



Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA)

Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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

www.colusagroundwater.org

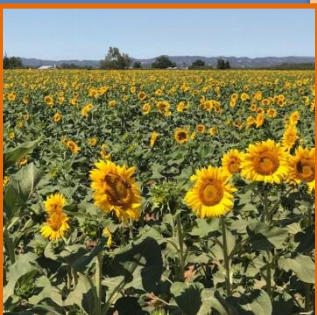
APRIL 11, 2019

SGMA UPDATE

WELCOME

A lot has been going on with local Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) implementation in Colusa and surrounding counties, and statewide. This newsletter provides information on the following activities:

- **2018 Basin Boundary Modifications (BBM)** were finalized and announced on February 11, 2019. Two of the groundwater basins in Colusa County were affected by these BBMs. **See pages 2-3.**
- The **Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA)** Board continues their hard work to ensure that SGMA is implemented in the least burdensome manner to beneficial users in Colusa County in order to maintain local control of groundwater management, and avoid State intervention. If you're not familiar with the CGA, a brief background of the organization is included on **Pages 4-5.**
- The CGA has been operating since July 1, 2017. The Member Agencies agreed to fund this effort for the first two years of operation (July 2017-June 2019). The CGA Joint Powers Agreement states that a long-term funding strategy must be in place to cover the daily operations of the CGA by the end of the second year. A discussion about **financing SGMA and long-term CGA operations** is included on **Pages 6-7.**
- **Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP)** must be completed in our region by January 31, 2022. Plan development is underway and Stakeholder input is a critical component of GSP development. For an update on this process in the Colusa Subbasin, **see page 8.**
- This Newsletter is one of the tools used by the CGA to provide information to the public. For a summary of the **CGA's Public Outreach efforts**, **see page 9-10.**
- The results of the **2017 Sacramento Valley Land Subsidence Survey** were released on 1/29/2019. To learn about the results, **see pages 8-9.**

