

Wyandotte Creek GSA Advisory Committee Meeting

Access meeting materials at: <https://www.wyandottecreekgsa.com/>

Meeting Brief

- **Overview:** This was the fifth meeting of the Wyandotte Creek Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Advisory Committee (WAC) [[Access Meeting Recording](#)].
- **Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee Reports:** The WAC received verbal updates from the Management Committee.
- **Implementation Costs & Funding Mechanism Options:** The WAC began initial discussions related to implementation costs associated with GSA administration, data gaps, and PMAs and explored possible funding mechanisms [[Access presentation](#)]. The WAC provided input and possible recommendations to the Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee.
- **Projects and Management Actions (PMAs) Discussion:** The WAC received an overview of submitted Wyandotte Creek GSA PMAs, engaged in preliminary evaluation of PMAs, and reviewed next steps. WAC members provided feedback [[Submitted PMA Table](#) | [PMA Submittal \(Sherwood\)](#)].
- **Next Steps:** The WAC will meet again via video conference on June 3, 2021, from 9:00-12:00.

Action Items

Item	Lead Person(s)	Completion
Upload meeting recording to the website.	Chris Heindell (Thermalito Water and Sewer)	Complete Access Here
Finalize April WAC Meeting Summary and upload to the website.	CBI & Management Committee	
Submit an additional PMA focused on plans to expand water reuse facility and increase water treatment capacity at Thermalito Water and Sewer.	Chris Heindell (Thermalito Water and Sewer)	
Research and evaluate potential venues and logistical considerations for hybrid meetings.	CBI & Management Committee	

Summary

Introductions & Agenda Review

The facilitator, T. Carlone (Consensus Building Institute, CBI) welcomed participants and reviewed the meeting agenda. WAC members and Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee representatives introduced themselves and welcomed Nicole Johansson, the newest WAC member.

Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

No comments.

Meeting Notes Review & Consideration

WAC members reviewed and approved the April 1, 2021, meeting summary [[Access Here](#)].

Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee Reports

The Wyandotte Creek GSA Board met on April 22, 2021 [[Access Materials](#)]. K. Peterson (Butte County) thanked all WAC members that submitted PMA ideas. The board received an update on GSP progress, timeline, and schedule. The next meeting will take place on May 27th. The new multi-completion monitoring well in the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin is moving forward and currently being drilled. On May 11, the Butte Board of Supervisors is going to consider appointing the last seat of the Wyandotte Creek GSA Board for the alternate position representing agricultural users. The draft SMC chapter will be released for a 30-day public comment period in the coming weeks.

Implementation Costs & Funding Mechanism Options

The WAC began initial discussions related to implementation costs associated with GSA administration, data gaps, and PMAs and explored possible funding mechanisms [[Access presentation](#)]. The WAC provided input and possible recommendations to the Wyandotte Creek GSA Management Committee.

Costs

J. Turner and P. Gosselin reviewed the various costs to consider for GSP implementation, including (1) GSA operations, (2) monitoring and reporting, (3) data gaps, and (4) PMAs.

1. GSA Operations – Wyandotte Creek GSA Costs

P. Gosselin reviewed the current structure for funding and staffing for the Wyandotte Creek GSA. The GSA was formed a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) between the City of Oroville, Thermalito Water and Sewer District, and Butte County. These three agencies formed one Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) with a five-member board and an advisory committee (WAC). The JPA has financial terms, including SGMA fee authority, did not designate employees, and specify possible contracts with engineers and others. The base operation is achieved through in-kind Member Agency staff support and through voluntary Member Agency contributions.

The Member Agencies support the public agency functions including Board meetings, Brown Act compliance, discloses information in a transparent way through the agency website, as well as other administrative functions. Staff also helps develop and review GSP chapters and sends notifications to the public through a designated listserv.

Member agencies voluntarily contribute \$5,000 per year per Member Agency for a \$15,000 annual budget. This budget is used to fund the Legal Services Contract, insurance, auditing, website maintenance, and other tasks such as well permitting and advertisement. This budget is geared towards GSP development but not necessarily implementation. There may be some things that member agencies are able to carry out, such as GSP implementation actions (e.g., annual report, monitoring). However,

new responsibilities of the Wyandotte Creek GSA will need a funding source (e.g., grants, fees). Potential new responsibilities include investigations, projects, additional data collection (e.g., pumping data), and ordinances.

