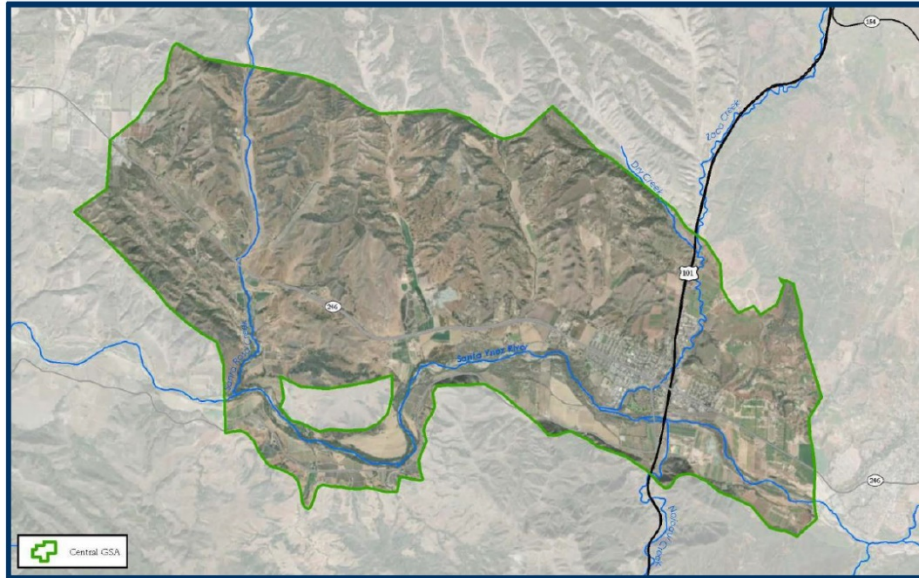


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PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN



Prepared for:



Prepared by



JULY 2019

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS/ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
Aquifer	An underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock, rock fractures or unconsolidated material (gravel, sand, or silt) that yields significant amounts of groundwater to wells or springs (DWR Bulletin 118).
CAG	Citizen Advisory Group
CMA	Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Central Management Area (CMA)
COB	City of Buellton
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EMA	Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area (EMA)
Engagement	Efforts made to understand and involve stakeholders and their concerns in activities and decisions of the GSA
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014
Stakeholder	An individual or entity interested or affected by the GSP
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
SYRVB	Santa Ynez River Valley Basin
SYRWCD	Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
SBCWA	Santa Barbara County Water Agency
WMA	Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Western Management Area (WMA)

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I BACKGROUND ON SGMA

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on September 16, 2014, created a new framework for groundwater management in California. The framework includes a structure and schedule to achieve sustainable groundwater management within 20 years. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has historically managed the state's central repository for groundwater data. Under SGMA, DWR provides guidance, financial assistance, and technical support for compliance with state requirements. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) provides the regulatory backstop under SGMA, taking over basin management and assessing fees if local groundwater management is not successful in complying with the requirements of SGMA.

SGMA established a new structure for local groundwater management through Groundwater Sustainable Agencies (GSAs). The formation of GSAs for all basins that the DWR designated as high and medium priority groundwater basins (basin(s)) was required by July 1, 2017. Each GSA for these high and medium priority basins must then develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that details how sustainable groundwater management will be achieved within 20 years of implementing the GSP. Sustainable groundwater management is defined by SGMA as *the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results*. This avoidance of undesirable results is measured through six sustainability indicators:

1. Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply if continued over the planning and implementation horizon,
2. Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage,
3. Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion,
4. Significant and unreasonable degradation of water quality,
5. Significant and unreasonable land subsidence, and
6. Depletion of interconnected surface water and groundwater that has significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water.

The GSP is a tool used to help the GSA sustainably manage the basin. The criteria for sustainable management, including determining what is significant and unreasonable within the parameters of SGMA for the groundwater basin managed by that GSA, must be assessed, with input from stakeholders, before the GSP can be adopted.

I.1 SGMA Requirements for Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is an important component of any successful long-term planning effort and is required by the SGMA (§ 10720 - § 10730) and GSP Regulations (§ 353 - § 354). Each GSA shall encourage and support active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin (§ 10727.8). The GSA must also allow for voluntary participation by Native American Tribes and the federal government (§ 10720.3). The GSA may appoint and consult with an advisory committee (§ 10727.8) and must consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater within the basin (§ 10723.2).

