SCV GSA

MEMBER AGENCIES

SCV WATER

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT of REGIONAL PLANNING

LACWD

Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Plan Overview, High Level Summary of Public Comment, Discussion

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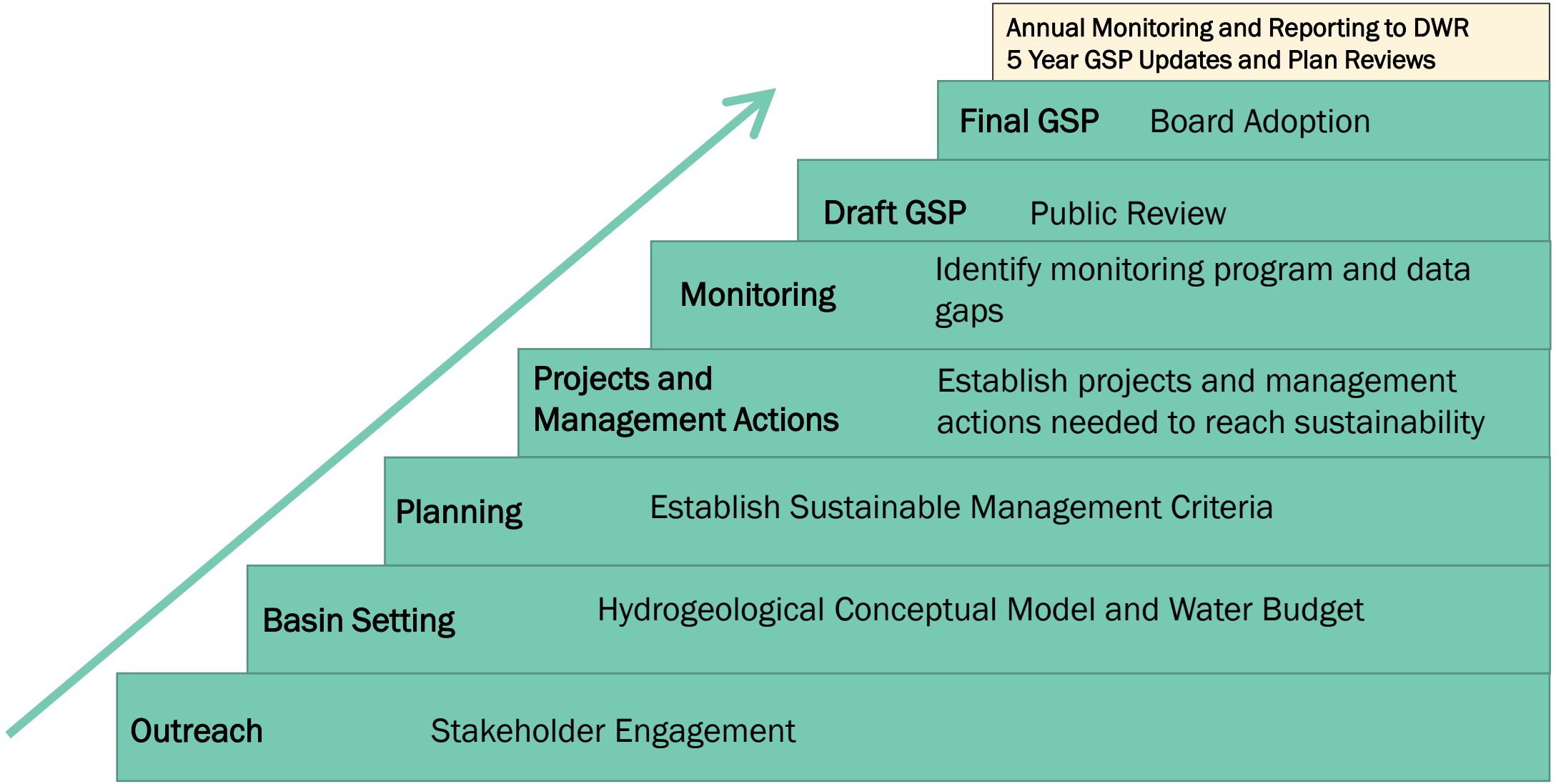
October 20, 2021

Overview- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2014 (SGMA)

"A central feature of these bills is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally."

– Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.

Activities Leading to an Accepted GSP



Overview - SCV-GSA Board of Directors

- Formed in 2017
- Members operating under a Joint Powers Agreement:
  - County Waterworks District No. 36
  - County Regional Planning
  - City of Santa Clarita
  - SCV Water
- Meets quarterly or as needed
- www.scvgsa.org

SCV
GSA

Overview - Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The GSA SAC provides insight, support and expertise on various social, cultural and economic issues impacting groundwater management in the SCV.

- Represents environmental interests, groundwater pumpers, business and members-at-large
- Participated in planning for, and debriefing after, 6 public workshops
- Provided input on draft GSP components along the way

Stakeholder Meetings and Public Workshops

- More than 15 public Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings
- 6 Public Workshops

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS	
June 17, 2020	Hydrogeological Conceptual Model
August 5, 2020	GW/SW Interactions and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems
November 4, 2020	Water Budget
March 10, 2021	Sustainable Management Criteria
June 2, 2021	Management Projects and Actions
August 25, 2021	Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Sustainability Goal

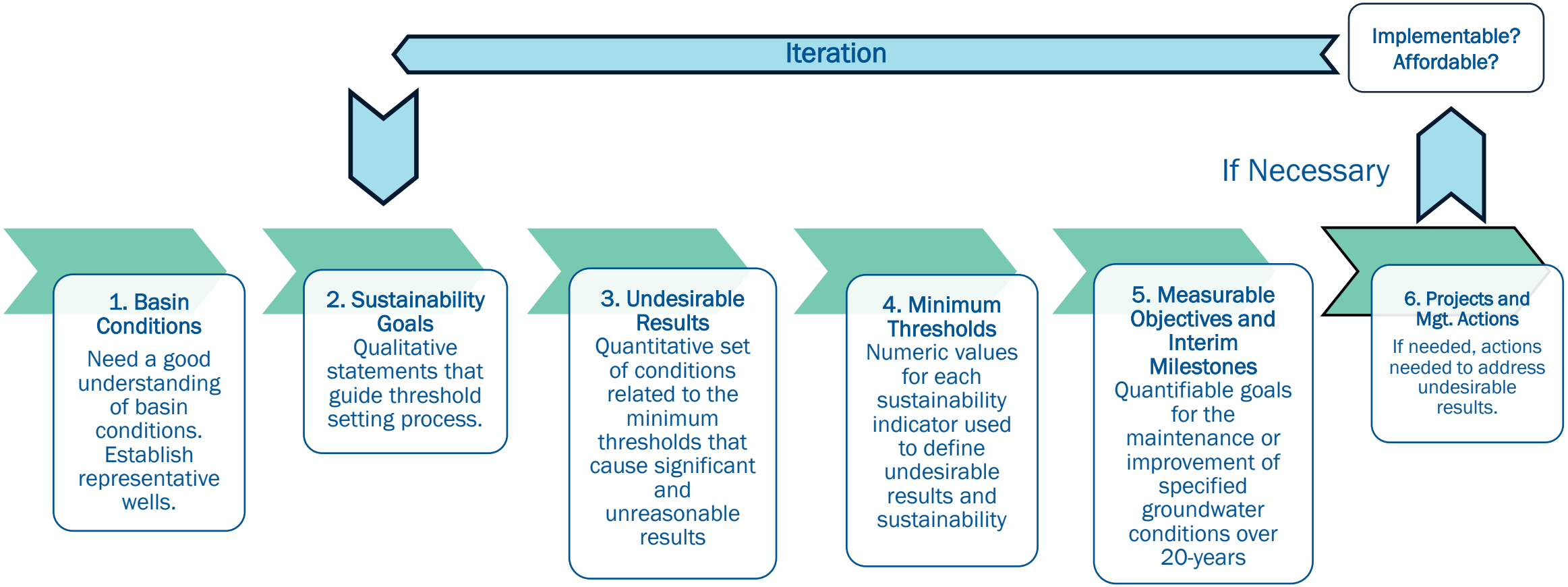
"The SCV-GSA's sustainability goal is to manage the groundwater resources of the Basin for current and future beneficial uses of groundwater, including the river environment, through an adaptive management approach that builds on robust science and monitoring and considers economic, social, and other objectives of a wide variety of stakeholders....."

