



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service



## AGENDA

### REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 27, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Agricultural Commissioner's Office/UCCE Conference Room  
1710 Soscol Avenue, Napa CA

#### Committee Members

Michelle Benvenuto  
Tucker Catlin  
Alan Galbraith  
Don Gleason  
Dave Graves  
Michael Haley  
Peter McCrea  
Charles Slutzkin  
Steve Soper  
Marilee Talley  
Jim Verhey  
Susanne von Rosenberg  
Duane Wall  
Dale Withers

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL
2. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS *(Chair)*
3. ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS *(10 min) (Staff, Consultant, Committee)*
  - a. APPROVAL OF ACTION MINUTES & MEETING SUMMARY
  - b. REVIEW MEETING AGENDA AND COMPLETED WORK PLAN

#### 4. PUBLIC COMMENT

In this time period, anyone may comment to the Committee regarding any subject over which the Committee has jurisdiction, or request consideration to place an item on a future Agenda. No comments will be allowed involving any subject matter that is scheduled for discussion as part of this Agenda. Individuals will be limited to a three-minute presentation. No action will be taken by the Committee as a result of any item presented at this time. *(Chair)*

#### 5. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

##### COMMITTEE REVIEW, DISCUSSION & DIRECTION

- a. UPDATE ON NAPA COUNTY DROUGHT CONDITIONS, WATER SUPPLIES AND DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS PLANNING *(10 min)*  
*(Phil Miller, Deputy Director-Water Resources/Public Works)*
  - Q&A - DISCUSS GRAC QUESTIONS
- b. GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES RECOMMENDATIONS *(10 min)*  
*(Dorian Fougères, Ph.D., Center for Collaborative Policy; Ad-Hoc Committee)*
  - CONFIRM FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
  - DISCUSSION/DIRECTION

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## 5. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS: (cont'd)

- c. REPORT FROM THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GRAC FINAL REPORT AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PRESENTATION (45 min)  
*(Dorian Fougères, Ph.D., Center for Collaborative Policy; Patrick Lowe, Natural Resources Conservation Mgr./Public Works; Ad-Hoc Committee)*
- DISCUSS AD-HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
  - Q&A - REVIEW/DISCUSS GRAC QUESTIONS
  - DISCUSSION/DIRECTION
- d. UPDATE ON INDUSTRY/PUBLIC OUTREACH & WELL OWNER OUTREACH (10 min)  
*(Patrick Lowe, Natural Resources Conservation Mgr./Public Works)*
- UPDATE ON WELL OWNER OUTREACH EFFORTS
  - COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETINGS – MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2014
    - VINTNERS - YOUNTVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER - 1:00 PM
    - PUBLIC - TUCKER FARM CENTER - CALISTOGA - 5:00 PM

*LEARN MORE ABOUT GROUNDWATER, WATER SUPPLY AND DROUGHT IN NAPA COUNTY*

## 6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. UPCOMING EVENTS OR ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE COMMITTEE AND STAFF (5 min)
- b. THANK YOU!

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

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**Note:** Where times are indicated for agenda items they are approximate and intended as estimates only, and may be shorter or longer, as needed. If requested, the agenda and documents in the agenda packet shall be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability. Please contact Greg Morgan at 707-259-8621, 804 First St., Napa CA 94559 to request alternative formats.





A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service



**ACTION MINUTES**

**NAPA COUNTY GROUNDWATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
December 12, 2013**

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

**The Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC) met in regular session on Thursday, December 12, 2013 with the following members present:**

**Tucker Catlin; Alan Galbraith; Don Gleason; Michael Haley; Chair Peter McCrea; Charles Slutzkin; Steve Soper; Jim Verhey; Duane Wall; and Dale Withers. Vice-Chair Michelle Benvenuto arrived during Item No. 3.a; Dave Graves arrived during Item No. 3.a and left after the conclusion of Item No. 5.b; and Marilee Talley and Susanne von Rosenberg were excused.**

2. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

**Chair Peter McCrea provided opening comments. It was announced that member Bill Trautman recently passed away.**

3. ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

a. APPROVAL OF ACTION MINUTES AND MEETING SUMMARY

**Action Minutes and Meeting Summary of October 24, 2013 approved.**

<b>MB</b>	<b>TC</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>DG1</b>	<b>DG2</b>	<b>MH</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>MT</b>	<b>JV</b>	<b>SVR</b>	<b>DW1</b>	<b>DW2</b>
									X		X		

b. REVIEW WORK PLAN/SCHEDULE

**Patrick Lowe, Natural Resources Conservation Program Manager, Public Works, went over the workplan/schedule and noted the February meeting will probably be the last formal meeting of the GRAC and their final recommendations will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in April.**

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

**None.**

5. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. REPORT FROM THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DRAFT WATER AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS (WAA)

**Steve Lederer, Director, Public Works, referenced the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting of November 19 and thanked the Ad-Hoc Committee members for their time and a good discussion. The main question of the WAA was on the tiering concept that has been previously discussed. The WAA**

**Item No. 5.a...Continued**

current process is if a project meets the current water usage threshold under Phase 1 (less than one acre foot per acre on the Napa Valley floor, less than 0.5 acre foot per acre in the hills or less than 0.3 acre foot per acre in the MST), no further analyses are necessary. (The revised WAA refers to the initial evaluation of the applicant’s information as Tier 1.) The proposed change is for all projects under Tier 1 to go through well to well and well to surface water analyses where applicable. There are both pros and cons to the proposed change. Mr. Lederer shared an example of a recent challenge to a project for well to well and well to surface water interference wherein the project will now be delayed for six to nine months while the analyses are performed. Ad-Hoc Committee members Michelle Benvenuto and Tucker Catlin did not agree with the proposed change to the WAA. Ms. Benvenuto felt the WAA has been used successfully for years and there doesn’t seem to be an issue with Tier 1. If there are issues with the pumping test under the current WAA Phase 2, those issues should be addressed rather than rewriting the WAA and changing the rules for everyone. Mr. Catlin concurred with Ms. Benvenuto and added the WAA shouldn’t increase conflict. He felt the measurements of 500’ and 1,500’ were excessive and he didn’t support the requirements for “surface water.” (Vicki Kretsinger Grabert, Principal Hydrologist, LSCE, responded the limits could be 500’, 1,000’ or 1,500’ depending upon the pumping capacity of the proposed well. The numbers aren’t set numbers but are more like guidelines that reasonably indicate little to no potential impact, in which case additional information could be accepted in lieu of testing if the numbers aren’t exceeded.) Ad-Hoc Committee member Dave Graves agreed with the proposed change. Mr. Graves felt the standard under the current Phase 2 is technically inadequate and indefensible because it calls for a pumping test to be done in a particular manner. The way the WAA is currently written is factually inadequate, and revising it would be beneficial to applicants and their neighbors because there will be more fact finding earlier in the process. Mr. Graves felt the GRAC should seriously consider the proposed change for at least evaluating well to well potential interference at a minimum as part of the revised WAA Tier 1 process. After further discussion, the GRAC approved the following changes to the WAA: 1) Improve the method for determining a project’s estimated water usage when conducting the water use evaluation under Tier 1; 2) If the proposed water use is below the established threshold, no further action is required (i.e., no change to the current process); and 3) Correct the method of performing the Phase 2 evaluation by making the technical changes as proposed by the County.