Engaging members of the public in groundwater sustainability planning can improve public understanding of the technical, financial and political considerations the GSA factors into their decision-making process. Participation by the public can also improve the GSA's understanding of the potential impacts of their decisions. SGMA recognized the importance of stakeholder engagement and laid out specific requirements for stakeholder engagement within each of the four phases of SGMA:

Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination

- Establish and maintain a list of interested parties (§ 10723.4).
- Provide public notice of the GSA formation (§ 10723(b)).
- Conduct a GSA formation public hearing (§ 10723(b)).
- Notify DWR of the GSA formation (§ 10723(b)).
- Provide a written statement to DWR as well as the cities and counties within the GSA boundary, describing how interested parties may participate in the GSP development (§ 10727.8).

Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission

- Submit initial notification of intent to prepare a GSP (§ 353.6).
- Prepare a GSP that considers beneficial uses and users of groundwater when describing undesirable results, minimum thresholds, projects and actions (§ 10727.8, § 10723.2 and § 354.10).
- The GSP must include a communication section that includes the following (§ 354.10):
 - Explanation of the GSA's decision-making process;
 - List of public meetings at which the GSP was discussed;
 - Identification of opportunities for public engagement and a discussion of how public input and response will be used;
 - Description of how the GSA encourages the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin;
 - Description of how the GSA will inform the public about progress implementing the Plan, including the status of projects and actions.

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- Public noticing and public meeting procedures prior to adopting, submitting, or amending a GSP (§ 10728.4).

Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation

- Upon GSA adoption of the GSP and submittal to DWR, the GSP will be available on the DWR website for a 60-day public comment period. Any person may provide comments to the DWR on the GSP. DWR will consider the comments received prior to completing their evaluation and assessment of the GSP (§ 353.8).

Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting

- SGMA requires assessments and re-evaluation of the GSP at least every 5- years.
- GSA's must provide public notice and hold public meetings prior to amending the GSP (§ 10730).
- Public notice is required before the GSA imposes or increases fees (§ 10730). The GSA must also follow other applicable laws and regulations associated with the assessment of fees including the requirements of Proposition 218.

Appendix A to this document includes a table with the statutory requirements to assist the GSA in tracking progress towards meeting the requirements throughout each of the 4 phases.

