



Corning Subbasin Communications and Engagement (C&E) Plan Update

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Background on C&E Plans: what are they and why do we need them?

- Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) need to be developed in consideration of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater in a subbasin.
- Communications & Engagement (C&E) Plans document how those beneficial users will be engaged in GSP development and implementation.



Requirements of a C&E Plan

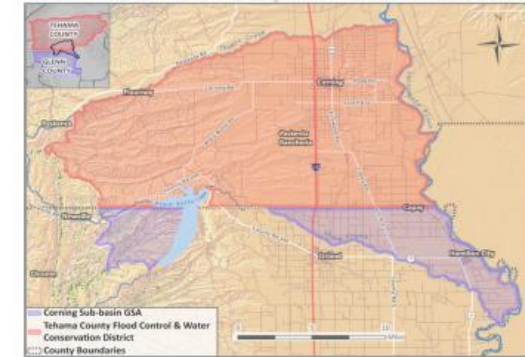
GSP Regulations (Section 354.10) require the inclusion of a section (generally accomplished through a C&E Plan) that documents communication with stakeholders that includes the following:

- An explanation of the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies' (GSA) decision-making process.
- Identification of opportunities for public engagement and a discussion of how public input and response will be used.
- A description of how the GSAs encouraged the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin.
- **The method the GSAs shall follow to inform the public about progress implementing the Plan, including the status of projects and actions.**



The Need for a Plan Update

- The Corning Subbasin's C&E Plan was included in the GSP as Appendix 2A.
- It was last updated in 2021, and generally includes information specific to GSP development.
- With the GSP submitted to DWR and implementation getting underway, the GSAs decided it was time to update the C&E Plan.
- Stantec was tasked with updating the C&E Plan to reflect these additional considerations and ensure that all beneficial users and uses are considered during implementation



CORNING SUBBASIN STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation
(2019-2022)

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute
Version: 12/11/19
Revised: 09/08/2021 and 11/18/2021



How has the Plan changed?

Previous Plan:

- Background
- Desired Outcomes & Goals of the Plan
- Duration of Plan
- Interested Parties and Other Stakeholders
- Outreach Roles
- C&E for GSP Plan Elements
- C&E Forums
- C&E Tools
- Outreach Partners
- Inter-basin Coordination
- Evaluation and Assessment



Plan Update:

- Introduction (including background on C&E Plans, interested parties, roles, and the update process)
- Outreach Activities
- Outreach Tools
- Leveraging Partnerships, Coordinating with Neighbors



Interview Process Overview

- Interviews took place between December 2023 and January 2024
- Outreach was conducted to 13 stakeholder interest groups for a total of 11 interviews:
 - City of Corning
 - Domestic Well Owners
 - Glenn-Colusa Cattlemen's Association
 - Glenn County Resource Conservation District
 - Hamilton City
 - Northern California Regional Land Trust
 - North Region California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
 - Spanish Speaking Community
 - Tehama County Farm Bureau
 - Tehama County Cattlemen's Association
 - UC Cooperative Extension
- Interviews lasted 45 minutes – 75 minutes with a standard set of questions that covered:
 - GSA and GSP Familiarity
 - Communications and Outreach Preferences
 - GSP Implementation Questions
 - Summary Questions
- Added benefit: Tehama County subbasins conducting similar interviews at same time for updating their plans; leveraged overlap.



What did we learn?

1. Members of the public have **highly valued meetings** as a place to engage with the two GSAs, and there are opportunities to make those meetings even more effective.
2. Some members of the public are not aware of SGMA or the potential **impacts of undesirable results**, while others are aware of it but have misconceptions about current conditions, the status of GSP projects and management actions (PMA), or the role SGMA can play in achieving sustainability.
3. There exists a perception that the two GSAs have not been **responsive to public input**, and that there are limited spaces to provide adequate public input.
4. Many members of the public do not know the difference between the two GSAs and have **difficulty accessing information** that clarifies this. It is not always clear when something pertains to them.



1. Public Meetings

Context:

Public meetings and hearings represent one of the most meaningful ways that members of the public engage with groundwater planning in the Corning Subbasin

Opportunities:

- Retain hybrid options, and consider posting meeting recordings online
- Create more reliability in meeting schedule. Inconsistent meeting schedule can make it difficult for members of the public to track opportunities for engagement
- Provide more detail on points of discussion, agreement, or divergence of opinion in meeting minutes



2. Public Awareness of SGMA

Context:

Some members of the public are not aware of SGMA or the potential impacts of undesirable results, while others are aware of it but have misconceptions about current conditions, the status of PMAs, or the role SGMA can play in achieving sustainability

Opportunities:

- Continue to leverage the interested parties list
- Continue to grow partnerships with existing networks to distribute educational materials and connect with relevant programs
- Develop informational materials about the values that GSAs provide
- Develop informational materials about DWR grant-funded implementation projects currently underway
- Consider how to include households that don't use the internet via alternative outreach methods



3. Incorporating Public Input

Context:

There exists a perception that the two GSAs have not been responsive to public input, and that there are limited spaces to provide adequate public input

Opportunities:

- Share how public input is incorporated into relevant activities, including via documentation methods (i.e. meeting minutes)
- CSAB member agencies' briefings
- Q&A component to certain agenda items
- Public Workshops



4. Public Knowledge of GSAs

Context:

Many members of the public do not know the difference between the two GSAs and have difficulty accessing information that clarifies this. It is not always clear when something pertains to them

Opportunities:

- Apply the Corning Subbasin Operations Plan, which includes a graphic which delineates the GSAs' geographic boundaries and associated governing bodies
- Improve navigability of the three websites to more clearly communication the respective roles of the GSAs



Outreach Activities and Tools Identified in the Update

Outreach Activities

- Public Meetings
- Public Workshops
- Member Agencies' Governance Briefings

Outreach Tools

- Interested Parties Lists
- Websites
- Informational Materials
- Newspaper Notices & Radio
- Community Bulletin Boards
- Mailing and Utility Bill Notifications
- Social Media
- Surveys

Leveraging Partnerships, Coordinating with Neighbors

- Outreach Partners
- Inter-Basin Coordination



Reflections

Questions for consideration:

- Given your special knowledge and context in the Corning Subbasin, which observation grabs your attention the most?
- Have you heard these points of view from the folks you work with?
- Did the challenges that were expressed by the interviewees surprise you?
- Which opportunities would you like to explore more?