

Meeting Brief

- **Overview:** Staff representatives from Antelope, Bowman, Butte, Colusa, Corning, Los Molinos, Red Bluff, Sutter, Vina, Wyandotte Creek, and Yolo subbasins held their seventh inter-basin coordination meeting. Subbasin staff provided updates on their Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development status and key takeaways from relevant meetings, including adjacent subbasin conversations. In addition, staff reviewed and refined a preliminary draft report that outlines a proposed framework and scope for sustained inter-basin coordination through Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation. The draft report will be shared for the respective GSA Boards consideration and for public input through existing subbasin venues (e.g., GSA meetings, committees, etc.).
- **Next Steps:** Efforts will continue to focus on refining the draft framework for continued inter-basin coordination and dialogue throughout GSP implementation. The facilitation team will incorporate suggested edits and convene one more meeting among staff before sharing the draft report for input to GSA boards and the public. Meanwhile, subbasin staff will provide inter-basin coordination updates and gather public input related to the direction of current efforts and desired priorities, shared concerns, and possible ideas for inter-basin coordination during GSP implementation moving forward. Staff and consultants will continue to share technical information during GSP development that contributes to a shared regional understanding of basin conditions.
- **Next meeting:** The next staff meeting will take place on May 26, 2021.

Action Items

Item	Lead	Completion
<input type="checkbox"/> Update inter-basin coordination documents (i.e., information-sharing template and presentation).	CBI	Ongoing
<input type="checkbox"/> Reach out to DWR regarding projects needing to be in plan for state funding eligibility.	CBI	
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule next inter-basin coordination meeting.	CBI	Done
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare next draft report including the framework for inter-basin coordination based on the ideas shared at the meeting.	CBI	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bring examples of dispute resolution clauses for discussion.	CBI	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create template for compiling and comparing the different approaches to developing SMC.	CBI & Christina Buck	Done
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore possible collaboration with Eddy Teasdale (LSCE consultants) to compile PMAs in the various subbasins and conduct a preliminary analysis to find themes and opportunities for regional coordination.	CBI & Ryan Teubert	
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide inter-basin coordination updates to advisory boards and at relevant public meetings. Share key questions and concerns at next meeting.	CBI and subbasin representatives	Ongoing Access latest presentation
<input type="checkbox"/> Update inter-basin coordination website.	Christina Buck	Access Here
<input type="checkbox"/> Share notes from approaches to Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) and Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) in the Sacramento River corridor.	Christina Buck	Done
<input type="checkbox"/> Expand the North Sac River Corridor coordination group to include Red Bluff and Antelope.	Christina Buck	

Summary

1. Meeting Purpose and Introduction

This was the seventh meeting of staff to support the Northern Sacramento Valley (NSV) inter-basin coordination effort. The aim of this meeting was to review and refine a preliminary draft report that outlines a proposed framework and scope for sustained inter-basin coordination through Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation. The draft report will be shared for the respective GSA Boards consideration and public input at existing subbasin venues (e.g., GSA meetings, committees, etc.). In addition, staff representatives provided updates on their GSP development status, shared takeaways from adjacent subbasin meeting, and determined next steps for technical information-sharing efforts.

2. Meeting Summary

Participants did not provide feedback or suggested edits to the previous meeting summary (3/2/21). The summary is available on the webpage [[Access Here](#)].

3. GSP Development Status Updates

Subbasin staff provided updates on their GSP development status. For more subbasin specific updates, visit websites in the table below.

