

Board Meeting Recap: Jan 2021

Hydrogeological Modeling Scenarios Reviewed

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency's January board meeting was held Thursday, January 28, and was conducted via all-remote, web- and phone-based access due to the coronavirus prevention guidelines. The agency welcomed two new board members: Manu Koenig from the County of Santa Cruz, and Mark Smolley from the San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD). Also, private well owner Angela Franklin's resignation from the board was announced – the board will make an appointment to fill the vacancy at the February meeting.

SMGWA continues its work to develop the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), a requirement of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), due in early 2022.

The board reviewed the Basin's problem statement that they had worked on in December and provided feedback on the specific sections. The meeting's GSP elements development session focused on the results of hydrogeological modeling scenarios for possible projects and management actions that would help the basin achieve sustainability. The proposed climate projection scenario predicts a significant increase in the number of dry and critically dry years, and a decline in the total rainfall in the region. Higher predicted temperatures will result in more evapotranspiration. This, in turn, reduces the amount of recharge, which is the source of natural replenishment of the aquifers in the groundwater basin.

The board reviewed four modeling runs during the meeting, including the baseline that assumes a slight increase in demand for both municipal pumpers: 0.26% per year for SVWD and 0.18% per year for SLVWD. This was compared to project scenarios including aquifer storage and recovery (ASR), injection-only and in-lieu recharge. The first two of these scenarios involve putting water back into the aquifer through well injection well sites. In-lieu recharge means wells are allowed to rest during wet, winter months when surface water could be provided to groundwater users. None of the project scenarios resulted in a desirable future outcome for the basin, to the effects of the drastically dryer climate projection scenario, the groundwater levels would continue to decline. The board requested that a different, less extreme, climate forecast be used for modeling.

In developing the GSP, SMGWA must identify projects and management actions that will achieve long-term sustainability for the basin. The agency can rely on programs and projects that will be undertaken by member agencies, rather than executing these efforts on its own.

Per agency bylaws, the board also elected officers for the 2021 calendar year. Chris Perri of SVWD was selected as chair; Gail Mahood of SLVWD as vice chair; and Jack Dilles of the City of Scotts Valley as secretary. The board also received quarterly reports on financials and community outreach.

The next SMGWA Board of Directors meeting will be held Thursday, Feb. 25, at 5:30 p.m. More information at www.smgwa.org.



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