Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation

Butte Subbasin

Stakeholder Communications & Engagement Plan

Version: January 21, 2020

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Background

The purpose of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), signed by Governor Brown in 2014, is to ensure local sustainable groundwater management in medium- and highpriority groundwater basins statewide. California's Department of Water Resources has determined that the Butte Subbasin located in Butte, Colusa, and Glenn counties is medium priority and subject to SGMA.

SGMA Milestones: There are eleven Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in Butte Subbasin that formed by the state-mandated deadline of June 30, 2017, constituting SGMA's first major milestone. These GSAs have entered into a Cooperation Agreement for the purpose of

developing a single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the subbasin. The second major milestone in SGMA is the adoption of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 31, 2022. The GSP is prescribed by SGMA and contains required elements. The third milestone is achieving sustainability by 2042.

Figure 1. SGMA Milestones



Desired Outcomes & Goals of the Plan

Outcomes: The desired outcome of this Communications & Engagement plan is to achieve adoption of the GSP with input from and in consideration of the people, the economy, and the natural resources within the subbasin and in coordination with adjacent subbasins.

As the participating GSAs near completion of the GSP, this Communications & Engagement Plan will be updated to address implementation actions.

Plan Goals: SGMA requires GSAs to consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater, and encourages involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the subbasin during GSP preparation and implementation. The goals of the Communications & Engagement Plan are to:

- 1. Enhance understanding and inform the public about water and groundwater resources in the Butte subbasin, the purpose and need for sustainable groundwater management, the benefits of sustainable groundwater management, and the need for a GSP.
- 2. Engage a diverse group of interested parties and stakeholders and promote informed feedback from stakeholders, the community and groundwater-dependent users throughout the GSP preparation and implementation process.
- 3. Coordinate communication and involvement between the GSAs and other local agencies, elected and appointed officials, and the general public.
- 4. Utilize the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board to facilitate a public engagement process.
- 5. Employ a variety of outreach methods that make public participation accessible and that encourage broad participation.
- 6. Respond to public concerns and provide accurate and up-to-date information.
- 7. Manage communications and engagement in a manner that provides maximum value to the public and constitutes an effective use of GSAs' resources.

Time Period: The Plan is intended to cover communications and engagement for August 2019-January 2022, when the GSP is due to be submitted to California Department of Water Resources. Since this is a multi-year effort, the key activities needed to achieve these goals will be broken down into annual work plans, and may be amended, as needed.

Groundwater Sustainability Agency Cooperation & Coordinated **Public Involvement**

There are eleven GSAs in the Butte Subbasin. They include:

- 1. Biggs West Gridley Water District
- 2. Butte Water District
- 3. City of Biggs
- 4. City of Gridley
- 5. County of Butte
- 6. Colusa Groundwater Authority DRAF
- 7. County of Glenn
- 8. Reclamation District No. 1004
- 9. Reclamation District No. 2106
- 10. Richvale Irrigation District
- 11. Western Canal Water District

These GSAs have entered into a Cooperation Agreement to:

- 1. Develop, adopt, and implement a legally sufficient GSP for the subbasin
- 2. Coordinate basin-wide public involvement and stakeholder outreach and engagement in developing and implementing the Butte subbasin GSP
- 3. Maintain mutual respect for the autonomy of individual GSAs and the preservation of each GSA's separate legal authorities, powers, duties and rights as separate public agencies and GSAs.

The Butte Subbasin Advisory Board is comprised of elected officials who serve as the primary representatives and their alternates who may be staff or elected officials from each of the GSAs in the subbasin. As is specified in the Cooperation Agreement forming the Advisory Board, the purpose of this entity is to establish:

- 1. A GSA cooperation forum for member agencies
- 2. Publicly noticed meetings and processes pursuant the Ralph M. Brown Act for public involvement in GSP development and implementation in the subbasin
- 3. A mechanism whereby member agencies raise, and attempt in good faith to resolve, disputes that may occur between and among members
- 4. A mechanism to make advisory recommendations to member agencies concerning development and implementation of the GSP

When evaluating the options and making decisions, GSAs and the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will solicit public input through a variety of methods, including public workshops, written and

verbal comments, meetings with stakeholder organizations, and other. Input can be made during public comment periods at GSA board meetings and at the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board meetings and submitted through the subbasin website and/or in writing through individual GSAs.