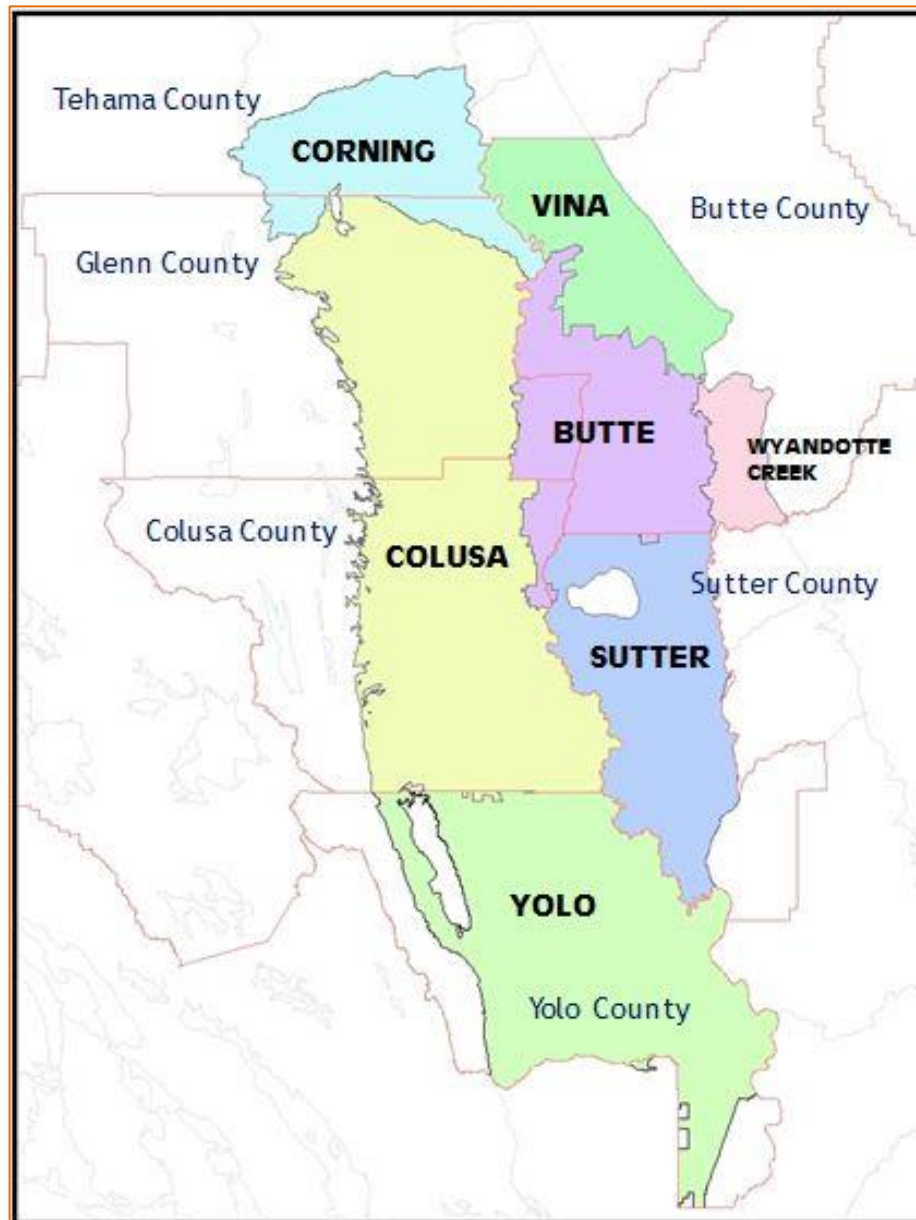


KNOW YOUR GROUNDWATER BASIN

Basin Boundary Modifications

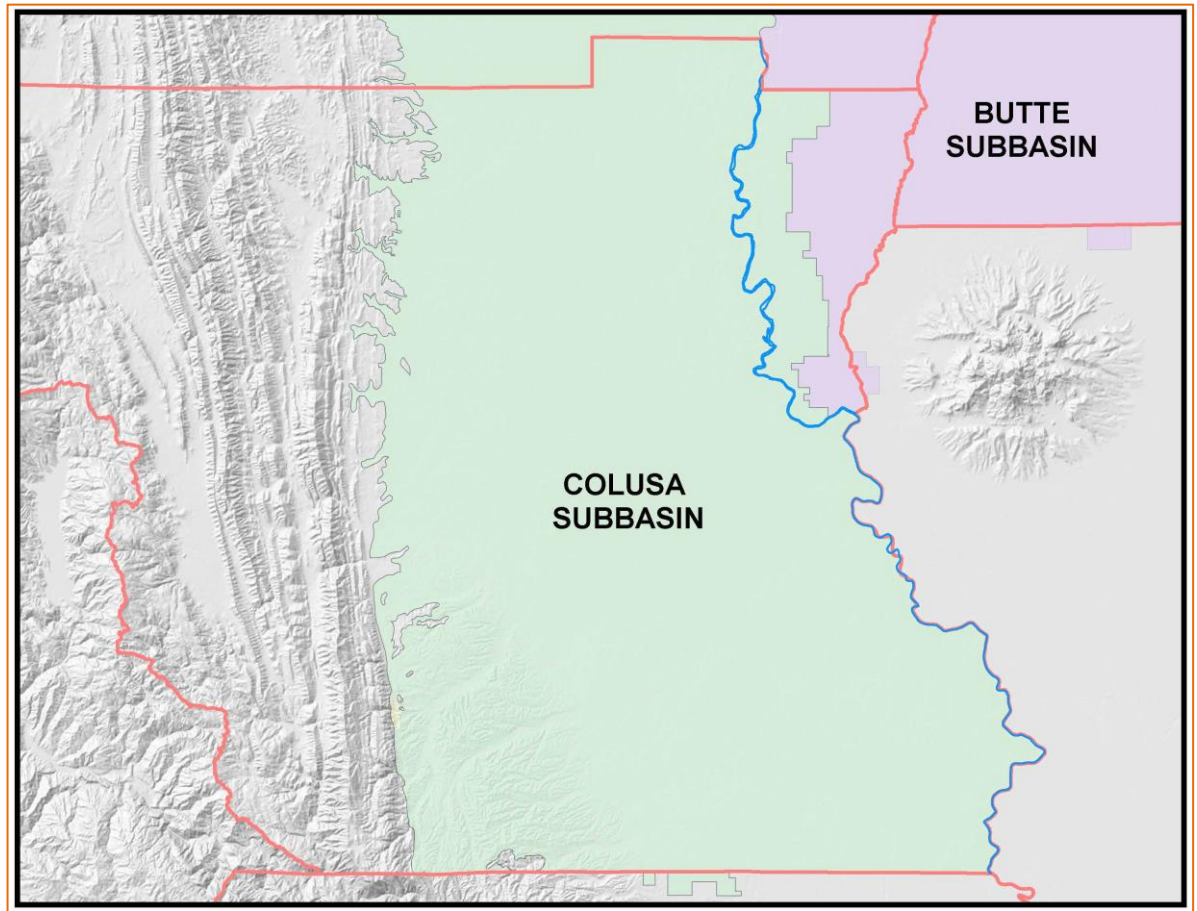
The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) established a process for local agencies to ask The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to revise the boundaries of existing groundwater basins or subbasins, including establishing new subbasins. The DWR recently issued their final decisions on the 2018 Basin Boundary Modification requests. Several groundwater basins in and around Colusa County were revised during this process, including the Colusa Subbasin and the new Butte Subbasin.

