Groundwater Management in Colusa County

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Water Education Foundation Groundwater Tour
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Groundwater Management in Colusa County

- Pre-SGMA Groundwater Management
- Current Groundwater Management
- GSA Formation Process in Colusa County
Colusa County Groundwater Management Plan

- Implementation delayed until 2013 due to limited County resources
- Half-time staff subcontracted through RCD
- December, 2014 - County put in place a Water Resources Department, one full time staff
  - SGMA and other water-related tasks
Current Groundwater Management

- **Groundwater Commission**
  - Advises County Supervisors
  - Processes groundwater transfer requests

- **Public and Agency Outreach**

- **Groundwater level monitoring**
  - DWR monitors 2-3 times/year, utilize their data

- **Subsidence Monitoring**
  - DWR GPS network
    - Initial survey of Sacramento Valley in 2008
    - Limited survey in Colusa County “Area of Interest” in June, 2016
    - Resurvey of Sacramento Valley in spring, 2017
  - 2 Extensometers in Colusa County
  - NASA satellite surveys

- **Groundwater Assessment, 2015**
  - Focus on “Area of Interest”
  - Data can be utilized in a future water balance

- **GIS Well Mapping Project**
  - County-wide well development over time
Current Groundwater Management

Programs and Studies

Monitoring and Data Management Program

*Prop. 1 Counties with Stressed Basins grant funding, $250,000*

- SGMA compliant monitoring program that addresses 5 of 6 sustainability indicators:
  - Groundwater levels
  - Groundwater quality
  - Groundwater storage
  - Land subsidence
  - Groundwater/surface water interaction
- (Seawater intrusion is the 6th, we do not have to address this)

- SGMA compliant data management program, user-friendly, easily shared

We’ve come a long way in a few years, but many data gaps remain

Near future data needs for SGMA:

- Water balance
- Groundwater model

Shared efforts with other agencies
GSA Formation Process in Colusa County

- Basin Boundary Adjustment at Tehama/Glenn County Line
- Colusa sub-basin, Medium Priority
- West Butte sub-basin, High Priority
- Basin Boundary Adjustment at Colusa/Yolo County Line
GSA-eligible Agencies - 28
- 16 Water Districts
- 4 Reclamation Districts
- 4 Public Water Supply Districts
- 2 Cities
- County
- Resource Conservation District

Others
- 5 Mutual Water Companies
- *50,000+ Acres of “White Areas” (Private Pumpers)

Tribes and Federal (exempt)
- 2 Tribes
- 3 Federal Wildlife Refuge Complexes
- US Forest Service
- California Fish and Wildlife Service
GSA Formation Process in Colusa County

- Planning within County boundaries; Coordinating with surrounding counties (Glenn, Butte, Yolo)

- Facilitation Support Services provided by DWR
  - Sacramento State, Center For Collaborative Policy
  - All meetings are open to the public; information posted on the County Water Resources website at: [countyofcolusa.org](http://countyofcolusa.org)

- Overlapping GSAs
  - 1 City and 5 water agencies filed
  - 90-day rule, rush to file
  - Overlaps must be resolved by June 30, 2017

- Colusa County overlaps will be resolved when final governance is decided, before June 30
**GSA Formation Process in Colusa County**

**“White Areas”**
- Per SGMA, Counties are responsible for the white areas
- Per SGMA, individual landowners/private citizens are NOT eligible to be a GSA

- **Private Pumper** = groundwater user outside of any water agency boundaries
  - Agricultural water users
  - 100% dependent on groundwater to grow their crops
  - They have a large stake in SGMA, but are not eligible to participate in governance
Private Pumper Advisory Committee (PPAC)

- The PPAC was formed to ensure that private pumpers have a role in SGMA planning and implementation.

- Colusa County Supervisors recognized the critical role of the private pumpers.

- The Colusa County PPAC was originally developed as an Advisory Committee to the County, but they have advocated for representation on a governing board.

- Colusa County discovered that a non-eligible entity can be appointed to a JPA Board with equal voting rights (but there are caveats)
  - Sacramento Groundwater Authority model
  - JPA Signatories can appoint a private entity
  - The Appointee is never independent of the Appointer
  - The Appointee gets the authorities that are given to them by the Appointer
  - The Appointee can be rescinded by the Appointer at any time

- Since Colusa County formed its PPAC, several other counties are developing similar committees.

PPACs are not part of the GSP Regulations.
Current Model (this is a work in progress):

- Multi-agency GSA
- Covers County portion of basins
- Inclusive of interested parties
- Private Pumper representation

Colusa County governance planning approach is collaborative and inclusive of agencies and private pumpers.
GSA Formation Process in Colusa County

Key questions, concerns, challenges

• Funding: who, what, when, where, how?

• How to distribute authorities between GSAs and Management Areas

• How to distribute voting rights - per acre, by water use?

• Define private pumper role

• Chicken and Egg – a parallel process
  • Need for technical information to make governance decisions
  • Need governance to make decisions and fund technical studies

• Coordination with Glenn County and Butte Counties
Pooling resources and working together will provide efficiencies, reduce costs, and ensure long-term sustainable water supplies for agriculture, communities and domestic well owners.
Thank You
Questions?

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