

GSA Staff Advisory Group Meeting Notes

March 29, 2016 | Dixon, CA



OVERVIEW

Participants

Jim Allen, Ag Advisory Committee (*alternate for Russ Lester*)
Jack Caldwell, Cal Water
John Currey, Dixon Resource Conservation District
Royce Cunningham, City of Vacaville
Darrel Eck, Sacramento County
Mike Hardesty, RD 2068
Misty Kaltreider, Solano County
Cary Keaton, Solano Irrigation District
Chris Lee, Solano County Water Agency
Russ Lester, Ag Advisory Committee
Derrick Lum, Solano County Farm Bureau

David Melilli, City of Rio Vista
Peter Miljanich, Solano County (*alternate for Misty Kaltreider*)
Tim O'Halloran, Yolo County Flood Control & WCD
Felix Riesenberg, City of Fairfield
Jason Riley, City of Dixon (*alternate for Joe Leach*)
Erik Ringelberg, Northern Delta GSA
Lisa Shipley, Solano County Farm Bureau (*alternate for Derrick Lum*)
Melinda Terry, North Delta Water Agency
Brooking Gatewood, Ag Innovations, Facilitator

Not present today but interested in staying involved: Rural North Vacaville Water District (Gordon Stankowski), represented today by SID; Maine Prairie Water District (Don Holdner); RD 2098 (Tom Schene).

Meeting goal:

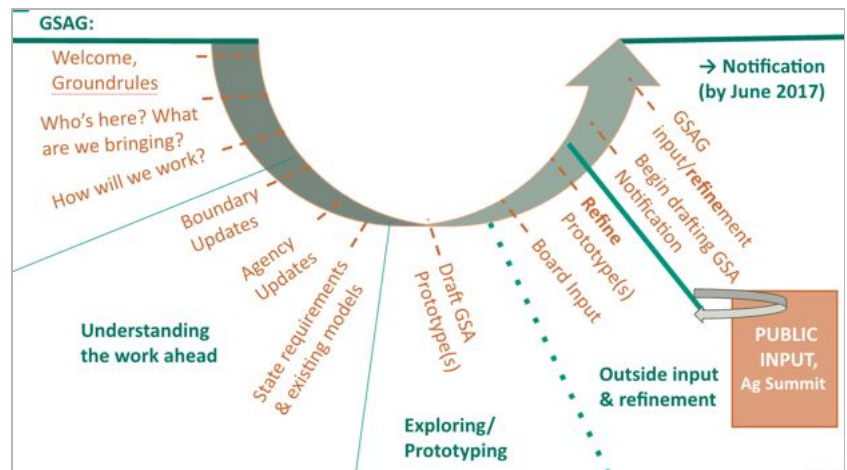
Target: Draft two to three GSA Governance Structure options for review and input from your boards/constituencies.

Minimum: Adopt charter, share updates, and clarify key questions & priority areas for input.

Next Meeting: Late May, after Ag Summit and time to get board level input on the question:

What kind of governance structure & representation would your group/agency need to feel comfortable with a single GSA for the Solano County portion of the Solano Subbasin?

Figure 1. Pathway to GSA Recommendations.



Meeting Summary

- ROADMAP REVIEW.** We began with an overview of the process we'll go through to come up with a GSA notification plan (Figure 1). We acknowledged this is a complex, and somewhat unpredictable effort, but we aim to be able to notify within about six months if all goes well. *Members should expect to meet for one more half-day meeting in late May, and then for shorter monthly meetings with between meeting document review as needed until notification.*
- INTROS.** Members introduced themselves and built an asset map (Figure 2) of our collective resources.
- CHARTER REVIEW.** The draft charter was approved by all members present. Decisions will be made based on a 6 point consensus scale, with only a full veto blocking a decision from moving forward. The group will address the appropriate next steps veto incidents on a case by case basis. The need for technical consultants and possible additional funding

support before this time was raised - such financial decisions will be discussed at future meetings. The full charter is available [here](#).

1	2	3	4	5	6
Fully endorse!	Endorsement with minor issues	Conditional agreement	Stand Aside / Abstain / Neutral	Disagreement	Reject
I strongly support the proposal.	I generally like it. Proceed with my support.	I can support if some steps are taken now or in the future.	I neither support nor reject the proposal – Proceed.	I don't agree with the proposal in its current form but will not reject it outright.	I cannot support the proposal at all.

- BOUNDARY MODIFICATION DISCUSSION.** The group spent time understanding Yolo and Northern Delta boundary modification proposals. Yolo is submitting their proposal this week. It follows County lines, but leaves RD 2068 and a few other cross-boundary groups within the Solano Subbasin, and keeps UC Davis land with the proposed Yolo Subbasin. The RDs in the Northern Delta GSA effort will stay in the Solano Subbasin - this creates an awkward boundary in the case of RDs 999, 150 and 307, which extend into Yolo County but will remain in the Solano Subbasin for now. These RDs want to be part of the Northern Delta GSA, and that group will remain part of Solano Subbasin until it is able to form a complete proposal. If that proposal fails, Yolo will offer to include those RDs in it's new Subbasin, otherwise they would remain in the Solano Subbasin. An overview and map of the proposed changes are available [here](#).
- GSA STRUCTURE EXPLORATION.** The group spent the remainder of the afternoon in exploratory conversations about possible GSA structures, focused primarily on the questions: 1) How many GSAs and GSPs do we want in our subbasin and 2) What governance structures would provide fair representation? After much discussion and exploring the different options in small groups (detailed notes below), the group came to a consensus: for simplicity and cost-efficiency, we would like to *aim* for one GSA within the Solano County portion of the Subbasin (it may make sense to have the Yolo and Sacramento portions of the subbasin be their own GSAs, with a coordinating agreement for one GSP for the entire basin). The key question then becomes: *how do we ensure a fair and representative voting structure for a GSA covering the Solano County portion of the Solano Subbasin?* This is the core question that members will take out to their boards, constituencies, and staff teams for further input before our next meeting in May. In every group, management areas were mentioned as a key part of our governance solution. The questions of which authorities a management area can legally have, and how coordinating agreements would work are ones that need to be resolved with DWR before moving forward into more detail with these proposals.