MB	TC	AG	DG1	DG2	MH	PM	CS	SS	MT	JV	SVR	DW1	DW2
		N		N				N	X		X		

**b. REPORT FROM THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES**

Dorian Fougères, Ph.D., Mediator, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS, reported the Ad-Hoc Sustainability Committee met again and came up with five high-level objectives and added specificity. With Ad-Hoc Committee member Jim Verhey providing direction and feedback, the Ad-Hoc Committee produced a table that assigns who would take the lead role in sustainability, such as professional organizations and associations. Patrick Lowe, Natural Resources Conservation Program Manager, Public Works, added that Ad-Hoc Committee member Susanne von Rosenberg took the time to consolidate the GRAC’s comments and the Ad-Hoc Committee’s work into table form. There was added interest that the monitoring and reporting mechanism continue, which would be transferred over to the WICC Board, as they are involved in other monitoring programs. The table was being shared with the GRAC for any additional comments. Mr. Verhey added the Ad-Hoc Committee thought of who the County could assign to take the lead

Item No. 5.b...Continued

role on sustainability and focused on the RCD, Napa Valley Grapegrowers, Farm Bureau and Napa Valley Vintners. Sustainability must be led with best sustainability practices. Mr. Verhey quoted Ad-Hoc Committee Marilee Talley by saying if we could get the entire community (defined as everyone living and working in the Napa Valley) to be part of this process and start educating everyone about best sustainability practices and use monitoring as a scorecard, it's a lot better than changing the ordinances and regulations, which is what the GRAC will recommend to the Board of Supervisors. The GRAC complimented the Ad-Hoc Committee on their latest efforts and adopted the Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendations for the sustainability plan.

MB	TC	AG	DG1	DG2	MH	PM	CS	SS	MT	JV	SVR	DW1	DW2
									X		X		

c. UPDATE ON INDUSTRY/PUBLIC OUTREACH & WELL OWNER OUTREACH

Patrick Lowe, Natural Resources Conservation Program Manager, Public Works, went over the latest version of the well outreach table that was distributed at the meeting. Mr. Lowe noted the few areas in yellow that still need attention. Many of the GRAC members have been out making contacts. Jim Verhey and Michael Haley made great progress working with contacts upvalley, which has generated calls to Mr. Lowe. Cakebread Cellars volunteered 12 wells that are dispersed across a number of properties. Mr. Lowe met with a woman in American Canyon recruited by Supervisor Keith Caldwell who had complete well drilling records going back to 1967 and will help look for another well site in the area. Mr. Lowe found the well owners he met with to be very helpful with lots of information and they have also recruited their neighbors. He also found that some well owners have contacted him as a result of activities going on around them. Jim Verhey gave a nice presentation on the GRAC and the groundwater monitoring program at a Grapegrowers regulatory workshop and in the process secured two more wells. Mr. Lowe reminded the GRAC if anyone has contacts in the yellow areas to please contact them and mentioned he is working on additional follow-ups. Mr. Lowe thanked the GRAC for their efforts.

d. DISCUSSION OF GRAC FINAL REPORT & PRESENTATION

Dorian Fougères, Ph.D., Mediator, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS, mentioned some of the GRAC members suggested having a one-page cover letter followed by what the GRAC has worked on (e.g., the Groundwater Monitoring Plan, educational materials, sustainability objectives, etc.) so that the materials could be presented to the Board of Supervisors in one complete packet. The cover letter would reiterate the Board of Supervisors' charge to the GRAC followed by the GRAC's recommendations. Jim Verhey suggested in addition to the recommendations, some of the conclusions the GRAC came to as a committee should be included, such as there isn't a quantity issue in the county other than in the MST, and there isn't really a quality issue in the County other than in Calistoga and Carneros, and some of the data gaps Vicki Kretsinger Grabert, Principal Hydrologist, LSCE, is trying to fill should also be included. Mr. Verhey also suggested an ad-hoc committee be formed. Vice-Chair Michelle Benvenuto, Tucker Catlin, Dave Graves, Chair Peter McCrea and Jim Verhey were appointed to an ad-hoc committee to work on a draft one-page document before the next GRAC meeting.

MB	TC	AG	DG1	DG2	MH	PM	CS	SS	MT	JV	SVR	DW1	DW2
				X					X		X		

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Update on well owner outreach.
- Review of cover letter for GRAC final report and presentation.

Steve Soper shared that he is working with a vineyard project in Rutherford and inquired with Public Works if they had the spring and fall static water levels for Rutherford, which they did. Jeff Sharp, Principal Planner, Public Works, distributed a CASGEM groundwater elevation data spreadsheet that had the measurements for two wells in Rutherford going back to fall 2011 and up to spring 2013 with readings Mr. Sharp entered for October 2013. The spreadsheet listed ground surface to water surface and ground surface elevation levels, which Mr. Soper compared to his project well's measurements.

9. ADJOURNMENT TO THE NEXT MEETING

Adjourned in memory of Bill Trautman to the next regular meeting of the Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee on Thursday, February 27, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PETER McCREA, Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
PATRICK LOWE, Secretary

By: GREG MORGAN, Supervising Office Assistant

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**Voting Key**

If not unanimous, member votes will be tallied (N = No; X = Excused; A = Abstained) using the following Committee Member abbreviations:

MB = Michelle Benvenuto; TC = Tucker Catlin; AG = Alan Galbraith; DG1 = Don Gleason; DG2 = Dave Graves;  
MH = Michael Haley; PM = Peter McCrea; CS = Charles Slutzkin; SS = Steve Soper; MT = Marilee Talley;  
JV = Jim Verhey; SVR = Susanne von Rosenberg; DW1 = Duane Wall; DW2 = Dale Withers

Example Key:

