# NOTICE AND AGENDA OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BOARD

**Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency – Board Room**
**Rio Vista Treatment Plant Facility**
**27234 Bouquet Canyon Road**
**Santa Clarita, CA 91350**

**Monday, March 6, 2023 at 2:30 PM**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

This meeting is conducted in person at the address listed above. As a convenience to the public, members of the public may also participate virtually by using the **Agency's Call-In Number 1-833-568-8864, Webinar ID: 160 057 8786 or Zoom Webinar by clicking on the link: https://scvwa.zoomgov.com/j/1600578786** Any member of the public may listen to the meeting or make comments to the Board using the call-in number or Zoom Webinar link above. However, in the event there is a disruption of service which prevents the Agency from broadcasting the meeting to members of the public using either the call-in option or internet-based service, this meeting will not be postponed but will continue without remote participation. The remote participation option is provided as a convenience to the public and is not required.

Attendees should be aware that while the Agency is following all applicable requirements and guidelines regarding COVID-19, the Agency cannot ensure the health of anyone attending the Board meeting. Attendees should therefore use their own judgement to protect themselves from exposure to COVID-19.

We request that the public submit any comments in writing if practicable, which can be sent to ekang@scvwa.org or mailed to Eunie Kang, Board Secretary, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency, 27234 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. All written comments received before 12:00 PM the day of the meeting will be distributed to the Board members and posted on the SCV-GSA website prior to the start of the meeting. Anything received after 12:00 PM the day of the meeting will be posted on the SCV-GSA website the following day.

## 1. REGULAR PROCEDURES

1.1 Call to Order

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

1.3 Public Comments – Members of the public may comment as to items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Agency that are not on the Agenda at this time. Members of the public wishing to comment on items covered in this Agenda may do so now or at the time each item is considered. (Comments may, at the discretion of the Board's presiding officer, be limited to three minutes for each speaker.)

1.4 Approval of Agenda

## 2. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and non-controversial and will be acted upon by the Board by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items prior to the time the Board votes unless any Board member, staff or the public, requests specific items be discussed and/or removed from the Consent Calendar for separate action.

| ITEMS | | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | * | Approve Minutes of the January 9, 2022, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency Special Board of Directors Meeting | 1 |

## 3. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION AGENDA ITEMS

| ITEMS | | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | * | Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Monitoring Protocol<br><br>Direct Link to the GDE Evaluation Report: **https://scvgsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SCVGSA_GSP_GDE-Monitoring-Protocol_Feb-2023.pdf** | 3 |
| 3.2 | * | Consideration to Adopt the Santa Clara River Valley East Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) 2022 Annual Report<br><br>Direct Link to the GSP 2022 Annual Report: **https://scvgsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SCVGSA_2022-GSP-Annual-Report_Feb-2023.pdf** | 5 |
| 3.3 | | Bouquet Creek Status Update | |

## 4. DIRECTOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

## 5. ADJOURMENT

*** Indicates attachment**
**♦ To be distribute**

**NOTICES:**

Any person may make a request for a disability-related modification or accommodation needed for that person to be able to participate in the public meeting by telephoning Eunie Kang, Secretary to the Board of Directors, at (661) 297-1600 or writing to Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency at 27234 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. Requests must specify the nature of the disability and the type of accommodation requested.

A telephone number or other contact information should be included so that Agency staff may discuss appropriate arrangements. Persons requesting a disability-related accommodation should make the request with adequate time before the meeting for the Agency to provide the requested accommodation.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.5, non-exempt public records that relate to open session agenda items and are distributed to a majority of the Board less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available for public inspection at the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency, located at 27234 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, California 91350, during regular business hours. When practical, these public records will also be made available on the Agency's Internet Website, accessible at http://www.scvgsa.org.

Posted on February 28, 2023

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**DRAFT**

**ITEM NO. 2.1**

Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency – January 9, 2023

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A special board meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SCV-GSA) was held in person at 2:30 PM on Monday, January 9, 2023. A copy of the Agenda is inserted in the Minute Book of the SCV-GSA preceding these minutes.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Russ Bryden, William C. Cooper, Jeff Ford (Alternate for Piotr Orzechowski), Jason Gibbs, Maria Gutzeit, Gina Natoli Gary Martin

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Piotr Orzechowski

Also present in person: SCV-GSA General Counsel Tom Bunn, SCV-GSA Treasurer Rochelle Patterson; SCV Water Agency Assistant General Manager Steve Cole, Director of Water Resources Ali Elhassan, Principal Water Resource Planner Rick Viergutz, Communications Manager Kathie Martin, Controller Amy Aguer, and Board Secretary April Jacobs. Attending virtually were Water Resources Planner Ernesto Velazquez with SCV Water Agency; John Porcello with GSI Water Solutions, Inc., and various members of the public.

