

**ACWA Groundwater Committee
Meeting Recap
Wednesday, September 22, 2021**

Chair: John Woodling
Vice Chair: Michael Markus
ACWA Liaison: Soren Nelson
ACWA Analyst: Meghan Cook

Groundwater Committee Members: Log in to your [ACWA.com account](#) to access presentation materials archived on the [Groundwater Committee webpage](#).

Agenda: Link

Department of Water Resources Update (DWR SGMO Team)
(See slides for more details)

Paul Gosselin introduced himself as the new Deputy Director for Statewide Groundwater Management and gave a brief update on the state of groundwater during the drought.

Steven Springhorn gave an update on CalGroundWater (CalGW) 2020. There is a highlights document that summarizes key findings and recommendations. There is also a statewide report. The data cutoff for the report was the end of 2018, which leaves a latency gap. There is also a web app called California's Groundwater Live (CalGW Live), which is meant to address that gap between the 5 year updates on the report.

Steven reminded the committee that DWR is currently collecting fall groundwater level measurements from agencies and seeks to complete this around mid-October. There are upcoming workshops to help transition data from CASGEM to SGMA Groundwater Monitoring.

Steven gave a brief explainer on GSPs as a foundation for accounting, allocations, and trading. The three main areas they are tracking are: the EDF/CA Water Data Consortium effort, internal DWR effort to continue water budget handbook, and working with CWC on trading efforts.

Craig Altare updated on June GSP decision releases. Other critically overdrafted basins will receive decisions through January 2022. Others are submitting first plans by January 2022. DWR will host a webinar in late October on submitting GSPs via the SGMA Portal.

Keith Wallace gave a presentation on DWR funding efforts. (See slides).

Melissa Sparks-Kranz discussed Action 11 from the April 21, 2021 Executive Drought Proclamation. Their office is collaborating with the SWRCB to work on this. Melissa went over

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DWR's public engagement process thus far. DWR released a draft document on September 8th. They are now taking public comment on the document.

Q&A

Question: Do you see potential funding for the next round of GSPs?

Answer: The budget language still allows for planning funding, and that can include GSP updates.

State Water Resources Control Board Update: (Natalie Stork, Chief, Groundwater Management Program)

Natalie gave a brief update on their role assisting DWR with GSP reviews and providing input on GSP decisions.

California Water Commission Update (Laura Jensen, Assistant Executive Officer) (See slides for more details)

Laura provided an update on in-basin groundwater trading. CWC's role is to hold public conversations, particularly with vulnerable users. This will feed into a multi-agency whitepaper that considers the role of the state in groundwater trading and explores the characteristics of well-managed trading. The white paper will be released in March of 2022.

CWC is currently seeking feedback on points of divergence, particularly around best practices. What information can the state offer that would be helpful? What areas should the state weigh in on? In what ways should trading occur?

Committee comment: Land use is a big question. When water allocations are uncertain into the future, it makes planning difficult. When agricultural land must come out of production, it must stay fallowed and weed free to avoid evapotranspiration (ET) that would be detected by satellite or other measurements used for regulation. Habitat restoration will have ET, and this must be addressed.

Groundwater Policy Principles Update (Michael Marcus, Vice Chair)

The new ACWA Groundwater Policy Principles were finalized in August and are available at <https://www.acwa.com/resources/acwa-groundwater-management-policy-principles/>.

Legislative Issue Subcommittee Update (Anjannette Shadley)

No Update

SGMA Implementation Subcommittee Update (Trevor Joseph)

The subcommittee has been meeting to identify issues and challenges, as well as lessons learned and best management practices, on GSP development and implementation. The subcommittee is exploring ways to strengthen the relationship with DWR and SWRCB and have them join some of these meetings to help interpret or explain some of the requirements.

Groundwater Quality Subcommittee Update (Greg Woodside)

Greg reported that Lisa Porta gave a talk on water quality management in GSPs at the last meeting. The subcommittee has reviewed two recently released reports on groundwater quality.

ACWA Committee Appointment Process for 2022-23 (Petra Rice, ACWA)

The committee appointment process for 2022-23 is under way. Your ACWA committee appointment is NOT automatically renewed. Submit your application to ACWA by September 30. You can find the form at <https://www.acwa.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Composition-and-Consideration-Form.pdf>.

ACWA Federal Issues Update (David Reynolds, ACWA)

Senate bipartisan infrastructure bill: A contingent of moderates have convinced Speaker Pelosi to guarantee a vote on the bill by a specified date. The reconciliation bill is likely slipping into October, as there is deep division among Democrats on the bill. There is funding for groundwater storage, including a small grants program and an aging infrastructure account.

Democrats are also pushing a continuing resolution to keep the government open until December 3rd to avoid a September 30th shutdown. The parties are bickering over raising the debt ceiling.

ACWA State Legislation Update (Kristopher Anderson, ACWA)

Bills are now at the Governor's desk and we are waiting for his signature.

ACWA has supported AB 252, sponsored by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) that would create a grant program to support repurposing of agricultural lands fallowed as a result of SGMA implementation. This program was instead folded into a budget bill that has passed. EDF will likely continue to seek more funding for the program.

AB 350, sponsored by American Farmland Trust, was made a 2 year bill, and will come back next year. The bill would have created a technical assistant program to support landowners in reducing groundwater use or apply for funding to reduce use.

ACWA Conference Update (Melanie Medina, ACWA)

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The 2021 Fall Conference will be an in-person conference in Pasadena and the groundwater committee will meet in person during the conference. Online registration is available until November 19. Click [here](#) to register. There will also be a virtual option to join the conference.

ACWA Presidential Election: ACWA staff will ask the board to approve the use of a virtual voting system in addition to the required in-person voting. An announcement will come out after the board makes a decision.

Question: Is there a cap on in-person registration? Answer: No, there is no maximum. The number set by the state before proof of vaccination or negative COVID test is required is 1,000 people.

Update on GRA's Strategic Plan, Initiatives, and Events (Abigail Madrone, Groundwater Resources Association)

(See slides for more details)

Abigail provided an introduction to the mission and role of GRA. GRA is a volunteer led organization that supports state and professional association partners. She encouraged ACWA members to join GRA as volunteers.