



Solano Subbasin GSA Collaborative Meeting Summary

June 19, 2025 | 1:00 - 2:10 p.m. | Via Zoom

Participants

x	Solano Subbasin GSA Chris Lee		Solano Irrigation District GSA Cary Keaten	x	Sacramento County GSA Chris Hunley
x	Maritza Flores		Paul Fuchslin		Austin Miller
x	Alex Rabidoux	x	Kyle Esquer		Kerry Schmitz
	Northern Delta GSA Erik Ringelberg	x	City of Vacaville GSA Justen Cole		
	Chris Thomas		Tim Hawkins		
x	Solano Subbasin GSA TAC Kelly Huff	x	Luhdorff & Scalmanini Engineering Vicki Kretsinger Grabert	x	Ag Innovations Jenn Fox
	Chris Rose	x	Nick Watterson	x	Guadalupe Garcia
	Ed King	x	Faithe Lovelace		Jessie Holtz
x	Lisa Shipley				
x	Misty Kaltreider				
	"Dick" Chun Tzou				
x	Miranda Jachens				

AGENDA

1. GSA Updates
2. GSP Implementation
 - a. Projects and Management Actions
 - b. Updates on Well Permitting, State Activities, & Funding
 - c. Groundwater Recharge Presentation & Discussion
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. Forecast next Collaborative meeting (August 21) topics

MEETING NOTES

Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) Updates

- Solano Subbasin GSA: GSA Board approved the proposed budget for implementation actions associated with the Department of Water Resources grant.



- Sacramento County GSA: Work is continuing on the consolidation of GSA, outreach, mailers, workshops, and an upcoming July 22 hearing.
- City of Vacaville GSA: Designing three new municipal water wells, have completed one monitoring well, and are working on another shortly.
- Solano Irrigation District: No updates at this time.
- Northern Delta GSA: Not present.

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation

Projects and Management Actions

Luhdorff & Scalmanini Engineering (LSCE) provided updates on progress related to the implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Efforts include ongoing model refinements, enhancing monitoring activities, and addressing data gaps in the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) section of the GSP. The team is also advancing efforts to complete the well and surface water diversion inventories, with support from partners such as Solano County, Dixon RCD, and Solano RCD.

LSCE has been integrating the survey efforts into the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP), thanks to collaboration with the Dixon RCD team. Their support has enabled the inclusion of targeted survey questions to better understand groundwater and surface water use, as well as the location and status of both domestic and agricultural wells. This has significantly improved response rates and data quality compared to stand-alone surveys. A revised version of the survey is set to be distributed this year, with data expected in the spring.

LSCE also shared about well inventory and sampling work funded by the DWR grant. The team is currently finalizing a targeted list of approximately 25 wells for sampling, selected based on factors such as domestic well density and water quality concerns. Sampling is expected to begin in the summer, depending on landowner participation.

Innovative concepts are being developed through biweekly coordination meetings on Projects and Management Actions (PMAs). Ideas include repurposing and reimagining of tailwater systems to capture and infiltrate stormwater, as well as opportunities to recharge surplus surface water through various means, such as existing infrastructure, ephemeral channels, or distribution systems. LSCE is beginning initial engineering conceptual designs, and several landowners have shown interest in partnering on pilot projects.

There was broad agreement on the value of inter-program collaboration, particularly between the GSP and the ILRP. GSA Collaborative meeting attendees noted that such integration not only improves efficiency but also reduces costs and duplicative efforts. Other subbasins have expressed interest in replicating this coordination, encouraged by the success seen in the Solano Subbasin.

Additional examples of inter-program coordination were discussed, including the Nitrate Control Program. The Regional Water Board has emphasized the importance of aligning ILRP activities with management zone efforts. Coordination among ten agricultural coalitions in the San Joaquin Valley was also noted, aimed at reducing reporting burdens and improving efficiency



across programs. Additionally, a Central Valley-wide surveillance and monitoring program is being developed to consolidate reporting from ILRP efforts into a single, comprehensive format, enhancing data utility beyond basic compliance.

Updates on Well Permitting, Funding, State Activities, and Funding

The state budget includes updated projections of a multi-billion-dollar shortfall over the next three years. Funding allocations, including Proposition 4 implementation, have been deferred. A trailer bill is expected later this summer to address some funding items. There was a brief mention of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes initiative. A proposed trailer bill to streamline permitting for the Delta Conveyance Project was rejected. A trailer bill seeking to exempt amendments to the Bay-Delta Plan from CEQA was also rejected but may be revised and reintroduced later.