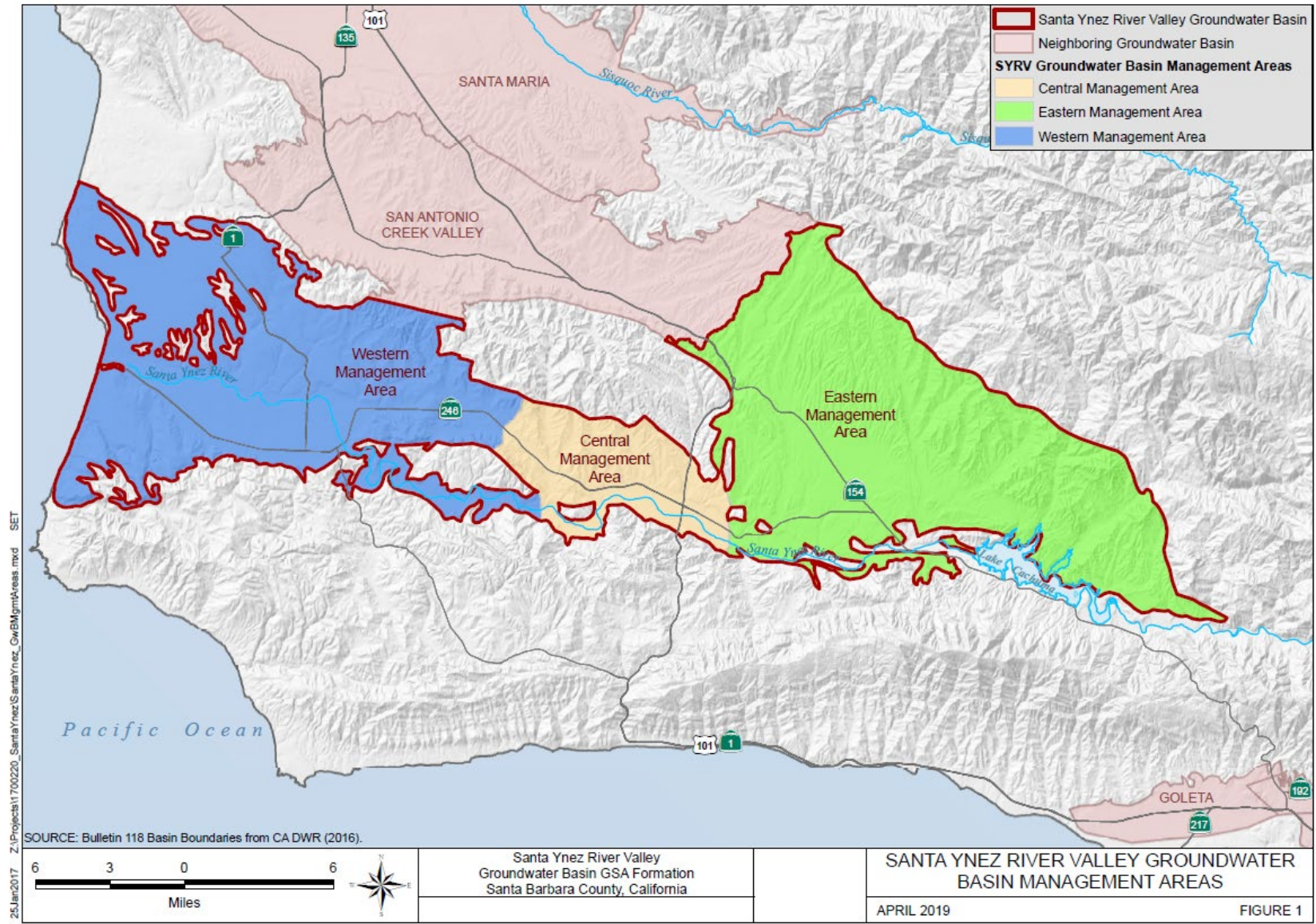
2 SANTA YNEZ RIVER VALLEY BASIN

The Santa Ynez River Valley Basin (SYRVB), as described in DWR Bulletin 118, lies under approximately 319 square miles of land in the Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara County. The boundaries of the SYRVB, as determined by DWR, are the Purisma Hills on the northwest, the San Rafael Mountains on the northeast, the Santa Ynez Mountains to the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The SYRVB has established the following three management areas:

- Western Management Area (WMA),
- Central Management Area (CMA), and
- Eastern Management Area (EMA).

As described in Bulletin 118, the CMA includes the Buellton Upland, the WMA, is comprised of the Lompoc Plain, Lompoc Terrace, Lompoc Upland and Santa Rita Valley, and the EMA includes the Santa Ynez Upland. Each Management Area also contains their respective section of the Santa Ynez River alluvium. Figure 1 shows the SYRVB boundaries and the three management areas. Local agencies within the management areas collaborated to form GSAs for each of the management areas. The three GSAs have continued to coordinate and are actively working to establish formal coordination agreements.

Figure 1: Management Areas and SYRVB Boundaries



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3 CENTRAL MANAGEMENT AREA

Land use within the CMA is approximately 95 percent agriculture with a small amount of residential, commercial and industrial uses in the county unincorporated areas and the City of Buellton comprising nearly 5 percent of the land over the CMA. The CMA includes the Santa Ynez River alluvial deposits and those of the older Buellton Uplands. For the most part, the water bearing alluvial deposits have limited hydrologic contact with those of the uplands. In addition to the Santa Ynez River alluvium, the CMA includes the Buellton Uplands. The Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) jurisdiction includes the entire CMA. The SYRWCD was formed in 1939, has the responsibility of administering and protecting water uses within the Santa Ynez River Valley Basin.

In conjunction with the groundwater replenishment in the CMA, Santa Ynez River water is stored in Cachuma Reservoir in accordance with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order WR 89-18. Releases from Cachuma Reservoir replenish the alluvial groundwater basin based on the accrual of credits water stored in the Above Narrows account in the Reservoir. Within the CMA, the City of Buellton has contracted for imported water from the State Water Project (SWP).

3.1 Stakeholders and Interested Parties

Interested parties and stakeholders in the CMA include residents, domestic well owners, public agency representatives, landowners, non-governmental organizations, agricultural well owners, , and business owners. Any member of the public can request (in writing) to be added to the list of interested parties and receive updates via email. Stakeholders can also subscribe to the interested parties list at www.santaynezwater.org or by emailing cma.gsa.syrwb@gmail.com. A list of beneficial uses and users of groundwater within the CMA is included as Appendix B.

3.2 CMA GSA Formation

The CMA GSA was formed on January 11, 2017, through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City of Buellton, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD), and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency (SBCWA). The CMA filed a notice of intent to form a GSA with the DWR and became the exclusive GSA for the CMA in May 2017.