Next Steps

- Scheduling:** Ag Innovations will send a Doodle Poll to schedule the next half day meeting after the Ag Summit date is selected. The meeting will be sometime in mid or late May, after the Ag Summit, so we can incorporate input from that event to our next discussion.
- Document Sharing:** A FTP Site has been set up for sharing documents within this working group. There is no password, simply visit <ftp://ftp.scwa2.com/SGMA/>.
- Clarifications:** Ag Innovations will reach out to DWR for clarification on the questions of management area authorities, technical requirements, and coordinating agreements. (See [Appendix A](#) for DWR response.)
- Soliciting Board & Constituency Input:** All members were asked to share a progress report on the proceedings of this meeting with their boards, and the following question for board input:

What kind of governance structure & representation would your group/agency need to feel comfortable with a single GSA for the Solano County portion of the Solano Subbasin?

Soliciting additional input on ideas for funding, staffing, and voting structures is welcome!

DETAILED MEETING NOTES

Welcome & Introductions

- Brooking introduced the Theory U approach to solving complex problems
 - We first bring different players in the system together to find shared understanding of the challenge, and *then together* explore how to move forward, prototype some ideas, test them with a wider group, and refine a solution. To jump to solutions without this kind of group process often results in ineffective solutions in complex context like that of groundwater governance.
- Groundrules for every meeting:
 - Be present
 - Listen openly
 - Speak courteously
 - Suspend certainty
 - Represent your Agency/Constituency Interests
- Estimated roadmap & time commitment
 - Today: Finalize charter, review boundary Issues, draft GSA recommendations
 - May: Another half-day meeting
 - June: Begin drafting GSA Notification document and coordinating agreements

Figure 2. Asset Map: What resources do we bring to support this process?

Peter with Solano County: Legal expertise.	Darrell with Sacramento County: Groundwater process expertise.	Royce with the City of Vacaville: Engineer; long history working in the subbasin.
Felix with the City of Fairfield: Engineering & water utility management.	Cary with SID: knowledge of the area (SID covers 20% of basin), data, staff time, financial resources.	Erik with the Northern Delta GSA: Delta/RD relationships; process expertise.
Misty with Solano County: geologist, water quality, land use expertise; well permitting data; running a new water study for the County soon.	Russ with The Ag Advisory Committee: Long-time local land-owner & farmer perspective; bridge to what's happening in Yolo process.	Mike with RD 2068: Groundwater monitoring capability; conjunctive use program connection; Delta and farmer relationships.
Chris with SCWA: environmental scientist and planning expertise; technical staff, interns, and funding, data, conduit to reaching vast majority of electeds.	Derrick with Solano County Farm Bureau; represent farmers both in and outside of subbasin; access to Farm Bureau water lobbyists and water attorneys.	John with Dixon RCD: Irrigated lands program - data, and connection with 650 individual landowner members/farmers in the subbasin; personal perspective as farmer.
Lisa with the Farm Bureau: Informational liaison to 400 ag community members.	Jack with Cal Water: Groundwater data.	David with the City of Rio Vista; Groundwater management expertise, well data.
Jason with the City of Dixon: Civil engineer; environmental science; long history with cities in the area.	Jim with the Ag Advisory Committee: Annual crop report, ag trends, & pesticide data.	Melinda with NDWA: Recovering lobbyist; governance process expertise; relationships in the Delta.
Tim with Yolo County: Groundwater technical knowledge; Yolo process liaison.	Brooking with Ag Innovations: Meeting organization, facilitation, process design, interview data.	Tessa with Ag Innovations: Note-taking & meeting support.

Charter Review

- Membership update: We will add a few more alternates as we get names. Several of the RD's we invited do not want to participate, but a few more may yet join.
- Charter can be modified at any time if the group votes for a change.
- **Question:** What if the public would like to participate in these meetings?
 - In other processes around the state, there is a mix of approaches with regard to public and staff level meetings. Our approach is being used elsewhere, and will work best with ongoing public updates and opportunities to provide input - e.g. at SCWA and other board meetings. If you do hear public concern about this group: let them know who is part of this group so they can reach out to the contact they feel comfortable with. Also please let Brooking know of concerns.
- **Question:** In case of veto, how many times will the issue go back to the group for reconsideration?
 - We are striving for consensus. We will deal with each issue on a case by case basis.
- **Decision:** Everyone gave thumbs up or thumbs sideways to agree with moving forward with the charter.

