



Corning Subbasin Advisory Board



Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Members

Matt Hansen -- Dave Lester -- Steve Gruenwald -- Ian Turnbull (Alternate)
John Amaro -- Brian Mori -- Julia Violich -- Grant Carmon (Alternate)

Corning Subbasin Advisory Board

March 27, 2024 | 2:00 p.m.

Location | 794 Third Street, Corning, CA 96021

Alternate Location | 1177 Magnolia Ave., Larkspur, CA 96021

And Teleconference

Special Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

Member Hansen called the Corning Subbasin Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (TCFCWCD)	Corning Sub-basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) (CSGSA)
X Steven Gruenwald	X John Amaro
X Dave Lester	X Brian Mori
X Matt Hansen	X *Julia Violich (joined at 2:26)
X Ian Turnbull (Alternate)	X Grant Carmon (Alternate)

Other participants: Lisa Hunter (Glenn County Water Resources Coordinator), Kaitlyn Murray (Glenn County), Justin Jenson (Tehama County Deputy Director of Public Works – Water Resources), Nichole Bethurem (Tehama County), *Brandon Davison (California Department of Water Resources (DWR)), *Bryan David, Eddy Teasdale (Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE)), *Jaime Lely, *Jim, *Jim Brobeck, Luke Alexander, Marisa Perez-Reyes (Stantec), Martin Spannaus, *Michael Snyder, Michael Ward, *Ronna Bowers, Shanna Long (Tehama County Farm Bureau)

* = online participant

3. Period of Public Comment

Martin Spannaus provided a public comment to express appreciation to the CSAB and support staff for their work of managing the Subbasin.

4. Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Determination Response

Mr. Eddy Teasdale, Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE), shared the overall timeline for revising and resubmitting the Corning Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) which includes the following upcoming meetings:

- March 28, CSGSA Committee Meeting

- April 4, Joint GSA Meeting to pass Resolutions to develop Well Mitigation and Demand Management Programs as part of the revised GSP
 - April 11, CSGSA Committee Meeting to adopt revised GSP
 - April 15, TCFCWCD Board Meeting to adopt revised GSP
- a. *** Review and recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies on setting revised Minimum Thresholds and Sustainable Management Criteria for Groundwater Levels**

Mr. Teasdale reviewed the technical team’s approach to managing the subbasin by special zones of concern to achieve a more locally-specific management approach to address declining groundwater levels. The special zones are consistent with the Tehama County Groundwater Commission ad hoc’s proposal.

Members of the CSAB asked questions about the special zones:

- Member Gruenwald expressed concern that the groundwater level data may be underestimating the rate of decline. Mr. Teasdale replied that these areas would remain in the special zones. Member Gruenwald contended that it would likely increase the area of the special zones.
- Member Turnbull called attention to declining groundwater levels outside the special zone. Member Lester said the special zones are more concerned with dry wells than with declining groundwater levels. Mr. Teasdale confirmed that the definition needs to be changed to not only account for dry wells but to also respond to declining groundwater levels.
- Member Turnbull requested clarification on the 2x seasonal variation that has now been modified; whereby, Mr. Teasdale explained that after discussions with DWR the buffer in areas outside of special zones had been changed from 2x the seasonal variation to 20 feet. Mr. Teasdale confirmed that at least two thirds of the subbasin would be inside the special zones (and about 20 wells would be outside the special zones). Member Mori likened the approach to that being taken in the Colusa Subbasin.

Member Lester made a motion to use the same methodology as proposed in the Red Bluff Subbasin using 1.5 feet of groundwater elevation decline per year. Member Gruenwald objected to using the long-term average to calculate the 1.5 feet of decline per year. Mr. Carmon requested clarification on the data and methodology used to develop the proposed minimum threshold (MT).

In regards to the data package included in the meeting packet, Mr. Teasdale clarified that the MT shown in the hydrographs are not up to date with the proposed methodology. Member Turnbull observed that the special zones do not correspond to the polygons and asked how the management would be reflective of that. Mr. Teasdale replied that the management would be tailored to the polygons. The special zone boundaries will be refined to match the polygons better. Mr. Teasdale highlighted as well that the Tehama County portion of the subbasin will

have a more accurate estimate of the number of dry wells this time next year as a result of the well registration program.

- Member of the public Luke Alexander asked why a task force couldn't be created now, to confirm the number of dry wells. Mr. Teasdale clarified that the GSAs need to make decisions about the Minimum Thresholds based on the data they have now, and that work could be accomplished after the resubmission to verify dry wells. There was some pressure to understand whether grant funds can or should go toward it now, without waiting for the well mitigation program to go into effect in about 2026.

Member Gruenwald reflected that it appears the technical team is taking a more conservative approach in the Corning Subbasin compared to Red Bluff Subbasin. He asked how those differences will be addressed at the bordering areas. Member Lester replied that a greater percentage of the Corning Subbasin is in a zone of concern because there are more dry wells. Mr. Teasdale confirmed there is more emphasis on the Corning Subbasin because of the data sets that exist. Member Gruenwald expressed concern that the zones are located near to areas of new development.

Shanna Long, Tehama County Farm Bureau, suggested that 2022 was an anomalous year in the Corning Water District because they did not take surface water due to the high price. Ms. Long said the Subbasin has identified recharge projects, but not put them in place yet. Mr. Teasdale confirmed that DWR will let the GSAs revise the MTs. The message they have heard from DWR is that recharge will not be enough, but it is an important part. Ms. Long asked why Tehama County was further behind Glenn or Butte County in implementing recharge projects. Mr. Teasdale noted that it was because the County didn't have resources to do so until this past December. Jenny Marr with DWR is working with the team now to expedite recharge.