3.3 Decision Making Process

CMA GSA member agencies formed a GSA Committee, comprised of a representative appointed from each member agency. The CMA GSA Committee (Committee) is responsible for implementing the requirements of SGMA including overseeing the development of a CMA GSP and coordinating activities between the agencies and GSAs within the SYRVB. The members appointed by the City of Buellton and the SYRWCD each have one vote and representatives

from both agencies must be present for a quorum at Committee meetings. A representative, appointed by the Santa Barbara County Water Agency participates in the Committee as a non-voting member.

3.4 CMA GSP

The Committee hired a consultant team to develop a GSP in compliance with SGMA for adoption by the GSA and submittal to DWR by January 1, 2022.

4 PURPOSE

This Public Outreach and Engagement Plan (Plan) has been developed as a communication tool to help stakeholders understand the importance of participation in groundwater sustainability planning and lay the framework of how stakeholders can actively engage in the GSA and GSP planning efforts.

In 2018, DWR released [a guidance document for GSP Stakeholder Communication and Engagement](#) that details best practices including the development of Communication and Engagement Plans to increase transparency in the GSP development process. The Committee will prepare a GSP for the CMA in accordance with the SGMA, to guide future management decisions. Example management decisions include: the amount of water that can be pumped from the CMA without causing undesirable results; and new project development to enhance water resource management. The SGMA act, as well as the state agencies implementing SGMA (DWR, SWRCB), have mandated public and stakeholder outreach and engagement during GSP development. The Committee supports and encourages active involvement from diverse social, cultural, and economic groups within the SYRVB to ensure relevant and interested stakeholders and the public are involved throughout the GSP development. This Plan provides a framework for clear communication and transparency throughout the GSP development and implementation process. It will be updated as needed.

4.1 Defining Sustainability for the CMA

During GSP development, the Committee will request stakeholder feedback as they develop criteria for “significant and unreasonable” undesirable results for the CMA. The Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) will play a role in reviewing technical information generated for the GSP, from the stakeholder perspective, and is expected to form consensus on key sustainable management recommendations for the Committee’s consideration. The Committee may also request feedback from the CAG and stakeholders regarding specific projects and management actions, that could be used to sustainably manage groundwater within the CMA.

4.2 Outreach and Engagement Goals

Outreach and engagement for the CMA began during the GSA formation process. Information about the GSA formation was posted on the [Santa Barbara County website \(https://www.countyofsb.org/pwd/gsa.sbc\)](https://www.countyofsb.org/pwd/gsa.sbc). Individual landowners and groundwater pumpers within the CMA were contacted directly to discuss requirements of the SGMA and potential future changes to groundwater management in the CMA. The individual CMA member agencies including the City of Buellton and SYRWCD issued public notices of intent to participate in the CMA GSA and held public meetings to receive comments. The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors also held a public meeting regarding the formation of the CMA GSA. Public notices, announcing the various meeting and public hearings to form the CMA GSA were also published in the *Santa Barbara News Press*. Additionally, there were one on one meetings held between SYRWCD Staff and several SYRWCD constituent groundwater pumpers to provide information on SGMA and the formation of GSAs in the SYRVB.

The Committee's goal is to build and maintain a collaborative and inclusive processes for stakeholder engagement and GSP development and to consider the interests of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the CMA during development of the GSP. This includes the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater. Collaborative and inclusive processes will assist in making the GSP more resilient by increasing public buy-in, promoting compliance, and enhancing the quality of information on which the GSP is based. The Committee has established an open and ongoing list of interested persons to whom notices are and will be sent regarding meetings of the CMA GSA, GSP development, and other SGMA-related activities. This approach will increase the success of the GSP by fostering early public participation, development of stakeholder supported management strategies, and enhancing the data quality and basis of GSP development. Specifically, the Committee will implement the following tiered outreach strategy to actively engage a diverse group of stakeholders in the development of the GSP:

1. Facilitate engagement of a diverse group of stakeholders in the development of the GSP through the CAG.
2. Provide regular updates on GSP development progress via email to the list of interested parties;
3. Build and maintain a website where stakeholders can obtain CMA GSA information, ask questions, and provide comments; and
4. Hold public meetings where members of the public can ask questions and provide comment.

This four-tiered engagement strategy is designed to give a diverse group of stakeholders multiple forums to participate, as appropriate based on their level of interest, availability, and communication style. The Committee will continuously evaluate stakeholder outreach and engagement goals. The Committee may adjust the engagement strategy and/or provide additional outreach opportunities as needed throughout the GSP development and implementation process.