Communications and Engagement for GSP Plan Elements

To truly engage the public in development of a GSP that is science-based, complex, technical, and includes achievable outcomes, GSAs will strive to meet these overall objectives:

- Educate the public in meaningful ways. Communicate what may often be complex concepts in straightforward, comprehensible ways
- Show how the input received has been considered and incorporated, as appropriate, into the plan or process
- Remain focused on results

Community engagement activities will be focused on development of GSP plan elements. The GSP will be prepared iteratively and in a logical progression, building on previously developed technical and policy information. Throughout the process of preparing the GSP, background materials along with draft text, figures and tables for each section will be provided to the GSAs' staff, the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board, and the public in advance of meetings for input and comment. The Advisory Board and the public will have opportunities to comment on each element, before the element is ultimately adopted by the governing bodies of the GSAs.

It is anticipated that the GSP will be developed in six phases:

- 1. Preparation and submittal of initial notification of GSP preparation
- 2. Definition of plan area and basin setting
- 3. Development of sustainable management criteria, including the sustainability goal, undesirable results, minimum thresholds, measurable objectives and interim milestones
- 4. Design of monitoring program and data management system
- 5. Identification and evaluation of proposed projects and management actions
- 6. Development of GSP implementation costs, detailed schedule, and reporting

Each phase requires robust outreach with the goal of educating and engaging the general public, stakeholders, and the Advisory Board on the technical and policy aspects of the GSP plan elements. Each phase will include a mix of communication tools, to be used in a variety of forums.

Interested Parties & Other Stakeholders

SGMA identifies interested parties that GSAs must consider when developing and implementing the GSP, including:

- Agricultural users of groundwater
- Domestic well owners
- Municipal well operators
- Public water systems

- Land use planning agencies
- Environmental uses of groundwater
- Surface water users
- The federal government
- California Native American tribes (see Appendix A)
- Disadvantaged communities (including those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems).

Table 1. Butte Subbasin Stakeholder Group Interests & Engagement Purpose

The following table identifies the categories of stakeholder interests and the corresponding groups that will be the focus of the GSAs' engagement efforts. The table also specifies the anticipated level of engagement for various stakeholder groups.

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Engagement Purpose
 General Public Citizens groups Community leaders Interested individual Universities/Academia 	 Each GSA maintains interested parties lists. Groundwater Pumpers Advisory Group (GPAC) 	Inform to improve public awareness of sustainable groundwater management
 Land Use Municipalities Local land use agencies Regional land use agencies Community Service Districts 	Butte City Community Service District	Consult and involve to ensure land use policies are supporting GSPs and there are no conflicting policies between the GSAs / GSP and local government agencies
 Private Users Private pumpers (domestic and agricultural) Schools and colleges Hospitals 	 Colusa Properties Manzanita School Richvale Elementary School 	Inform and involve in assessing impacts to groundwater users
 Urban/ Agricultural Users Water agencies Irrigation districts Municipal water companies Mutual water companies Resource conservation districts Farmers/Farm Bureaus Water Districts Water users associations Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Coalition 	 Reclamation District No. 2054 Reclamation District No. 2106 Reclamation District No. 1004 Reclamation District No. 777 Reclamation District No. 2056 Dayton Mutual Water Company Sartain Mutual Water Company Northern California Water Association Butte County Farm Bureau Colusa County Farm Bureau Glenn County Farm Bureau Butte County Resource Conservation 	Collaborate to ensure sustainable management of groundwater