**MB TC AG DG1 DG2 MH PM CS SS MT JV SVR DW1 DW2**

## **MEETING SYNOPSIS**

### **Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee**

December 12, 2013 - 15<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS

#### **Meeting Synopsis**

The Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC) held its fifteenth meeting on December 12, 2013. The meeting began with Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County, reviewing the schedule and indicating that the GRAC may conclude its work in February and present their recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors in April 2014. Mr. Steven Lederer, Napa County, and the Ad-Hoc Committee on Water Availability Analysis (WAA) then reviewed their discussion on the proposed revisions to the WAA, which included new well-to-well and well-to-surface water interference standards. The GRAC discussed and agreed that the County should address the technical deficiencies for water use estimation and pump test protocols in the WAA. The majority of GRAC members also recommended that the County maintain the existing WAA procedure, and not automatically require testing for well-to-well interference, and not add a new test for well-to-surface water interference. The Ad-Hoc Committee on Groundwater Sustainability Objectives and staff then reviewed five high-level recommended objectives, including a draft table identifying professional organizations that should lead implementation. The GRAC agreed to the Ad-Hoc committee's recommendations. Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County, then provided a status update on well owner and industry outreach for the monitoring program, and members discussed how to fill remaining gaps. Lastly, the GRAC created an Ad-Hoc committee to draft a concise summary/report of the GRAC's conclusions and recommendations, for review by the GRAC in February and eventual presentation to the County Board of Supervisors in April 2014. The GRAC's next meeting will be on February 27, 2014.

Please see the GRAC's webpage ([www.countyofnapa.org/bos/grac](http://www.countyofnapa.org/bos/grac)) for copies of the December 12, 2013 presentations and handouts.

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## Action Items

1. **JIM VERHEY** to send a copy of his Grapegrowers presentation to **PATRICK LOWE** to distribute to **AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEMBERS**.
2. **DORIAN FOUGÈRES** to organize a “final report cover letter ad-hoc committee” teleconference meeting prior to the next GRAC meeting on February 27.

## Agreements

1. The County should implement the technical changes to water usage estimates and the pumping test protocols in the Water Availability Analysis (WAA). (Note: there was not consensus agreement about whether to change anything about the WAA process. See section 5(a) below, especially pages 6-7.)
2. The GRAC agreed to adopt the Groundwater Sustainability Objectives Ad-Hoc Committee’s recommendations.
3. The GRAC agreed to create a final report cover letter ad-hoc committee.

### 1. Call to Order & Roll Call

All members of the Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC) were in attendance, except for Marilee Talley and Susanne von Rosenberg, who were excused, and William Trautman, who recently passed away.

## **2. Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Chair Peter McCrea opened the session.

## **3. Organizational Items**

### **a. Approval of Action Minutes & Meeting Summary**

The meeting minutes and meeting summary were unanimously approved.

### **b. Review Work Plan/Schedule**

Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County reviewed an updated work plan and noted the GRAC may conclude its work in February and present to the County Board of Supervisors in April 2014.

### **c. Review Meeting Agenda and Process**

Chair Peter McCrea reviewed the agenda.

## **4. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **5. Presentations and Discussion Items**

### **a. Report from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Recommendations for the Draft Water Availability Analysis (WAA)**

Mr. Steven Lederer, Napa County, reviewed the WAA Ad-Hoc Committee (AHC) discussion on November 19 that evaluated the County's proposed revisions to the Draft WAA. AHC members disagreed on whether the WAA deficiencies warranted incorporating well-to-well and well-to-surface water interference criteria to the current water usage criteria. The objective for this discussion was to gather final GRAC input and recommendations for the County's next steps.

GRAC members received an updated draft WAA, a decision tree diagram, and a memo reviewing the proposed changes at the AHC meeting. Mr. Lederer said County staff acknowledged the benefits and drawbacks of the WAA revisions, but overall the staff supported the revisions. GRAC members also received a copy of a recent appeal challenging the Woolls Ranch winery project on the grounds of potential impacts to groundwater and neighboring wells. Mr. Lederer stated the revised WAA might have

helped the winery project, but now the appeal will delay the project for approximately 6-9 months.

Based on discussion, the GRAC agreed the County should address technical deficiencies in the WAA, but the majority of GRAC members recommended the County retain the existing WAA process and not incorporate new well interference criteria. Major concerns mentioned during discussion included the perceived extra burden on all applicants, frequency of challenged projects, and the County's ability to sufficiently evaluate project proposals.

Mr. Lederer said County staff and GRAC recommendations will be presented to the County Board of Supervisors, who will ultimately decide on the WAA revisions. The Board can also change the WAA in the future if revisions prove ineffective.

#### **RESPONSES TO CLARIFYING QUESTIONS**

County staff, AHC members, and Vicki Kretsinger Grabert, Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE), provided the following information in response to GRAC questions:

- **Discretionary projects.** The WAA only applies to discretionary projects, which require use permits. Examples include new wineries, new vineyards on slopes greater than 5%, and new uses of existing wells with use permits.
- **Existing WAA process.** Tier 1 has one criterion: water usage (i.e., one acre feet of water/acre land/year on the valley floor, 0.3 for the MST, and 0.5 for the rest of Napa County). If the project meets the water usage criteria, and it is not challenged, the project moves on in the application process. If the project uses more than the water usage threshold or is challenged, it undergoes an ineffective pumping test and potentially other unnecessary analyses.
  - County staff and LSCE said the current WAA second phase is inadequate.
    - Public planners feel obligated to accurately evaluate groundwater use, and under the current process, an approved project may still negatively impact nearby wells and/or surface waters.
    - Water usage estimation needs revising because the County provides outdated estimates that are based solely on production capacity

- without accounting for varied operations (e.g., tourism and events hosting, compared with solely wine production).
  - Approximately 1 to 2 challenges occur per 20 applications per year.
- **Proposed WAA revisions.** The purpose of the revisions is to identify a method that would be more accurate and also streamline the process.
  - **Tier 1 - Thresholds:** Tier 1 would have three criteria: water usage, well-to-well interference, and well-to-surface water interference.
  - **Tier 2 - Simulation analyses:** If the project does not satisfy any of the three criteria or is challenged, it prompts Tier 2. Tier 2 initially utilizes available information (e.g., pumping capacity, well design, available hydrogeologic information, etc.) to calculate simulated drawdown effects. If effects are insignificant, the application proceeds forward.
    - **Tier 2 - Site-specific analyses:** If simulations predict a significant impact, the applicant can reconsider some of the planned project design parameters (e.g., well construction, well location, etc.) and/or a qualified hydrologist needs to perform site-specific analyses. Costs for these analyses depend on the project's complexity (estimated low range: \$7,500-15,000; medium: \$15,000-\$30,000; high: \$30K and up), and the applicant pays for most of the data collection.
  - The scientific and technical basis for the proposed revisions are explained further in the revised WAA and the November 19 AHC meeting summary.
  - A well with a new discretionary use is still subject to the WAA even if neighboring wells are on the same property.

