Solano Subbasin GSA Collaborative Meeting

November 20, 2025 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. | Via Zoom

Participants

	Solano Subbasin GSA		**Solano Irrigation District GSA**		**Sacramento County GSA**
	Chris Lee	x	Cary Keaten		Chris Hunley
x	Deborah Barr		Paul Fuchslin	x	Austin Miller
x	Alex Rabidoux	x	Kyle Esquer		Kerry Schmitz
x	Gavin Poore				
	Northern Delta GSA		**City of Vacaville GSA**		
x	Erik Ringelberg		Justen Cole		
	Chris Thomas	x	Tim Hawkins		
	Solano Subbasin GSA TAC		**Luhdorff & Scalmanini Engineering**		**Ag Innovations**
x	Kelly Huff		Vicki Kretsinger Grabert	x	Jenn Fox
	Chris Rose	x	Nick Watterson	x	Guadalupe Garcia
x	Ed King	x	Faithe Lovelace		
x	Miranda Jachens	x			
x	Misty Kaltreider				
x	“Dick” Chun Tzou				
Guest: Trevor Joseph, Regional Water Authority (RWA) and Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA)					

AGENDA

1. Sacramento Regional Water Bank - presentation and discussion
2. GSA Updates
3. GSP Implementation
    a. Projects and Management Actions
    b. Updates on Well Permitting, State Activities, and Funding
4. Stakeholder Engagement
5. Forecast next Collaborative meeting (February 19) topics

MEETING SUMMARY

Sacramento Regional Water Bank - presentation and discussion

The Technical Services Manager of the Sacramento Groundwater Authority provided an overview of the Sacramento Regional Water Bank, an expanding conjunctive-use program. The presentation covered the Water Bank's background, project status, and water-accounting framework.

Background

The Sacramento region has long relied on a three-reservoir system: snowpack, surface water, and groundwater. With climate change reducing snowpack reliability and increasing hydrologic volatility, groundwater storage and recovery must play a larger role going forward. The region's geology and history of conjunctive use made it well-positioned to formalize a groundwater bank.

Project Update and Status

The Water Bank initiative is advancing through multiple coordinated workstreams.

- Completed: Governance framework, goals and principles, early modeling updates, Water Accounting System concept, and CEQA/NEPA project description.
- Active: Stakeholder engagement, baseline and scenario modeling, CEQA analysis, and development of monitoring and mitigation plans.
- Upcoming: Implementation of the accounting system, enhanced temperature modeling, NEPA documentation, and finalization of federal agreements.

The program is also investing in public communication through videos explaining climate impacts, groundwater storage concepts, and how the Water Bank operates.

Outcomes and Federal Acknowledgment

Notably, the Bureau of Reclamation has formally acknowledged the Water Bank, allowing Central Valley Project contractors to participate in banking and recovery activities outside their usual service areas

Water Accounting System

The accounting system is designed to provide a transparent and consistent method for tracking recharge, recovery, losses, and sustainability metrics, as well as administrative procedures for participating agencies. Hypothetical examples for different water-supply portfolios were shared. Upcoming work includes developing the accounting tool, advancing temperature modeling, completing CEQA/NEPA, securing federal agreements, and expanding monitoring and mitigation plans.

Discussion

Questions focused first on the mix of urban and agricultural water use in the North American Subbasin. The response clarified that most ag areas still rely heavily on groundwater, while the major urban areas have more surface-water access. Because of that, current Water Bank activity is centered in urban agencies with the infrastructure and funding to participate. Agricultural involvement is expected to grow in later phases, and early conversations are happening now.

Several questions addressed how agencies with different water portfolios have managed to work together. The answer emphasized that cooperation developed over many years of relationships, negotiated agreements, and experience with groundwater-substitution transfers. Cost-sharing isn't centralized; agencies negotiate financial arrangements directly, while RWA provides technical coordination.

Questions about the accounting system focused on baselines, aquifers, and participation. Baselines for in-lieu recharge are aligned with GSP allocations to avoid crediting native groundwater. Even though the basin has multiple aquifer units, the Water Bank accounts for it as one system, with safeguards to address any local declines. As in-lieu opportunities level off, more agencies may need direct recharge or ASR to take part.

There was also interest in how the Harvest Water project fits into the picture. The response noted that it operates independently but affects the basin water balance, so it will be tracked through the regional accounting system. Looking ahead, the hope is for full federal acknowledgment, broader participation across the region - including agriculture - and continued alignment with GSAs as the Water Bank expands.

Groundwater Sustainability Agency Updates

Northern Delta GSA

- The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is offering domestic wells for problem areas.
- Commented on the RWA presentation - groundwater accounting is essential to program success.