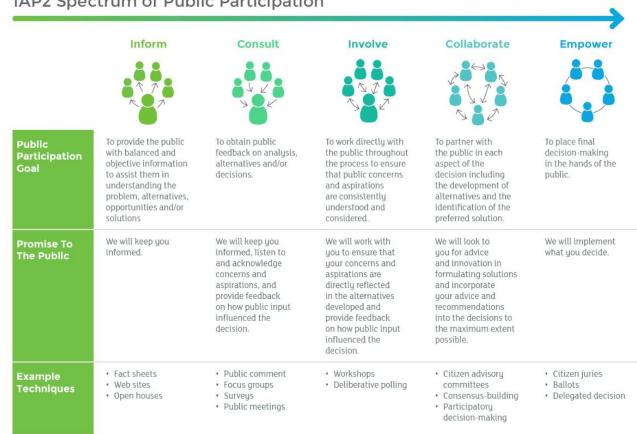
Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Engagement Purpose	
Environmental and Ecosystem	 District Colusa County Resource Conservation District Glenn County Resource Conservation District Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County Sacramento Valley Irrigated Lands Program California Rice Commission Butte County Rice Growers Associations Sierra Club 	Inform and involve to	
 Uses Federal and State agencies Wetland managers Environmental groups 	 Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy Friends of Butte Creek Trout Unlimited Audubon California Waterfowl/Ducks Unlimited Butte Environmental Council Sacramento River Preservation Trust The Nature Conservancy Gray Lodge State Wildlife Refuge 	consider/incorporate potential ecosystem impacts to GSP process	
 Surface Water Users Irrigation Districts Water Districts Water user associations Agricultural users 	 Biggs West Gridley Water District Butte Water District Richvale Irrigation District Western Canal Water District 	Inform and involve to collaborate to ensure sustainable water supplies	
 Economic Development Chambers of commerce Business groups/associations Elected officials State Assembly members State Senators Economic Development Team 	Butte County Water Commission	Inform and involve to support a stable economy	
 Human Right to Water Disadvantaged communities Small water systems Environmental justice groups/community-based organizations De minimis well owners 	 City of Biggs City of Gridley 	Inform and involve to provide safe and secure groundwater supplies to all communities reliant on groundwater	
Tribes	Tribal engagement is not anticipated in	Inform, involve and consult	

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups	Engagement Purpose
 Federally Recognized Tribes Non-Federally Recognized Tribes 	this subbasin, as area Tribes' interests reside outside of the Butte Subbasin in adjacent basins.	with tribal government
 Federal Lands U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service U.S. Bureau of Reclamation U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 	 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North Central Valley Wildlife Management Area U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge 	Inform, involve and collaborate to ensure basin sustainability
 Integrated Water Management Regional water management groups (IRWM regions) Flood agencies 	 North Sacramento Valley (NSV) Integrated Regional Water Management Group Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group Central Valley Flood Protection Board 	Inform, involve and collaborate to improve regional sustainability

Purpose of Engagement Process

When considering the purpose of engagement for various stakeholder groups, the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation may assist decision-makers in clarifying how to define the most effective engagement process for the range of stakeholders.

Table 2. Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Communication & Engagement Forums

Member Agencies Governance Briefings

Member Agency board members may brief their councils or boards regularly on GSA activities and may work with the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board to provide additional briefings on sensitive or important topics.

Stakeholder Briefings

Butte Subbasin Advisory Board members will meet with and communicate regularly with the stakeholders they represent. To promote consistent messaging, and to the extent possible, briefings will be coordinated with all Member Agencies through the Advisory Board structure.

