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Groundwater Management Experts

Water Resources Assessment

Water Balance and Safe Yield

Groundwater Modeling

Groundwater Resource Development

Contaminant Hydrogeology

Source Water Assessment and Protection

Water Re-use and Conjunctive Use

Aquifer Storage and Recovery

Drinking Water Treatment

GIS and Geomatics

Litigation Support/Expert Witness

Forensic Engineering

Risk Assessment

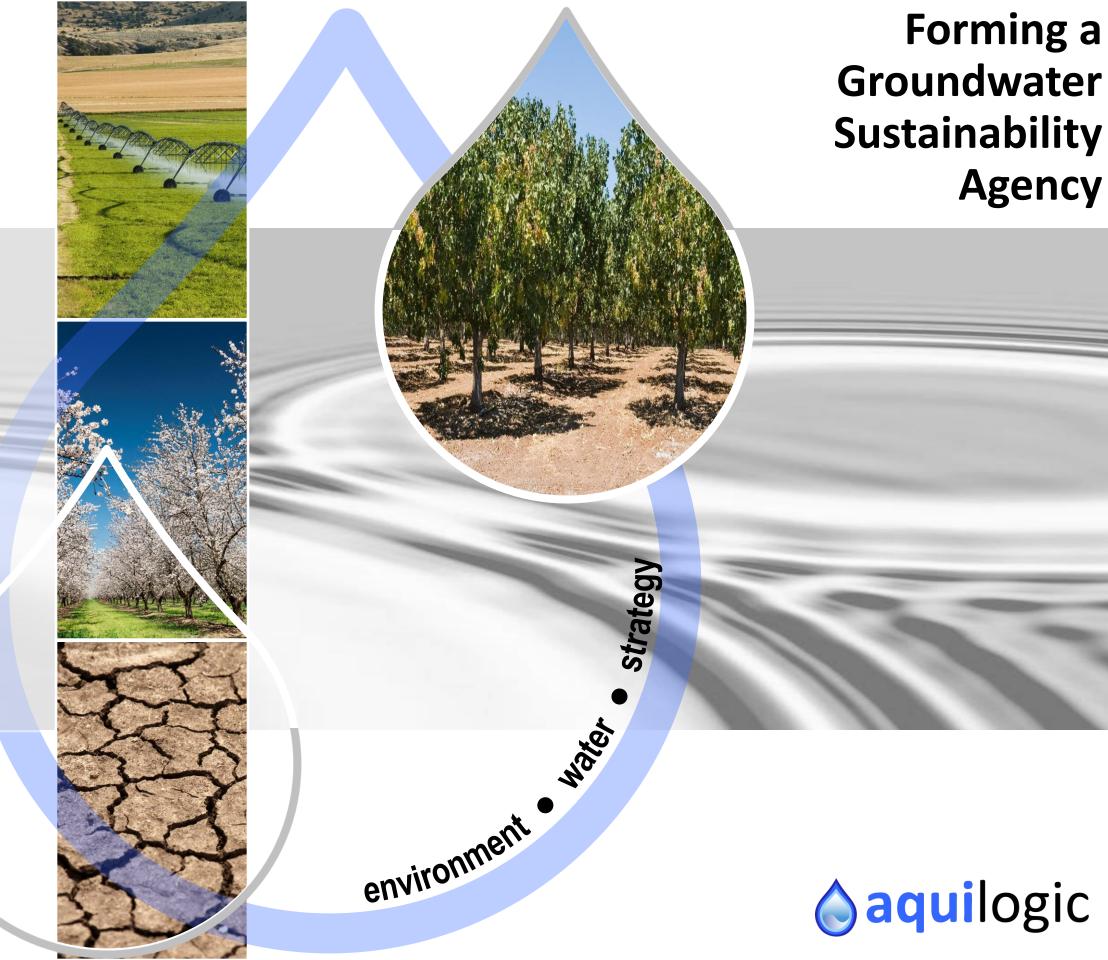
Stakeholder/Public Participation

Regulatory Strategy



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GSA Development

In 2014, California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The SGMA allows local agencies to establish a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) (Water Code 10723), or participate in a GSA with a group of other public agencies. Once formed, the GSA must then develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) (Water Code 10727). There are three key elements to developing a GSA and GSP: (1) Legal, (2) Technical, and (3) Public Outreach. This document discusses the public outreach components.