Sacramento County GSA

- The reclamation district withdrawal process and notification period is complete; the cleanup and consolidation of GSA notices are still underway.
- Recently implemented a groundwater fee, which generated only one inquiry, with minimal public concern.
- Regarding the earlier presentation, "previously banked water" is a key topic for Sacramento water agencies. Offered to connect Solano Collaborative members with County staff who are actively engaged on this issue.

Solano Irrigation District

- Is interested in the applicability of the RWA presentation for agricultural areas.

City of Vacaville GSA

- Vacaville has recently completed three new monitoring wells and will begin drilling three high-production wells next month.
- Described chromium-6 compliance efforts
- The city is interested in Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) concepts but faces funding constraints.
- Has met with consultants about water recycling projects

Solano Subbasin GSA

- The GSA Board is scheduled to meet in January.

- Noted the ambition of the Sacramento Area Sewer District Harvest Water Program.
- Small pilot groundwater recharge projects are being coordinated with private entities and supported by staff. Promising early results, with noticeable infiltration observed during recent surveys. A new monitoring well is planned, with installation expected in mid-January.

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation

Projects and Management Actions

LSCE Consulting Engineers presented an update on GSP implementation activities.

Pilot Recharge Sites

The objective for pilot recharge efforts is to evaluate the feasibility of utilizing existing agricultural drainage infrastructure and natural landscape features to capture and recharge stormwater. It includes Extensive coordination among Solano Subbasin GSA/SCWA, Dixon RCD, Solano RCD, LSCE, RD2068, and local landowners. They are targeting opportunities achievable within the grant timeline. Locations and concepts of interest include: limited construction needed and interested landowners. Three sites are currently in stages of planning and implementation. LSCE describes three pilot recharge sites

Pedrick Road Tailwater Basin

- Reconfiguring a tailwater return basin to capture drainage from the west.
- Water will be retained for infiltration before excess flows continue downstream.
- Includes installing a culvert and diversion feature along the adjacent ditch.
- Site historically pumped tailwater back for reuse; now tested for recharge potential.

Olmo Lane Perch Pond (Kidwell Interchange on I-80)

- Using a former fish pond with high infiltration rates, connected via culverts to a local ditch.
- Failed originally due to excessive seepage, suggesting strong recharge potential.
- Exploring ways to increase water delivery to the pond for intentional infiltration.

Wolfskill Road Drainage Swale (Near Hwy 505)

- Natural drainage feature where tree removal has opened infiltration space.
- Currently used for passive monitoring to estimate infiltration under natural conditions.
- Future concept: divert excess water from the canal during spill conditions to recharge the swale.
- Additional nearby analog site ("dry arroyo") may serve as a similar recharge opportunity, especially when reservoir spills continue after rainfall, but flood risk is low.

Groundwater Monitoring

Groundwater monitoring network efforts continue, including seasonal GSP monitoring, sampling for 25 domestic wells to characterize water quality, and potentially expanding the monitoring network. Installation of a new monitoring well at CUDA Creek and Pedrick Road will support restoration planning and fill a significant data gap in interconnected surface water monitoring.

Annual Report Preparation
LSCE described the work on the Annual Report and shared a schedule. Data request will be sent out in early December. Requested data due back early January. The Annual Report will be sent to the Collaborative for review in early March. The Annual Report will be submitted to the Department of Water Resources by April 1. Agencies will submit data in the same reporting format as previous years. Partial data submissions are encouraged when some elements are pending

Periodic Evaluation Planning
Initial efforts on the "Five-Year Update", now called "Periodic Evaluation", are underway. The Evaluation will verify alignment of basin conditions, monitoring network, and plan objectives, but a full plan amendment is not expected. The Evaluation will be supported by updated modeling and technical refinements, review of minor corrective actions identified in the initial plan, and reassessment of the water quality monitoring strategy, which may need adjustments. It will include coordination with and reference to annual reports and is due January 2027.

The group discussed that the Periodic Evaluation will address GSP recommended corrective actions, and a GSP Amendment will not be needed. That sentiment was endorsed by Collaborative members present.

Updates on Well Permitting, Funding, State Activities, and Funding
The DWR grant extension has been approved, and the team has finalized an updated task list outlining work through 2027. Once the amendment confirmation is received, likely at the February Collaborative meeting, the revised task list will be presented. The list builds on prior collaborative planning and will guide implementation efforts under the extended grant.

One participant mentioned an upcoming One Water presentation to the Solano County Board, providing updates on water reuse and efficiency. A question was asked about the California Forever development proposal.

Stakeholder Engagement
Dixon and Solano Resource Conservation District is hosting an irrigation forum on January 27, 2026, focused on supporting irrigated lands. More details will be posted on the Dixon RCD website. As always, please contact Ag Innovations if you have suggestions for stakeholder engagement.

Next Meeting
The group discussed topics to be considered for the February 19 GSA Collaborative Meeting, including: Annual Report, possible GSA Workshop to engage newer members and review the Annual Report, possible Virtual Town Hall, and updates on the DWR Prop 68 grant.