Situation Assessment Interview Highlights

Brooking shared some high level themes from her 1:1 interviews conducted in January with many of the member agencies represented in this room. Principles/core values she heard for GSP implementation included:

- **Collaborative attitude.**
 - No winners and losers.
 - Open & sharing in information and resources.
 - Community-minded.
 - Build trust along the way.
 - **Creative, thoughtful, solution orientation:**
 - Solve problems together rather than prolonging them.
 - It's an iterative process. Be willing to adjust when decisions were the wrong ones.
 - Build off what has worked well here in the past.
 - Look for synergies with other regulatory requirements & efficiency measures.
 - Consider creative options like recharge credits.
 - **Facts-based decision-making:**
 - Get the science before making decisions.
 - Listen first, learn, consider implications, then decide.
 - Focus on data collection, filling gaps, transparent sharing.
 - **Consider different stakeholder needs:**
 - Balance between urban and ag representation.
 - Recognizing and planning for unique gw areas within the basin.
 - Keep farmer timelines in mind with implementation - i.e. no mid-season changes.
 - **Develop a shared definition of what gw sustainability is and how we want to achieve it.**
- The worst case scenario named consistently consisted of state takeover and loss of local control, and developing a process that became too bureaucratic and unwieldy.
 - *This balance between the need for meaningful stakeholder input and efficient and effective governance is one of our core design challenges.*
 - Key tensions/considerations:
 - Coordination with Yolo County and Sacramento County.
 - Managing unique groundwater conditions, like in the Delta.
 - How to fairly represent the ag community, as majority groundwater users.
 - Voting - one agency/one vote was a common theme. Concerns about under/over representation were common in interview discussions.
 - Financing - How will we finance the GSA/GSP development, and long term? How does voting relate to financing? Can we leverage SCWA for support while still having representative voting?
 - Opportunities
 - Better data, management, relationships, public awareness and trust.
 - Integrated management; conjunctive use.
 - Filling data gaps to support holistic management of the subbasin.

GSA Formation Process Overview

- Brooking went over some high level points & useful tables and diagrams from the pre-reading materials:
 - The [Draft GSP Emergency Regulations Guide and GSA Formation Notification Guideline](#)
 - The recent UC Berkeley report “[Designing Effective Groundwater Sustainability Agencies: Criteria for Evaluation of Local Governance Options](#) (by Wheeler Water Institute at CLEE (UC Berkeley) and UC Water)).
 - The California Water Foundation’s [Know Your Options: A Guide to Forming Groundwater Sustainability Agencies](#).
 - Key tables and information are pulled out in the GSA Structure worksheet the group went through later in the afternoon, available for download [here](#).
- She clarified that we are not behind in the process and are making progress at a reasonable pace compared to other subbasins around the state. The biggest variable slowing notification processes is overlapping service area boundaries.
- **Question:** Suisun is on the other side of the County. Won’t Suisun Valley have to deal with this process down the line? Won’t every subbasin have to deal with this at some point?
 - It’s possible. Right now only medium and high priority have to take these steps. Future legislation could demand low and very low priority basins go through similar processes.

Boundary Modification Discussion ([map & overview available here](#)).

Yolo County Update:

- Tim O’Halloran from Yolo County Flood Control provided an update about Yolo County’s boundary modification request. They will submit the request to DWR on Thursday, March 31, 2016. They thought one Yolo County GSA would be more efficient than coordinating over two counties, partly because Yolo County has a long established groundwater monitoring program and partly because neither County will want to give up land authority. They anticipate working with Solano Subbasin through coordinating agreements.
 - RD 2068 is not included in the Yolo subbasin. Mike Hardesty indicated a preference to stay in the Solano subbasin.
 - The boundaries may be changed again after Tim is able to speak with John Currey (Dixon RCD). John expressed neutrality towards Yolo assuming responsibility over a portion of land within Dixon RCD.
 - The part of the UC Davis campus that overlies the Solano subbasin will stay in Solano, and the part of the campus in Yolo County will be in the Yolo subbasin.
 - Responses to Tim’s proposal:
 - The simpler the better. The properties in question are downstream of Solano subbasin groundwater flow. If issues arise they will be dealt with through coordinating agreements or another manner.

Northern Delta Region Update:

- Erik Ringelberg from the Northern Delta GSA provided an update about the RDs in the Delta region. The Delta region is geographically different from the rest of the subbasin. A draft MOU for a proposed Northern Delta GSA has three signatories in the overlap area with Yolo County’s boundary so far, and they are looking to pick up some more in the southern area. They intend to pursue boundary modification, but not in this round. There will likely be another opportunity for boundary modification in 2017.
 - This proposed GSA is reflected in the blue unhashed area on [the Yolo map](#). That would be all the area to the right of the hashmark and below that figure would be mapped out as a new basin. As far south as RD 2093 (includes some area of Sacramento County);
 - The Updated Northern Delta GSA Map is also available for download [here](#).
 - They are working with the Southern America and Eastern San Joaquin subbasin groups to participate in a planning process and to assist in development of GSP as independent GSAs.
 - Delta RDs are each a different animal. 765 hasn’t been engaged in our activities. Their attorney has to chosen not to make a decision at this point, but the the door remains open. Northern Delta GSA has recommended that they should be talking to Yolo.
 - All of the RDs in the Northern Delta GSA would be party to a MOU with the County GSAs.
 - Thier ultimate goal is to get out of the County GSA process and be entirely independent GSA, without creating a set of new complex bureaucracies. They want to collaborate.