- **Colusa**– released the first four GSP chapters for public comment through May 5th, including Introduction, Plan Area, Basin Setting, and Monitoring Network.
- **Antelope, Bowman, Los Molinos, and Red Bluff** – released the Basin Setting (including the Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model) and Water Budget chapters for public review. Tehama County has formed an ad hoc committee to evaluate recommendations for land subsidence. For Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs), the technical team will likely determine they do not have enough information to set Measurable Objectives (MOs) and Minimum Thresholds (MTs) at the moment. Further, the technical team is looking into integrating the 2020 Land IQ data into the model to assess the impacts of growth on local conditions.
- **Corning** – has released the following chapter sections out for review: Introduction, Plan Area, HCM, Groundwater Conditions, and Water Budgets.
- **Vina and Wyandotte Creek** – Will be releasing the SMC chapter for public comment in the next few weeks. Butte County has had robust conversations related to inter-basin coordination with the Groundwater Commission and the Vina GSA Board.

Subbasin	Website
Antelope, Bowman, Los Molinos & Red Bluff	Website
Butte	Website
Corning	Website
Colusa	Websites (Glenn) (Colusa)
Sutter	Website
Vina	Websites (Vina) (RCRD)
Wyandotte Creek	Website
Yolo	Website

Discussion:

- The facilitation team proposed developing a spreadsheet to gather the most up-to-date information regarding Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) development. This spreadsheet would include the proposed Minimum Thresholds (MT), Measurable Objectives (MOs), undesirable results statements, number of wells per representative monitoring network, and status of SMC development (preliminary, in discussion, or out for public review).
- Overall, subbasin staff supported the idea of creating a draft internal document to have a centralized place to look at similarities and differences. Some were concerned about developing a side-by-side comparison, since each subbasin is developing their SMC based on different local conditions. To avoid confusion, some staff would like to maintain this as an internal document temporarily to be referred to and updated as needed. Butte County representatives shared they would prefer to have the information publicly available, as GSA boards have local control and authority to make decisions.

Update on Sacramento River Corridor Coordination

Christina Buck (Butte County) provided an update on a meeting focused on the Sacramento River Corridor among representatives of Butte, Colusa, and Tehama Counties. The goal was to identify commonalities among the approaches to Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) used to draft SMC around the Sacramento River and its corridor. Overall, subbasins are using measured conditions to develop SMC, not modeling outputs, except for the Redding Subbasin.

In addition, C. Buck shared an update on another recent meeting among the Northern California Water Association (NCWA) meeting focused on establishing “common ground” for identifying GDEs for Sacramento Valley GSPs. The discussion has focused primarily on the methods and data used to identify GDEs. The group discussed data-gaps and potential ways to address them. Lee Bergfeld (MBK Engineers) is in the lead, compiling and documenting the discussion. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) seems to be supportive of identifying GDEs as data gaps, when there is not enough information, as long as GDEs are not simply erased from the map due to lack of information. The group expressed a general interest in maintaining consistency and will meet again in May to continue discussions.

Outcomes & Next Steps:

- The facilitation team will work with Christina Buck (Butte County) to develop a draft template to compile SMC information in the next two weeks.
- Staff will provide feedback on the template. Once refined, the subbasin staff will begin completing the template with the most up-to-date information, acknowledging each subbasin is in a different stage in GSP development.
- Christina Buck (Butte County) will share notes from the two meetings mentioned focused on SMC development along the Sacramento River corridor. Further, C. Buck will copy the other managers on communications about future meetings among the technical teams in the Sacramento River corridor.

4. Framework and Scope for Inter-basin Coordination

The facilitation team prepared a draft report outlining the intent and purpose of inter-basin coordination in the Northern Sacramento Valley. The draft report describes the process followed to facilitate inter-basin coordination, the regulation requirements outlined in Article 8, § 357.2. Inter-basin Agreements [[access here](#)], and the materials developed throughout the process. It also outlines the foundational elements, referred to as key pillars, of a framework for sustained inter-basin coordination through GSP implementation. During the meeting, staff representatives were asked to share their initial impressions on the draft inter-basin coordination report and

framework. Then, staff reviewed and refined the framework pillars, discussed possible coordination groups and funding for inter-basin coordination efforts, and shared initial thoughts on possible issue resolution process. The draft report will be shared as staff recommendations for the respective GSA Boards consideration and for public input through existing subbasin venues (e.g., GSA meetings, committees, etc.).

