Arroyo Grande Subbasin GSP
Stakeholder Workshop #1 Summary: Basin Setting and Visioning
Held December 15, 2020
Recap:
Workshop Goals

- Share project overview, timeline and alignment with other projects
- Share key requirements of SGMA
- Share basin setting overview
- Document stakeholder’s shared vision of what a “sustainable Arroyo Grande subbasin” means
Who Attended the Workshop
Workshop attendees helped populate a virtual white board to answer the question “What is our shared vision of what a ‘sustainable Arroyo Grande Subbasin means?” Stakeholders shared their ideas, values, perceptions, and desired outcomes across the following categories:

1. **AVAILABLE GROUNDWATER SUPPLY.** What needs/uses does our groundwater supply always need to be able to serve?

2. **AVAILABLE GROUNDWATER STORAGE.** What needs/uses does our stored groundwater need to serve and/or prepare us for?

3. **ECOSYSTEM HEALTH.** If we achieve a “sustainable Basin” how does it look to groundwater-dependent ecosystems?

4. **GROUNDWATER QUALITY.** What is the quality of groundwater we aim to sustain?

5. **COST TO USERS.** How do we ensure that the cost of securing a ‘sustainable Basin’ is fair and feasible?

The following is a report out of this workshop exercise.
BASIN VISIONING EXERCISE

What does a "Sustainable Arroyo Grande Subbasin" mean to you?

SCREENSHOT OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT DURING THE WORKSHOP

Future State of the Subbasin

- Groundwater dependent ecosystems
  - Current and future Agriculture needs.
  - City of Arroyo Grande future groundwater needs as noted in Master Plan
  - Domestic users

Available Supply

- What needs/uses does our groundwater supply need to always be able to serve?
- May be some increases in total dissolved solids (TDS) downstream, but overall quality is fairly good
- There was a viable Steelhead population in Arroyo Creek; surface water are an important depository for these species

Groundwater Quality

- What is the quality of groundwater we aim to sustain?
- Historically, quality has been sufficient to drink from wells and for crop irrigation
- Let's avoid creating unnecessary management cost
- We can explore this further as we get more clear on the projects needed

Cost to Users

- How do we ensure that the cost of securing a "sustainable subbasin" is fair and feasible?
- Currently, pumpers pay their "fair share" to the utility companies; let's keep it that way (no additional costs to pump)

Available Storage

- What needs/uses must our stored groundwater serve or prepare us for?
- Prepare for drought

Ecosystem Health

- If we achieve a "sustainable subbasin" how does it look to groundwater dependent ecosystems?
- Preservation of groundwater quality

Current State of the Subbasin

- Downstream flow directly impacts aquatic and listed species
- From wildlife / habitat standpoint, water quality is important

The driver for this project is developing a model to support the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

Support biodiversity, public trust resources (species) that depend on the groundwater

There was a viable Steelhead population in Arroyo Creek; surface water are an important depository for these species

Adequate storage to get through dry periods and drought

Prepare for drought

The deeper the water, the higher the cost to pump (well efficiency drops); available storage supports cost-effective pumping especially for farmers
We incorporated the input provided by stakeholders into the draft **5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES INFORMING THE ARROYO GRANDE SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (GSP),** described on the pages that follow.

A synthesis of all ideas and suggestions shared by the workshop attendees are listed beneath one or more of these principles.

These **GUIDING PRINCIPLES** will be used by the Groundwater Sustainability Agency to inform the development of the Basin sustainability goals; and the projects and management actions.
Guiding Principles Informing the Arroyo Grande Subbasin GSP

1. Available groundwater supply reliably supports current and evolving water needs.

2. Stored groundwater supports cost-effective pumping and drought preparedness.

3. Groundwater levels and quality support other regional initiatives including the Habitat Conservation Plan.

4. Groundwater quality safely and reliably supports human, agriculture, ecosystem, and wildlife needs.

5. Cost of maintaining a sustainable basin is cost-effective and fair for all users.
1. Available groundwater supply reliably supports current and evolving water needs.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- Downstream flow directly impacts aquatic and listed species
- Current and future agriculture needs
- Household/residential use
- City of Arroyo Grande future Groundwater needs as noted in Master Plan
- From wildlife / habitat standpoint, water quality is important
- Future residential development
- Understand stored and available groundwater supply in the context of conjunctive use management and the interconnections between surface water and groundwater supplies.
- COMMENT: Both groups have room to increase efficiency in the future.
2. Stored groundwater supports **cost-effective** pumping and drought preparedness.

**SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

- The deeper the water, the higher the cost to pump (well efficiency drops); available storage supports cost-effective pumping, especially for farmers.
- Adequate storage to get through dry periods and drought.
- Prepare for drought.
- Provide what the current sustainable yield is in acre feet/year based on current pumping and downstream releases. With this we can determine storage for droughts and impacts when agricultural land is converted to commercial/residential in the coming years.
- Understand stored and available groundwater supply in the context of conjunctive use management and the interconnections between surface water and groundwater supplies.
3. Groundwater levels and quality support other regional initiatives, including the Habitat Conservation Plan.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT

• The driver for this project is developing a model to support the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
• Preservation of groundwater quality
• Support biodiversity, public trust resources (listed species) that depend on the groundwater
• There was a viable Steelhead population in Arroyo Creek; surface water are an important depository for these species
• What about saltwater intrusion? (this hasn’t been an issue in the sub basin historically)
4. Groundwater quality safely and reliably supports human, ecosystem, and wildlife needs.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT

• Preservation of groundwater quality
• Aim to maintain groundwater quality at historical levels
• Historically, quality has been sufficient to drink from wells and for crop irrigation
• There was a viable Steelhead population in Arroyo Creek; surface water are an important depository for these species
• May be some increases in total dissolved solids (TDS) downstream, but overall quality is fairly good
5. Cost of maintaining a sustainable basin is cost-effective and fair for all users.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- Currently, pumpers pay their "fair share" to the utility companies; let's keep it that way (no additional costs to pump)
- Let's avoid creating unnecessary management costs
- Share costs across governance orgs to support successful, effective management
- We can explore this further as we get more clear on the projects.
To stay informed on this project, go to

www.SLOCounty.ca.gov/AGBasin