Sacramento County Update:

- Specifically involving the boundary of the South American subbasin, the sense is that they would be better suited from groundwater management perspective with the Northern Delta group. That won't happen in this round of boundary changes, but something to consider moving forward
- Solano County Update: Elected officials in Solano County thought the Yolo modification needed further study. Their board will comment on Yolo Basin boundary modification. There are advantages from a governance perspective and ease of use, though there are also some concerns about the 3 Yolo RDs (307, 999, 150) remaining in the Solano Subbasin .

Discussion:



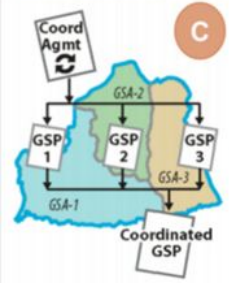
- Commenting on the proposals: GSA eligible agencies and the public both have the authority to comment. As someone who is commenting, you have 30 days after DWR accepts the package as complete to support, oppose or remain silent. Silence is akin to acknowledgement, though making a statement may be more powerful, some surmised.
- If it doesn't pass, Yolo would likely have their own GSA within our basin.
- **Question:** Why doesn't the Yolo subbasin modification include RDs 999, 150 and 307? Those RDs are technically within the Yolo County political boundaries. Excluding those RDs creates a weird finger sticking down into the Yolo area.
 - The 3 eligible agencies who have elected to stay within the Solano subbasin have indicated that they are not interested in being included in the Yolo subbasin; but would prefer the Northern Delta GSA. The overriding principle is to follow what the locals prefer.
One reason they may want to stay in Solano for now is that there may be some costs associated to be part of WRA, in addition to those required for the GSA.
- Some individuals expressed support of the Yolo subbasin modification and others indicated they would support the modification if it included the three excluded RDs.
- Misty from Solano County will take the Yolo subbasin modification to the Solano County board before the comment period ends.

Brooking closed this discussion with a proposal: given the uncertainties here, we need to make some assumptions to move forward with our GSA governance draft conversations. Let's assume for now that DWR will pass the Yolo subbasin boundary modification, and that the 3 RDs not included in the Yolo modification will be a separate management area to start. We will adjust course if those assumptions prove wrong.

GSA Structure Discussion

The group discussed the three options below collectively, and then broke into small groups to explore the pros and cons and possible governance structures for each approach. What follows is a table summarizing the key points of these discussions. Option A effectively explores a bottom-up management structure that could apply for one Subbasin GSA or for the Solano County portion of the Subbasin (i.e. in option B). Option B explores a top-down management structure. Option C explores more local level GSA/GSP authority.

Figure 3. Summary Assessment of Basic GSA Structure Options

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Option A: 1 GSA for subbasin</p> <p>One GSA, One GSP</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Areas without agency representation would be included. + Unified decision-making on basin-wide issues. + Expandability - if Suisun Valley becomes medium priority, can easily be incorporated as a new management area into larger GSA. + Most economically efficient for farmers and landowners - fewer meetings to attend, unified regulatory expectations. <p><i>Note: many of these strengths would remain for option B below, with the County-based GSA structure. Option B would have 1 GSA for the Solano County portion of the Subbasin.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could create some political conflict with regard to County authorities that may be difficult to resolve. Would require the creation of a new special district or a JPA between the counties, so effectively option B may be simpler. - Could require a complex governance structure, especially if we have a lot of management areas - we would need to clarify representative governance and likely create JPAs or MOUs for those. - Creating a cross-County voting structure might be particularly challenging.
<p>Option B: 1 GSA for each County within the Subbasin. 1 GSP.</p> <p>Multiple GSAs, One GSP with optional Coordination Agreement</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Simplest and most cost-effective structure, administratively, given the tri-County subbasin structure. Simplest data aggregation. + This divides land use authority between counties while still allowing the simplest, most cost effective structure for the Solano portion of the Subbasin. + Minimizes the need to engage all parties from other counties in voting structure. + Works regardless of Yolo Modification results. + Easy coordination between counties. + Simplifies collaboration at a local scale. + SCWA or County would step up to manage white areas. + Management areas can be implemented where there is a need for strong local control and/or unique groundwater conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several uncertainties regarding direct and indirect representation in governance. - The legal authority for management areas and how these relate to the GSA need clarification. - The same risk of white areas exists here as with all options.
<p>Option C: Multiple GSAs and GSPs within the Subbasin.</p> <p>Multiple GSAs, Multiple GSPs with required Coordination Agreement</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + GSA make-up could be based on different themes: agency infrastructure, land types, hydrological zones. + If organized by agency, maximizes representation & control for each agency & their constituents. GSA structure could mirror agency jurisdiction for more specific and locally controlled management and minimal disruption to current management regimes. + If organized by land type or hydrology, could result in plans well-catered to local needs, with easier local regulation & enforcement. + Max representation to agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This option would be less efficient regarding stakeholder engagement and administrative costs. Particularly, GSP costs could overwhelm small GSAs. - Agencies without pre-existing funding may have difficulty establishing funding sources. - Necessitates complex coordinating agreement, planning, and management. - Higher risk for boundary overlap or white spaces (i.e., areas not covered by an agency might be left out). - User overlap: for landowners with land across different basins and/or GSA territories within a basin (i.e., option C), the risk of multiple different regulatory conditions is a concern.

