



# 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 6, 2024 | 1:30 p.m.

Location | 794 Third Street, Corning, CA 96021

Alternate Location | 1177 Magnolia Ave., Larkspur, CA 95939

And Teleconference

### Special Meeting Minutes

#### 1. Call to Order

Member Hansen called the Corning Subbasin Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call

Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (TCFCWCD)	Corning Sub-basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CSGSA)
X Steven Gruenwald	X John Amaro
X Dave Lester	X Brian Mori
X Matt Hansen	X *Julia Violich (departed at 3:53)
X Ian Turnbull (Alternate)	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), Bill Davis, \*Bridget Lowry (Stantec), \*Curt Pierce (University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources), \*Eddy Teasdale (Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE)), \*Jaime Lely, Jenny Scheer (Water and Land Solutions), John McHugh (LSCE), Karen Jones, \*Maddie Munson (Water and Land Solutions), \*Marisa Perez-Reyes (Stantec), \*Philip Cramer (California Department of Fish and Wildlife), Ryan Fulton (Larry Walker Associates), Sharon, \*Toni Longley, Michael Ward

\* = online participant

#### 3. Period of Public Comment

A member of the public who identified themselves as Sharon offered public comment on three topics. Firstly, she relayed that people in the community are upset about Tehama County’s well registration program. Secondly, if a refund will offered to individual parcels as a result of the grand jury decision, the County should look into providing people the option of donating their refund, especially considering it would be very small in many cases and pose a greater cost to the County to administer. Sharon said no one has worked with the community about dry wells but that many would be willing to conserve water to help their neighbors.

Ryan Fulton, a consultant performing as District Engineer for the Corning Water District, shared that the Water District has, through a stakeholder-engaged process, identified recharge projects that would benefit the subbasin that they would like to share with the CSAB in the near future. He recommended convening an ad hoc of representatives who can bring an update back to this group. Members of the CSAB requested to agendaize this topic at a future meeting.

#### **4. Groundwater Sustainability Agency Updates**

Mr. Jenson reported that TCFCWCD has directed staff to develop two resolutions to include in the revised Red Bluff, Los Molinos, and Antelope Subbasin GSPs to commit to developing well mitigation and demand management programs after GSP resubmission, within 6-18 months. Mr. Jenson relayed that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has indicated that these resolutions will be accepted as a means to address the corresponding plan deficiencies. The resolutions have not been drafted yet. He offered that a similar set of resolutions could be prepared for the Corning Subbasin and, if so, a Joint GSA meeting of TCFCWCD and CSGSA be held to pass those resolutions.

- On the topic of well mitigation, there was agreement among CSAB members and staff that a well mitigation program would include investigative work to determine how many dry wells have been mitigated already, confirm that preexisting wells were destroyed, and other items. Some CSAB members expressed concern that a resolution to develop a program that could take up to a year to put in place could allow conditions in the subbasin to worsen in the interim.
- Discussion on this topic will be continued under Agenda Item 5.

Mr. Jenson also provided an update on the Grand Jury Report. A response will be drafted and presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

Ms. Hunter reported the CSGSA is supportive of passing resolutions committing to developing a demand management program and demand management program.

#### **5. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Determination Response**

On October 26, 2023, DWR determined the Corning Subbasin GSP to be “incomplete.” The GSAs have 180 days to address the deficiencies and resubmit the GSP for evaluation no later than April 23, 2024. The consulting team, Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE), are supporting the efforts to revise the Corning Subbasin GSP to address DWR’s comments.

Mr. John McHugh, LSCE, presented on the deficiencies that were identified by DWR and shared examples for how the GSAs could address them. The technical team is looking for direction from the GSAs, including recommendations from CSAB, on how the GSP should be revised, particularly related to projects and management actions and revising minimum thresholds (MT) for groundwater levels.

**b. \*Discussion and potential recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies on approach to develop a well mitigation program (advanced on the Agenda)**

Members of the CSAB provided considerations for a well mitigation program including eligibility, potential costs, and implementation approaches.

The CSAB entertained a motion by Member Lester seconded by Member Gruenwald for GSA staff to draft a resolution to develop a Corning Subbasin Well Mitigation Program as part of the revised GSP.

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

Noes: None

Absent: None

The CSAB requested a special meeting be scheduled so that they may review the details of the proposed resolution (including the timeline for development of the program) and provide input or requests for changes before the resolution goes to the GSA Boards for adoption.