Public Meetings/Hearing

Public meetings or hearings are formal opportunities for people to provide official comments on programs, plans and proposals. Regular meetings of the GSAs and the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board constitute regular public meetings that will be noticed and conducted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act. SGMA requires that a public meeting be held prior to the adoption of a fee and that public hearings are held for the adoption of GSP elements and the final GSP plan. There are also constitutional requirements for public hearings for some fee/rate options. Public meetings and hearings are an important forum for people to share viewpoints and concerns, but often occur at the end of a process, when only one option is under consideration. The GSAs will hold required public meetings and hearings, but will also use less formal public workshops to solicit feedback and information throughout the process.

Public Workshops

The Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will convene public workshops. These workshops provide less formal opportunities for people to learn about groundwater, SGMA, and GSP elements. Workshops can be organized in a variety of ways, including open houses, "stations" where people can ask questions one-on-one, and traditional presentations with facilitated question and answer sessions. In order to solicit feedback from people who may not be comfortable speaking in public, workshops can include small group breakout discussions, comment cards and other techniques. Whatever format is used, workshops will be designed to maximize opportunities for public input.

Public Notices

In addition to the public notice required for fee adoption, SGMA requires that prior to initiating the development of a GSP, GSAs must provide a written statement describing the manner in which interested parties may participate in the development and implementation of the GSP. The statement must be provided to all the cities and counties within the subbasin.

As outlined in this Communications & Engagement Plan, there will be a variety of opportunities for people to participate in the development and implementation of the GSP, including workshops, public hearings, providing comments at GSA and Butte Subbasin Advisory Board meetings and through written comments.

Communication & Engagement Tools

The Butte Subbasin GSAs will use a variety of communications and engagement tools to keep the public informed, including the following.

Interested Parties List: SGMA mandates the creation of an interested parties list. SGMA does not specify the type of list (email versus hard copy). The first preference is an email list, to get information out quickly and to reduce costs. A secondary list will be developed for people who don't use email. GSAs can contribute names of organizations, agencies, and individuals to the list. Whenever new inquiries are made and when new individuals participate in public meetings and workshops, their names will be added to the list, if requested. Each GSA maintains its own interested parties list for SGMA implementation purposes.

The list is broad and includes anyone who would like to stay informed about SGMA activities and anyone the GSAs think should be informed about the GSP process and the outcomes of the planning effort. The Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will coordinate on the distribution of periodic updates to the interested parties list. This list will also be used for dissemination of information about public workshops, public meetings, and other engagement activities. **Informational Materials:** Developing a variety of informational materials is critical to successful education and necessary to circulate consistent, accurate information. The Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will develop a range of materials, which may include:

- **Talking Points:** Clear, concise messages to be used by GSAs when communicating with media, organizations, and stakeholders.
- Milestone Fact Sheets: For initiating the GSP and completion of elements of the GSP.
- **Periodic Updates:** As stated above, the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will coordinate on the distribution of periodic updates that can then be used by the GSAs for distribution to the groups and organizations they represent using existing communications tools, such as newsletters, social media, list serves, etc.
- **Newspaper editorials:** Authored by GSAs or the Butte Subbasin Advisory Board for submittal to local news sources.
- **Briefing Packets:** For milestone briefings to the public and stakeholders. Packets will include standard talking points, and other materials to assist in educational outreach and for soliciting feedback.

Website: The Butte Subbasin website, <u>www.buttebasingroundwater.org</u>, will be a tool for distributing and archiving meeting and communication materials as well as a repository for any studies and informative, educational materials. The Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will coordinate to ensure that the website is updated on a consistent basis to include up to date, timely information. The website will include the following information:

- Home page: summary, calendar of meetings and events, highlighted topics
- Groundwater basics, SGMA background including links to existing sources of relevant information, such as https://groundwaterexchange.org.
- Butte subbasin specific information
- Information about Butte subbasin GSAs, including links to respective GSAs' websites
- Butte Subbasin Advisory Board agendas and meeting materials

Mailings and Utility Bill Notifications: Individual GSAs may utilize postcards, or other means, and include updates and relevant GSP development information in utility bills and other regular mailings.