Assumptions:

- For now, Sacramento is not seeking boundary revisions and will remain part of our subbasin.
- For Option B, the group focused on only having counties as the GSAs. There is another version of option B that we did not explore: having multiple GSAs that might include some additional water agencies, e.g., and still having one GSP. This would have some of the same pros & cons of option B, as well as some of the added costs and complexities of option C. The group can explore this more if it comes up as a viable option of interest for parties in our subbasin.

Clarifying Questions & Responses before we broke into small groups:

- **Question:** If you have Countywide GSAs, how do you deal with the 3 reclamation districts Yolo is leaving out in its basin boundary modification request?
 - One option is to designate them as a special management area. If these three RDs are asking to stay within the Solano Subbasin, there would still need to be one or more GSAs (it could be those same reclamation districts or another agency, like Yolo County) that has its service area within the Yolo County portion of the Solano Subbasin.
- **Question:** How can there be one plan with multiple GSAs?
 - They coordinate and set management priorities and agreements at the subbasin level.
- **Question:** Can one GSA exist with multiples GSPs. Is that an option?
 - No. You can have special management areas “basin if local conditions for one or more critical parameters differ significantly from those of the basin at large, and if the Agency has determined that subdivision into management areas will facilitate implementation of the Plan” (DWR Draft Emergency Regulations, section 354.20)
- **Question:** With 1 GSA in the whole basin, the different agencies are still going to have uncovered areas. Can you create a JPA to cover those uncovered areas?
 - Yes. Another possibility is those areas that are covered by the counties that participate in the GSA. Or in Solano’s case, if the County does not wish to cover those areas, SCWA could.
- **Question:** When will the advisory group be able to propose something to the public?
 - There will be another half day workshop in late May after the Ag Summit to hash out more governance structure details. We anticipate being able to share something for public input over the summer.

GSA Governance Brainstorm Breakouts

The Advisory Group broke into three sub-groups to sketch out these three options in more detail and explore specific governance possibilities, strengths and weaknesses for each approach. Concept notes from those break-out groups are included below. Most groups only had time to dip into drafting basic governance concepts - matters of specific voting parties, financing, GSA authorities, and interested parties still need further exploration.

The breakout groups evaluated the following three possible structures of a GSA:

- I. One GSA and one GSP for the Solano Subbasin
- II. One GSP and 3 GSAs; one in Solano County, one in Sacramento County and one in Yolo County
- III. Multiple GSAs within the Solano Subbasin

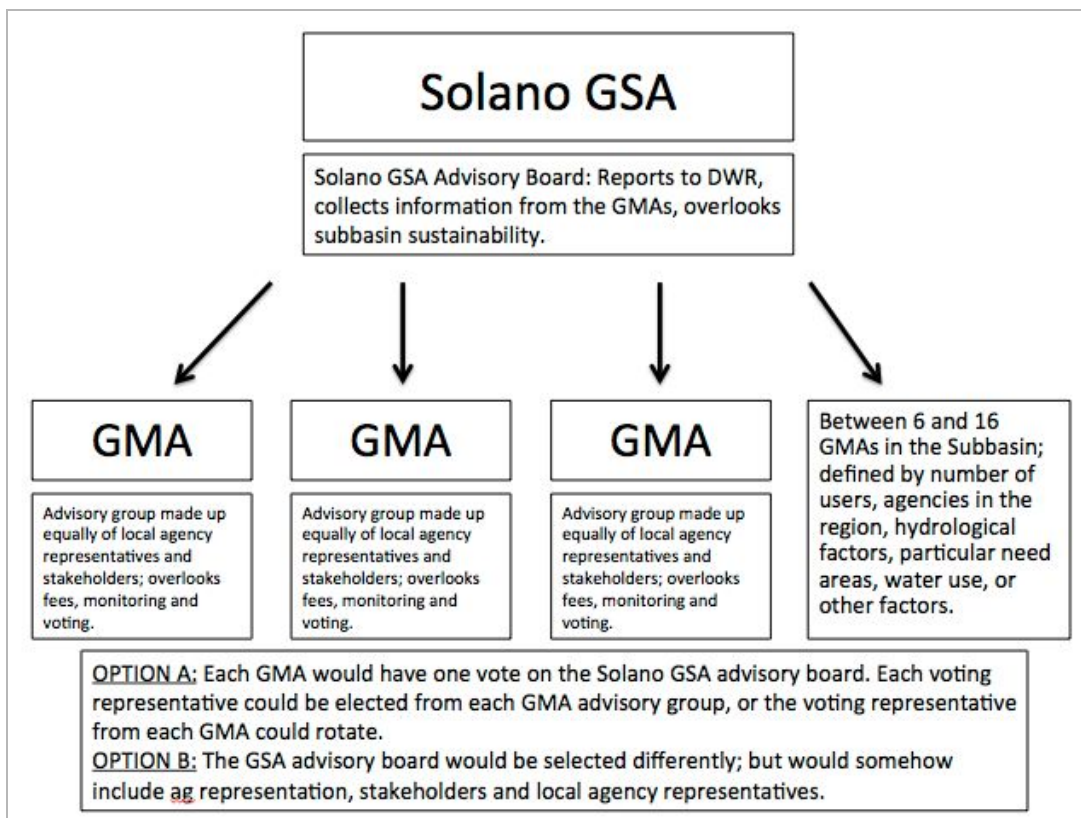
I. Draft Governance Concept for Option A

Group A investigated a structure with one GSA and one GSP for the Solano Subbasin.