## **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION**

- **Technical and Process Issues.** If the WAA has been effective since 1990 with Tier 1, the County should focus on technical deficiencies, such as improving Tier 1's water usage estimation and the currently inadequate WAA Phase 2 pumping test.
  - **AHC Comment:** The current WAA potentially gives a false sense of security when projects satisfy the water usage criteria, but in reality are at higher risk (e.g., using more water than annual rainfall supplies).
- **Woolfs Ranch example.** The Woolfs project lacks sufficient information to determine whether the WAA revisions would have helped the applicant.
  - **Question:** What would happen if the Woolfs project went through the revised WAA, and they determined the project could have a significant impact?

- **Staff Response:** The project could have multiple outcomes. Tier 1 and 2 revisions would have answered the challenges in the appeal. The project might have stopped as is, but the applicant could alter the well's location, construction, and/or water use level to satisfy the WAA criteria.
- **Conflict resolution as alternative focus.** No regulations can deter some opponents from challenging a project. The County should focus on conflict resolution and education and outreach as an alternative approach.
  - **LSCE Response:** The revisions are a form of proactive resolution because the applicant considers the neighbor's well while completing the application.
- **CEQA protection.** The County should revise the WAA to help project applications become more defensible under CEQA.
- **Surface water vaguely defined.** Surface water can be any water that touches the ground. Ambiguous terms such as "surface water" and "streams" need an explicit working definition.
- **Neighbor concerns.** At the joint GRAC-WICC meeting, Planning Commissioner Matt Pope and Supervisor Keith Caldwell indicated people had voiced concerns at public hearings, but that no one had returned later and said their wells had dried up.
  - **Staff Response:** Granted, but we also have anecdotal evidence where people said their well does not work after a winery or another project came in.
- **Improved understanding of the proposal.** Request: People can understand the issue more easily with a 1-page summary and/or a proposed application to walk through the WAA revised process.
- **Logistics may overburden small projects.** The criteria should be proportional to the project size. Large vineyards should provide more analyses than small vineyards.
  - **Comment:** We should consider how the revisions affect private operators who service rural communities and have very limited budgets.

**AGREEMENT:** All **GRAC MEMBERS** agreed the County should implement the technical changes to water usage estimates and the pump test protocols in the WAA.

## **SUMMARY OF GRAC MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVES ON REVISING WAA PROCESS**

Aside from a consensus recommendation for the County to address technical deficiencies, members had two broadly different perspectives on the value of revising the WAA process.

- **First Perspective**

- The need to completely revise the WAA process remains unconvincing.
- The project should undergo other appropriate analyses only if the project fails the water usage criteria or is challenged.
- Well-to-surface water criteria should not be included.
- Challenges are too infrequent to warrant changing the WAA process. Some challenges are unavoidable because they are based on personal relationships and conflicts.
- We need to consider how the less affluent applicants will be affected.
- The County should focus on developing incentives and educate the public rather than adopting the proposed revisions, which could divide members of the public.

- **Second Perspective**

- Staff desire to do a fair and competent job for the public. If staff believe they need better tools to address this issue, their recommendations should be supported.
- Some opponents will challenge a project despite available information, but the revised WAA may also stop challenges by opponents who are genuinely looking for more evidence to satisfy their concerns.
- The current WAA process is scientifically inadequate and does not work. There is no way of knowing how many wells are affected by neighbor withdrawals under the existing permitted uses.
- The water usage criteria are not appropriate for all sub-areas.

**MAJORITY VOTE:** The GRAC could not reach consensus on the proposed revision to the WAA process. The majority of GRAC members recommended the County maintain the existing WAA process, not revise the well-to-well interference criterion, and not add a new criterion for well-to-surface water interference.

- Members in the majority included: Ms. Michelle Benvenuto, Mr. Tucker Catlin, Mr. Donald Gleason, Mr. Michael Haley, Mr. Peter McCrea, Mr. Charles Slutzkin, Mr. Jim Verhey, Mr. Duane Wall, and Mr. Dale Withers.
- Members in the minority included: Mr. Alan Galbraith, Mr. David Graves, and Mr. Steve Soper.

## **b. Report from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Recommendations for Groundwater Sustainability Objectives**

Facilitator Mr. Dorian Fougères and Mr. Patrick Lowe, Napa County, reviewed the Sustainability Objectives Ad-Hoc Committee (AHC) meeting that incorporated feedback from the GRAC at its October meeting.

GRAC members received a draft of the five sustainability objectives that the AHC agreed are of greatest importance. The group also received a table drafted by AHC member Ms. Susanne von Rosenberg, which identified professional associations and organizations to take the lead role in implementing the objectives. These included the Watershed Information Center & Conservancy (WICC), Napa County Resource Conservation District (RCD), Napa Valley Grapegrowers, Napa Valley Vintners, and the Farm Bureau. AHC members noted that they wanted the overall message to be that the entire community, which is everyone living and working in Napa, needs to be part of this process. Furthermore, they wanted to lead with best sustainable practices as a starting point and use monitoring to track progress.

GRAC members shared their appreciation for the AHC's fair and thorough work to integrate the GRAC's input. Several GRAC members said the organizations should be responsible for implementation, with the County providing coordination and motivation.

### **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

- **Identifying responsible organizations.** The RCD expressed interest and asked when the GRAC's work would be available.
  - **Staff Comment:** The County has a long partnership with RCD and the WICC Board, which facilitates communication and implementation.
- **Developing collaborative stewardship.** The AHC's work is good because it switches the focus from changing ordinances or regulations to keeping it voluntary and less divisive.
- **Initial momentum from the County.** The County needs to provide the initial support for education and incentives and facilitate the industries' implementation efforts.

**AGREEMENT:** All **GRAC MEMBERS** agreed to adopt the proposed Groundwater Sustainability Objectives recommendations.

### c. Update on Industry/Public & Well Owner Outreach

Mr. Lowe provided an update on outreach efforts with industry groups and the general public on the Voluntary Groundwater Monitoring Program.

The GRAC received an updated table detailing outreach progress in the Areas of Interest (AOIs). Mr. Lowe said some areas still required attention, but overall well sign-ups are progressing very well. He thanked GRAC members for their outreach efforts and encouraged them to continue recruiting participants. He noted GRAC member Mr. Jim Verhey's presentation at a Grapegrower's workshop in Yountville was highly effective.

Mr. Lowe also shared how the monitoring program can help participants address their neighbors' questions, and noted neighbors sometimes participate as a precautionary action. Mr. Lowe said people generally do not broadcast dry well issues in large public forums to avoid undesirable attention and potentially decreased property values. The monitoring program helps create a better understanding of potential problem areas while retaining some degree of anonymity for property owners.

#### QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- **Sign-ups will continue.** Question: How is the County concluding the monitoring program outreach?
  - **Staff Response:** The County will continue to sign-up participants even after the GRAC concludes its work.
- **Continued assistance to GRAC members.** Certain GRAC members are highly effective at recruiting. Those having challenges should ask for assistance.

### d. Discussion of GRAC Final Report & Presentation

The facilitator and Mr. Lowe provided context for the GRAC's final report and presentation to the Board of Supervisors. Several GRAC members had suggested creating an ad-hoc committee to draft a short cover letter that summarizes all of the GRAC's work. The cover letter would reiterate the GRAC's charge and their recommendations. The corresponding reports and documents (e.g., Monitoring Plan, Groundwater Sustainability Objectives) would follow the cover letter, ensuring the Board receives everything together.

Ad-hoc committee members will compose the cover letter offline and circulate the document with Mr. Fougères and Mr. Lowe serving as points of contact. The ad-hoc committee will present the draft cover letter for GRAC review in February. Mr. Peter McCrea and Mr. Jim Verhey agreed to co-present the final report to the Board of Supervisors.

#### **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

- **Additional components to the cover letter.** We should include GRAC conclusions, consensus items, and remaining issues. For example, conclusions would be that the groundwater is stable except in the MST, and Napa County does not have a water quality issue except possibly in Calistoga and Carneros. Remaining issues identify what data gaps or questions need further consideration, such as the groundwater-surface water connection and confidence in the data.
- **Grapegrowers presentation.** Mr. Verhey's presentation at the Grapegrowers' workshop is a good starting point.

**ACTION ITEM:** JIM VERHEY to send a copy of his Grapegrowers presentation to **PATRICK LOWE** to distribute to **AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEMBERS**.

**ACTION ITEM:** **DORIAN FOUGÈRES** to organize final report cover letter ad-hoc committee teleconference meeting prior to the next GRAC meeting on February 27.

**AGREEMENT:** The GRAC agreed to create a final report cover letter ad-hoc committee. Ms. Michelle Benvenuto, Mr. Tucker Catlin, Mr. David Graves, Mr. Peter McCrea, and Mr. Jim Verhey were appointed to the final report cover letter ad-hoc committee.

## **6. Other Business**

### **Groundwater Elevation Measurements**

GRAC member Mr. Steve Soper and Napa County Principal Planner Mr. Jeff Sharp led the group through a handout of groundwater elevation data, for spring and fall in two wells in Rutherford. Mr. Soper stated the purpose was to understand the water level variations, from Calistoga towards Rutherford and across the Napa River, using County and industry measurements. Mr. Soper noted the County measured groundwater level varied from his well project in Rutherford.

## **7. Announcements**

No announcements were made.

## 8. Future Agenda Items

Proposed items include:

1. Update on outreach efforts
2. Cover letter of GRAC conclusions and recommendations

## 9. Adjournment to the Next Meeting

Thursday, February 27, 2014 – 2:00 p.m.

Agricultural Commissioner's Office/UCCE Conference Room

1710 Soscol Avenue, Napa CA

- The meeting adjourned in memory of William Trautman.

## Attendees

Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee Members

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Michelle Benvenuto | 7. Peter McCrea     |
| 2. Tucker Catlin      | 8. Charles Slutzkin |
| 3. Alan Galbraith     | 9. Steve Soper      |
| 4. Donald Gleason     | 10. Jim Verhey      |
| 5. David Graves       | 11. Duane Wall      |
| 6. Michael Haley      | 12. Dale Withers    |

Public Attendees

13. Michelle Nori
14. Mark Nordberg, California Dept. of Water Resources

County Staff/Facilitator/Consultant Attendees

- |                                    |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 15. Brian Bordona                  | 21. Steve Lederer |
| 16. Greg Clark                     | 22. Patrick Lowe  |
| 17. Deborah Elliott                | 23. Phil Miller   |
| 18. Dorian Fougères, CCP           | 24. Greg Morgan   |
| 19. Vicki Kretsinger Grabert, LSCE | 25. Jeff Sharp    |
| 20. Stephanie Horij, CCP           |                   |

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## **DRAFT SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES**

### **GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES AD-HOC COMMITTEE**

### **Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC)**

February 27, 2014 GRAC Meeting

#### **1. Goal of Developing Groundwater Sustainability Objectives**

The use of groundwater is essential to protecting the quality of life in Napa County because groundwater is integral to agriculture, the wine industry, the cities, and the culture of the region. Therefore, the overarching goal of developing sustainability objectives is to protect the groundwater resources of Napa County for all the people who live and work here, regardless of the source of their water supply. This builds on the County's General Plan and associated actions.

#### **2. Definition of Groundwater Sustainability**

Based on the GRAC's charge from the Board of Supervisors and a review of definitions in published literature, we define "groundwater sustainability" as follows:

*Groundwater sustainability depends on the development and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained indefinitely without causing unacceptable economic, environmental, or social consequences, while protecting economic, environmental, and social benefits.*

As such, groundwater sustainability is both a goal and a process.

Examples of unacceptable consequences included: insufficient water supplies for agriculture, wine production, and business operations; loss of groundwater wells; loss of real estate value; environmental damages; and increased governmental intervention.

Examples of benefits included: protection of quality of life, small town rural setting, agricultural communities, the county's economy, and groundwater in the valley; healthy streams; and proactively avoiding State and County intervention.

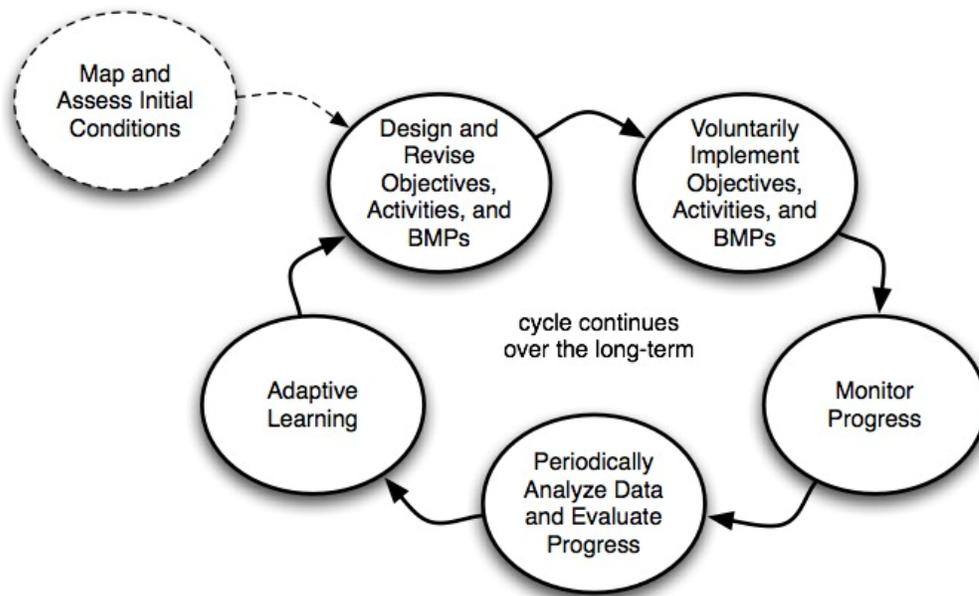
#### **3. Shared Responsibility for Groundwater Sustainability**