A number of proposed bills were mentioned:

- AB 93 (Papan): related to environmental impacts of data centers, particularly their water and energy use.
- AB 259 (Rubio): would extend teleconferencing flexibility for board meetings through 2030.
- AB 293 (Bennett): on transparency for groundwater sustainability agencies, requiring publicly available information such as board details and Form 700s.
- AB 362 (Ramos): related to water policy and Tribal communities. The bill did not meet the legislative deadline but may return as a two-year bill.
- AB 709 (Gonzalez): involves submissions for multiple GSAs and GSPs within a single subbasin.
- AB 78 (Chen): would require local agencies to post detailed construction project information online, including invoices and subcontractor data.
- AB 810 (Irwin): proposed expanded online posting requirements for local agencies, including staff email addresses. This bill failed the deadline and may be reintroduced.
- AB 1146 (Papan): introduced in response to concerns about water management during wildfires. The bill addresses emergency water releases.
- SB 72 (Caballero): pertains to the California Water Plan, requiring it to include specific cost and impact assessments for DWR projects.
- SB 89 (Weber Pierson): Would prohibit the sale of glyphosate unless applied by licensed personnel. Agencies should ensure that staff are certified if using this herbicide.
- Another proposed bill related to licensing requirements for drone operators..

Groundwater Recharge Opportunities presentation and discussion

The group talked about Water Code Section 1242.1, which originated after the 2023 floods and allows for the diversion of floodwaters for groundwater recharge without a water right or permit under emergency conditions. The code requires that floodwaters be diverted only when there is imminent risk of flooding, as determined by triggers such as emergency proclamations from reclamation districts or flood stage thresholds. Additionally, diversions must use existing infrastructure (e.g., pipes, pumps) and cannot impact other water rights, cause water quality issues, or flood areas that would result in further damage. Water can only be applied to actively



cultivated fields, and diverters must submit notice to both the State Board and their local GSA within 48 hours. The group listened to more about an application in the Cosumnes Subbasin and discussed how floodwater was used for groundwater recharge.

Sacramento County initially began exploring how to meet the planning requirements in late 2023 but paused the effort due to concerns about the time needed to get a plan formally adopted. However, a January 2024 executive order from the Governor waived the planning requirement temporarily, allowing the County to proceed with a test implementation during the 2024 water year. In coordination with the Office of Emergency Services and the county council, Reclamation District 800 and the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (CSD), the County utilized emergency proclamations to trigger a diversion of floodwaters from the Cosumnes River.

The Rancho Murieta CSD used an existing ditch system and worked with a willing landowner to apply water to nearby fields during two separate storm events—once in February and again in March—moving approximately 110 acre-feet of floodwater each time. These diversions occurred over short 24-hour periods and served primarily as a test of the operational and reporting framework under Section 1242.1. The fields were selected based on accessibility through existing infrastructure and their status as actively cultivated land. Despite limited recharge benefits, the effort successfully demonstrated that emergency floodwater diversions could be conducted legally and safely with minimal administrative delay.

To enable this, a simple flood stage trigger was established using the National Weather Service's established action stage. When the threshold was reached, the County—under its emergency proclamation—designated the area downstream of Dillard Road for imminent flood risk. This designation allowed for diversion activities upstream to proceed. The County coordinated closely with Reclamation District 800, which played a key role in assessing flood risk and informing when flood conditions were present.

Rancho Murieta CSD submitted all required notifications and post-diversion reports to both the State Water Resources Control Board and the local GSA. The reporting process, intended to be streamlined for emergency scenarios, required only basic information and estimated diversion volumes, not precise measurements. Additionally, Sacramento County posted public-facing notices to clarify the emergency nature of the diversion, the low-level public safety concern, and to provide transparency about where and how the water was being redirected.

The pilot highlighted the importance of pre-established relationships among local agencies, reclamation districts, and landowners, as well as the need for clear legal and procedural frameworks. With this test run completed, Sacramento County is now working with engineers to develop more refined, forecast-based triggers and to identify additional diversion and recharge locations for future events. The goal is to formalize these efforts in a flood diversion plan that will satisfy state requirements and be integrated as an annex to the County's broader Emergency Operations Plan. The County also recognizes the need for improved hydrologic monitoring along the Cosumnes River and its tributaries to better predict flood conditions and support timely diversions.