5 GSP ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Staying Informed

The best way for interested parties to get the latest information on the GSP development process is to subscribe to the email distribution list. Interested parties can subscribe to the email distribution list from the CMA GSA's website (www.santaynezwater.org) or by emailing cma.gsa.syr gb@gmail.com. Regular communications will be distributed via email throughout the GSP development process. Emails will provide notice of public meetings and other important updates.

5.2 Providing Feedback to the GSA

Questions and comments regarding the CMA GSA and GSP development process can be sent via email to cma.gsa.syr gb@gmail.com or using the feedback link on the CMA GSA's website (www.santaynezwater.org). All CMA Committee and CAG meetings are open to the public and provide opportunity for the public to comment. The CMA GSA may also hold special meetings or workshops focused on obtaining feedback on components of the GSP. The CMA GSA will provide members of the public opportunities to provide comment on the GSP before adoption. Comments on the GSP are requested in writing, in electronic format, through the online comment form. Electronic links to the online comment form will be provided to interested parties via email and via public notice for the public at-large. The public and stakeholders will be provided with information about the timeframe and process for submitting electronic, written comments. If needed, Staff will provide assistance in completing the online comment submittal form (contact information provided in section 6). Notice of opportunities to comment will also be posted on the CMA GSA website (www.santaynezwater.org).

5.3 Citizen Advisory Group Representation

The purpose of a CAG is to provide additional public input to the Committee, representative of various categories of groundwater uses and users within the CMA, as set forth by the SGMA. In addition to providing their individual perspectives, CAG members serve in respective capacities, representing different categories of groundwater uses and users in the CMA. All CAG members are expected to work collaboratively with each other, with at-large stakeholders and members






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of the public, with the Committee, with staff of the member agencies of the CMA GSA, with the other GSAs within the SYRVB, related agencies, and agency staff members. At various points during development of the GSP, the CAG may be asked to provide perspective on elements or sections of the GSP and on the final draft of the GSP. Stakeholders can obtain additional information about the CAG by emailing cma.gsa.syr gb@gmail.com.

5.4 GSP Engagement Summary

Expected roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for engagement throughout the GSP development process are summarized in Figure 2. The CMA Committee may provide additional opportunities or adjust the process as needed to meet the needs of stakeholders and/or the requirements of SGMA.

Figure 2: GSP Development Roles and Responsibilities

GSP Development Participants	Roles and Responsibilities for GSP Development
<p>CMA GSA Voting Member Agencies: SYRWCD and City of Buellton</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee GSP development • Approve costs and budgets • Conduct public hearings • Consider stakeholder feedback • Adopt the GSP • Provide direction to GSA staff
<p>CMA GSA Non-Voting Member Agency: Santa Barbara County Water Agency</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in GSA meeting and CAG meetings as appropriate • Provide guidance to the GSA
<p>CMA GSA Staff</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer the GSA and CAG • Provide notice of public meetings • Manage GSP consultant team
<p>Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review technical information • Confer with other groundwater users and interested parties • Provide feedback and recommendations to the CMA GSA
<p>Interested Parties</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend GSA meetings and workshops • Read newsletters • Provide input on draft and final GSP

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<p>GSP Consultant Team</p>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop draft GSP components• Present information and make changes as directed by the GSA• Prepare final CMA GSP
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6 CONTACT US

The best way to stay informed and receive the most current information for the CMA GSA and GSP development is to subscribe to the email distribution list. To subscribe, send an email to cma.gsa.syr gb@gmail.com. Additional information may be obtained by contacting:

- **Name:** Bill Buelow
- **Title:** SGMA Program Manager
- **Phone number:** (805) 693-1156 ext. 403
- **Email:** bbuelow@syrwcd.com or cma.gsa.syr gb@gmail.com
- **Website:** www.santaynezwater.org

Appendix A: SGMA Requirements for Public Outreach and Engagement

Public outreach and engagement are an important component of any successful long-term planning effort and is required by the SGMA (§ 10720 - § 10730) and GSP Regulations (§ 353 - § 354). This appendix provides a quick reference to how the CMA GSA will meet these requirements.

