

Graton Community Services District
Groundwater Management Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting
Initial Meeting
Tuesday, April 24
7:00 pm
Sonoma Wine Co., 9119 Graton Rd., Graton, CA

Contact for more information: Colleen Fernald at 538-3803 or GCSD at 823-1542

Purpose: The purpose for the GCSD's Groundwater Management Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting is to **enlist the assistance and participation of technical experts from the public and agencies in developing a groundwater management plan for the Graton area.**

Background

- Graton Community Services District is upgrading its wastewater treatment plant to provide advanced wastewater treatment as required by the State Water Quality Control Board.
- The community of Graton invested in forming the GCSD so that the treatment plant would be operated in an environmentally beneficial and sustainable way and be controlled by the community.
- Part of the original vision was to use reclaimed wastewater for irrigation by nearby growers and replace their use of groundwater for that purpose. This should have the positive environmental impact of allowing groundwater to replenish riparian vegetation along Atascadero Creek, and reduce the use of surface water flow for that purpose. Environmental benefits include preserving summertime instream flow, improving aquatic habitat, and allowing for other beneficial uses of the surface water. Economic and water security benefits are expected as well.
- Additionally, Graton's vision for the future is to apply the tertiary treated wastewater at greater than agronomic rates in order to further replenish groundwater, riparian vegetation and Atascadero Creek surface water flow. Filtration and mycoremediation through forest soils may have the added benefit of additional removal of endocrine disruptors and other untreated chemicals.
- Management plans for both of the above activities are required. Title 22 and Graton's NPDES permit require monitoring and management related to the use of reclaimed water for irrigation. Additional environmental documentation and a groundwater management plan is required in order to apply reclaimed water at greater than agronomic rates.
- The entire community of Graton depends on groundwater as its source of domestic water. State and regional initiatives in water management may affect or rely on local information and input.

- The California Department of Water Resources encourages local groundwater management through funding if groundwater management plans (developed according to legislated guidelines) are in place.

Objectives

GCSD's Objectives

- Ensure on-going stakeholder involvement in appropriate management of reclaimed wastewater resulting in compliance and best management of wastewater effluent
- Enable the possibility of applying treated effluent at greater than agronomic rates to:
 - Provide additional removal of endocrine disruptors and other contaminants not currently removed by tertiary treatment,
 - Cause environmental improvements of increased riparian vegetation and increased surface water flow in Atascadero Creek
 - Reduce life cycle costs of treating wastewater
- Increase awareness and local community participation with regard to local water, groundwater and wastewater issues
- Participate with or involve other agencies, groups and individuals so that the plan has the greatest chance of being effective and beneficial
- Comply with requirements associated with state funding under Proposition 50
- Provide for the possibility of receiving state funding for expanded groundwater management efforts

Community/Environmental Objectives

Community and other environmental objectives will be discussed and prioritized in on-going Stakeholder and TAC meetings. Those that have been voiced thus far include:

- Improve riparian and aquatic habitat in Atascadero Creek
- Ensure security and local control of groundwater resources
- Avoid future regulation and adjudication (potentially based on instream flow needs associated with endangered Coho salmon)
- Address areas of groundwater overdraft through possible recharge and management
- Influence land use practices to avoid negative impacts to groundwater (i.e. paving)
- Prevent or mitigate flooding damage
- Address summertime degradation of groundwater quality

Perimeters

The minimum area for groundwater management under GCSD's authority is those areas where reclaimed wastewater will be applied, and downgradient lands owned by GCSD. This includes up to approximately 200 acres of land in the vicinity of the GCSD wastewater treatment plant. This area is a portion of the Atascadero Watershed. A groundwater management plan must be developed for this area by the GCSD.

For a variety of technical and political reasons, it may be appropriate to expand this area to include the entire groundwater basin. Should this be desired, additional efforts will be required in order to develop the needed authority or solicit willing compliance.

Public Process

GCSD will follow procedures stipulated in the California Water Code Section 10753 for adopting groundwater management plans. Accordingly GCSD has:

- Adopted an ordinance or resolution to adopt and implement a groundwater management plan
- Initiated (and will continue) opportunities for public and agency involvement (public notices, advertising of advisory committee meetings, one stakeholder meeting)

It is intended that stakeholders meetings will be continued ad infinitum, and that the TAC will convene for as long as necessary to develop and revise an effective and acceptable groundwater plan. Monthly meetings are anticipated.

A list serve, web site, public notices, newspaper articles and other opportunities as they arise will be used to communicate progress widely.

After plan is prepared, a public notice (Section 6066) will be made in order to receive final comments. If a majority protest is not filed, the plan will be adopted. Rules and regulations to implement and enforce the groundwater management plan will then be developed.

Discussion of Other Agency and Community Efforts

- DWR Community Assistance for Groundwater Management
- Sonoma County Water Agency for Sonoma Valley
- Sonoma County Water Information Group
- Sonoma County Water Coalition
- League of Women's Voters
- Other

Groundwater Plan Components

- Management Objectives
- Components related to monitoring and management of groundwater levels, quality and changes in surface flow and quality that affect groundwater levels or quality or are caused by groundwater pumping
- Monitoring protocols to track changes related to above and to determine whether management objectives are being met.
- A plan to involve other local agencies, water purveyors and private well owners regarding the plan
- A map depicting the groundwater basin
- Rules related to implementation of the plan

Technical Requirements

- Maps – regional and local (including agency boundaries)
- Hydrologic characteristics of the groundwater basin
- Summary of available historical data including: wells, surface and groundwater monitoring data
- Issues of concern and relevant data
- A general discussion of historical and projected water demands and supplies
- Summary of local and regional groundwater-related planning and management activities

Data Needs and Sources

Next Steps

Review and analyze data

Fill data gaps if needed

Set monitoring and management objectives