2018 DWR Bulletin 118 Groundwater Basins:



For more information on the Basin Boundary Modification process, click on the link below to visit the DWR website:
<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Basin-Boundary-Modifications>

2018 DWR Bulletin 118 Groundwater Basins in Colusa County:



The Final 2018 Basin Boundary Modifications were developed after a technical review of the basin boundary modification requests and public comments. DWR held a public meeting and a public presentation to the California Water Commission to present the Draft Basin Boundary Modifications and technical review process. The Final Basin Boundary Modifications were released February 11, 2019.

You can find a map of statewide groundwater basins by accessing DWR's online Basin Boundary Assessment tool: <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/bbat/>



KNOW YOUR GSA

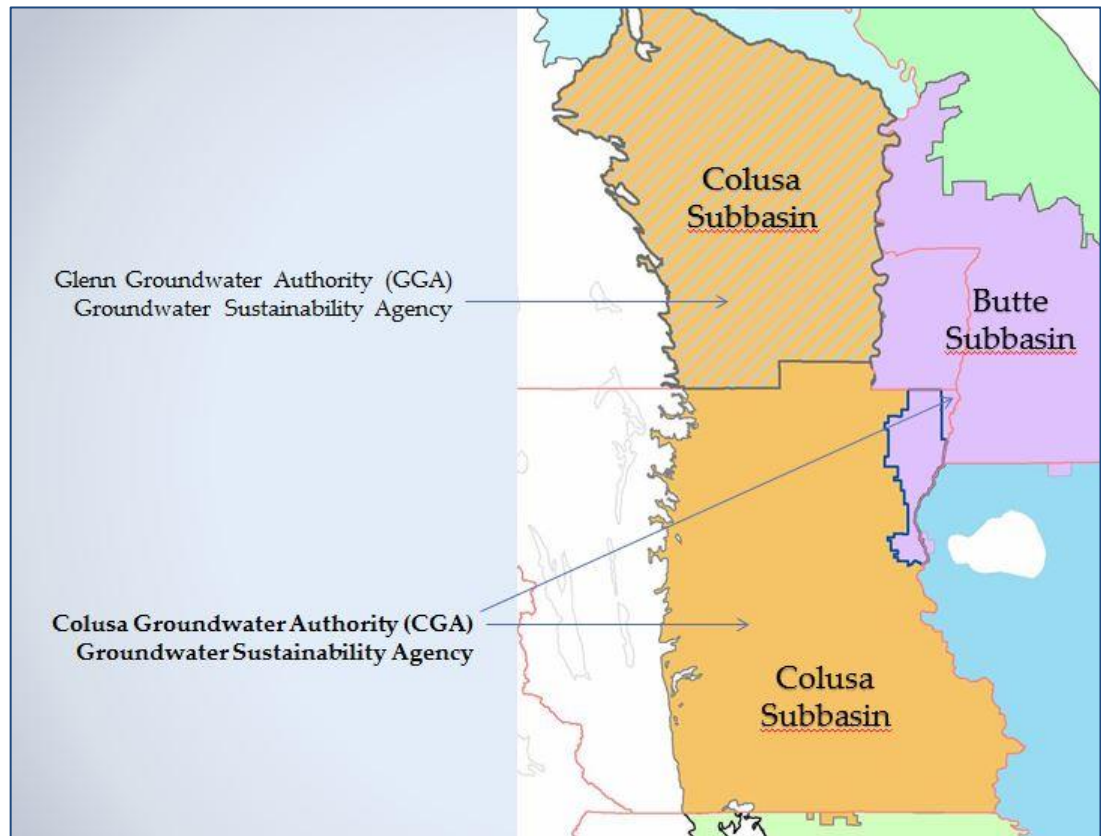
The Colusa Groundwater Authority

The Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA) was formed on June 29, 2017 to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) regulations and ensure that groundwater is managed locally in Colusa County. The CGA is a 12- member Joint Powers Authority and is recognized by DWR as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Colusa County portion of the Colusa Subbasin, and a small portion of the Butte Subbasin in Colusa County, to the east of RD 1004.

A Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is responsible for performing the duties and exercising the necessary powers to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

SGMA law requires GSAs to be in place by June 30, 2017.

Any “unmanaged areas” (areas not covered by a GSA) in a groundwater basin that is subject to SGMA will come under management of the State Water Resources Control Board.



Members of the Colusa Groundwater Authority Board:

1. County of Colusa
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

CGA Background

In 2015, at the onset of SGMA, there were 8 separate GSAs formed in Colusa County. These agencies, along with other GSA-eligible agencies and interested parties held regular public meetings over the period of January, 2016 – June, 2017 to determine the best governance structure for the Colusa County portions of the groundwater basins. During this period, the participating agencies and individuals were able to build trust and realized that the most efficient and cost effective SGMA governance mechanism was to form a single multi-agency GSA. This structure allows the agencies to pool resources and work together closely.

SGMA requires basin-wide planning and implementation - if there are multiple GSAs and multiple GSPs in a basin, they have to coordinate, the Plans have to align, and data has to be based on the same methodologies. Multiple GSAs/GSPs in a basin creates extra cost and duplication of efforts. The CGA Board also realized that a single GSA with one point of contact and one set of meetings creates a much easier and less confusing structure for public engagement.

A copy of the Joint Powers Agreement forming the Colusa Groundwater Authority can be downloaded on the website here: <https://colusagroundwater.org/about/>

Private Pumper Representation on the CGA Board

From the early SGMA planning discussions, Private Pumpers were invited to the table in Colusa County. It was important to the County Board of Supervisors that Private Pumpers had a voice on the CGA Board. The county formed a Private Pumper Advisory Committee (PPAC) in early 2016 to ensure that groundwater pumpers could be involved in local SGMA planning. After Colusa County formed the PPAC, other counties followed suit and began forming similar committees.

Although private citizens are not eligible to be a GSA, the CGA found a way to include two private pumpers on the Board and to extend equal voting rights to these Members. Private pumper representation on a GSA Board is unique in the State. Other GSAs have private pumpers on their advisory committees but it is not common to see them sitting on GSA Boards with equal voting rights.

A map of statewide GSAs can be found on the [DWR GSA Map Viewer](#).

The Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA) was formed to comply with SGMA regulations and to ensure that the groundwater resources in Colusa County are managed locally and that State Intervention is avoided.

FINANCING SGMA

Understanding the Need for Funding

The CGA Board was formed to comply with SGMA law and the board is committed to maintaining local control over groundwater management in Colusa County. The public has sent a clear message that they do not want the State involved. If a basin is not covered by a GSA or combination of GSAs, the State will step in.

In order to get the Colusa Groundwater Authority up and running and off to a good start, the CGA Member Agencies agreed to fund SGMA implementation efforts for the first two years of operation (July 2017-June 2019). The CGA Joint Powers Agreement specifies that by July 1, 2019, a long-term funding plan must be in place.

The CGA has contracted with Provost and Pritchard consultants to determine the best option to fund their day to day operations after June, 2019. It is important to understand that if the CGA is unable to comply with SGMA due to a lack of funding, the State Water Resources Control Board will step in and take on SGMA implementation at much greater cost to landowners and with no local benefits.

Proposition 218 Majority Protest

A Proposition 218 Majority Protest process is being considered by the CGA for long term funding of the agency operations. A fee study has been developed by the Provost and Pritchard Consulting group, and adopted by the CGA Board. The type of fee under consideration is a property-related fee for a water service. The service in this case is SGMA compliance, including GSP development and implementation, and local control of groundwater management.