Social Media: Existing Facebook, Twitter, and other emerging social media technologies will be leveraged to provide updates on milestone progress to interested parties.

Surveys: Online tools, such as Survey Monkey, may be used periodically to gather stakeholder ideas and to provide feedback on key issues.

Media Plan: The Butte Subbasin Advisory Board will develop press releases and public service announcements (if appropriate) at each milestone and for meetings and workshops. The press releases will be distributed to local and regional media and elected officials. See Appendix B for a media contact list that will be updated on a periodic basis.

Inter-Basin Coordination

While inter-basin agreements are optional under SGMA, GSAs in the Butte Subbasin intend to coordinate with adjacent basins to share technical information and to ensure that the implementation of the GSPs in adjacent basins are compatible and will not cause any adverse effects in the Butte subbasin or any other adjacent basins.

Evaluation and Assessment

Any communication strategy should include opportunities to check in at various points during implementation to ensure that it is meeting the communication and engagement goals and complying with SGMA. These check-ins will occur at least on an annual basis.

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Table 3. Summary of Engagement Opportunities and Milestones

Timeframe	Milestone or Stage	Required Community Engagement Under SGMA	Communication Strategies
Shortly after GSA formation	After identification of outreach responsibilities among GSA member agencies	Notification of GSA formation	 Provide notice of GSA outreach resources: website, email listserv, calendar of GSA Board and subcommittee meetings Develop and continue to update list of interested parties
Before GSP Planning Activities	Prior to beginning GSP development	Provide to the public and State, notice of intent to begin GSP planning and description of opportunities for interested parties to participate in GSP development and implementation	 Public workshop (s) GSA Board meetings Email notices and updates Newspaper notice of public workshop(s)
Between Notice of GSP Planning and January 31, 2022	During GSP development	Public workshops, public meetings, Butte Subbasin Advisory Board meetings, GSA Board meetings and other opportunities providing stakeholder avenues to participate in GSP development	 Public workshops and/or public meetings on GSP development. Email notice of public workshops / meetings Newspaper notices of public workshops / meetings Updates and information on GSP development at standing meetings Disseminate updates via interested parties list, websites social media, outreach partners
	During GSP development	Active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the Subbasin	 Provide email notices and updates Update website regularly Convene regularly scheduled Butte Subbasin Advisory Board meetings Convene regularly scheduled meetings of GSA Boards Collectively identify and communicate opportunities for public engagement on GSP development, (providing clear messages that GSAs retain legal responsibility for final GSA and GSP related decisions)

Timeframe	Milestone or	Required Community	Communication Strategies
	Stage	Engagement Under SGMA	 Develop consistent, coordinated messages and talking points and other tools easily accessible to all GSAs for consistent and cohesive messaging. Arrange for technical support to stakeholder groups through presentations or workshops conducted by GSA representatives/staff Develop content appropriate to the audience and their interests, ensuring information can be easily understood Conduct legislative briefings at strategic milestones (and any other groups upon request) Utilize updated interested party stakeholder list, GSA listservs delivered via email and/or U.S. Mail, outreach partners mechanisms for communications and other media outlets such as newspaper and radio to provide notices Strategically engage local, special SGMA identified groups Utilize local channels and meetings to identify and communicate opportunities for public engagement and/or public comment during meetings on GSP development Leverage and support local agencies and community organizations in disseminating information and engaging stakeholders, including through existing community meetings, newsletters, websites, and social media Organize public meetings around concrete impacts to specific stakeholders Develop additional, locally-targeted communities and community members
GSP adoption no later than January 31,	Prior to GSP adoption or amendment	 Provide notice to cities and counties within Plan area 	SEE ABOVE
2022		• Consider comments provided	

Timeframe	Milestone or Stage	Required Community Engagement Under SGMA	Communication Strategies
		 by the cities and counties Accommodate requests for consultation received from the cities and counties within 30 days 	
GSP adoption no later than January 31, 2022	Prior to GSP adoption or amendment	No sooner than 90 days following public notice, hold public hearing/ public workshop	SEE ABOVE

Appendix A: Tribal Engagement Guidance Document

While there are not active Tribes in the Butte Subbasin, this information is included in order to inform the GSAs of SGMA requirements and best practices associated with tribal engagement.

