP was discussed or considered are included in Appendix 1-B.

In addition, GSP Staff will be available throughout the GSP development process to communicate and engage with Interested Parties and the public. Interested Parties can be involved in GSP development by providing input throughout the process.

Other avenues for public engagement included or will include:

- **GSA Board meetings:** During Public comment period of any Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors or Siskiyou County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (GSA) Board meetings

- **Working Groups:** Working groups may be formed during GSP implementation to provide specific input from Interested Parties or on specific topics.
- **Comments:** Opportunity for the public or interested parties to comment on draft GSP sections or chapters is provided. Comments received through this process, and the responses provided are included in Appendix 1-C.

1.4.4. Coordination

GSA and Siskiyou County staff, and at times technical team, held coordination meetings or phone calls to provide additional input into the GSP with various state agencies, Tribes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or members of the public. GSA staff and at times the technical team also attended non-SGMA focused workshops to provide updates or information regarding SGMA and the GSP development. Some highlights of those efforts are below:

- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)**
 - GSA staff has monthly coordination meetings with CDFW staff to discuss numerous topics, which includes SGMA updates and key items and issues related to groundwater management.
- **Shasta Indian Nation**
- **Klamath Coalition of the Willing**
 - This is a large group of NGOs, Tribes, and irrigators brought together to develop solutions related to the Klamath Basin conflicts. County staff and the technical team has interacted with the group and developed project ideas that are either being implemented or in initial design phases, including managed aquifer recharge, storage development and improving upland lake management. These projects are further described in Chapter 4.
- **Butte/Tulelake**
 - GSA staff and the technical team has met with Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuge manager to discuss findings of possible existing connections between the groundwater basins. The Lower Klamath is a low priority basin and therefore is not required to develop a GSP.
 - GSA and the Butte Valley technical team met with the technical consultant team for Tule Lake to share results and expected GSP outcomes.

1.5. GSP Organization

The GSP is organized in accordance with the GSP Emergency Regulations and statutory provisions of SGMA. The format of the GSP is similar to the outline provided by DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management program. A brief summary of each GSP section is provided below.

- **Executive Summary.** Provides a summary of what is included in the GSP.
- **Chapter 1 – Introduction.** The Introduction includes the purpose and administration of the GSP, sustainability goal, agency information, and GSP organization.
- **Chapter 2 – Plan Area and Basin Setting.** Plan Area describes the geographic setting, existing water resources planning and programs, and additional GSP components. The Basin Setting includes a detailed discussion of the hydrogeologic conceptual model used to prepare the GSP; current and historical groundwater conditions; future groundwater conditions after allowances for growth, land use changes, and climate change; and a discussion of the area’s current and future groundwater budget.
- **Chapter 3 – Sustainable Management Criteria.** Includes the sustainability goal, addresses the mandated six sustainability indicators (SI) that monitor undesirable results; defines the minimum thresholds (MT) for each undesirable result; and sets measurable objectives (MO) for the GSP complete implementation, including interim milestones for intermediate plan years. This Chapter also describes the network of monitoring wells and other information to measure the GSP outcome; assesses the need for improvements to the network to provide fully representative data; and address monitoring protocols and data analysis techniques.
- **Chapter 4 – Projects and Management Actions to Achieve Sustainability.** Describes potential projects and management actions (PMAs) that may be implemented in pursuit of sustainability. Where available, project details include measurable objectives that are expected to benefit from the PMA, required permits, anticipated benefits, estimated costs, and how the PMA will be accomplished.
- **Chapter 5 – Plan Implementation.** Describes the GSP implementation process, including estimated costs, sources of funding, a preliminary schedule through full implementation, description of the required data management system, methodology for annual reporting, and how progress evaluations will be conducted over time.
- **Appendices – References and Technical Studies.** Contains the references and sources used to prepare this GSP.
 - **DWR GSP Elements Guide**– This GSP was prepared to meet the regulatory requirements established by DWR, as shown in the completed GSP Elements Guide, provided in Appendix 1-D, which is organized according to the California Code of Regulation Sections of the GSP Emergency Regulations.