Under the Proposition 218 process, once the Board determines the need to establish new fees, landowners must be notified and given the opportunity to protest before they are established. The CGA Board of Directors will hold a public hearing at which all landowners affected by the Operations Fees may participate and are entitled to protest the Operations Fee. At the public hearing, the CGA will consider and address comments and questions from owners of land that would be subject to the proposed CGA Operations Fee. Landowner protests received prior to and by the close of the public hearing will then be counted and the protest results will be certified. If written protests are submitted accounting for a majority of the total assessed parcels, CGA will not adopt the Operations Fee. Absent a majority protest, CGA is authorized to adopt the proposed Operations Fee

The CGA has worked hard to leverage grant funding and Member Agency resources in order to keep the costs of operations to a minimum. Because of the fiscally responsible actions of the CGA Board, the estimated costs for day to day operations is significantly lower than other efforts we are seeing throughout the State.

Financing SGMA, WHY:

SGMA is the law.

GSAs are new, local Government, regulating agencies.

GSAs must be funded to operate and it is up to each agency to determine the method of funding.

If a GSA cannot operate due to lack of funding, the State will step in and take over groundwater management at a much greater cost to landowners with no local benefit.

CGA Funding Quick Facts:

- The CGA Fee Study covers five years, including Fiscal Year 2019/20 through 2023/24
- The Fee under consideration by the CGA is a per-acre fee imposed on landowners within the CGA's jurisdiction
- The Cities of Colusa and Williams will pay the fee on behalf of the landowners within their boundaries, those landowners will not participate in the Majority Protest
- The small community water systems will pay the fee on behalf of the landowners within their jurisdictions (Arbuckle PUD, Grimes Waterworks, Princeton Waterworks, Maxwell PUD, Almond Ranch Estates), those landowners will not participate in the Majority Protest
- The CGA Board adopted the final budget and Fee Study at their Board meeting on March 26, 2019
- The adopted fee is **\$1.21/acre per year**
- An inflation factor based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will be added each year. Current CPI is 3%. If CPI remains at 3%, the fee would reach **\$1.36/acre** by Fiscal Year 2023/24
- The Adopted Fee is the maximum that the CGA may impose - if additional fees are needed after five years, a new Fee Study and Public Hearing process must take place
- **A Notice of Public Hearing and majority protest information will be mailed to affected landowners by April 19, 2019**
- **A public hearing will be held June 5, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. at Colusa Industrial Properties, 100 Sunrise Blvd., Colusa, CA 95932**
- If the fee does not pass, the CGA will not be able to fund its operations and will likely dissolve, leaving a large portion of the Colusa Subbasin unmanaged under SGMA. This will trigger State Intervention.
- A copy of the Fee Study and other information about long-term funding of the CGA is posted on the CGA Website here: www.colusagroundwater.org/long-term-funding

AVOIDING STATE INTERVENTION

A guiding principle of the CGA is to maintain local control of groundwater management through compliance with SGMA.

Either of the following will trigger loss of local control and Intervention by the State Water Resources Control Board:

- If the basin is not covered entirely by a GSA or combination of GSAs
- If a GSP is not completed by Jan. 31, 2022, and approved by DWR

State intervention comes at a much greater cost than local SGMA implementation by the CGA. Besides costs, the State will impose restrictions without any local benefits.

In addition to mandatory fees, State actions can include: groundwater extraction reporting, installation of meters on wells at owner's expense, technical reporting and studies at landowners' expense and curtailment of pumping if deemed necessary.

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

SGMA requires GSAs to adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) by January 31, 2022. (Plans are due in 2020 in the critically overdrafted basins in the state, all of which are located south of the Delta).

The Plans must address the six SGMA Sustainability Indicators: Chronic lowering of groundwater levels; Land subsidence; Reduction of groundwater in storage; Degraded water quality; Depletions of interconnected groundwater and surface water; and Seawater intrusion (not applicable in our region). During GSP development, agencies will identify any groundwater conditions that are not sustainable and determine how those issues will be addressed in order to achieve groundwater sustainability over the next 20 years.

Plan development is in the early stages now and it is important that stakeholders are involved in GSP development as these are the Plans that will dictate groundwater management over the next 20 years and beyond.

Previous groundwater studies have been completed in Colusa County and this data will be integrated into the local Groundwater Sustainability Plans. These studies include: Colusa County Groundwater Management Plan; various agency Agricultural Water Management Plans; Proposition 1 Counties with Stressed Basins grant projects in Colusa and Glenn Counties; SGMA Risk Assessment; Colusa County Groundwater Assessment, Subsidence Surveys in 2008, 2016 and 2017, and others.