Relevant DWR Information

SGMA Section 10720.3. ... any federally recognized Indian Tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a groundwater sustainability plan or groundwater management plan under this part through a joint powers authority or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. A participating Tribe shall be eligible to participate fully in planning, financing, and management under this part, including eligibility for grants and technical assistance, if any exercise of regulatory authority, enforcement, or imposition and collection of fees is pursuant to the Tribe's independent authority and not pursuant to authority granted to a groundwater sustainability agency under this part.

Draft Discussion Paper Tribal Participation with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies

http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/pdfs/SGMA Tribal GSAs.pdf

Must a local agency exclude federal and tribal lands from its service area when forming a

GSA?

No, federal lands and tribal lands need not be excluded from a local agency's GSA area if a local agency has jurisdiction in those areas; however, those areas are not subject to SGMA. But, a local agency in its GSA formation notice shall explain how it will consider the interests of the federal government and California Native American tribes when forming a GSA and developing a GSP. DWR strongly recommends that local agencies communicate with federal and tribal representatives prior to deciding to become a GSA. As stated in Water Code §10720.3, the federal government or any federally recognized Indian tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a GSP or groundwater management plan through a JPA or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. Water Code References: §10720.3, §10723.2, §10723.8

Tribal Outreach Resources

The follow are links to agency tribal outreach resources and considerations, each of which captures important principles and resources for tribal outreach. A short summary of key outreach principles can be found below.

- Draft Discussion Paper Tribal Participation with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
- CalEPA Tribal Consultation Policy Memo (August 2015)
- DWR Tribal Engagement Policy (May 2016)
- CA Natural Resources Agency Tribal Consultation Policy (November 2012)

- <u>SWRCB Proposed Tribal Beneficial Uses</u>
- <u>Butte County Associate of Governments: Policy For Government-To-Government</u> <u>Consultation With Federally Recognized Native American Tribal Governments</u> (a model from the transportation sector)
- <u>CA Court Tribal Outreach and Engagement Strategies</u>
- <u>Traditional Ecological Knowledge resources</u>
- <u>Water Education Foundation Tribal Water Issues</u>

Key Outreach Principles

- Engage early and often
- Consider tribal beneficial uses in decision-making (identified by region <u>here</u>); identify and seek to protect tribal cultural resources
- Share relevant documentation with tribal officials
- Conduct meetings at times convenient for tribal participation with ample notifications
- Request relevant process input/data/information from tribes
- Empower tribes to act as tribal cultural resources caretakers
- Designate a tribal liaison(s) where appropriate
- Share resources for tribal involvement as is feasible
- Develop MOUs where relevant
- Be mindful of the traditions and cultural norms of tribes in your area

Key Outreach Partners/Liaisons

The following are potential partners for Butte County tribal SGMA outreach:

- <u>SGMA Tribal Advisory Group (TAG)</u>: "The Tribal Advisory Group (TAG) includes tribal leadership, subject matter experts, and technical and non-technical members of local, academic, and tribal governments that are actively engaged in local groundwater management and will be key in local implementation of SGMA. TAG members will be responsible for distribution of information and resources to their respective tribes and organizations."
- <u>California Indian Water Commission, Inc.</u>
- DWR Office of Tribal Advisor
- DWR Regional Office

Appendix B: Media Contact List

Media Outlet

Action News Now Chico Enterprise Record Chico News and Review Gridley Herald KCHO News KRCR Channel 7 KRBS KZFR NCEN News 10 Oroville Mercury Register (Legals) Durham Community Voice Colusa Sun Herald Glenn County Transcript

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