- The group did not focus much on the role of other counties, so many of the governance structure proposals here would also work for option B.
- A key assumption in this group is that the GSA would be subdivided by management areas, with management areas working as the implementing “arms” of the GSA, and with JPA(s) defining the authorities of each area.
 - *Since the management area concept is new in the DWR draft regulations, we are not yet sure whether this approach would be acceptable to DWR.*
- In this model, management areas could be defined by the number of users, agencies in the region, hydrological factors, particular need areas, water use, or other factors. Fees and monitoring as well as voting happens at the local level. If sustainability is not achieved, the GSA steps in. The GSA submits report to the state, so the only oversight from a local perspective is from a local and not state authority.
- OPTION A: Each management area would have a vote on the GSA advisory board.
 - This approach avoids potential urban vs rural representation disputes.

- OPTION B (more aligned with Tim’s Yolo proposal): The GSA advisory board would be selected differently; but would somehow include ag representation, stakeholders and local agency representatives. Governance structure could look like:
 - Agencies that are extractors and SCWA that are logical full board members.
 - Interest groups are represented with a voting seat; appointed by agencies at the table or nominated.
 - Ag interest: FB, Ag Advisory Committee, e.g.
 - Commercial water users: Campbell’s Soup, e.g.
 - One possibility: 5 legal entities and 5 interest group votes?
 - Each management area does not need its own board. Maybe needs an advisory group; demands some sort of local management and overlook.

Figure 4. Sketch of Possible Governance Structure for Option A, with Management Areas Focus

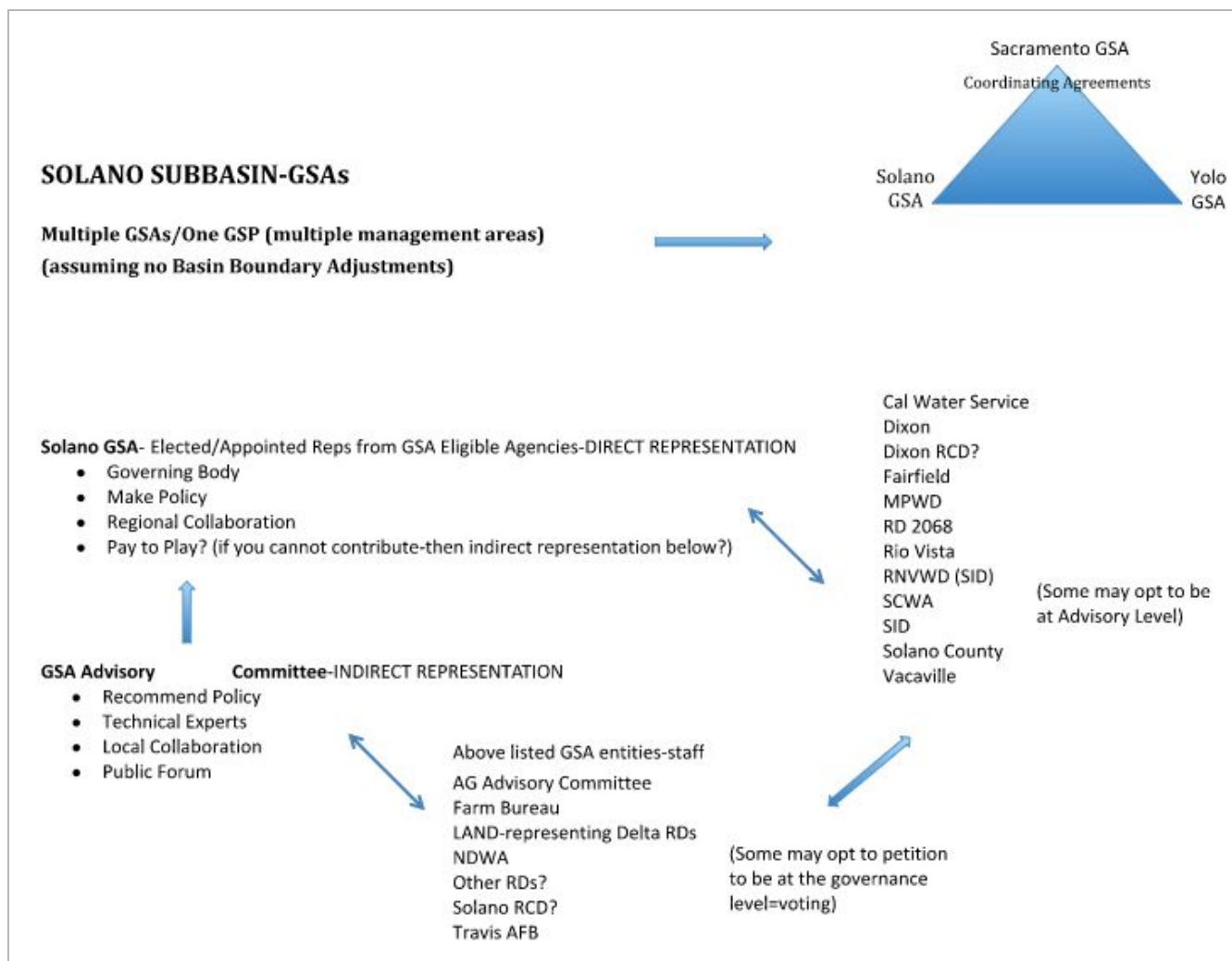


II. Draft Governance Concept for Option B

Group B investigated a structure with one GSP and 3 GSAs; one in Solano County, one in Sacramento County and one in Yolo County. The GSA in Solano County would be subdivided by management areas.

