



TULARE BASIN WATERSHED CONNECTIONS COLLABORATIVE APRIL 30, 2018 AGENDA

Time & Location: 9 a.m. – 12 noon, DWR-Fresno (3374 E. Shields Ave., Fresno 93726)

Phone in conference line: 1 (916) 573-2034, access code 38035588

Facilitator: Carole Combs (TBWP – Executive Director)

Note-takers: Jennifer Morales (DWR- Fresno), Dezaraye Bagalayos (TBWP)

Attachments: (1) TBWCC January 26, 2018 meeting notes; (2) TBWP IRS 501 c 3, mission/vision/strategic plan objective #1; (3) TBWCC Draft Charter; (4) TBWCC Draft Strategic Plan; (5) WaterSmart grant draft; (6) TBWCC SGMA & Ecosystem Restoration Work Group February-April meeting notes (7) PPIC report April 18, 2018: Replenishing Groundwater in the San Joaquin Valley

1. **Welcome, introductions (Carole, All) (9 – 9:10 a.m)**
 2. **Transition from DWR Coordination to TBWP Coordination (9:10 – 10:00 a.m.)**
 - a. John Andrew, Assistant Deputy Director (Climate Change), DWR
 - b. Carole, TBWP past/present/future capacity to coordinate the TBWCC (TBWP IRS 501 c 3 framework, mission, vision & strategic planning; TBWCC Draft Charter; TBWCC Draft Strategic Plan; TBWCC 2018 -2019 Work Plan development – July 2018)
 - c. Discussion
 3. **Key points in BOR WaterSmart grant application draft January 31, 2018 (not submitted) for potential follow up in TBWCC work plan (10:00 – 10:30 a.m.)**
 - a. Project matrix
 - b. Outreach plan, powerpoint presentation (Sarah Campe, Sierra Nevada Conservancy)
 - c. Co-equal TBWCC management participation by upper and lower watershed and natural resource managers
 - d. Other suggestions? Discussion
- BREAK (10:30 – 10:45 a.m.)**
4. **TBWCC SGMA & Ecosystem Restoration Work Group (10:45 – 11:30 a.m.)**
 - a. Overview (Scott Sellers, EDF)
 - b. Science & Mapping Subgroup; Pixley Groundwater Commission Land Conservation Pilot Program update (Abigail Hart, TNC); Mike Hickey – Tulare County GIS re: Tulare Basin map under development
 - c. Policy/Funding/Permitting Subgroup (Scott Sellers, EDF)
 - d. PPIC Replenishing Groundwater in the San Joaquin Valley - report released April 18, 2018
 - e. Discussion, next steps
 5. **Strategic Growth Council research climate change adaptation/community impacts proposals submitted April 13, 2018 (11:30 – 11:50 a.m.)**
 - a. Stanford University – Tulare Basin (Lower Tule, Kern GSA subbasin focus)/TBWCC relevance
 - b. University of California – Tulare Basin (Kings River Basin focus)/TBWCC relevance
 - c. Discussion, synergies
 6. **Agenda suggestions for July 18, 2018 meeting (11:50 – 12 p.m.)**
 7. **Adjourn (12 p.m.)**

SUMMARY NOTES + UPDATES:

Attendees (in person or by phone):

Jennifer Morales, DWR
John Andrew, DWR
Carole Combs, TBWP
Larry Saslaw, TBWP
John Austin, TBWP
Matt Hurley, TBWP (SGMA advisor)
Dezaraye Bagalayos, TBWP
Sarah Campe, SNC
Scott Sellers, EDF
Abigail Hart, TNC
Samantha Arthur, CA Audubon
Kelli McCune, SusCon
Soua Lee, KRCD
Julie Allen, SRT
Soapy Muhlolland, SRT
Adam Livingston, SRT
Caroline Lilly, SRT
Roger Bales, UCM
Benjamin Bryant, Stanford U.
Justine Reynolds, Yosemite-Sequoia RC&D
Mike Hickey, Tulare County Information & Communications Technology (TCiCT)

1. Introduction. Carole Combs welcomed the attendees and led with a reminder regarding the role of TBWP's Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative begun in 2010/2011 with CA Department of Conservation funding that enabled the hiring of a Tulare Basin Watershed Coordinator, culminating in a 2014 Upper-Lower Watershed Connections Workshop where Michelle Selmon, DWR Climate Change Specialist, offered to coordinate(on an interim basis) the Tulare Basin Watershed Connections *Workgroup (renamed Collaborative – TBWCC on January 26, 2018)*. The highlight of Michelle's tenure in this role -- which ended upon her move to C DFW on February 12, 2018 -- was her coordination of the October 2017 Headwaters to Groundwater Symposium attended by representatives of upper and lower watershed water and natural resource managers . The Symposium created momentum for whole watershed management integration to achieve water supply and ecosystem resiliency in the context of climate change. The TBWP is offering to help continue the TBWCC as a core function in continuing the Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative.