SGMA Requirement	CMA GSA
The GSA must encourage and support active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin. (SGMA § 10727.8)	Implement a tiered outreach strategy as discussed in Section 4.1 of this plan.
The GSA must also allow for voluntary participation by Native American Tribes and the federal government (SGMA § 10720.3).	The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians are a participant in the EMA and EMA CAG.
The GSA must consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater within the basin (SGMA § 10723.2).	CAG representation as discussed in section 5.3 of this plan.
The GSA may appoint and consult with a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAG) (SGMA § 10727.8)	CAG formation as discussed in section 5.3 of this plan.
Establish and maintain a list of interested parties (SGMA § 10723.4).	See discussion under section 3.1 of this plan.
Provide public notice of the GSA formation (SGMA § 10723(b)).	Completed on October 28, 2016; November 22, 23, 29, and 30 2016; December 28, 2016;
Notify DWR of the GSA formation (SGMA § 10723(b)).	Uploaded to DWR Portal on February 15, 2017
Conduct a GSA formation public hearing (SGMA § 10723(b)).	Public hearings were conducted on November 8 (all CMA entities) November 10, 2016 (COB) and December 6, 2016 (County); and January 11, 2017 (SYRWCD)
Provide a written statement to DWR as well as the cities and counties within the GSA boundary, describing how interested parties may participate in the GSP development (SGMA § 10727.8).	Completed on May 16, 2018

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<p>Submit initial notification of intent to prepare a GSP (GSP Regulations § 353.6).</p>	<p>Completed on May 16, 2018</p>
<p>Prepare a GSP that considers beneficial uses and users of groundwater when describing undesirable results, minimum thresholds, projects and actions (SGMA § 10727.8, § 10723.2 and GSP Regulations § 354.10). The GSP must include a communication section that includes the following (GSP Regulations § 354.10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the GSA’s decision-making process; • List of public meetings at which the GSP was discussed; • Identification of opportunities for public engagement and a discussion of how public input and response will be used; • Description of how the GSA encourages the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin; • Description of how the GSA will inform the public about progress implementing the Plan, including the status of projects and actions. 	<p>To be completed in the draft and final GSP.</p>
<p>Public noticing and public meeting procedures prior to adopting, submitting, or amending a GSP (SGMA § 10728.4).</p>	<p>To be completed in the draft and final GSP.</p>
<p>Upon GSA adoption of the GSP and submittal to DWR, the GSP will be available on the DWR website for a 60-day public comment period. Any person may provide comments to the DWR on the GSP. DWR will consider the comments received prior to completing their evaluation and assessment of the GSP (GSP Regulations § 353.8).</p>	<p>To be completed by DWR.</p>
<p>GSA’s must provide public notice and hold public meetings prior to amending the GSP (SGMA § 10730).</p>	<p>To be completed as discussed in the final GSP.</p>
<p>Public notice is required before the GSA imposes or increases fees (SGMA § 10730).</p>	<p>To be completed as discussed in the final GSP.</p>

APPENDIX B: List of Beneficial Uses and Users

In accordance with Section 10723.2 and Section 10723.8 (a)(4) of the SGMA, the following parties have or will be contacted to determine how best to consider and protect their interests throughout the formation of the GSA, development of a GSP, and implementation of the GSP.

These interests include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Holders of overlying groundwater rights, including (1) agricultural users and (2) domestic water-well owners: The City of Buellton (COB) and Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) are GSA members. Domestic water-well owners and agricultural users were invited to join the CMA GSA Citizen Advisory Group (CAG).
- (b) Municipal Well Operators: The COB is a member of the GSA.
- (c) Public Water Systems: Representatives from several mutual water companies in the CMA were invited to sit on the CMA GSACAG.
- (d) Local Land Use Planning Agencies: The COB is a member of the CMA GSA and the Santa Barbara County Planning Department, through Santa Barbara County Water Agency, is a member of the CMA GSA.
- (e) Environmental Users of Groundwater: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) will be consulted as appropriate regarding potentially groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- (f) Surface Water Users: SYRWCD calls for water-rights releases under Order from the State of California Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The COB pumps groundwater and discharges treated wastewater to the alluvial underflow of the Santa Ynez River. Agricultural interests (i.e. vineyards and truck crops) that have reported groundwater production with SYRWCD were invited to serve on the CMACAG.
- (g) Federal Government: None.
- (h) California Native American Tribes: None. (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians are in the EMA)
- (i) Disadvantaged Communities: None.
- (j) Entities Listed in SGMA Section 10927 that are monitoring groundwater elevations in all or part of the CMA managed by the GSA: The COB monitors its wells and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency is the CASGEM agency within the CMA. Both are members of the GSA.