**c. \*Discussion and potential recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies on approach to develop a demand management program (advanced on the Agenda)**

Mr. McHugh provided background information on the need for developing a demand management program, including details about the subbasin's water budget, sustainable yield, and estimated overdraft. He added that additional work is underway, funded by the GSP implementation grant (which will be discussed further under Agenda Item 6), to fill data gaps to better estimate current and future groundwater demand and understand the amount of groundwater needed to support groundwater dependent ecosystems and avoid depletion of interconnected surface waters.

There was some discussion among the CSAB and GSA staff about potential differences between demand management approaches for the Tehama County vs Glenn County portion of the Corning Subbasin as well as with neighboring subbasins in both Tehama and Glenn Counties.

Mr. McHugh presented the technical team's proposed approach for managing overdraft by breaking the subbasin into smaller areas ("polygons") and tracking annual groundwater level change over time, averaged over the last 20 years (i.e., average change in storage). See meeting packet for details. DWR's preliminary input on this approach was to consider land use changes, variable water year types, hybridizing model and empirical inputs, and more heavily weighting current conditions.

Member Lester raised concerns about the consequences of implementing a demand management program, resulting in restricted pumping. Other members of the CSAB replied that action does need to be taken by the GSAs to consider the future, and the consequences from not acting to implement a demand management program would be greater than the alternative.

CSAB Members recommended engaging Tehama County Environmental Health about the number, locations, and projected use of new wells to help estimate the groundwater pumping demand.

Projects and management actions (PMAs) can help with demand management (some of which have been funded and will be touched on under Agend Item 6). Additionally, demand management can include voluntary or involuntary actions, subject to analysis of legal or economic impacts.

Jenny Scheer, Water and Land Solutions, underscored the importance of conducting an economic analysis of the potential impacts of implementing involuntary demand management actions.

The CSAB entertained a motion by Member Gruenwald, seconded by Member Lester for GSA staff to draft a resolution to develop a Corning Subbasin Demand Management Program as part of the revised GSP.

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

Noes: None

Absent: None

**a. \*Discussion and potential recommendation to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies on Groundwater Level Sustainable Management Criteria**

Mr. McHugh described DWR's comments on the GSP determination that the GSAs better describe the effects of undesirable results and develop better justification for their minimum thresholds (MTs) that allow MTs to affect groundwater uses and users because existing conditions do not indicate that the Corning Subbasin is on track to reach sustainability because undesirable results are manifesting (e.g., wells have gone dry).

He provided an overview of how the groundwater level MTs were initially set in the 2022 GSP, distinguished by the characteristics of "stable" or "declining." He noted that the Colusa Subbasin is setting MTs based on whether or not a given area has experienced dry wells or subsidence since 2015. For those areas that have experienced those undesirable results, the Colusa Subbasin is setting the MT at the observed 2020-2022 groundwater low, whereas the other areas are being set between 10 and 25 feet lower than the observed 2020-2022 groundwater low. A similar approach could be taken in the Corning Subbasin.

Member Mori expressed concern that setting the MT at the observed groundwater level for the affected areas reduces the GSAs' flexibility to address the problem. GSA staff clarified that SGMA builds in time for groundwater levels to recover before the basin would be considered out of compliance.

Mr. McHugh shared considerations on recommended actions based on the technical team's discussions with DWR, including that DWR is not likely to approve a plan with MTs that allow greater than 10% of wells to dewater. GSA staff expressed concern that allowing the groundwater MT to stay where it is, associated with a well mitigation program costs could

“bankrupt” the subbasin. The CSAB discussed the variable options in greater detail, but were not able to reach unanimous consensus. In the interest of time, they considered conducting a special CSAB meeting to continue discussion.

The CSAB entertained a motion by Member Lester, seconded by Member Gruenwald that the groundwater level MTs for areas with wells that went dry since 2015 be set at the observed 2022 groundwater level low and that for areas without dry well impacts, groundwater level MTs be set at the 2022 low plus a buffer of 2x the seasonal variation in groundwater level.

Ayes: Members Lester, Gruenwald, Hansen, Amaro

Noes: Member Mori

Absent: Member Violich

## **6. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation**

### **a. Update on Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Implementation Grant**

### **b. Update on Water Year 2023 Annual Report development**

In the interest of time, this item and its sub-items were deferred.

## **7. Discussion and potential announcement of Special CSAB Meeting**

A special meeting of the CSAB will be held to present further details about the revised groundwater level MTs and the demand management and well mitigation program development resolutions. The date, time, and location are to be determined.

## **8. Corning Subbasin Advisory Board Member Reports and Comments**

There were no CSAB member reports or comments.

## **9. Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2024 at 1:30 p.m., however a special meeting will be held sooner.

## **10. Adjourn**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.