Key Terms and Concepts

- GSPs are long-term planning documents that include stakeholder input, technical analysis and BoD leadership.
- GSP Maintains and/or reaches sustainability within 20 years and beyond.
- State Approach for Measuring Sustainability
  - Sustainability Indicators
  - Undesirable Results
  - Absence of Undesirable Results

Undesirable Results

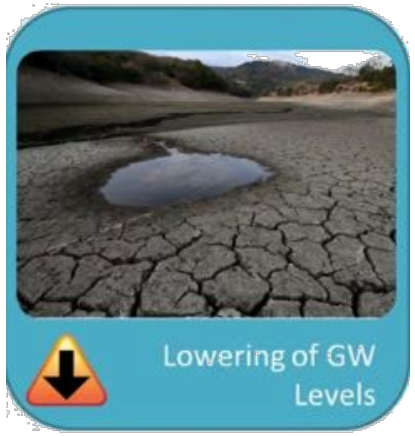
Process for Development of Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC)

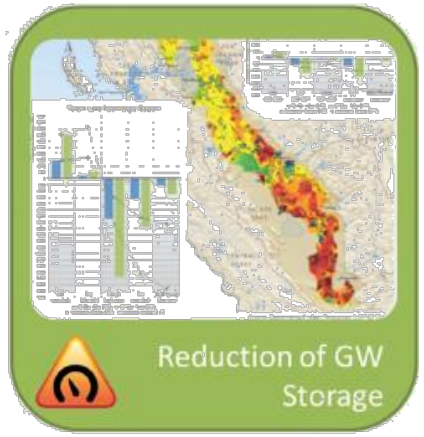


Measuring Sustainability

- We track groundwater elevations and other measurements against minimum thresholds.
- Exceeding multiple minimum thresholds as defined in the GSP means an undesirable result has taken place.
- If monitoring show an undesirable result is anticipated, then management actions are implemented.
- Ongoing monitoring and study will improve our understanding

SMC Summary- Chronic Lowering of Water Levels and Chronic Reduction in Groundwater Storage



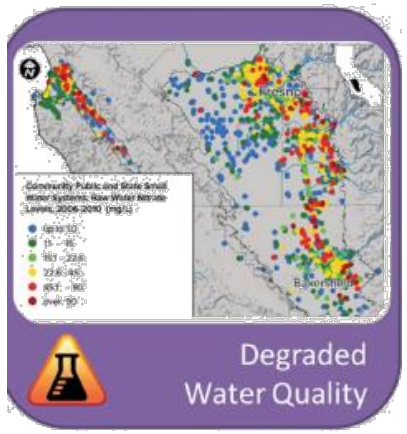


Objective	Minimum Threshold	Undesirable Result	Measurable Objective	Management Actions
Maintain Groundwater Levels to support groundwater use and river environment	Lowest Future Water Levels	If groundwater levels drop below the minimum thresholds over a three-year period in certain wells an undesirable has taken place	Average future water levels	Include, but are not limited to: redistribution of pumping, reduced pumping, releases of water from Castaic Lake; imported water, water conservation

SMC Summary- Land Subsidence*

Objective	Minimum Threshold	Undesirable Result	Measurable Objective	Management Actions
Reduce or prevent land subsidence that causes significant and unreasonable effects to groundwater supply, land uses, infrastructure, and property interests	Sets minimum thresholds based on land surface elevations	Substantial interference with land uses, impacts on the use of critical infrastructure and roads, or subsidence greater than minimum thresholds at 10 percent of monitoring locations	Maintenance of current ground surface elevations	Same as for Chronic Lowering of Water Levels, and Chronic Depletion of Storage

SMC Summary- Avoid Degraded Groundwater Quality



Objective	Minimum Threshold	Undesirable Result	Measurable Objective	Management Actions
Maintain access to drinking water supplies and agricultural water supplies. Maintain quality consistent with current ecosystem uses.	Existing regulatory Water Quality Objectives for TDS, chloride, nitrate, and sulfate, or if salts exceed the assimilative capacity of the basin	Degradation of water quality beyond water quality objectives and/or assimilative capacity	Prevent water quality degradation for salts and nutrients and for contaminants	Consider alternatives for improving groundwater quality

SMC Summary- Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water

- Objective: Avoid significant and unreasonable affects (i.e. undesirable results) on beneficial uses in the Basin, including GDEs, caused by groundwater extraction. Maintain sufficient groundwater levels and surface water flow to sustain aquatic habitat where unarmored three-spine stickleback (UTS) are present (e.g. at the I-5 Bridge), to the extent such decreases are caused by groundwater extraction.