President Gutzeit called the meeting to order at 2:36 PM. A quorum was present.

Item 1.3: There was no public comment.

Item 1.4: There were no changes to the January 9, 2023 Board Agenda and it was accepted as presented.

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Item 2: Upon motion of Director Gibbs, seconded by Director Cooper and carried, the Board approved the Consent Calendar with the amendment to correct the spelling of Director Gary Martin's last name of the October 3, 2022 SCV-GSA board minutes by the following roll call votes:

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|---|---|---|---|
| Vice President Bryden | Abstain | President Gutzeit | Yes |
| Director Cooper | Yes | Director Martin | Yes |
| Director Ford (Alternate) | Abstain | Director Natoli | Abstain |
| Director Gibbs | Yes | Director Orzechowski | Absent |

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Item 3.1: Steve Cole reported on the Bouquet Creek update. Steve attended a community meeting held on December 7, 2022 at the Grace Baptist Church located on Copperhill Drive. The meeting was facilitated by Board of Supervisors County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The Public Works staff did a really good job explaining the challenges to the roadway, flooding and the infrastructure needed to address those concerns. The meeting was to present the project and receive feedback from the community.

Item 3.2: Ernesto Velazquez presented on the Upper Santa Clara River Salt and Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP) Update and how we locally manager our basin. The SNMP purpose is to provide a framework for management practices, determine water quality of our basin through monitoring and modeling and protect beneficial uses and allow for the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources consistent with Basin Plan objectives.

Item 3.3: Rick Viergutz presented a quarterly status report of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (SGMA) Implementation Activities.
Topic covered:

- Contract management with Geosyntec for data management system.
- Domestic wells and Non-de-minimis wells
- A grant on behalf of the SCV-GSA was recently submitted that would fund additional work examining well records in the basin.
- Groundwater flowmodel refinement
- Monitoring reporting and outreach/promoting best water use practices
- Well permitting is being tracked. Additional effort may be undertaken to comply with Governor's Executive Order regarding well permits.

Item 4.1: Director Gary Martin provided a verbal update on his attendance at the ACWA General Session Membership meeting held on November 30, 2022.

Item 5.1: Per the approved rotational schedule to appoint the SCV-GSA Board President and Vice President, Russ Bryden was appointed as Board President and Gary Martin as Board Vice President for the 2023-year term.

Item 6: No future agenda items requested.

Item 7: The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 PM.

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Eunie Kang, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

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President of the Board

ITEM NO. 3.1

# Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board Memorandum

**DATE:** February 28, 2023

**TO:** SCV-GSA Board of Directors

**FROM:** SCV-GSA Staff

**SUBJECT:** Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Monitoring Protocol

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**SUMMARY:**

A presentation will be provided on the subject report at the March 6, 2023 Board meeting. Consistent with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Implementation and the adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plan, an initial assessment of Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) conditions was performed in August 2022.

As stated elsewhere, including the GSA's 2022 Annual Report, and the linked report below, the GDE triggers and associated minimum thresholds are in need of refinement incorporating new empirical data to make them consistent with the approach in the GSP. Regardless of this technical refinement, the GSP has a process to evaluate GDEs if triggers are approached or reached, and as such the GSP Team determined it was appropriate to conduct the full GDE Evaluation process.

This initial process is described more fully in this linked report: https://scvgsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SCVGSA_GSP_GDE-Monitoring-Protocol_Feb-2023.pdf

Recommendations from the initial assessment of GDE Conditions in 2022, and the analysis to determine if GDEs were experiencing undesirable results due to groundwater extraction are summarized below.