2. Transition from Interim DWR Coordination to TBWP coordinaton. John Andrew noted that he attended the Symposium and is impressed with the diversity and strength of the TBWCC. He made clear that although DWR's ability to continue Michelle's role with the TBWCC will not continue for budgetary and staffing reasons, he would like to see the TBWCC succeed and serve as a model for other regions. Like Michelle, John and Jennifer are Central Valley natives and share the DWR interest in the Sierra, how it is changing, and the effects of climate change on downstream communities. He has approved the location of the next (July 18) TBWCC meeting at the DWR Fresno office, and Jennifer has generously agreed to help with logistics for that meeting.

Carole Combs referred to a document included with the reference materials for the meeting stating the TBWP IRS 501 c 3 status, mission, vision and primary strategic plan objective which support the TBWP

offer to continue the TBWCC as core function in its ongoing Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative. She requested a discussion of this offer by participants. This discussion focused on a strong request by Sarah Campe that the TBWCC maintain strict neutrality regarding policy or advocacy matters. Larry Saslaw attested to the prior TBWP role as convener of the Tulare Basin Working Group (2003-2014) and the potential need to address policy issues that might inhibit programs or projects that upper-lower watershed managers want to pursue. It was agreed that the TBWCC will address the matter of maintaining strict neutrality during **review of the Draft Charter to be included in the agenda of the July 18 meeting**, which Sarah will facilitate.

Carole responded to a question from Roger Bales about TBWP-TBWCC lower water manager/GSA leaders' receptivity to TBWP engagement by stating that the TBWP and SRT are actively engaged in and well-received by a number of Tulare Basin GSAs, representatives of which attended the Symposium. **[Engagement by lower watershed water agency/GSA leaders as "co-equal" managers/collaborators in the TBWCC going forward is a very high priority, per agenda item 3 below.]**

In response to a question from Larry Saslaw about representation of upper watershed managers in the TBWCC going forward, Julie Allen offered that in spite of serious budgetary challenges faced by public agency upper watershed managers, Therese Bensen-- newly arrived USDA FS region manager-- will be amenable to engaging with the TBWCC and is expected play a positive role in this context.

Sarah Campe added that it will be necessary to include specific tasks for upper (and, by implication, lower) watershed managers on TBWCC meeting agendas in order to encourage their meeting attendance and [co-equal upper-lower] whole watershed management collaboration.

Adam Livingston added that it will be important for the TBWCC to be very clear about "what this group is doing that is not being done elsewhere." Carole responded that this matter could be addressed in part through the SGMA & Ecosystem Restoration Work Group initiative—a unique TBWCC leadership collaboration.

Justine Reynolds offered information that the Yosemite-Sequoia RC & D has re-organized as an IRS 501 c 3, has many active partnerships in the Sierra, and is primarily a project management group focusing to date on tree mortality but is now turning to more collaborative work and wants to become more involved in the TBWCC.

3. Key points in BOR WaterSmart grant draft January 31, 2018 (not submitted) for potential follow up. The draft WaterSmart grant application discussed during the January 26, 2018 TBWCC meeting included the following deliverables that Carole proposed be included in the TBWCC Strategic Plan and/or 2018-2019 work plan: development of a **project matrix** (based in part on information previously assembled by Michelle), development of an **outreach/education plan powerpoint** for use with GSA and other groups TBD (offered by Sarah Campe, augmented by extensive outreach material available through UC Water described by Roger Bales), and **co-equal representation of upper and lower watershed managers in TBWCC management** (to be represented in the TBWCC Charter). There was general consensus on the value of continuing these deliverables among those present – **for follow up discussion with lower watershed managers present during discussion of Charter, Strategic Plan, and 2018-2019 work plan as major agenda items for the July 18 TBWCC meeting.**