For more information on Groundwater Sustainability Plans, visit:

<https://groundwaterexchange.org/developing-a-groundwater-sustainability-plan/>

2017 SACRAMENTO VALLEY LAND SUBSIDENCE SURVEY

One of the six Sustainability Indicators that must be addressed under SGMA is land subsidence.

In 2008, DWR conducted a Sacramento Valley-wide land subsidence survey to identify baseline measurements of ground surface elevations. Their intent was to resurvey every few years to monitor any changes, but due to a lack of funding, these resurveys did not take place.

During 2015 at the height of the severe drought, declining groundwater levels in the Arbuckle area caused concern. During this same 2015-2016 time period, NASA released a report from a satellite-based subsidence survey. Data from this survey showed land subsidence occurring near Arbuckle, and this was the first time that we had seen scientific data measuring land subsidence in the Sacramento Valley.



In June, 2016, DWR completed a limited subsidence survey in and around the Arbuckle area in order to ground truth the results of the NASA survey. The 2016 survey confirmed just over 2' of land subsidence had occurred at one survey point (SECO) near Arbuckle between the 2008 baseline survey and 2016.

In 2017, DWR resurveyed the entire Sacramento Valley GPS monument grid. This survey reconfirmed just over 2' of subsidence at the same survey point (SECO), just outside of the town of Arbuckle. Despite what you may have read or heard on the news about subsidence affecting the entire town of Arbuckle, this measurement is at a single survey point.

Any incidence of subsidence is certainly not something to ignore, and we will be further investigating the causes and extent of local land subsidence through SGMA implementation efforts and GSP development.

More information on the 2017 Subsidence Survey can be found on DWR's website: <https://water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/2019/January/Survey-Shows-Areas-of-Land-Subsidence>

PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

Public outreach efforts related to SGMA have been ongoing by CGA Staff and Member Agencies since 2014. The CGA Website (www.colusagroundwater.org) and email list offer excellent opportunities for stakeholders to be informed. All CGA Board meetings are open to the public and stakeholders are encouraged to attend.

Ongoing outreach efforts include:

- Dedicated website: www.colusagroundwater.org
- Email distribution list
- Facebook: *Colusa County Groundwater*
- All CGA Board meetings are public and all agendas, minutes and meeting notes are posted on the CGA website
- Newsletter
- Newspaper articles
- Articles/information in local agency newsletters (Farm Bureau, Family Water Alliance, FSA, etc.)
- Information provided at local meetings:
 - CGA Member Agency Board meetings
 - Other Local agency Board meetings
 - Farm Bureau Board meetings
 - Public outreach meetings
 - Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management group TAC and Board meetings (www.nsvwaterplan.org)
 - Northern California Water Association Groundwater Task Force meetings

Get to know the Colusa Groundwater Authority, and keep up with the latest SGMA news.

Visit the website: Colusagroundwater.org

- Presentations:
 - Annual Colusa County Agricultural Commissioner's Growers Meeting
 - Colusa County Groundwater Commission meetings
 - Various workshops and forums throughout the Sacramento Valley

SGMA – STAY INFORMED:

Between now and January 31, 2022, the CGA will be developing the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Colusa Subbasin. **If you have not been involved in local SGMA planning, now is the time!**

There are many opportunities to be engaged and informed about local groundwater management planning:

- ✓ Get on the CGA email notification list for updates and meeting announcements by signing up on the website: <https://colusagroundwater.org/contact-us/> - or contact Staff (see contact info below)
- ✓ Visit the CGA Website regularly: <http://colusagroundwater.org>
- ✓ Attend Colusa Groundwater Authority Board meetings
- ✓ Visit DWR's Groundwater Information Center website: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management>
- ✓ Visit the DWR SGMA Portal: <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/#intro>

All CGA Board meetings are open to the public. The Board meeting schedule can be found on the CGA website: <https://colusagroundwater.org/meetings/>

Staff contact:

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Other SGMA Resources:

- CA Department of Water Resources: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management>
- Groundwater Exchange: <https://groundwaterexchange.org/>

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 CGA's email list, please contact [Water Resources staff](#) to ensure you receive meeting notices and other relevant information, and please share this information with your friends and neighbors.