

**UPPER VENTURA RIVER GROUNDWATER AGENCY
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING APRIL 22, 2021**

The Board meeting was held via teleconference, in accordance with California Executive Order N-25-20. Directors present were Bruce Kuebler, Larry Rose, Emily Ayala, Susan Rungren, Glenn Shephard, Richard Hajas, and Chair Diana Engle. Also present: Executive Director Bryan Bondy, Agency Counsel Keith Lemieux, and Administrative Assistant Maureen Tucker.

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Meeting ID: 912 8991 6195

Passcode: 899258

1) CALL TO ORDER

Chair Engle called the meeting to order at 1:01p.m.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Bryan Bondy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) ROLL CALL

Executive Director Bondy called roll.

Directors present: Bruce Kuebler, Larry Rose, Susan Rungren, Richard Hajas, Emily Ayala, Glenn Shephard, and Chair Diana Engle.

Directors absent: None

4) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Engle asked if there are any proposed changes to the agenda. No changes were proposed.

Director Kuebler moved agenda approval. Director Rungren seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: B. Kuebler – Y L. Rose – Y E. Ayala – Y D. Engle - Y
 S. Rungren – Y R. Hajas – Y G. Shephard - Y

Absent: None.

Noes: None.

5) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA**

Chair Engle asked if there were any public comments on items not appearing on the agenda.

No public comments were offered.

6) **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

None

7) **GSP ITEMS**

a. Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water Sustainable Management Criteria (Grant Category (d); Task 11: GSP Development and Preparation)

Executive Director Bondy and Rincon Consultants staff members Steve Howard and Kiernan Brtalik provided a presentation concerning sustainable management criteria (SMC) for the depletions of interconnected surface water (ISW) sustainability indicator. Executive Director Bondy began the presentation with a SMC development and schedule update. He then provided an overview of ISW in Basin and groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) as they pertain to SMC for the GSP. Rincon described the results of their work to identify and characterize aquatic GDEs in the Basin. Five aquatic GDE areas were identified for consideration in ISW SMC development, including two critical riffles and three habitat areas. Executive Director Bondy presented estimates of ISW depletion calculated from the GSP numerical model. Rincon described potential effects of ISW depletion on the five aquatic GDE areas. Two of the three areas have potential effects that are recommended for further consideration including the “Confluence Habitat Area” and the “Foster Park Habitat Area.” The remaining three aquatic GDE areas have very small amounts of predicted depletion and were screened out. Executive Director Bondy presented proposed approaches for developing the ISW depletion SMC. A study is recommended for the “Confluence Habitat Area” because data are not available to determine what the depletion effects are and whether those effects are significant and unreasonable. If the study suggests that significant and unreasonable effects are caused by ISW depletion, the GSP would be updated to include SMC for the “Confluence Area” as part of the first or second 5-year GSP update. SMC for the “Foster Park Habitat Area” would be developed based on the City of Ventura’s 2013 study that indicated significant habitat degradation occurs when Ventura River flows decline below 2 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the USGS gage. The presentation slides are posted on the UVRGA website: https://uvrgroundwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/04-22-21-Item7a-SMC-Presentation_low_res.pdf

Executive Director Bondy and Rincon Consultants staff answered miscellaneous questions during and following the presentation:

Director Kuebler asked about aquifer connectivity during dry periods. Executive Director Bondy explained that, when the water table is very low, the aquifer has limited hydraulic connectivity with the Casitas Springs area. Pumping in upstream areas would not have much effect on downstream areas during these periods, but upstream pumping that occurred prior to the low water table condition removed water from storage that would have otherwise become surface water flow in Casitas Springs. Executive Director Bondy said the impact of upstream pumping on downstream areas is delayed.

Director Ayala asked about plant GDEs. Rincon staff explained that riparian GDEs were discussed during the prior Board meeting.

Chair Engle asked if the no pumping model simulation has pumping turned off everywhere in the Basin. Executive Director Bondy confirmed that is correct.

Director Kuebler asked what happens when the water table becomes disconnected from the river. How can there be depletion in those times if groundwater and surface water are no longer interconnected. Executive Director Bondy explained that there are times that prior pumping has removed water from groundwater storage that cause the water table to disconnect from the river. Disconnecting the water table from the river is considered depletion.

Kelly Dyer, Casitas MWD, asked what the 50-year modeling period was. Executive Director Bondy explained that the model simulated a 50-year future period using actual hydrologic inputs from the 1970-2019 period.

Kevin DeLano, State Water Resources Control Board, asked how groundwater pumping volumes were determined for the model. Executive Director Bondy provided a brief summary and cited a December 2020 Board meeting staff report for further details.

Director Hajas asked how the San Antonio Creek Watershed was simulated. Executive Director Bondy explained that inflows to the Basin were estimated using the stream gage located at the bottom of the San Antonio drainage, which is located near the Basin boundary. Director Hajas asked how the effects of water use in the San Antonio Creek Watershed were addressed in the model. Executive Director Bondy explained that the model assumes no change because the San Antonio Creek area is not part of a groundwater basin that is managed.

Chair Engle asked if “significant” is primarily a technical term and if “unreasonable” is a policy term. Executive Director Bondy said that both terms are policy. The term “significant” involves judgment because there is no scientific definition of significance for the sustainability indicators. Chair Engle expressed concerns about using those terms in the slides. Executive Director Bondy said the Board will ultimately adopt definitions of significance and unreasonableness when it adopts the GSP. He said the presentations are proposals, not conclusions. He said that a disclaimer could be added to future slides to address Chair Engle’s concern.

Chair Engle asked what the next steps look like. Executive Director Bondy explained that staff proposes to present the information at the April 29 workshop and then work with the Board to finalize SMC for the draft GSP in May.

Director Kuebler asked why the ISW SMC would be specific to certain areas, but the water quality SMC applied across the entire basin. Executive Director Bondy explained the undesirable results are defined as either occurring throughout the Basin or that are caused by conditions throughout the Basin. The water quality SMC are based on avoiding degradation of water quality throughout the Basin. The IWS SMC would apply in limited areas but are related to pumping throughout the Basin.

Director Kuebler said the approach is reasonable and he would like to proceed with presenting at the workshop.

Director Rungren said she appreciates the work and needs some time to review it. She asked what the next steps are. Executive Director Bondy said the next step is to present at the workshop.

Director Hajas said he has no problem with what was presented.

Director Shephard supported going forward with what was presented recognizing that there is the right to comment with more detail as we proceed and are further informed by stakeholder input.

Director Engle said the Board needs to provide staff direction, and she is unsure if Director Rungren is comfortable. Director Rungren said the information is factual in nature and it should be fine to move forward with workshop, but the City may have comments later.

Executive Director Bondy asked if the Board is comfortable with narrowing the discussion of potential SMCs to the two aquatic GDE habit areas, as recommended. The Board concurred.

Director Kuebler clarified that the workshop will present the Agency's experts' ideas, which are not yet approved by the Board. Board approval should not happen until after receiving stakeholder input from the workshop.

Executive Director Bondy agreed and said that it will be made clear during the workshop that the SMC proposals are from the technical team, not the Board.

No public comments.

Note, Director Ayala departed the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

8) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None were identified.

9) ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.