



Colusa County Water Resources Update

Water Resources Division, Colusa County Community Development Department

100 Sunrise Blvd., Ste. A, Colusa, CA 95932 | 530-458-0719

[Website](#)

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SPECIAL SGMA EDITION

UPDATE - Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Planning in Colusa County

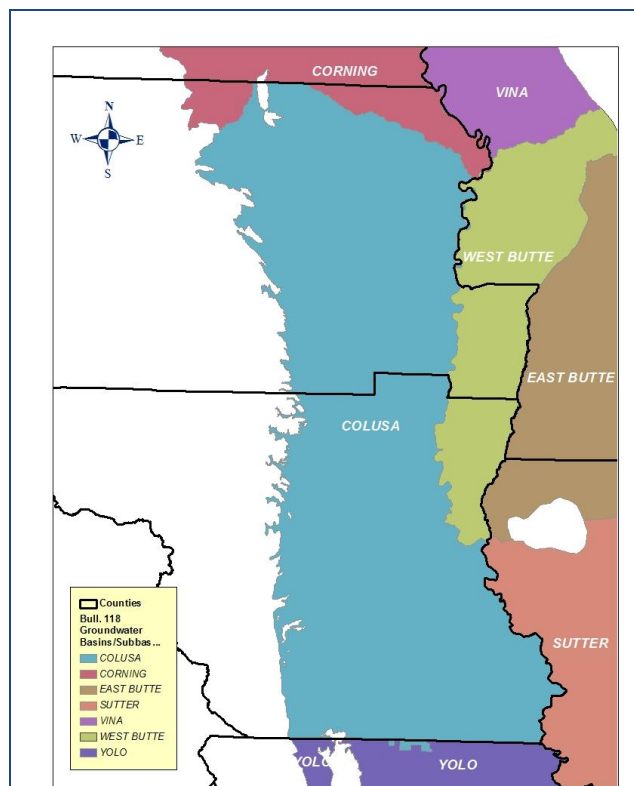
The first major deadline for compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was June 30, 2017. As mandated by SGMA, every high and medium priority groundwater basin in the State was required to be managed by a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), or multiple GSAs, with no conflicting overlaps by the June 30 deadline. Any non-compliant groundwater basins are considered to be in a probationary status and the State Water Resources Control Board will assume management of those basins.

Two groundwater basins within Colusa County are subject to SGMA; the Colusa subbasin (medium priority), and the West Butte subbasin (high priority). We are happy to report that GSAs have been successfully filed and both basins are SGMA-compliant. The agencies that will be participating as GSAs are ready to begin development of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) and to work to ensure that the local groundwater resource is managed sustainably into the future.

Background

SGMA was signed into law in September, 2014. In Colusa County and in the Sacramento Valley region as a whole, agencies have been working hard over the past two-plus years to ensure that the region's groundwater basins are compliant with SGMA law and that groundwater is managed locally.

When the SGMA planning process began, 28 agencies were identified in Colusa County as eligible to be a GSA. By late 2015, certain circumstances led to eight agencies within the County portions of the basins filing to be stand-alone GSAs. This created eight overlapping and conflicting GSAs, and it was necessary to resolve these overlaps, as SGMA requires a collaborative approach to groundwater management.



Department of Water Resources, Bulletin 118 High and Medium Priority Groundwater Basins. Colusa County shares the Colusa subbasin with Glenn County and the West Butte subbasin with Glenn and Butte Counties.

A **Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)** is responsible for developing and implementing a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) to meet the sustainability goal of the basin to ensure that it is operated within its sustainable yield, without causing undesirable results.

Colusa County obtained facilitation support services provided by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and began a series of facilitated GSA Workgroup meetings. Dave Ceppos from the Center for Collaborative Policy, Sacramento State University was the facilitator for both Colusa and Glenn Counties, among others. The Workgroup met regularly over the past two years to determine the best GSA structure for the County portions of the groundwater basins. The Workgroup consisted of interested GSA-eligible agencies within Colusa County, including the agencies that had previously filed to be GSAs and others. Private groundwater pumper representatives also participated. All meetings were open to the public, and the County maintains the [Water Resources website](#) where all meeting materials and other relevant information are available for viewing and download.