- The Solano County GSA would consist of between 13 and 20 agencies and invited representatives (ag community, stakeholders).
 - GSAs have a broad array of new authorities to help them carry out their new responsibilities, but they don’t necessarily need to exercise these authorities. That is, if groundwater management in a specific management area is not causing undesirable results, then a particular authority may not need to be exercised in that management area, while it might need to be exercised in another part of the subbasin.
 - GSA governing body would consist of policy makers.
 - SCWA or the County are the most likely candidates for being the notifying GSA.
- Management area responsibilities would include local coordination and data collection/reporting.
- Costs will depend on the nature/depth of the plan requirements.
 - Creativity will be essential for effective long-term management.
 - With Prop 281 unlikely to succeed, we will have to consider other options.
 - What might a new tax look like?
 - A water charge may be a statewide “solution”.

Figure 5. Sketch of Possible Governance Structure for Option B, with County-based GSAs



III. Draft Governance Concept for Option C

Group C investigated a structure with multiple GSAs within the Solano Subbasin.

- The GSAs could be divided/determined by agency, land use (urban vs ag), soil types, or a variety of other factors. Division by agency is the favored method.
- In the process the group came up with an interesting hydrology-based set of GSAs - or management areas.
 - The upside is these would be areas with similar groundwater conditions.
 - The downside is some agencies would have to participate in multiple GSAs or management areas, which could be complex.
- Environmental interests could be represented at the advisory level.

Figure 5. Sketch of Possible Governance Structure for Option C (or management areas)

This option was offered in an effort to map GSAs according to hydrogeological areas of the subbasin. It was not the consensus of the group but one idea for how to break down the GSAs. (Another option would be by water districts.) This same structure could also be used to delineate management areas for Options A or B.

Northern Subbasin GSA	Southern Subbasin GSA	Eastern Subbasin GSA (Yolo, Sac counties and proposed Northern Delta GSA)
Urban areas (Dixon & Vacaville) SID County SCWA Ag representation (tbd) RDs & RCD representation	Urban (Fairfield) County SCWA RDs Ag representation (tbd) Travis AFB	Urban (Rio Vista) Counties (Yolo, Sac, and Solano) SCWA RDs Northern Delta GSA Ag representation (tbd)

Closing Group Discussion

After hearing reports from each subgroup, we ended with a conversation focused on key themes and questions across the different GSA structure possibilities. Conversation highlights are included below.

- Formulating the governance structure is the largest obstacle. Once the governance structure is flushed out, representatives can approach their boards and electeds with proposals and recommendations.
- The group realized options A and B are not that different from each other.
- The focus on management areas as central to solutions warrants further inquiry with DWR.
- The group agreed that option C is not ideal, but, provides the greatest specific representation of multiple agencies.
- **Decision:** Everyone agreed to work to move toward having one GSA for the Solano County portion of the subbasin, assuming we could come up with fair representation model for governance.
- Broad notes on possibilities for Governing board of GSA:
 - Might be one representative from each management area if we rely on that model (and DWR allows this structure).
 - Might be one representative from each eligible agency and stakeholders (ag, commercial).
 - Some expressed concern that it would be difficult for the GSA board to release power to lower levels. Others noted that eligible agencies don't actually have power yet - helping to determine the best path forward, with public input, is why we are here.
- Notes on Ag representation:
 - Ag input is necessary. Some individuals feel that ag doesn't have a voice. Some individuals feel that ag is well represented by the Ag Advisory Commission, RD 2068 and the agencies looking out for their users and property owners. The Ag Summit will help to clarify how the ag community wants to be represented.
 - We might have a board with a larger and more representative single advisory group of staff, FB, Travis AFB, ag representation, landowners.
 - Many agencies will be unable to fund what they need to do. They'll be forgotten - we need to consider power dynamics based on resources as we develop this plan.
- Metering could cause an economic disadvantage and impact within a local community. It may be very divisive.

Closing Questions

Many questions were raised in the discussion. Ag Innovations and agency staff will investigate answers for the unanswered questions, categorized and summarized below.

Management & Governance

- Management Area Authority:
 - What is the extent of the authority that can be given to a management area?
 - How is authority delegated between the GSA and management areas? Can management areas use the authority of the GSA through a JPA with GSA?
 - Could an agency's jurisdiction cover the same area as a management area? One in the same?
 - What happens when one management area isn't sustainable? (Proposed answer: JPA bylaws)
 - Can the management areas have advisory boards? Can reps from management areas be on the GSA board?
 - Do the management areas need to be staffed?
 - How do you get the individuals within the management areas to select one representative? (Proposed suggestions: Rotating, each individual has veto power)
- How will GSA authority be reconciled with County authority?