2. *Monitoring & Reporting*

J. Turner covered potential costs associated with monitoring and reporting. These costs include annual monitoring, which could be potentially covered by the Butte County Monitoring Project. Other reporting estimates could range between \$20,000 - \$80,000. Further, the GSA will need to complete five-year updates. Costs will depend on conditions, ranging from approximately \$50,000 to \$100,000.

3. *Data Gaps*

J. Turner reviewed data gaps identified, which would be required for compliance, as well as data improvement opportunities summarized in the table below. Geosyntec reviewed costs associated with compliance data gaps, as they are short-term priorities.

	Description	Estimated Costs
<i>Compliance Gaps</i>	Stream Aquifer Interactions	Stream gauges and Shallow Groundwater Monitoring Wells <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream Gauges – Three Staging Areas - \$30,000 - \$50,000 Monitoring Wells - \$350 - \$450 per foot One 100 Foot Well - \$35,000 to \$45,000 Assessments - \$20,000 - \$50,000 Development of Appropriate SMCs - \$20,000 - \$40,000
	Water Quality Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well Needed Near 28L001M (approx. 200-foot Depth) Cost \$350-\$450 per Foot - \$70,000 - \$90,000 Well.
<i>Data Improvements</i>	Groundwater Monitoring Network Improvements	TBD
	Groundwater Recharge Assessment	TBD
	Further Evaluate Bottom of Subbasin	TBD
	Refine Hydrogeologic Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AEM Survey 	TBD

4. *Projects & Management Actions (PMAs)*

Funding Mechanisms

GSAs can pursue various funding mechanisms to finance the costs mentioned above. These include DWR Technical Support Services program for well installation, Proposition 68 Implementation Grants associated with PMAs, other funding opportunities from the Governor’s Office, as well as other applicable U.S. Department of Agriculture grant opportunities (e.g., irrigation efficiency improvements). Lastly, the GSAs can establish fees to cover costs.

Discussion:

- D. Kehn (CalWater) asked about the timing and deadlines to apply for the funding opportunities mentioned. P. Gosselin shared that the Management Committee will work to solicit and keep track of state and federal grant opportunities. There is a considerable amount of money available for water resources projects. Grant applications will be principally completed in house.
- N. Johansson (ag rep) asked about the level of competition for the funds mentioned and whether the GSA is at a disadvantage compared to critically over drafted basins. P. Gosselin shared the Management Committee's intent is to get direction from the board on prioritization to be prepared in February grant applications in thereafter. Further, he mentioned that grants have been and will be awarded in two rounds, the first, which has already passed, was solely focused on critically over drafted basins and the second will focus on other medium and high priority basins for GSPs to be submitted January 2022. Further, the new state budget may include additional funding for projects to improve drought preparedness and water supply reliability. Further, this WAC member shared her experience from a recent webinar that outlined fire resilience opportunities and encouraged looking for synergies and collaboration with other partners.
- A. Hussein (Geosyntec) asked the WAC about their perspective on the type of role the Wyandotte Creek GSA would play during GSP implementation. Will the GSA play a more active and involved role or a more subtle, oversight role?
- N. Johansson (ag rep) shared her experience from an agricultural perspective on a state-wide basis. Since funding and resources are limited, she suggested taking an oversight and advisory role and delegating project work to GSA member agencies. A. Hussein (Geosyntec) clarified that member agencies can submit their own grant applications. In his experience in other basins, GSAs can identify the most important project(s) per subbasin, and the member agency can prepare the grant and bare the costs including matching funds.
- A. Hussein prompted additional discussion related to filling data gaps. P. Gosselin shared that, in general, the GSA Board wants the agency to only take actions needed to achieve sustainability and not become a bigger agency. Given the nature of the basin, the board suggested following the most simple and straightforward approach towards maintaining sustainability.
- M. Thompson (City of Oroville) expressed concern regarding Member Agency staff time and availability. P. Gosselin suggested securing a dedicated funding stream to fund GSA operations to help bring security for the long run.
- D. Kehn supported the idea of the GSA Board maintaining an advisory role if external funds are available and successfully secured. If the GSA misses out on a grant opportunity, he wondered if the GSA would have the flexibility to change the structure. P. Gosselin shared the board can change policy and direction at any time. The Wyandotte GSA Board, as an independent agency, is responsible for assuring the plan will be implemented and the basin achieves sustainability. A recommendation to the board could be to have member agencies take the lead as a preference, but the GSA can play a bigger role if conditions change. D. Williams agreed with this perspective.
- P. Gosselin shared that one of the funding options could be achieved through fees to support GSA operations, particularly if the agency would like to pursue an active role in implementing PMAs. Agencies would need to assess what is the minimal needs and requirements vs. what the GSA would like to pursue. Once that is established, the GSA would need to assess funding mechanisms. One WAC member suggested that given the current basin conditions, it didn't appear that imposing fees would be needed.