4. TBWCC SGMA & Ecosystem Work Restoration Work Group. Scott Sellers described the genesis of the TBWCC SGMA & Ecosystem Work Group in a multi-party public/private natural resource leadership meeting convened by John Shelton/CDFW approximately one year ago. John was unable to continue the convening role, with the result that Michelle invited Scott and EDF to continue this role under the

auspices of the TBWCC, as reported in the TBWCC January 26, 2018 meeting notes. Scott convened a follow up meeting of those interested in participating in this work group (including representatives of five lower watershed GSA subbasins as well as numerous NGOs and UC Merced faculty) on February 26. A strong focus of this meeting was the emerging “storefront approach” land use alternative initiative underway between the LTRID/Pixley GSA Groundwater Planning Commission (GPC) and TNC. Two subgroups (Science & Mapping, and Policy/Permitting/Planning -- led by Abigail Hart and Scott Sellers respectively) met by conference call during twice during the February 26 meeting and the TBWCC April 30 meeting. TNC is developing restoration models for land retirement, engaging with landowners, and in the process of executing an MOU between the GPC and TNC for a Land Conservation Pilot Program (LCPP). EDF has a related initiative underway working with landowners in Kern County.

The two subgroup conference calls resulted in an initial understanding of the science and mapping resources available and the policy/permitting/funding issues that will need to be addressed by this work group going forward. Scott Sellers is leaving EDF on May 4 but reports **that EDF has a strong commitment to continuing his leadership role of this work group when his replacement has been hired (expected by July 2018) and that “there will need to be clear objectives for the work group and subgroups to come together on”**. At the time of the April 30 meeting, it was anticipated that Carole and Larry would continue the Policy/Permitting/Funding subgroup leadership until Scott’s replacement is on board and that Abigail Hart would continue her leadership role of the Science and Mapping subgroup. **[UPDATE]** However, on May 2 Abigail notified the Science and Mapping subgroup that she will not be able to continue her leadership role of this subgroup--primarily as a result of the need to focus TNC resources and attention on the emerging GPC–TNC Land Conservation Pilot Project (LCPP) MOU and roll out work with GPC landowners. **[UPDATE]** On May 3, Larry Saslaw informed Carole that he plans to meet with David Wolfe of EDF on May 10 for a site visit in Kern County to discuss changes to Safe Harbor Agreements needed to ease SGMA-related land use changes by farmers in need of land retirement/land fallowing alternatives.

Additional, new resources for the Science and Mapping subgroup review are now available:

- Mike Hickey, Tulare County Information and Communications Technology GIS Analyst, described a mapping project he has developed “accumulating data for Tulare Basin counties, looking at the whole Basin, with a classification system and a publicly available share file” that he would like to make available for TBWCC participant review and potential use by TBWCC colleagues and contacts. He added that “the County is willing to host data for the region.” Mike can be reached at MHickey@co.tulare.ca.us (559/622-7241). A message from Mike containing a live link to the url for this mapping project has previously been sent to Science & Mapping Subgroup participants and is included with the cover message to recipients of these meeting notes as well.
- PPIC recently released a report titled “Replenishing Groundwater in the San Joaquin Valley”. A link to this report is posted on the TBWP website.
- TNC and DWR recently released the “iGDE Database”, a statewide interactive mapping tool cataloguing groundwater dependent ecosystems for use by GSA-GSP planners. TNC conducted a webinar briefing concerning this database on May 2. Information about this database is available at www.GroundwaterResourceHub.org, on the DWR website as the “Natural Communities Viewer”, or via a live link posted on the TBWP website.

Additional discussion points of particular note under this agenda item included:

- Kelli McCune – Sustainable Conservation staff (Katie Haldeman) is working on programmatic permits to make habitat restoration under SGMA easier and cheaper, as well as on extending the use of the Groundwater Assessment Recharge Tool (GRAT) on active crop land.
- Samantha Arthur – CA Audubon is working on “broader habitat issues in each region”, with relatively more focus on existing wetland habitats, coarse and detailed water budgets for Central

Valley wetlands. CA Audubon is contracting with a Farm Bill specialist to bring in federal funds for its SGMA related habitat restoration priorities.