Initial Impressions on Draft Pillars

The facilitators shared the draft pillars presented in the figure below. These pillars were developed based on previous discussions among GSA staff focused on desired outcomes and priorities, as well as on the regulations outlined in Article 8, § 357.2. Inter-basin Agreements [access [here](#)].

1. Information-sharing

- a. Commitment to inform each other on changing conditions (i.e., surface water cutbacks, land use changes, policy changes that inform groundwater management).*
- b. Commitment to share annual reports and interim progress reports.*
- c. Commitment to share data and technical information and work towards building shared data across basin boundaries (e.g., monitoring data, water budgets, modeling inputs and outputs, and GDEs).*

2. Joint analysis & evaluation

- a. Commitment to evaluate and compare contents of GSPs with a focus on Basin Setting, Monitoring Networks, SMCs, and PMAs. Identify significant differences and uncertainties related to cross-boundary flows and stream-aquifer interactions at boundaries, including data, methods, and assumptions. Identify relevant issues of concern related to groundwater interaction at the boundaries.*
- b. Commitment to engage in analysis and evaluation of SMCs between GSPs to assess impacts and identify significant differences and possible impacts between subbasins that could potentially lead to undesirable results.*

3. Coordination on mutually beneficial activities

- a. Commitment to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate on mutually beneficial activities, which could include joint monitoring, joint reporting, regional modeling, and other efforts to address data gaps at subbasin boundaries.*
- b. Commitment to collectively pursue funding and collaborate on mutually agreed upon projects and management actions that provide benefits across boundaries.*
- c. Commitment to leverage existing collaboratives (NSV IRWM, etc.)*

4. Coordinated communication and outreach

- a. Commitment to coordinate and collaborate on regional scale public engagement and communication strategies that promote awareness on groundwater sustainability, enhance public trust, and maintain institutional knowledge and establish a foundation for long-term collaboration.*

5. Non-binding

- a. Commitment to honor the individual authorities of GSAs*

Discussion:

2. Joint Analysis and Evaluation

- Staff stated robust evaluation could be considered a specific project post GSP adoption. While there is interest in collaborating, the question is at what scale? This question was revisited later in the meeting, when discussing coordinating groups and possible funding.

4. Coordinated communication and outreach

- Staff suggested to better emphasize the focus on providing consistent messaging at a regional level and distinguish from public engagement efforts to share basin-specific content. Staff representatives stated consistency is particularly important for stakeholders who cross basin-boundaries. Some staff suggested modifying the language to avoid implying subbasins were committing to convening regional public meetings.
- Some suggested leveraging regional venues to provide updates on a regular basis, particularly through the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) venues.
- A key consideration would be to specify how decision-making bodies (GSA boards) communicate with each other. While staff will commit to coordinate and communicate on an ongoing basis, staff would like to bring this topic for discussion to the GSA boards. Board members can then give direction to staff.

Possible Coordination Groups and Funding

Subbasin staff explored organizing and possibly funding inter-basin coordination priorities by specific subbasin boundaries. One approach would entail creating specific “Coordination Groups” (see map). Some of these groups are pairs and others include multiple subbasins around a river boundary.