Projects and Management Actions (PMAs)

The WAC received an overview of submitted Wyandotte Creek GSA PMAs, engaged in preliminary evaluation of PMAs, and reviewed next steps. WAC members provided feedback [[Submitted PMA Table](#) | [PMA Submittal \(Sherwood\)](#)].

A. Hussein provided an overview of the PMAs received and encouraged WAC members to include as many potential PMAs as possible in the GSP as those projects would then become eligible for funding. K. Peterson (Butte County) shared that additional PMA ideas will be submitted in the next few days. Geosyntec will proceed with the PMA evaluation and begin drafting the associated chapter.

Ideas Submitted

A. Hussein reviewed submitted PMAs, which include the following:

- ▶ **Orville Wildlife Area Robinson's Riffle Restoration Project:** This PMA was proposed by the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency, which is currently in the planning stages. The project costs approximately \$1.67M and would have multiple benefits, including hydraulic, ecological, recreational, flood management, educational and local economic benefits. In terms of benefits to the GSA, this project would enhance stream flows and floodplain inundation. A. Hussein shared this project has significant potential. Timing, application status, and other details still need greater clarification. The application for funding to be received for this project would only cover planning costs, not implementation costs.
- ▶ **Sherwood Groundwater Recharge:** Two projects submitted in the conceptual stages could be pursued by private landowners. The project costs and feasibility are still to be determined, and it would entail a series of injection wells and infiltration basins to store stormwater. Permitting requirements would need to be considered and explored in conversation with the landowners. The timing described ranges from 1 to 5 years. Additional details are still needed, including the land and acre-feet of water available.
- ▶ **Mardesich Groundwater Recharge:** This project is similar to the previous idea. It would be pursued by private landowners to capture and store stormwater through a series of injection wells and infiltration basins.

Discussion:

- N. Johansson (ag rep) asked a clarifying question regarding the process to include PMAs. A. Hussein clarified that PMAs included in the initial draft will be eligible for DWR implementation funding. The GSA will update the plan every five years, as well as in the interim, if needed. The GSA would want to be ready to apply for funding opportunities as they emerge. P. Gosselin shared that having a broad spectrum of potential PMAs, from planned to conceptual, demonstrates a range of possibilities and contingencies to build upon to reach sustainability.
- N. Johansson (ag rep) has two additional concepts that do not have specific details attached to them. She would like to pursue additional discussion related to water storage as well as additional infrastructure for water conveyance. A. Hussein shared these two concepts could be discussed in the GSP narrative as concepts to explore in the future. P. Gosselin clarified that a surface water storage project may not be viable or practical due to water right considerations. That said, the basin could do an initial evaluation of FloodMAR opportunities for recharge in different parts of the basin to store

high winter floods and recharge into the basin. Further, J. Turner shared these PMAs need to be tied to the SMC (groundwater levels, etc.).