As GSA Workgroup meetings progressed, rather than focusing on multiple stand-alone GSAs, the direction of the group turned to forming one multi-party GSA to cover the County portions of the basins. It was agreed that this type of collaborative approach would allow the agencies to pool their resources and result in the most efficient and cost-effective governance structure.

SGMA allows multiple agencies to form a single GSA through formation of a Memorandum of Agreement, a Joint Powers Agreement, or other legal Agreement. The Colusa GSA Workgroup developed a set of Common Principles which were integrated into a Memorandum of Agreement. Ultimately, the Workgroup decided that a Joint Powers Agreement would be a stronger document, and with the help of a Legal Review Subcommittee, A Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JPA) was drafted to form the Colusa Groundwater Authority GSA.

What is a Private Pumper?

A Private Pumper is a landowner outside of a surface water supply district who operates an Ag well or wells. Private Pumpers do not have access to surface water and they are dependent on groundwater to irrigate their crops.

SGMA does not allow private entities such as Private Pumpers to be a GSA, yet they could be very much affected by this new groundwater law if fees and/or pumping restrictions are put into place. The Colusa Groundwater Authority recognizes the importance of Private Pumper involvement in SGMA planning, and has appointed two Private Pumpers to serve on the Authority Board.

Current Status

During the months of May and June, each of the Member agencies that are signatory to the Colusa JPA held public hearings to consider the adoption of a resolution approving the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement establishing the Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA); and to authorize the CGA to serve as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the County portions of the Colusa and West Butte subbasins. All resolutions passed unanimously, and on June 29, 2017, the Colusa Groundwater Authority's GSA notice was submitted to DWR and the notification was posted on DWR's [SGMA Portal](#) website. The agencies that had previously filed to be GSAs rescinded those filings and all overlaps were resolved. Reclamation District 1004 chose to remain a stand-alone GSA in the West Butte subbasin. The Colusa Groundwater Authority GSA covers the entire County portions of the Colusa Subbasin, and the County portions of the West Butte subbasin excluding the RD 1004 service area.

Members of the Colusa Groundwater Authority Groundwater Sustainability Agency:

1. Colusa County
2. City of Colusa
3. City of Williams
4. Glenn Colusa Irrigation District
5. Maxwell Irrigation District and Westside Water District (1 seat)
6. Princeton-Codora-Glenn Irrigation District and Provident Irrigation District (1 seat)
7. Colusa County Water District
8. Reclamation District 108
9. Reclamation District 479
10. Colusa Drain Mutual Water Company
11. Private Pumper Representative from Colusa County Groundwater Commission
12. Private Pumper Representative from Colusa County Groundwater Commission

Next Steps

The first meeting of the Colusa Groundwater Authority has not yet been scheduled. It is planned to take place in early August. Please email [County Water Resources Staff](#) if you would like to be on the email notification list for upcoming meetings.

The next major SGMA deadline for our basins is January 31, 2022 when GSAs must complete a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for each of the basins they will manage. The Colusa Groundwater Authority will work with the Glenn Groundwater Authority to develop a single GSP for the Colusa subbasin, and will similarly work with the agencies in the West Butte subbasin to develop a West Butte GSP. The agencies will pursue Proposition 1 grant funding from DWR for GSP development. There will be ample opportunity for public input during GSP development.



STAY INFORMED!

All beneficial uses and users of groundwater (Water Code Section 10723.2) must be taken into consideration during SGMA planning and implementation. There will continue to be ample opportunities for public engagement during GSP development. If you are not on the County's SGMA email list, please contact [Water Resources staff](#) to ensure you receive meeting notices and other relevant information.

SGMA - How to Stay Informed:

- ✓ Get on the Colusa County Water Resources email notification list for updates and meeting announcements - call or email Water Resources Staff (see contact info below)
- ✓ Visit the Colusa County [Water Resources website](#)
- ✓ Visit DWR's Groundwater Information Center website: <http://water.ca.gov/groundwater/index.cfm>
- ✓ Visit the DWR SGMA Portal: <http://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/#gsa>

For more information on local water-related issues, please contact staff, or visit the [Water Resources](#) section of the Colusa County website.

Staff contact:

Mary Fahey, Water Resources Manager
100 Sunrise Boulevard, Suite A, Colusa, CA 95932
email: mfahey@countyofcolusa.org
Phone: 530.458.0719 (office), 530.383.4625 (cell)