Representation

- Do the agencies feel that they are being fairly represented? Would agencies be happy being within a management area? If so, under what conditions?
- How will non-agency votes be included? Where is direct versus indirect (i.e. non-voting) representation appropriate?
 - Farm Bureau has put out a position statement ([link here](#)) expressing a desire for representation that reflects actual groundwater usage in the County.
 - For the North Delta GSA / LAND group, indirect representation is not a viable option.
 - What is the mechanism that gets farmer opinions up to the decision-making board?
 - What about community input?
 - Can they be part of the management structure, or how will they be represented?
- Are votes weighted? By what metric? By how much?

Funding

- How will the GSA(s) and management areas be funded?
- How does ag contribute its share of funding? It might be hard for farmers to pay their fair share. Two ways to generate funding may be a charge per acre and/or a per volume extracted.
- Is funding proportional to voting?

We ended the day with agreement to meet again after the Ag Summit and after agency reps have a chance to get further input from their boards and teams. Key questions included:

- What is the best mechanism for stakeholder input?
- How will the GSA be staffed and funded?
- What does voting look like?
- Would agencies be happy being within a management area. If so, under what conditions?
- And, the #1 take-home question for board input before our next meeting was:
 - What kind of governance structure & representation would your group/agency need to feel comfortable with a single GSA for the Solano County portion of the Solano Subbasin?

Appendix A - Updates from DWR on Management Area Questions

As per the above next steps, Ag Innovations reached out to DWR and received the following clarification of our questions regarding management areas. We have also added these responses to our FAQ documentation coming out soon on the Solano SGMA website.

DWR's summary response:

Per the existing definition in the Draft GSP Emergency Regulations, a "management area" refers to areas within a basin where conditions such as water use sector, water source type, geology, aquifer characteristics, or critical parameters related to undesirable results are significantly different from basin conditions as a whole, and justify different minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, monitoring and management actions.

While management areas could be aligned with the service area boundaries of a local agency, that doesn't necessarily mean that a management area can operate independently from the rest of the basin or have distinctly different monitoring requirements or management schemes if there are no distinguishable differences in hydrologic conditions or water use (per the definition). That being said, if creating management areas that align with service area boundaries works for your portion of the basin, and gives you the flexibility to move forward politically, and you can justify that structure to DWR when it reviews the GSP for the entire basin, then that's up to you.

We can be more definitive and provide some better guidance once the GSP regulations are finalized and adopted. Because of some of the issues you raise, we may be revising that section of the draft regulations for clarity. An updated draft will be published on April 20th at the Water Policy Conference in Sacramento.

Management area FAQs

Once the GSA is formed, it will have authority to regulatory things. Does that authority reside in the GSA alone, or does that authority get divided up between the GSA member agencies and individuals?

There are different ways GSAs can be formed and structured. DWR did not dictate how GSAs will work. Management areas are part of the GSP, not GSAs. Management areas aren't necessarily based on agency boundaries.

What is the extent of the authority that can be given to a management area?

A management area is not necessarily intended to be a separate area for governance purposes, but an area of a basin that could benefit from being managed or monitored differently than the rest of the basin due to the availability of groundwater, or the presence of undesirable results related to past, present, or future management actions. For example, if 80% of the pumping occurs in 20% of the basin then the density and frequency of monitoring could be different (likely greater) in that 20% of the basin, and management actions might be specific to that 20% of the basin. Or, the portions of the basin where the majority of the pumping is occurring (where people rely upon groundwater exclusively) could have different minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and potential actions if conditions begin to reach significant and unreasonable levels. Ultimately, the sustainability goal for the entire basin needs to be met, and actions in one management area cannot cause undesirable results in another part of the basin. Also, the actions in one basin cannot cause undesirable results in an adjacent basin. Please see the working definition of management area and the language in 354.20.

How is authority delegated between the GSA and management areas? Can management areas use the authority of the GSA through a JPA with GSA?

Again, a management area is not necessarily intended to be a separate area for governance, but an option for local flexibility and an option for focusing resources where they are needed most, within the sustainability context of the entire basin. The GSA or GSAs in the basin that overlie those defined management areas would be responsible for ensuring that the applicable critical parameters are sufficiently monitored and that the basin's sustainability goal is being achieved. Ultimately, how the GSA creates its governance structure is a locally-made decision, but it needs to be effective and the agencies do need to coordinate.

Could a management area align exactly with a GSA-eligible agency's service area, such that, for instance, Reclamation District 2068's service area is considered a management area within the locally developed GSP?

A GSA could decide to create a management area to coincide with a local agency's service area, but unless the groundwater conditions or water use in that area are distinctly different from the adjacent agency's service area, the GSA would need to provide a reason for creating that management area and provide an explanation if the monitoring network, thresholds, objectives, etc. are significantly different.

What happens when one management area isn't managing groundwater sustainably to the detriment of the greater subbasin, and some level of GSP enforcement needs to occur within that management area?

It is up to the GSA or GSAs in the basin to ensure that the entire basin is being managed sustainably. DWR will be reviewing initial GSPs, annual reports, and 5-yr updates to ensure that the basin is on track towards achieving its sustainability goal and the basin's interim milestones are being met. If one part of the basin isn't "pulling its own weight" or is not adhering to the adopted GSP, then it puts the entire basin at risk for State Board intervention. Also see Water Code Section 10735.2(e).