SMC Summary- Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water

- Minimum Threshold: Surface water depletion caused by groundwater extraction caused as measured by groundwater elevations falling beneath the lowest predicted future groundwater elevation at GDE monitoring wells.
- Also note a special GDE evaluation process begins at a higher water elevation called a GDE trigger.

Potential Undesirable Results	Measurable Objective
Permanent loss or significant degradation of existing native riparian or aquatic habitat due to lowered groundwater levels caused by groundwater use throughout the GDE area. In areas that currently provide essential habitat to UTS (sensitive aquatic species in the vicinity of I-5 Bridge), cessation of surface flow during low-flow conditions in the river channel caused by groundwater extraction is an undesirable result.	Average of future modeled groundwater elevations (using the same data set as for the minimum threshold).

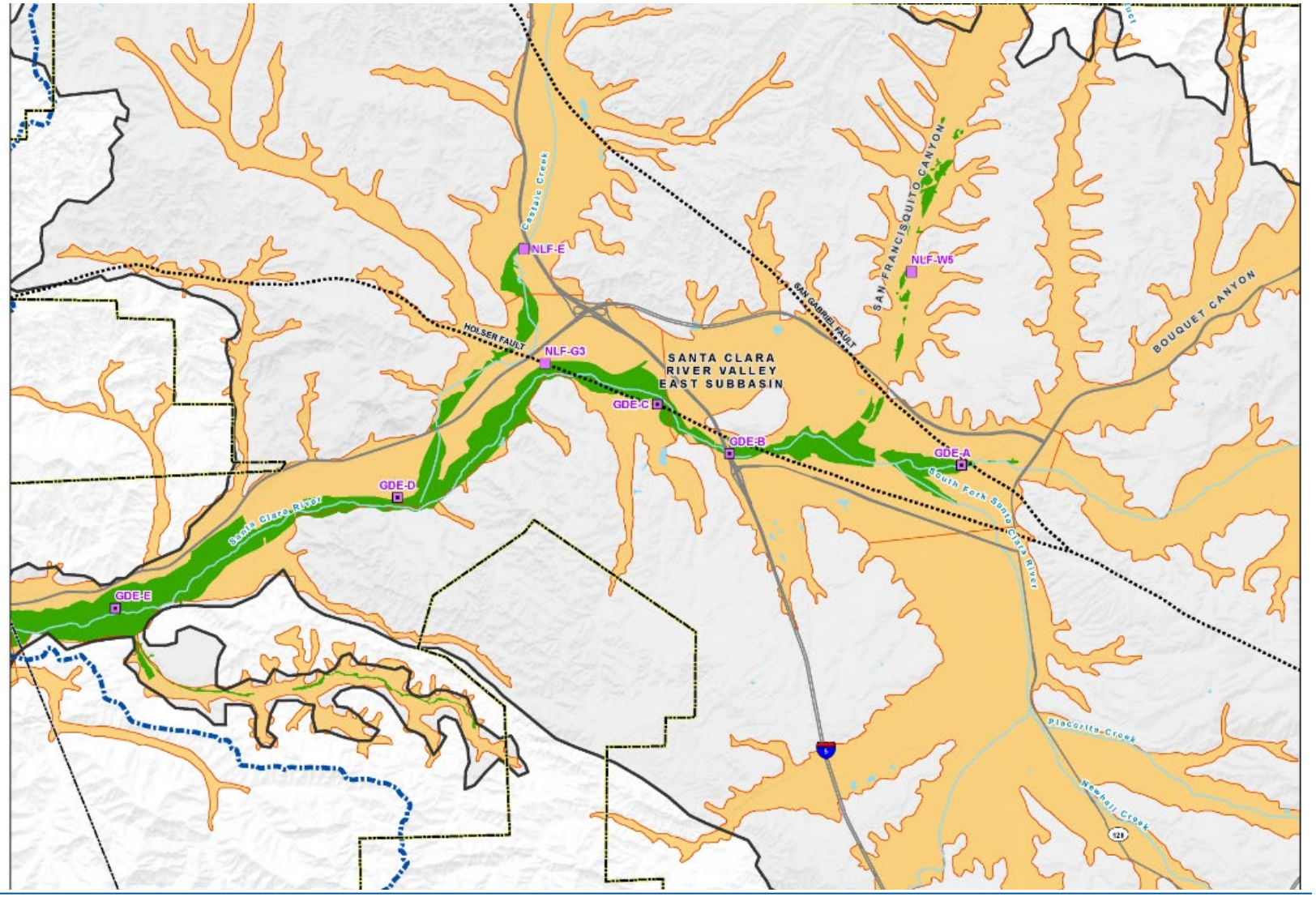
Actions if GDE Triggers are Reached

- Evaluation Process Takes Place
  - Includes 6 steps
  - Results in Evaluation Report and Communication to GSA
- Management actions may be called upon
  - Redistribute pumping (shift and/or stop pumping)
  - Increase imported water
  - Water conservation
  - Outreach to private well owners
  - Evaluate additional projects

Special Monitoring and Evaluation with GDEs

Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

- GDE Triggers
- Evaluation Process and Management Actions



Considerations When Triggers are Reached*

1. Is the affected river segment supported by surface flow from WRP discharges?
2. Is the historic low groundwater level already below the tree/shrub root depths?
3. Will the vegetation and sensitive species survive the temporary loss of access to groundwater?
4. Has the Management Action Trigger been reached often in recent years, and have water levels recovered quickly?
5. Are the declines in groundwater levels resulting from pumping?
6. Has new information been obtained that can be used to refine the trigger level?

Timely management actions would be implemented including redistributing or reducing pumping, if necessary, to protect GDEs