- K. Peterson (Butte County) followed up on the application status and timeframe for the Oroville Wildlife Area Robinson's Riffle Restoration Project. K. Peterson shared the project was submitted to two funding opportunities and the project proponent is still awaiting a response.
- D. Kehn shared CalWater is expecting to submit an additional PMA focused on water conservation, tied to the Urban Water Management Plan update currently under review.
- C. Heindell (Thermalito Water and Sewer) shared additional details on the PMAs they submitted focused on water conservation, use-efficiency, recharge, and conjunctive use to offset groundwater demands. Low-flow fixture rebate programs would be the most straightforward to implement. C. Heindell will include an additional PMA focused on some plans to expand water reuse facilities, possibly double water treatment capacity, and offset groundwater demand.
- P. Gosselin (Butte County) and K. McKillop (South Feather Water and Power) shared details regarding the Palermo Clean Water Improvement Plan to address water quality and quantity issues for domestic well owners. In terms of water supply, the Sierra Institute would evaluate extending infrastructure to South Feather Water and Power service area and provide clean water to the communities. This project would be ready to be submitted to various grant opportunities in phases. In terms of the GSP lens, this project would target addressing water supply reliability and groundwater demand reduction through in-lieu recharge. In terms of the water quality concerns, connecting communities to clean water supply would not alleviate the groundwater contamination concerns in the area related to onsite septic systems. There are stormwater, drainage, and water quality issues that need to be addressed. The infrastructure cost for treating the wastewater has been cost prohibitive at this point and remains a significant issue. P. Gosselin stated this project has significant funding opportunities from state and federal sources and has very high likelihood for implementation. Further, Butte County included this project as a priority for federal funding sources.
- K. McKillop (South Feather Water and Power) shared details on the PMA Hydrant Metering to Reduce Non-Beneficial Consumptive Use. The PMA seeks to improve ways to better quantify water usage and water loss.
- A member of the public submitted two conceptual projects to expand water storage along Wilson Creek, which is outside of the subbasin but is a tributary of the North Honcut Creek (Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems). This PMA could support the creek system's health and has potential for stormwater capture during high stream flows. Another PMA submitted related to old mining tailings that could be used to capture seasonal runoff for either recharge or support storage and conveyance projects. The last PMA related to stormwater capture and storage of tailwater from irrigation and then recharge at specific properties with surface water rights. P. Gosselin shared these recharge opportunities are critically important. The GSA could consider an umbrella proposal to evaluate FloodMAR opportunities, tied to taking high flows during wet cycles, and highlighting individual concepts and potential opportunities to evaluate within the first three years to analyze water right implications and other considerations.
- Lastly, P. Gosselin shared the County is undergoing a 10-year update to its General Plan. This process opens opportunities to evaluate policies and actions related to land-use that could be directly applicable to groundwater sustainability. P. Gosselin and his team will be working on the changes to the Water Element within the General Plan and will bring issues and updates to the WAC for input

when available. Further, the Vina GSA is working on a survey collaborating with agricultural water users and the Farm Bureau to evaluate practices and barriers to adopt irrigation efficiencies in the basin. WAC members would like to receive updates on issues and findings that are applicable to the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin as well. Further, A. Hussein encouraged the County to encourage FloodMAR opportunities and other recharge and conservation opportunities.

Future Meeting Arrangements

T. Carlone (CBI) requested the WAC's feedback related to their level of comfort with a hybrid and in-person meeting arrangements.

- D. Kehn (CalWater) supported the idea of pursuing hybrid engagement opportunities within the next two months, given safety measures and clear expectations are in place.
- N. Johansson (ag rep) supports the idea as well and suggested looking at local schools as possible venues.
- D. Spangler (DWR) suggested maintaining a call-in option to allow for remote participation.
- P. Gosselin (Butte County) expects significant changes in the public safety protocols regulating in person meetings.

Next Steps

- The Management Committee and technical consulting team will conduct additional analysis on PMAs submitted. The consulting team will reach out to project proponents and gather as much information as possible to quantify water savings, timeframe for implementation, and other funding information. After the analysis, the WAC will focus on defining prioritization and implementation process. The draft PMA and Implementation Chapters will be released for public review in the coming months.
- The facilitation team will work with the Management Committee to evaluate potential venues and logistic considerations.
- The WAC will meet again via video conference on June 3, 2021, from 9:00-12:00.

Meeting Participants

Participant	Representation/Affiliation	Present
Wyandotte Creek GSA Advisory Committee (WAC) Members		
David Kehn	California Water Service	Y
Darin Williams	Agricultural Water User	Y
Duke Sherwood	Agricultural Water User	N
Kristen McKillop	South Feather Water and Power	Y
Nicole Johansson	Agricultural Water User	Y
Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Member Agency Staff		
Paul Gosselin	Butte County	Y
Kelly Peterson	Butte County	Y
Matt Thompson	City of Oroville	N
Chris Heindell	Thermalito Water and Sewer	Y
Technical Consultants		
Joe Turner	Geosyntec	Y
Amer Hussein	Geosyntec	Y
State Agencies		
Debbie Spangler	Department of Water Resources (DWR) Northern Region Office (NRO)	Y
Facilitator		
Tania Carlone	Consensus Building Institute	Y
Mariana Rivera-Torres	Consensus Building Institute	Y

Approximately 3 members of the public participated.