Groundwater sustainability involves cities, private well owners, residents, and workers, as well as the County and unincorporated areas. Everyone who lives and works in the county shares responsibility and has a stake in protecting groundwater resources, including groundwater supplies, quality, and associated watersheds. Without this resource, the character of the county would be significantly different in terms of its economy, communities, rural character, ecology, housing, and lifestyles. In this context, healthy agriculture cannot be separated from healthy communities and healthy environments; none of these exist in isolation. The county would not be the same if any of these components were adversely affected.

## 4. Monitoring as a Means to Achieving Groundwater Sustainability

### Groundwater

Monitoring is not a goal in itself, rather, it is an activity that supports the larger goal of sustainability. Ensuring groundwater sustainability is an adaptive process that, among other things, maintains the ability of future generations to make choices about how they use groundwater resources. Monitoring is only one step in the larger adaptive cycle, albeit an important one, along with evaluating progress toward meeting objectives, learning from activities (adaptive learning), revising objectives and activities and best management practices (BMPs), and voluntarily implementing these. The following diagram summarizes the process.



## 5. Principles underlying the Objectives

- The objectives are to be “achieved through voluntary means and incentives”, per the charge from the Board of Supervisors.
- The objectives build directly off the County’s General Plan Conservation Element, the GRAC’s associated Monitoring Plan, and existing County climate change policies.
- The objectives acknowledge that groundwater management policies already exist in some areas. Stewardship of groundwater use currently occurs and can be strengthened through enhanced private responsibility, as well as existing regulations, programs, and mandates. Further regulation is not an objective.
- The objectives acknowledge that many private individuals are already taking care of their groundwater resources. Their participation in the monitoring program will help ensure that their ongoing stewardship activities are meeting the goal of groundwater sustainability.

## 6. Groundwater Sustainability Objectives

Goal: To protect and enhance groundwater quantity and quality for all the people who live and work in Napa County, regardless of the source of their water supply.

Objectives:

1. Initiate and carry out outreach and education efforts.
  - a. Develop public outreach programs and materials to make everyone who lives and works in the county aware that the protection of our water supplies is a shared responsibility, and everyone needs to participate.
  - b. Through education, enable people to take action.
2. Make better use of existing water supplies and systems.
  - a. Support landowners in implementing best sustainable practices.
  - b. Enhance the water supply system and infrastructure, including, but not limited to, system efficiencies, reservoir dredging, recycled water, groundwater storage and recharge, conjunctive use – to improve water supply reliability.
3. Continue long-term monitoring and evaluation.
  - a. Collect groundwater and surface water data and maintain a usable database that can provide information about the status of the county’s groundwater and surface water resources and help forecast future supplies.
  - b. Evaluate data using best analytical methods in order to better understand characteristics of the county’s groundwater and water resources systems, including, but not limited to, a county-level groundwater inflow/outflow estimation.
  - c. Share data and results of related analytical efforts while following appropriate confidentiality standards.
4. Improve our scientific understanding of groundwater recharge and groundwater-surface water interactions.
5. Improve preparedness to address groundwater issues that might emerge.
  - a. Improve preparedness for responding to long-term trends and evolving issues, such as adverse groundwater trends (including level and quality), changes in precipitation and temperature patterns, and saltwater intrusion.
  - b. Improve preparedness for responding to acute crises, such as water supply disruptions and multiyear drought conditions.

Supplemental recommendations:

1. Support the WICC and RCD in implementing the objectives.
2. If a County or sub-regional groundwater stewardship and sustainability plan is developed in the future, these should be the foundational objectives.

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## DRAFT SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES AD-HOC COMMITTEE

27-February-2014

General Objective	Specific Objective	Basis/Strategy	Metric	Timeframe	Who Will Implement?	Cost Range
I. Conduct Outreach and Education	a. Develop and widely distribute public outreach programs and materials	Make everyone who lives and works in the County aware that the protection of our water supplies is a shared responsibility, and everyone needs to participate	No. of individuals and organizations reached	Short-term – develop and distribute materials, On-going long-term – continue outreach effort, update information as needed	County and cities through professional/ educational and community organizations*	Low
	b. Educate people about opportunities for taking action	Provide a direct pathway to taking action	No. of individuals taking action to reduce water use	Short-term, On-going long-term	County and cities through professional/ educational and community organizations*	Low to moderate (if funding is made available to implement some measures)
II. Optimize Existing Water Supplies	a. Support landowners in implementing best sustainable practices	Solicit information on, and widely share best practices with regard to water use in vineyards, wineries, and other agricultural/commercial applications	No. of individuals and organizations reached	Short-term - solicit best practices information and rank for effectiveness, start outreach effort to share information; On-going long-term – Continue to solicit information and share with appropriate audiences	County through professional/ educational organizations*	Low to moderate (if funding is made available to implement some measures)

\* Professional/educational and community organizations: RCD, NVG, NFB, NVV, UC Davis, UC Berkeley, Chamber of Commerce and others

General Objective	Specific Objective	Basis/Strategy	Metric	Timeframe	Who Will Implement?	Cost Range
	b. Enhance the water supply system and infrastructure to improve water supply reliability.	May include, but is not limited to system efficiencies, reservoir dredging, recycled water, groundwater storage and recharge, conjunctive use	Potential water savings generated by various actions	Short-term – evaluate and rank opportunities Long-term – seek funding and implement high-value projects	County and cities	Moderate to high
III. Continue Long-Term Monitoring and Evaluation	a. Collect groundwater and surface water data and maintain a usable database that can provide information about the status of the county’s groundwater and surface water resources and help forecast future supplies.	On-going monitoring is crucial to understand trends.	No. of high quality wells monitored; no. of surface water monitoring locations; all data entered into database	On-going: refine monitoring program over time	County with support of private & public landowners, and professional organizations  WICC**	Low to Moderate, depending on number of wells monitored
	b. Evaluate data using best analytical methods to better understand characteristics of the county’s groundwater and water resources systems, including but not limited to a county-level groundwater inflow/outflow estimation.		Reassess groundwater trends at least every 3 years, including inflow/outflow estimation when sufficient data are available	On-going: Every 3 years minimum  Annual update: WICC	County & outside consultants (LSCE, others)  WICC	Low to moderate, depending on extent of evaluation
	c. Share data and results of related analytical efforts while following appropriate confidentiality standards.	Having good information allows organizations and individuals to make better decisions	Appropriate use of existing data becomes routine within the County	Short-term; On-going long-term  On-going updates through WICC	County & outside consultants (LSCE, others)  WICC	Low