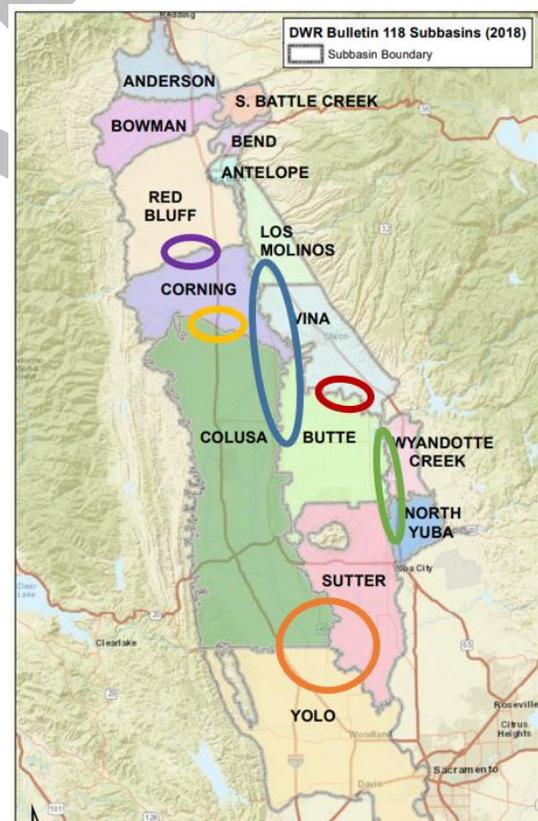
1. **Feather River Corridor**- Butte, Wyandotte Creek, North Yuba, Sutter
2. **North Sac River Corridor**- Los Molinos, Red Bluff, Corning, Vina, Butte, Colusa)
3. **South Sac Corridor**- Colusa, Sutter, Yolo
4. **Stony Creek**- Corning, Colusa
5. **Thomes Creek**- Red Bluff, Corning
6. **Butte/Vina**- Vina, Butte

Discussion:

Further, inter-basin coordination efforts would require resources and technical support. To explore options, subbasin staff were asked the following questions:

- How would you like to pursue funding opportunities post GSP submission (e.g., Technical Support Services or grant funding)? By coordination group?
- Would you like to include specific projects in your initial GSP draft?
- How do you suggest leveraging existing networks, agreements, and arrangements in the region?

Initial Discussion Highlights:



- Overall, staff thought coordination groups were a good start, as much of the coordination needed is boundary driven. These groups may work well and may need to be refined along the way. However, some concerns remain about the time and resource implications of pursuing such an approach.
- **Suggested change:** expand the blue circle (North Sac River Corridor) to include Red Bluff and Antelope.
- A participant highlighted that identifying projects at a regional level can make the individual GSPs stronger. Staff would appreciate CBI's support identifying projects suitable for regional coordination. For example, one project could entail pursuing funding at a regional scale to address monitoring needs and data gaps identified in existing plans. Packaging PMAs identified in individual plans into a regional project might help leverage funding.
- A participant highlighted that including regional projects in individual PMAs may not be possible in the initial GSPs but could be pursued after GSP submission. Others stated they will be compiling a project list in the coming weeks. With the facilitators and technical consultants support, staff can compile PMAs submitted across subbasins, identify themes, and suggest possible projects. Subbasins can include a broad and generic statement in their individual plans to accommodate inter-basin coordination efforts. Staff could work through the fall and winter polishing the statement for future inclusion, so that the project can be eligible for funding opportunities.
- Remaining questions:
 - Modeling: Is there interest in investing in a regional model and what would that look like? Would this project be tackled after GSP submittal? These questions need to be further explored in discussion with all GSAs.
 - Do inter-basin coordination projects need to be in the initial plan to get funding? How can subbasins add projects along the way? One suggestion could be to include projects in an appendix to avoid going through a formal plan update process to add projects. Adjusting the list will be important.
 - How can subbasins coordinate for Technical Support Service (TSS) funding and Prop 68 Implementation grants?

Possible Issue Resolution Process

The facilitators prompted a discussion regarding the possible inclusion of an issue resolution process in the inter-basin coordination framework. The facilitators pointed to the GSP Regulations [Article 8](#) where it states, "description of a process for identifying and resolving conflicts between Agencies" as a part of inter-basin coordination (*Sections 10727.2, 10733, and 10733.2, Water Code*). In addition, the facilitators shared the findings from a [recent study](#) from Stanford University that found that the ability of interagency coordination "to solve complex challenges will be contingent on the ability of these organizations to effectively prevent and manage conflicts before they arise and to resolve these conflicts equitably and efficiently when they do." (Moran, Martinez, and Blomquist, 2021). Therefore, the facilitators posed the following questions for reflection and discussion. In other words, staff were asked about the level of concern among their GSA boards regarding the decisions being made in other subbasins.

