

Santa Maria Basin Assessment

Findings and Recommendations

Prepared by Center for Collaborative Policy
California State University, Sacramento

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Purpose of Assessment

- To clarify and affirm key issues and concerns of local agencies and other stakeholders for the formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) in the non-adjudicated portion of the Santa Maria River Basin.
- Recommendations for GSA formation is informed by stakeholder feedback



Methodology

Methods

- Interviewed 17 individuals/agencies during August-October 2016 and February 2017
 - Covering all five fringe areas in the County of San Luis Obispo
 - Representing agricultural, conservation, oil and gas, non-agricultural GW users, and local agency perspectives

Key Findings: Water Use

- Local agencies limited water use
- Limited studies in fringe area
- Need to resolve basin boundaries

Key Findings:

Local Agencies

- Interest in complying with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
- Feasibility of creating and administering GSA
 - Economy of scale
 - Costs to participate, and what are the benefits?

Key Findings:

Stakeholder Water Use

- Pumpers in Fringe Areas are for the most part completely dependent on groundwater
 - A few exceptions, e.g., some pumpers in Fringe Area 2 (Arroyo Grande Creek Valley) benefit from releases from Lopez Lake.

Key Findings:

Stakeholder Voice

- Strong consistent agreement on the need for substantial Agricultural representation
- Mutual Water Companies
- Conservation representation could help the GSA proactively find solutions that would benefit groundwater management and the ecosystem

Key Finding: Interest in Transparency

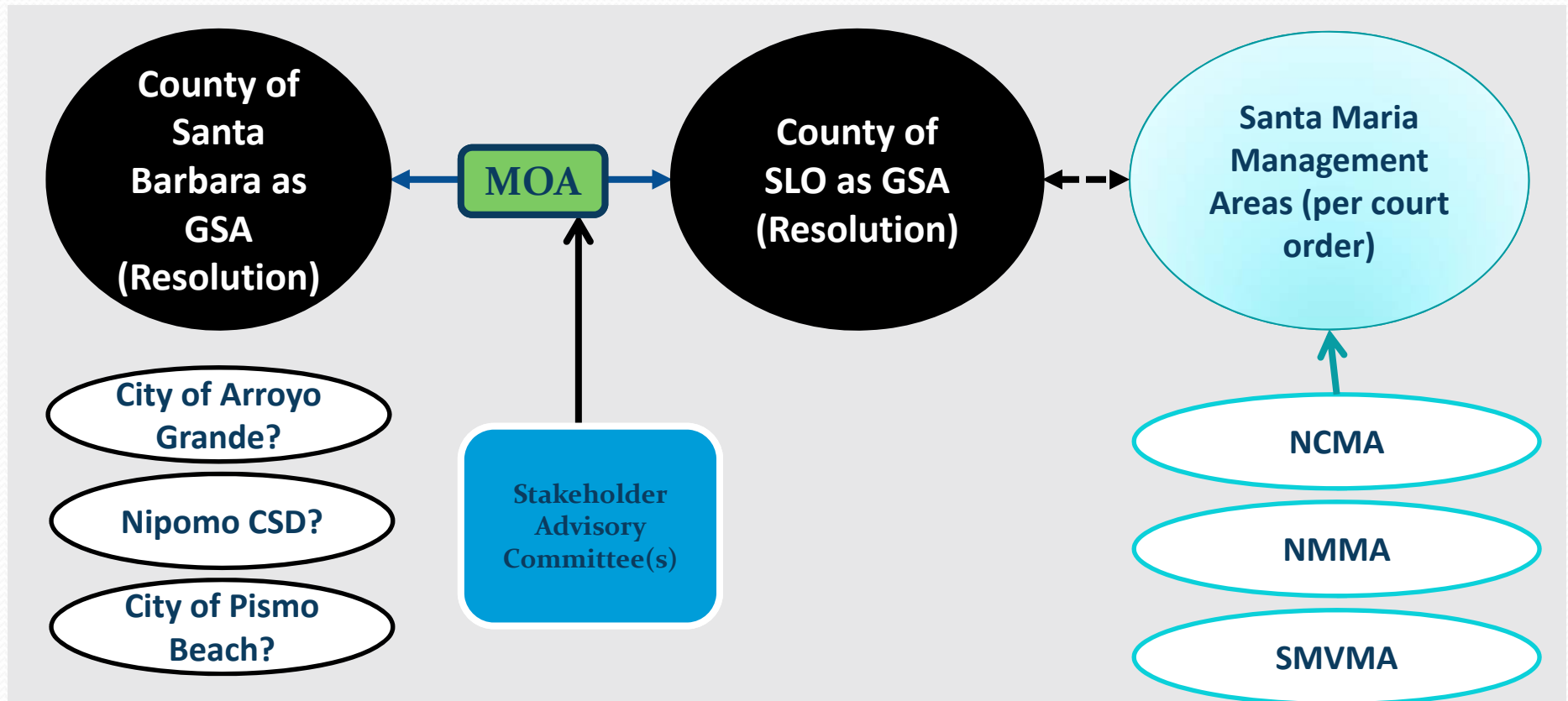
- Transparency translates to:
 - Meetings with agendas that are publically posted
 - List-serv that sends out meeting notices,
 - Testimony and deliberation is public: and
 - Decision makers connected to the GSA are appointed through public process



Key Findings: Trusted Agency

- County
 - The majority of respondents stated the County was a trusted agency

Recommendations





Thank You

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Advisory Committee Purpose

- To Advise the County GSA on:
 - Development of the GSP
 - Funding mechanisms
 - Other aspects as appropriate in regulating groundwater use



Advisory Committee Membership

- Agriculture
- Local Agencies
- Mutual Water Company Representative
- Conservation Representation
- Local Business Representation (non-ag)
- Other Private Pumper Representative



Feedback

- Advisory Committee Make-Up?
- Advisory Committee Appointment Process?
- Other Feedback?