

Tulare Basin Watershed Connections Collaborative



SGMA & Ecosystem Restoration Workgroup

Meeting Agenda

Date & Time: February 26th, 2018 (1:00 – 4:00pm)

Location: Provost & Pritchard Offices, Mill Creek Conference Room, 130 N. Garden St., Visalia

Call-In Option: Dial (559) 256-4200; press 4 to join Phone Bridge number 4; enter PIN code 0612 then #

Facilitator: Scott Sellers, EDF

Objectives for the day

1. Surface the range of approaches and resources to incorporate ecosystem and community benefits into SGMA implementation at a GSA and subbasin-specific level
2. Learn from the Tule Subbasin model: Pixley GSA & The Nature Conservancy's "storefront" approach to achieve ecosystem and community objectives as part of SGMA
3. Create a plan to best communicate this information to Tulare Basin GSAs and landowners, with an ultimate objective of facilitating a one-stop shop for information

TIME	TOPIC & LEAD
1:00 – 1:20PM	Welcome & one-minute intros (Carole Combs, Scott Sellers) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name and affiliation• History of your organization's engagement and one thing that brought you here today
1:20 – 2:00PM	Round robin, 5-min presentations by groups on their work (All) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organization objectives• Organization projects and initiatives
2:00 – 2:15PM	The Nature Conservancy / Pixley GSA presentation on developing storefront approach (Dan Vink, Abby Hart)
2:15 – 2:30PM	BREAK
2:30 – 3:45PM	Discussion: How to best communicate about ecosystem and community planning approaches in the context of SGMA to TB GSAs and landowners? (All)
3:45 – 4:00PM	Next steps and close (Scott Sellers)

Tulare Basin Watershed Connections Collaborative Goal Statement: To advance collaborative watershed planning and resource management in the Tulare Basin based on sound science and mutually identified needs for regional economic and ecological sustainability.

Meeting attendees (in person or by phone, in order of opening comments, or*arrival):

Carole Combs (Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners)

Scott Sellers (Environmental Defense Fund)

Abigail Hart (The Nature Conservancy)

Rob Hansen (College of the Sequoias, TBWP)

Daniel Mountjoy (Sustainable Conservation)

Matt Hurley (Tri-County Water Authority GSA, Tule GSA Subbasin, Tulare Lake GSA Subbasin)

Paul Hendrix (Mid-Kaweah GSA, Kaweah GSA Subbasin)

Eric Osterling (North Fork Kings GSA, Kings GSA Subbasin, Tulare Lake GSA Subbasin, Kings River Conservation District)

Kayode Kadara (Allensworth, Tri-County Water Authority GSA, Deer Creek Storm Water District)

Martha Conklin (UC Merced, Sierra Nevada Research Institute, UC Water)

Jennifer Morales (CA Department of Water Resources)

Nick Stanley (Kern-Pixley National Wildlife Refuge Complex)

Adam Livingston (Sequoia Riverlands Trust)

Samantha Arthur (CA Audubon)

Bonnie Eyestone (Point Blue)

Dick Moss (Provost & Pritchard, TBWP)

Larry Saslaw (BLM-retired, TBWP)

Jeff Single (CA Department of Fish and Wildlife)

*Dan Vink (South Valley Water Association, Pixley Groundwater Planning Commission GSA, Tule GSA Subbasin -- arrived 2:00 p.m.)

General Summary: Carole Combs opened the meeting, thanking Dick Moss for providing the space and Scott Sellers for organizing the meeting – the result of his presentation to the Tulare Basin Watershed Connections Collaborative (TBWCC) on January 26, 2018 (see the TB WCC section of the TBWP website at www.tularebasinwildlifepartners.org). Scott described EDF's current work in Kern County to identify strategic habitat restoration opportunities (ideally by fall 2018), as well as to leverage work in Kern and develop tools and plans to enable landscape-scale restoration with landowners more broadly. Abigail Hart described TNC's interest in coordinating with GSAs and landowners in the Tule sub-basin to develop a "storefront approach" for landowners to learn about and find funding to support land use alternatives under SGMA. Daniel Mountjoy described Sustainable Conservation's work regarding the Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool and the broad range of related scientific, permitting, and policy issues Sustainable Conservation is examining.

Rob Hansen summarized the expected major outcome of the workgroup as advancing the over-arching goal of Tulare Basin-wide water/ecosystem resiliency through "collaborative preparation of Tulare Basin GSA Subbasin-specific guidance for habitat restoration (upland, wetland, riparian corridor and groundwater replenishment projects that can be included in GSPs) with maps defining habitat priorities and listings of associated potential funding sources."

Others followed in the order listed above in what became a major iteration of follow up needs to accomplish the major outcome statement, i.e. utilization of existing science-based research (e.g. information in the TBWP/DFW Tulare Basin Conceptual Area Protection Plan documents) and existing or new mapping, as well as policy (e.g. Farm Bill, A.B. 2087 Resource Conservation Investment Strategy)/permitting (Safe Harbor

issues)/short and long-term funding requirements that must be addressed at the highest state and federal levels by this group (and others to join) going forward.

Next steps: The Pixley Groundwater Planning Commission GSA and TNC will meet to continue planning a “storefront approach” for that GSA. TNC is interested in bringing the work of other NGOs on alternative land uses like habitat and on- and off-farm recharge into the storefront model that they are developing in parts of Tule sub-basin. Two new subgroups will form immediately under the TB WCC SGMA –Ecosystem Restoration Workgroup “umbrella” : 1) a science-mapping subgroup and 2) a policy/permitting/funding subgroup (with overlap among participants likely) to nail down these major components of the overall effort.

All three “tracks” will meet again as a “whole” in two months and proceed from there, with the objective of making information ready to assist emerging pilot programs in specific GSAs as soon as possible and to assist coordinated subbasin-wide GSA technical advisory committees as soon as possible -- by-midsummer 2018.

Tulare Basin GSAs are proceeding to compile and complete chapters of their GSPs between now and summer 2019, creating opportunities for the TBWCC SGMA & Ecosystem Workgroup to provide project information for inclusion in GSPs. This is will be the first phase of a multi-benefit, multi-year collaboration under the TBWCC “umbrella.”