- Adam Livingston – a role for the TBWCC is to bring together ideas and best practices for habitat restoration in the Tulare Basin region. The SRT is willing to help as much as possible, but may have limited capacity. [Discussion followed regarding the potential need for new or existing local land trust engagement in providing expert case by case guidance and monitoring for SGMA-related habitat restoration projects.]
- Larry Saslaw – does the capacity issue depend upon what our restoration objectives are? Do we need an entire separate organization, or just the tools?
- Abigail Hart – She will have this conversation with Dan Vink soon and is inclined to let the LCPP project develop organically, knowing there is a need for expertise. “Farmers don’t want to be habitat managers.”
- Matt Hurley – “GSAs will have funding for projects but will need expertise to get the projects done. They are looking for direction from point A to Z to get projects done and are very aware of getting the bang for their buck. This is the opportunity to get those relationships going now.”
- Soapy Muholland – “There is a lot of uncertainty among landowners. SRT has a good list of projects, but it is too early to really identify/start projects. Landowners need to come together and decide what to fund.”
- Carole Combs – “As a result of the four official TBWP-CDFW/WCB Conceptual Area Protection Plans covering the Kern-Tulare hydrological basin and watershed/riparian corridors, close to anything we put forward could bring WCB grants. WCB has been interested in funding habitat restoration projects in this region for many years.”
- Larry Saslaw – “We have a habitat restoration demonstration project at our feet – the BLM Atwell Island Project.”
- Abigail Hart – TNC is putting together a menu of options on long-term management of retired lands. We need to identify what needs to be in GSPs in order to be able to do this work and maintain water rights.”
- Scott Sellers – (paraphrased) Both subgroups are doing great legwork. There is a need for a cross-cutting function to provide individual landowners with incentives and information regarding habitat restoration. (Later comment, paraphrased) An informational outreach powerpoint for GSAs could include information on what each environmental group involved is doing, as well as the menu of options.
- Carole Combs/Larry Saslaw—rather than prioritizing types of projects in information to GSAs, landowners need the greatest range of possibilities to meet their needs.
- Benjamin Bryant – this discussion is in line with work Stanford is doing with spatial prioritization to identify the need for projects, how to get landowners to start brainstorming projects, and developing GSA-specific “storefront” approaches rather than regional ones.
- Carole Combs/Benjamin Bryant – “Where do you see Stanford being able to intersect with the SGMA & Ecosystem Restoration Work Group?” (Response) “Through the group at Stanford that is engaged in understanding how enhancing nature benefits real people. Working with TNC to understand, if following happens, how to maximize broadscale benefits.”

[Carole, editorial note] Two overall objectives of the TBWCC SGMA & Ecosystem Work Group beginning with the February 26 meeting have been (1) to help bring the LCPP to fruition as a regional “learning experience” and model for other regional GSAs, and (2) to provide guidance to GSAs (and project solutions for inclusion in GSPs) regarding land use alternatives. During the interim period between the April 30 and July 18 meetings, participants in both the Science and Mapping and Policy/Permitting/Funding subgroups are advised to remain “in place” for follow up that will occur during the interim meeting period and a report and discussion regarding SGMA and Ecosystem Restoration Work Group next steps that will be included in the July 18 meeting agenda.

5. Strategic Growth Council research climate change adaptation/community impacts proposals submitted April 13, 2018. Teams from Stanford U. (represented by Benjamin Bryant) and UC (represented by Roger Bales, Martha Conklin and Mohammad Safeeq) submitted research proposals to the SGC that, if successful, could lead to specific collaboration with Tule Subbasin GSAs and Rosedale-Rio Bravo WSD by Stanford and the Kings River Basin (as well as the American River Basin) by UC. **If their proposals are successful, Stanford and UC representatives will be invited to present how their research and outreach activities will interact with the TBWCC.** In the interim, Benjamin Bryant and Roger Bales/Martha Conklin/Mohammad Safeeq are invited to participate the SGMA & Ecosystem Work Group to make climate change research information available for the benefit of downstream communities—principally underserved rural communities – that will be impacted most by climate change flood and drought extremes.

A broad-ranging discussion followed in which Roger Bales described UC Water program results under this program , which will end December 2018, as well as UC Water hopes of extending funding for another two years in a more competitive UC setting, and a major potential Sierra Nevada-wide carbon sequestration project under development.

6. Agenda suggestions for the July 18 meeting include:

- review of the TBWCC Draft Charter, Draft Strategic Plan, and 2018-2019 work plan (i.e. follow up on WaterSmart draft deliverables)
- SGMA & Ecosystem Restoration Work Group report, discussion, next steps
- Potential reports by Stanford and UC SGC proposal teams on TBWCC engagement needs
- Other items TBD by **upper and lower** watershed participants, i.e. **co-equal representation essential at this and future meetings**

The July 18 meeting will be held at the DWR-Fresno office (3374 E. Shields Ave.) from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, facilitated by Sarah Campe. The October 26 meeting will be held at the KRCD office (4886 E. Jensen, Fresno) from 1- 4 p.m., facilitated by Larry Saslaw.

Our thanks to DWR for hosting the April 30 and July 18 meetings, and to KRCD for agreeing to host the October 26 meeting and future TBWCC quarterly meetings (last Friday of first month in each quarter, 1 – 4 p.m.)