

2016 Year in Review

Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Formation

As we approach the June 30, 2017 deadline to form a Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), the Water Resources Association of Yolo County (WRA) and the Yolo County Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) want to take a moment to summarize what we have accomplished in 2016. But first, we would like to thank all who have been engaged in this process. Participants' demonstrated dedication, willingness, and creativity in an effort to accomplish this task. This has allowed us to establish our region as a leader in SGMA implementation in California. Hopefully, this leadership will put us in a good position to receive future grant funding as we move into Groundwater Sustainability Plan development and lessen the overall future financial burden on our organizations and constituents. While we still have several remaining issues to resolve, we feel confident that we are well on our way to forming a collaborative, mostly county-wide GSA.

The decisions made by the Yolo GSA Implementation Working Group of the WRA and Farm Bureau include the following:

- Agreed to consolidate the four Bulletin 118 groundwater basins into a county-wide Yolo Subbasin
- Agreed on Management Areas to define hydrogeologic characteristics
- Agreed to transition the WRA to the GSA and to operate as a single organization
- Developed a governance structure to maintain governance and decision making at the lowest (grassroots) level allowed by the legislation
- Developed a decision tree graphic for demonstrating how participating eligible entities can preserve existing authority, jurisdiction, and responsibility
- Agreed to a 2-year timeframe for reopening the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Agreement to review and adjust where necessary
- Agreed to develop, as part of the GSP process, water balances for each eligible entity. These individual water balances will be incorporated into a subbasin-wide water balance in order to assess and demonstrate overall GSA sustainability. We will accomplish this using the WEAP model and working with SEI. Grant monies have been secured to perform this work.

Major issues still to be resolved while finalizing the JPA Agreement include

- 1) deciding on a voting structure,
- 2) establishing a fee allocation for the first two years, and
- 3) administration of the white areas.

Significant Outreach Activities

- Approximately 75 outreach events took place throughout the year, these include presentations to different government jurisdictions (cities, counties, special districts, water districts, etc.), private well owners, nongovernmental organizations, and individual stakeholders.
- Established and maintained the <https://yologroundwater.org> website
- Conducted a County-wide groundwater subsidence monitoring survey
- Continued the WRA Groundwater Monitoring Program, including 11 real-time groundwater monitoring sensors
- Collaborated with Stanford University on the Status of the Formation of GSAs Report: Stanford Water in the West Report
- Maintained consistent dialogue and coordination with the Department of Water Resources
- Conducted three Yolo SGMA Public Meetings, attended by more than 500 people
- Conducted Yolo County Farmer Focus Groups, interviewed 25 farmers

We look forward to finalizing a Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) compliant JPA Agreement. Our hope is to have a final document available in early March for review and approval so we can meet the June 30, 2017 deadline and avoid State intervention in our groundwater basin.

For further information regarding the SGMA process in Yolo County please contact Denise Sagara at denise@yolofarmbureau.org or Tim O'Halloran at tohalloran@yocfcd.org or visit our website at <https://yologroundwater.org>.