- No undesirable results to GDEs were identified in 2022, therefore no management actions are recommended.
- Trigger levels and minimum thresholds for both GDE-A and GDE-B should be refined to better reflect the approach in the GSP and the newly collected empirical data.
- Continue working with the downstream landowner to obtain biological and hydrogeological data from the remaining portions of the SCR. Use this information alongside information collected from GDE wells A and B to improve flowmodel calibration, triggers, and minimum thresholds consistent with the adopted GSP.
- Continue collecting continuous groundwater elevation data and visit ML-B in the late summer and fall to confirm surface flow.
- Monitor stream gage at Old Road Bridge and conduct periodic site visits when flows reach 1 cubic foot per second.
- Continue to track climate and rainfall trends over the short-term and long-term to better understand potential impacts of climate change to the GDEs.

**CONCLUSION:**

The work performed during water year 2022 was the first full run through of the GDE Evaluation process. The process will be repeated in future years as called for by the GSP. The revision of triggers and minimum thresholds at GDE wells will be brought to your Board for its consideration later this year. No undesirable results to GDEs from groundwater extraction were identified.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information item only. No action is required.

**ITEM NO. 3.2**

# Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board Memorandum

**DATE:** February 28, 2023

**TO:** SCV-GSA Board of Directors

**FROM:** SCV-GSA Staff

**SUBJECT:** Consideration to Adopt the Santa Clara River Valley East Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) 2022 Annual Report

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## BACKGROUND:

The State's requirements for Groundwater Sustainability Plans include GSA submittal of annual reports by April 1 of each year. The 2022 annual report can be viewed on the SCV-GSA website: **https://scvgsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SCVGSA_2022-GSP-Annual-Report_Feb-2023.pdf** and is provided for the Board's consideration and adoption.

The Board may recall that last year's annual report, as the first report per SGMA regulations, was required to cover (October-September) water years 2020 and 2021 and reviewed changes in groundwater basin storage since 2015.

This year's 2022 Annual Report covers water year 2022 and conveys monitoring and water use data to the DWR and to Basin stakeholders to provide data on performance of the Basin relative to the sustainable management criteria set forth in the GSP.

## SUMMARY OF BASIN CONDITIONS AND DATA GAPS:

*Groundwater Elevation Sustainability Indicator*

Groundwater elevation trends observed at Representative Monitoring Sites (RMSs) in 2022 were generally stable or increasing in the Alluvial Aquifer, and stable or decreasing in the Saugus Formation, compared to elevations measured in water years 2015-2021. The water year type for 2022 was "critical" as was the case in water year 2021.

The RMS are monitoring locations used to determine if Minimum Thresholds are reached. Of the 25 RMS hydrographs presented in the Annual Report's Appendix E, most of the RMSs exhibit groundwater elevations at or above their minimum threshold during water year 2022, except for four GDE piezometers (GDE-B, GDE-C, GDE-D, and GDE-E) where new survey data collected in 2022 indicate the initial value of the minimum threshold was set too high during development of the GSP.

Because groundwater levels at the GDE piezometers were generally stable or rising during water year 2022, there is no indication that unsustainable conditions exist at these locations; specifically, there is no indication that surface water depletion due to groundwater pumping is occurring that could result in a significant and unreasonable effect to GDEs. At these locations

and elsewhere in the Basin, the groundwater monitoring program indicates that the Basin was being operated in a sustainable manner during water year 2022.

*Groundwater Storage Sustainability Indicator*

The Basin as a whole experienced decreases in the amount of groundwater in storage from January 1, 2015 through water year 2018, an increase in storage during water years 2019 and 2020, a notable decrease in storage during water year 2021 when precipitation was only 20 percent of normal, and a smaller decrease in storage during water year 2022 when precipitation was slightly below normal (15.00 inches). The year-to-year variations in storage primarily reflect the effect of variable rainfall, which after water year 2014 has consisted of 3 years of modestly above-normal rainfall and 5 dry years (below-normal to critically dry conditions).