\*\* WICC : Watershed Information Center and Conservancy of Napa County

General Objective	Specific Objective	Basis/Strategy	Metric	Timeframe	Who Will Implement?	Cost Range
IV. Improve our scientific understanding of groundwater recharge and groundwater-surface water interactions.		Potential connectivity between groundwater and surface water in various locations in the County is not well understood.	Extent of groundwater-surface interaction in key areas of the County is understood.	Short-term – clarify data needs; intermediate to long-term – collect and evaluate data	County and outside consultants (LSCE, others)	Moderate
V. Improve preparedness to address groundwater issues that might emerge	a. Improve preparedness for responding to long-term trends and evolving issues	Increase ability to address adverse groundwater trends (including level and quality), changes in precipitation and temperature patterns, and saltwater intrusion		Long-term	County and cities with outside consultants (LSCE, others)	Low; primarily a planning effort
	b. Improve preparedness for responding to acute crises, such as water supply disruptions and multiyear drought conditions			Long-term	County and cities with outside consultants (LSCE, others)	Low; primarily a planning effort

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## **DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

### **BOARD LETTER AD-HOC COMMITTEE**

#### **Napa County Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC)**

January 13, 2014

*Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS*

Per direction at the GRAC's December 12, 2013 meeting, an appointed Ad-Hoc Committee (AHC) (Michelle Benvenuto, Tucker Catlin, David Graves, Peter McCrea, and James Verhey) met via teleconference on January 13, 2014. The purpose of the meeting was to review a draft cover letter accompanying the final report to the Napa County Board of Supervisors.

### **Action Items**

1. **Patrick Lowe** to request **Vicki Kretsinger Grabert** to clarify references to "areas elsewhere in the valley" and "historic groundwater levels."
2. **Staff** to include page references in the GRAC final report/letter to specific objectives in the Monitoring Plan.
3. **Staff** to circulate updated draft letter for all Ad-Hoc members to provide final comments.

### **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Napa County staff Patrick Lowe welcomed members and opened the teleconference.

AHC member Jim Verhey wrote the initial draft, which was based off of Chairman Peter McCrea's update letter to the Board of Supervisors in April 2013. The draft had circulated among AHC members, and Mr. Lowe and facilitator Dorian Fougères had consolidated their feedback prior to the teleconference. Mr. Lowe commended AHC members on their hard work drafting and editing the document.

### **Review of Revisions**

Mr. Fougères reviewed member changes and staff recommendations to the draft letter, most of which were minor language and formatting edits.

Mr. Lowe and Mr. Fougères recommended maintaining the language from the Board of Supervisors' charge to the GRAC, including reference to the groundwater monitoring program as "non-regulatory" to be consistent with the terminology in the GRAC's 2012 revised Work Plan. Staff also suggested retaining the language provided by LSCE Principal Hydrologist Vicki Kretsinger Grabert to ensure technical accuracy.

### **Summary of Member Comments**

The group made additional language adjustments, and AHC members provided feedback on the document's remaining issues. Key points included:

- Members edited the letter to be more concise and accessible, while maintaining the overall substance of the document.
- The groundwater monitoring program recommendation should be moved towards the end of the GRAC Recommendations section. This emphasizes the GRAC’s primary recommendation for Napa County to focus on education and outreach that promotes community groups to adopt best sustainable practices for groundwater use. The monitoring program should only function as a way to measure the progress of their conservation efforts.
- The purpose of the monitoring plan should include groundwater quality conservation, as well as conserving groundwater quantity and stable groundwater levels.
- In the GRAC Conclusions, clarify ambiguous phrases.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Patrick Lowe to request Vicki Kretsinger Grabert to clarify references to “areas elsewhere in the valley” and “historic groundwater levels.”
- Add references to the specific monitoring objectives in the monitoring plan document to clarify the purpose and goal for monitoring.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to include page references in the GRAC final report/letter to specific objectives in the Monitoring Plan.
- One member suggested putting the actual GRAC recommendations in italics to help identify major points.
- The editing changed the overall message from prioritizing conservation and education to monitoring. Use Mr. McCrea’s original language that emphasizes the GRAC’s primary recommendation – to get groundwater stability through voluntary education using best sustainable practices.
- Use inclusive language for identifying community groups that could collaborate with the County.

### **Preparation for Next GRAC Meeting**

Members expressed their approval of the revised document’s sequencing, and per edits identified during the teleconference, they would likely approve a final draft within the month. All GRAC members will be able to review the final draft letter for any major “red flag” concerns but will be asked to avoid wordsmithing. The goal is to adopt a final letter at the GRAC’s February meeting. Mr. Lowe said he would e-mail the GRAC meeting packet earlier, about two weeks prior to the next GRAC meeting, to give committee members adequate time for review.

**ACTION ITEM:** Staff to circulate updated draft letter for all Ad-Hoc members to provide final comments.

## **Other Announcements**

Mr. Lowe announced a news article he would distribute to all GRAC members on two environmental groups warning of a lawsuit against Stanislaus County if it does not cease issuing well drilling permits without a California Environmental Quality Act review.

## **Attendees**

### **Ad-Hoc Committee Members**

1. Michele Benvenuto
2. Tucker Catlin
3. Peter McCrea
4. Jim Verhey

### **Staff**

5. Dorian Fougères, CCP
6. Stephanie Horii, CCP
7. Patrick Lowe, Napa County

### **Absent (Excused)**

8. David Graves

DRAFT

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Agenda Date:  
Agenda Placement:

## NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS **Board Agenda Letter**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC)

**SUBJECT:** Final Update on the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee

### **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

In 2009 Napa County began a comprehensive study of its groundwater resources to implement the recommendations of the County's 2008 General Plan. The study, by Luhdorff and Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE), emphasized developing a sound understanding of groundwater conditions and implementing an expanded groundwater monitoring and data management program as a foundation for integrated water resources planning and dissemination of water resources information.

On February 14, 2011 the Board of Supervisors held a Groundwater Workshop and heard presentations and recommendations derived from the consultant studies: Napa County Comprehensive Groundwater Monitoring Program (LSCE-February 2011) and Assessment of the Feasibility of a Collaborative Groundwater Data Gathering Effort in Napa County (Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS-August 2010). While the studies concluded that groundwater levels in Napa County are stable, except for portions of the MST district, they also identified the need for collaborative data gathering and suggested the establishment of a community advisory committee to guide the synthesis of existing information and the collection and analysis of additional data. Following Board direction and staff/consultant recommendations from the workshop, a draft purpose and composition for a Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee was developed and endorsed by the Watershed Information Center and Conservancy (WICC) Board on May 26, 2011.