Sacramento County GSA emphasized the importance of advocating for an extension of Water Code Section 1242.1 beyond its current 2029 sunset. Given the time it takes to plan, coordinate, and build capacity for effective floodwater recharge—especially in years without flooding—longer-term authorization is needed to fully utilize this tool.

The State has been highly supportive, eager to see these efforts succeed, and open to feedback. Sacramento County was the second to utilize 1242.1 under the Executive Order.

Ag Innovations shared a link to DWR's Flood Diversion and Recharge Enhancement initiative: https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Files/SGMO-Program-Brochure_Final3_Revised.pdf. GSA Collaborative Members were encouraged to sign up for the state's interest list, noting that while future funding is uncertain, early engagement could improve future access. The group talked about the relevance of initiative in the Solano Subbasin.

Discussion

Q: What are the groundwater conditions like at Rancho Murieta? Why aren't they using groundwater more?

A: Rancho Murieta is located on the eastern edge of Sacramento County, near the foothills. The community relies mostly on surface water from the Cosumnes River and a few upstream reservoirs. While this supply has been sufficient so far, concerns related to future growth and underperforming reservoirs have created interest in diversifying sources. Their current water master plan considers groundwater wells for emergency use only.

Q: What helped the recharge effort come together so quickly?

A: A combination of long-standing conversations, a willing landowner, board member, and strong local collaboration. One of the developers who owns the farmland used for recharge is deeply invested in the community and was motivated by both flood mitigation and water supply benefits. The effort seemed quick, but it was backed by months of informal coordination and legal prep work.

Q: Is there a resource that outlines the requirements for recharge plans under the Executive Order?

A: DWR has a technical guidance document ([linked here](#)) that outlines the basics, although it's not exhaustive, particularly around setting diversion triggers. The state has been supportive and flexible, often encouraging agencies to justify their approach and provide sound reasoning. Direct engagement with DWR staff has been key for Rancho Murieta.

Q: How are you determining diversion triggers? Are they based on tributary flows or the main stem?

A: In some cases, tributary-specific triggers are being developed; in others, main stem triggers might suffice with proper justification. The key is explaining clearly why a given trigger provides confidence that diversions are safe and appropriate.



Q: Are you doing modeling to support this work?

A: Yes. Their consultants (including CBEC Eco Engineering) are using weather forecasts, delta flows, tributary conditions, and other data to model potential flood events. Funding will support new stream gauges, which will help define triggers more precisely. A dashboard tool is in development to provide real-time guidance on when to initiate diversions.

Q: Were there any measurable groundwater responses from the recharge activity?

A: The volume recharged (~200 acre-feet total) over a short period isn't enough to create detectable changes, especially in an area with low recharge potential. However, they still view the effort as worthwhile and plan to continue applying water in future events.

Q: What's your broader takeaway or advice to others?

A: Don't wait until a flood is imminent—start building partnerships, identifying sites, and laying groundwork early. The flexibility in 1242.1 makes proactive planning worthwhile. The state is eager to support local efforts and receptive to feedback, so get connected and stay engaged.

Stakeholder Engagement

Ag Innovations provided a report of the Solano Subbasin Virtual Town Hall. The virtual meeting on May 19 was well received, with over 60 registrants and 45 participants. Presenters, including Solano and Dixon RCD, LSCE, and the Solano Subbasin GSA, were thanked. Survey results were positive, and a Spanish survey was received (showing the value of the Spanish simulcast). The recording and materials (in English and Spanish) are available at www.solanogsp.com/outreach/events-archive/. GSA staff were encouraged to share them with their Board and constituents.

Forecast Upcoming Meeting Discussions

The next meeting will be the third Thursday in August. A specific topic suggested for the August meeting was groundwater-dependent ecosystems, building on current implementation work. The group was asked to suggest additional topics for the GSA Collaborative meetings and/or share meeting feedback with Ag Innovations. A couple of members shared that they will be out of town on August 21.

As meetings transition to quarterly, there will be no meeting in July. Collaborative members were encouraged to look for calendar invites for the August, November, and January meetings (the meeting frequency is roughly quarterly).