Fluctuations in pumping may explain some of these variations as well, given the generally lower pumping from the Alluvial Aquifer and slightly greater Saugus Formation pumping that has occurred since the early 2010s. The observed changes in storage and the groundwater elevation hydrographs together show that conditions during water years 2015 through 2022 were similar to those observed historically, with declining groundwater elevations and storage in certain parts of the Basin during low-rainfall periods (dry cycles in the Basin's local hydrology), but stable or even rising groundwater elevations and storage in parts of the Basin under these same dry conditions because of reduced groundwater pumping. As has occurred in the past, groundwater levels and storage are likely to increase during the next cycle of normal or above-normal rainfall. Together, these observations indicate that the Basin was operated in a sustainable manner with respect to the groundwater level and groundwater storage sustainability indicators through water year 2022

*Land Subsidence Sustainability Indicator*

Available DWR InSAR land subsidence data indicate a displacement of -0.1 to +0.1 ft across the Basin from the end of water year 2021 through the end of water year 2022. According to land surface elevation measurements collected at the UNAVCO SKYB station, land surface elevation has fallen (negative displacement) by approximately 0.04 ft since October 2021. These data sets indicate that no land subsidence in the Basin has occurred exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.1 ft within a given year. Additionally, the InSAR mapping for June 2015 through October 2022 indicates that during the most recent 7-year period for which the InSAR data are available, no land subsidence has occurred exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.5 ft. This indicates that the basin is being operated sustainably with respect to the land subsidence sustainability indicator

*Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water Sustainability Indicator*

Significant work during water year 2022 took place regarding filling data gaps related to this sustainability indicator. Work included piezometer installation, initiation of groundwater elevation monitoring in the new piezometers, land surface and wellhead elevation surveys. Further, as part of GSP implementation the groundwater flowmodel is being updated with this new information to assist in making GDE well triggers and minimum thresholds more consistent with the approach in the GSP.

As stated above, Groundwater elevations are monitored at eight locations where groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) are present, including in five newly installed piezometers where

no data were previously available. During water year 2022, four of the five new piezometers had measured groundwater elevations that were below the elevations that are specified in the GSP as minimum thresholds and GDE trigger levels. Newly-collected field survey data indicate that the minimum thresholds and GDE trigger levels at these locations (before these new wells were installed) were calculated using ground surface elevations that are too high.

Further, a GDE Evaluation was performed consistent with the approach in the GSP for areas along the Santa Clara River roughly between Interstate 5 and Bouquet Canyon and the analysis did not identify undesirable results to GDEs in 2022. The monitoring program indicates that the Basin was being operated in a sustainable manner during water year 2022.

*Degraded Groundwater Quality Sustainability Indicator*

SCV Water recently analyzed the degraded groundwater quality sustainability indicator during its preparation of the 2022 update to the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan (LSCE, 2022). The 2022 update included analyses of inorganic water quality data against the water quality objectives (WQOs) and assimilative capacities that are established in the 2016 plan (GSSI, 2016) and that also serve as the minimum thresholds for this sustainability indicator. The 2022 update found that the conclusions from the 2016 plan remain valid; increases in certain constituent concentrations in some of the management zones are attributable to the predominantly dry to critically dry rainfall conditions that occurred during the study period for the update; and projected concentrations are expected to remain below the WQO except for minor exceedances in some areas. Since completion of the 2016 plan, two new monitoring wells have been added in one management zone (MZ-3, which comprises the Alluvial Aquifer along the South Fork Santa Clara River). At this time, SCV Water is beginning to engage stakeholders as it prepares to conduct the 10-year update of the plan, which will be completed in 2026. Limited new data are available, but review of available data suggests similar concentration trends from the previous SNMP update report, with one instance of an increased concentration, but several instances with decreasing concentrations.

*Monitoring Network Review, Data Gaps, and Status*

Significant progress has been made in filling data gaps identified in the GSP regarding GDE monitoring. This new information, not available at the time of GSP development, is being evaluated and used to improve groundwater flowmodel calibration. During 2023 water year, efforts will continue to build out the land subsidence monitoring program, conduct an updated well inventory, and develop a domestic well monitoring program. Further, progress will be made and policy considered by your board regarding groundwater extraction reporting from non-de minimis groundwater well operators.

**CONCLUSION:**

The annual report finds that the basin conditions are sustainable, and consistent with the sustainability indicators in the GSP; however as described above there is a technical issue with the setting of triggers and minimum thresholds at GDE wells. This technical issue is being resolved and later this year the GSP Team will provide additional information to your Board and recommend adjustment of these values so that they are more consistent with the approach in the GSP. Further, the first GDE evaluation was conducted in 2022 and it did not find GDEs had undesirable results.

Efforts will continue in water year 2023 to fill data gaps and implement the GSP.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the SCV-GSA Board of Directors adopt the Santa Clara River Valley East Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) 2022 Annual Report.