On June 28, 2011 the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution to establish a Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC), and an outreach effort for applicants began. On September 20, 2011 the Board of Supervisors appointed 15 residents to the Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC), and the GRAC held its first organizational meeting on October 27, 2011. The members represent diverse interests, including environmental, agricultural, development and community interests.

The GRAC was created to assist County staff and technical consultants with recommendations regarding:

- Synthesis of existing information and identification of critical data needs;
- Development and implementation of an ongoing non-regulatory groundwater monitoring program;

- Updated conceptualization of hydrogeologic conditions in various areas of the County and an assessment of groundwater resources as data become available;
- Development of groundwater sustainability objectives that can be achieved through voluntary means and incentives;
- Development of revised well pumping test protocols and related revisions to the County's groundwater ordinance; and
- Building community support for these activities and next steps.

## **GRAC ACTIONS**

From January 2012 until January 2013, the GRAC reviewed and provided feedback on consecutive draft chapters of a proposed voluntary Groundwater Monitoring Plan, the centerpiece of its work to that date. The proposed Plan included a characterization of current groundwater conditions in sub-areas of the county, refinement of criteria used to identify priority monitoring areas, and a proposed expanded monitoring network. The groundwater monitoring program relies on both publicly-owned and volunteered private wells. To fulfill its mission and garner community interest and support, the GRAC developed a Communication and Education Plan to implement the Groundwater Monitoring Plan through voluntary participation. This effort included the development of an outreach brochure and a series of fact sheets on specific topics.

A status update and materials developed by the GRAC and its consultants pertaining to the above were presented to the Napa County Board of Supervisors on April 2, 2013.

Following the Board's interim endorsement of the GRAC's efforts, the GRAC has undertaken the following steps:

- Provided updates to agriculture industry groups, environmental organizations and others;
- Led and supported outreach efforts to well owners for volunteer monitoring wells, which has been very successful in adding new wells to the Napa County Groundwater Monitoring Program;
- Held a joint public outreach meeting of the GRAC and WICC Board (on July 25, 2013);
- Reviewed and approved modifications to the Napa County Water Availability Analysis; and
- Developed and approved Groundwater Sustainability Objectives.

As of April 2014 the GRAC believes that over the past 2+ years it has fulfilled its duties and obligations and would like to present the Napa County Board of Supervisors (BOS) with its final conclusions and recommendations.

## GRAC CONCLUSIONS

- The 2011 baseline study by LSCE, which included over 600 wells and data going back over 50 years, concluded that “the groundwater levels in Napa County are stable, except for portions of the MST district.” Most wells elsewhere within the Napa Valley floor with a sufficient record indicate that groundwater levels are more affected by climatic conditions, are within historical levels, and seem to recover from dry periods during subsequent wet or normal periods.
- The LSCE study also concluded that, on a regional scale, there appear to be no current groundwater quality issues except north of Calistoga (mostly naturally occurring boron and trace metals) and in the Carneros region (mostly salinity).
- In spite of the conclusions reached by LSCE in the first bullet point above, Napa County still does not have adequate science-based answers to critical questions regarding the availability of water in Napa County or the interaction between surface and groundwater resources in Napa County. In addition, future monitoring should try to fill the “data gaps” that exist and will focus on 1) monitoring groundwater-to-surface water connectivity at five sites along the Napa River and 2) adding groundwater monitoring wells in 18 Areas of Interest to fill higher priority groundwater monitoring needs and to achieve monitoring objectives (Napa County Groundwater Monitoring Plan 2013 (January 2013) see p. 26-27).

## GRAC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the 2011 baseline study found no unforeseen groundwater quantity or quality issues, ***the GRAC recommends that Napa County focus primarily on education and outreach to everyone living and working in Napa County to institutionalize water conservation as a community value and to advocate the use of best sustainable practices to achieve this goal rather than relying on new regulations or ordinances.***

Groups could include the Napa County Resource Conservation District, industry and environmental and other community groups. These efforts could be overseen by the WICC.

2. ***The GRAC recommends that only water usage criteria in Tier 1 and the technical deficiencies in the Tier 2 analysis section of the current Water Availability Analysis (WAA) be revised.***

In an effort to implement the groundwater protections described in the existing groundwater ordinance based on well construction and placement, County staff had proposed a considerably more complex analysis be done prior to permit filing in an effort to avoid challenges to these permits. However, noting the success of the existing WAA and the relatively small number of challenges of discretionary use permits in Napa County on the basis of groundwater use, the GRAC recommends that all of the other aspects of the WAA remain unchanged for now. Policy changes may be warranted if accurate and adequate scientific data on groundwater and its

interface with surface water is established and if appropriate CEQA analysis is conducted.

3. ***The GRAC recommends that the BOS, through LSCE, continue to build a database of science-based answers to critical questions regarding the availability of water in Napa County and the interaction between surface water and groundwater resources.***

The expanded Groundwater Monitoring Network and Program will advance understanding of groundwater conditions in Napa County. However, there are also many non-groundwater-related data sets involved in the understanding of long-term groundwater sustainability. The GRAC also recommends that future studies should consider the scientific uncertainty associated with the existing and new data used as part of those studies. Quantitative measures of confidence should be developed as part of future studies, as appropriate, to ensure that the conclusions from the studies and modeling tools applied during such studies are clearly understood by staff, stakeholders, policy makers and the general public. These efforts could be overseen by the WICC.

4. ***The GRAC also recommends that the Groundwater Monitoring Plan currently being implemented by the County be positioned primarily as a tool to monitor the countywide progress toward achieving groundwater conservation and quality and stable groundwater levels.***

With regard to the Monitoring Plan, the GRAC strongly recommends that the BOS continue to pursue, as suggested by the GRAC at the April 2, 2013 BOS meeting, ways to enhance the confidentiality of private well data in order to encourage broader participation by private well owners in the Groundwater Monitoring Program.

We believe that this voluntary approach should maximize public support to optimize the County's future water supplies while helping to determine if any significant changes in groundwater conditions are occurring and provide a factual basis for any future regulations if they appear warranted. This is an intentional effort to build broad community support through an inclusive, voluntary, non-regulatory approach.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- A. Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee Workplan/Timeline
- B. Revised Napa County Water Availability Analysis and Groundwater Ordinance
- C. Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Objectives
- D. Napa County Groundwater Monitoring Plan 2013
- E. Education and Outreach Materials/Brochure