Discussion Questions for Staff Meeting (4/26/21)

- What top 3-4 specific problems or conflict(s) related to inter-basin coordination do you anticipate?
- In practical terms, what steps would you anticipate taking if a significant conflict or issue arose?
- What resources and support would be needed to resolve such issues?
- What might be the benefits and challenges of including an issue resolution process in the proposed inter-basin coordination framework?

Discussion:

- Level of concern varies across the various subbasins and would depend on the nature of the conflict and issue that arose.
- Stakeholder in the Vina subbasin (GSA board and stakeholder advisory committee members) are highly concerned with decisions and actions undertaken in subbasins on the other side of the river and the impact of those decisions on their groundwater conditions. Others expressed concern with a few individuals overly influencing the process.
- Some expressed that having a conflict resolution process in place is important. However, they are currently focused on developing GSPs and have competing priorities. Coordination among subbasins has gone very well and many didn't feel significant concern around this matter. That said, there are still many unknowns and staff do not feel like they have a full grasp of the situation.
- Stakeholders in different subbasins are concerned about the implications of water transfers outside of the area and lacking the proper resources to assess or address the situation. There is also a concern about the numbers in the plans not matching up. A thorough analysis will require hiring a consultant and/or working among coordination groups.
- Staff representatives would like to focus on the history of collaboration and trust. They would support establishing a process to identify issues that may arise and to prevent conflict, when possible. Staff would like CBI to provide issue resolution options for staff consideration. Broad and overarching options are preferable, particularly focused on a neighbor-to-neighbor basis.
- To gather public input, staff would like to share the draft report at their respective venues (GSA boards, groundwater commission, subbasin advisory boards, etc.) when it has undergone internal review among staff and is ready to be presented as a recommendation with key discussion questions to receive input on the framework section. The document can also be made available through the website for transparency.

Outcomes & Next Steps:

- + CBI will work with Ryan Teubert (Tehama County) and explore possible collaboration with their technical consultants to conduct a preliminary analysis on the compiled list of PMAs in the various subbasins.
- + CBI will bring in examples of issue resolution processes for staff consideration.
- + Staff representatives agreed to seek input on the draft report and framework using existing institutional structures that vary by subbasin. These structures include GSA Boards, Advisory Committees, and Groundwater Commissions, all of which are public venues. Staff would like to move from providing updates towards receiving input from stakeholders on the inter-basin coordination pillars. Staff will gather feedback on the draft report once the facilitation team incorporates changes, and the draft goes through internal review.

5. Public Meeting Discussion

Tehama representative shared the Facilitation Support Services (FSS) task order includes convening a regional workshop. This workshop could be convened between August and November. If convened in July or August, the workshop could provide an overview of the SMC and PMAs, the status of the development of the various GSPs, before they undergo public review. This meeting could also showcase the inter-basin coordination efforts so far. Staff representatives will revisit this topic at a future meeting.

Meeting Participants

Participant	Representation/Affiliation	Subbasins
Staff		

NSV INTER-BASIN COORDINATION MEETING (04/26/2021)

Participant	Representation/Affiliation	Subbasins
Christina Buck	Butte County	Butte, Vina, and Wyandotte Creek
Mary Fahey	Colusa Groundwater Authority	Butte and Colusa
Lisa Hunter	Glenn County and Glenn Groundwater Authority	Butte, Colusa, and Corning
Ryan Teubert	Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Antelope, Bowman, Corning, Los Molinos, and Red Bluff
Anjanette Shadley	Western Canal Water District	Butte
Facilitation Team		
Tania Carlone	Consensus Building Institute	
Mariana Rivera-Torres	Consensus Building Institute	

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