The Advisory Board considered a motion made by Member Lester, second by Member Gruenwald to set the criteria to establish special zones at a rate of decline of 1.5 feet per year. During further discussion, it was clarified that 1.5 feet per year decline includes the historical record; whereby, Member Gruenwald reiterated his concern over the length of time included in the calculation. MTs in special zones would be set at the 2015-2022 low and outside of special zones, the MT would be set at the 2015-2022 low with a 20 foot buffer.

Ayes: Members Lester, Gruenwald, Amaro, Violich and Hansen

Noes: Member Mori

Absent: None

c. * Review and recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to adopt Well Mitigation Resolution (advanced on Agenda)

Mr. Jenson presented the Draft Demand Management Resolution which lists the components that will be included as part of the future Well Mitigation Program, including program eligibility criteria, the application process, identification of mitigation measures (including cross-referencing existing programs and resources), and funding and financing (likely through fees and

assessments). See meeting packet for details. As a point of reference, mitigating 150 wells (assuming about \$20,000 per well) could cost approximately \$3 million. The term for the program will start no later than January 1, 2026, in part because the funding source needs to be in place first, and will last until groundwater levels have stabilized. The GSAs may potentially backdate for dry wells that have already been replaced, but that is something that would be decided during development of the Well Mitigation Program.

Member Hansen recommended including a condition that wells in the Tehama County portion of the subbasin be registered to be considered eligible.

Member Carmon requested the program be specific to domestic wells only. Mr. Jenson shared that DWR does not view exclusion of irrigation wells (regardless of age) to be acceptable. Regardless, the decision of which type of well to consider eligible for the program is not something that needs to be resolved today. Ms. Hunter shared that what the Glenn Groundwater Authority heard from DWR in the Colusa Subbasin is different than what DWR told the Corning Subbasin.

It was clarified that the CSAB already provided a recommendation to the GSAs to adopt the resolution at the previous meeting, so no action is necessary.

b. * Review and recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to adopt Demand Management Resolution

Mr. Jenson presented the Draft Demand Management Resolution which lists components that may be included as part of the future Demand Management Program, including demand management implementation measures (be they voluntary or more constrictive) and funding and financing (likely fees and assessments). See meeting packet for details.

The CSAB discussed when the term date should start: January 1, 2026 or 2027. GSA staff differed in their opinion of which date is more reasonable. Members Mori, Turnbull, and Carmon expressed support for setting a program start date of January 1, 2027. Members Gruenwald and Hansen were in favor of January 1, 2026. A sense of urgency was expressed to establish a moratorium of some sort on new development, especially considering there are newer orchards on the west side that are not fully matured in their evapotranspiration.

Based on a question from member of the public Ms. Long, Mr. Jenson clarified this resolution in relationship to the similar ones presented to the TCFCWCD Board of Directors meeting on March 25 and Tehama County Groundwater Commission this morning (March 27). Ms. Long expressed concern that all the entities won't end up on the same page.

The CSAB discussed the potential for including or not including a moratorium in the resolution, as a stop-gap to manage groundwater demand before the program is in place. If there is a stop-gap, members would feel more comfortable starting the program in 2027. There was contention about whether a moratorium would have the desired effect of slowing down the rate of decline of groundwater levels. Regardless, both legal counsels would need to indicate what can and cannot be included in a moratorium. Additionally, implementation of a moratorium would take time (it wouldn't be effective on adoption of the resolution). Mr. Jenson shared that based on

his conversations with legal counsel, a moratorium in certain areas based on certain criteria would be possible. The group confirmed that it would not slow down the timeline of passing the resolution to include a moratorium. Additionally, it was clarified that a moratorium would have a specified end date.

Member Amaro shared concern that CSGSA's legal counsel may have different views from Tehama County's legal counsel. Mr. Jenson provided details about the GSAs' existing authorities regarding installation of new wells.

Ms. Hunter explained that because the two GSAs have separate processes in place to confer with their County's well permitting process, it may make sense to separate this from the resolution to develop a demand management program. It was additionally clarified that the draft resolution already includes a related line.

Members of the CSAB directed GSA staff to draft the language and make a recommendation to the Joint GSA to decide on what to include. There was general consensus to recommend a 2027 start date if the stop-gap measure was included.

d. * Review and recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to adopt Draft Revised portions of the Corning Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

This item was struck because the draft revised portions of the GSP were not available.

5. Groundwater Sustainability Agency Updates

Mr. Jenson shared that April 10 is the deadline for well registration in Tehama County. He stressed the value that data provides the GSA.

There were no updates from the CSGSA.

6. Corning Subbasin Advisory Board Member Reports and Comments

Member Carmon shared an update about flood control gates at Black Butte Reservoir noting that inter-agency discussions are underway to conduct a study. The project could increase available water storage by 79,000 acre-feet. There have also been discussion on excess flood flows, and there are evidently no claims on the water. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deferred and they are working with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation now to try and get flows diverted to augment groundwater recharge. He is in touch with Jenny Scheer, who is a part of LSCE's GSP implementation team.

7. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2024.

8. Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:08 PM.