Public Outreach

In electing to form a GSA, the positions of all parties with an interest in the groundwater basin must be considered. To accomplish this, the public agency (or group) looking to form a GSA must maintain a list of such parties (Water Code 10723.4), and must provide the list and an explanation of how their interests will be considered in the development and operation of the GSA and the development and implementation of the GSP (Water Code 10723.8.(a)(4)). In addition, prior to initiating the development of a GSP, the GSA must provide a written statement describing the manner in which interested parties may participate. Further, the GSA must encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population (Water Code 10727.8.(a)).

Clearly, the language in the SGMA anticipates extensive engagement with a diverse stakeholder group with a diversity of strong positions about all water issues. Therefore, the ultimate goals of the GSA are: (1) to achieve effective, sustainable, local management of groundwater resources; (2) comply with the SGMA and associated regulations; and (3) do so in a manner that meets the water needs of all stakeholders in the basin. The first goal is aspirational, and the second goal is prescriptive, but the third goal is the real challenge!

One word defines our approach to assisting in the formation of a GSA – collaboration! The groundwater resource challenges facing any groundwater basin cannot be solved by one party. These challenges must be solved collectively by all stakeholders. These stakeholders will likely include, but may not be limited to, GSA member agencies, other Federal, State, and local agencies, elected officials, all parties using groundwater (pumpers – public and private), surface water users, all water right holders, individual cities and smaller communities (especially disadvantaged communities), Native American Tribes, agricultural interests, business interests, large land owners, environmental groups, the media, and the public, in general.

Aquilogic understands that the GSA member agencies have considerable institutional, legal, technical, political, and public relations expertise, and extensive local knowledge. Our ability to leverage this existing expertise and knowledge will be one of the key factors in developing a successful GSA, and the subsequent successful development and implementation of a GSP.

Collaboration can follow a six step process:

- 1. Identify and engage the stakeholders (frequently, clearly, honestly)
- Assess and understand the stakeholders (their history, constituency, perspectives, opinions, and issues)
- **3. Inform** the stakeholders (to create a common understanding)
- **Involve** the stakeholders (in the process to get "buy-in")
- 5. Collaborate with the stakeholders (to develop a common set of goals, constraints, issues, and solutions)
- 6. Empower the stakeholders (to "own" the process and get involved in decision-making)

Aquilogic works with the GSA member agencies to develop an assessment questionnaire to be sent to all interested parties. The questionnaire is completed on-line with direct entry into fields developed within the stakeholder database. The responses to the questionnaire are used to analyze the stakeholder population, their areas of interest, concerns, and their desired degree of involvement. It is also be used to stratify the stakeholders into groups by area of interest, concerns, or other factors. Thus the database is a powerful tool for effective stakeholder engagement. Subsequent questionnaires can be disseminated at key points within the process (e.g. governance structure development, GSP preparation). To facilitate the development of the GSA, stakeholder meetings are convened to disseminate information and solicit stakeholder input. Certain stakeholders will require more focused engagement, notably disadvantaged communities, involved public agencies, and elected officials.

iap2 Spectrum of Public Participation

















Public participation goal

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and

considered

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public

Promise to the public

We will keep you informed

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input

influenced the

Workshops

decision

for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporating your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent

We will look to you

We will implement what you decide

Example techniques

- · Facts sheets
- Websites
- Open houses
- Focus groups
- Surveys Public meetings

Public comment

- Deliberative polling
- Citizen advisory committees
- · Consensusbuilding

possible

- Participatory decision-making
- Citizen juries Ballots
- Delegated
- decision

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