Implementation Schedule

Management Action	Topic	Timing
Address Data Gaps	Piezometers, elevation surveys (wells and land surface), domestic water quality	Second quarter 2022-third quarter 2023
Monitoring, Reporting, Outreach	New monitoring, ongoing monitoring evaluation, outreach	Jan 2022-end 2026
Promoting Best Water Use Practices	Continued muni communication and outreach, private pumpers	Jan 2022-end 2026
GSP Reporting*	Annual Reports, GSP Update	April 2022-

Implementation Fiscal Considerations

Management Action	2021/2022 Fiscal Year	2022/2023 Fiscal Year
Address Data Gaps	$64,000	$0
Monitoring, Reporting, Outreach	$132,000	$183,000
Promoting Best Water Use Practices	$11,000	$11,000
GSP Reporting	$75,000	$50,000
Totals	**$282,000**	**$244,000**

Public Comment On Draft GSP

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Dr. Tom Dudley
- The Nature Conservancy, Audubon CA, Local Government Commission, Union of Concerned Scientists, Clean Water Action
- Friends of the Santa Clara River
- Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment
- Mr. Roger A. Haring
- Ms. Stacy Fortner

Public Comment On Draft GSP

- GSP Team will be preparing responses to each letter's comments
- Still reviewing in detail, but have assembled Common Themes

Public Comment On Draft GSP

Common Themes	Comment Ideas
GDEs	trigger, upland, oaks, historical conditions, wrp flows
Climate Change Models	Use extreme wet and dry models
Domestic Wells	depths, extraction, water quality
Monitoring Wells	well condition
Subsidence	past and future monitoring
Arundo Removal	support
Public Trust	interconnected streams
Human Right to Water	depths, extraction, water quality
Outreach to Disadvantaged Communities	additional outreach

Timing Considerations

- Our earlier schedule approach anticipated moving from today's meeting, to a December 15, 2021 meeting for Board adoption
- We now suggest a special Board Meeting in November to discuss comment responses and potential GSP modifications
- This schedule change may delay your Board's consideration of the final GSP until early January 2022

Recommendation

- Receive initial comment from GSP Board Members
- Meet in November to further consider public comment