

Frequently Asked Questions in Support of Upcoming Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency Public Meetings

1. **What is SGMA?** SGMA is the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act passed by the California State Legislature in September 2014. The Napa Valley Subbasin is one of 140 groundwater basins designated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as medium or high priority. SGMA requires all jurisdictions with medium or high priority subbasins (including Napa County) to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

The high priority groundwater area identified within Napa County is the Napa Valley Subbasin, which extends north of the Sossol Interchange (near the Meritage Resort) to Calistoga, covering the valley floor. The subbasin does not include hillside areas, the Carneros area, the Napa County Airport, or the City of American Canyon.

In enacting SGMA, the legislature and the governor recognized that groundwater management is most effective when implemented at the local level. Local management is provided under SGMA by Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). There are 260 GSAs in California. In December 2019, Napa County formed the Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (NCGSA) to manage groundwater resources consistent with SGMA.

2. **How will the Groundwater Sustainability Plan benefit Napa County?** The GSP will maintain local control of groundwater, based on the knowledge and expertise of residents, and using the best available data, scientific methods and modeling tools. If a GSP is not adopted, then the State Water Resources Control Board may assert direct control over management of the subbasin. Through local decision making, the GSP will protect groundwater and interconnected surface water resources within the subbasin and consider the needs of all beneficial users and uses of groundwater, including the environment and disadvantaged communities.
2. **How is SGMA different from other current planning efforts?** Although natural resources are a part of the countywide General Plan, the focus of SGMA is limited to groundwater within the Napa Valley Subbasin. The draft Drought Contingency Plan being prepared by the Cities, Town, and County will provide recommended infrastructure projects to develop additional water sources, in contrast to the GSP, which focuses on managing the aquifer. A Drought and Water Conservation Plan being considered in pending legislation would provide steps to assist failing wells and community water systems, while the GSP will work to avoid the conditions that contribute to dry wells.
3. **What is included in the GSP?** The GSP will have a dozen chapters, addressing topics such as historical groundwater and surface water conditions; historical, current and projected (50-year) groundwater budgets; monitoring networks to track basin-wide conditions; and defined sustainability criteria to avoid undesirable conditions. The GSP will also include a menu of projects and management actions including: best management practices, supply augmentation (such as groundwater recharge), and demand management (such as

strategies to conserve water or reduce groundwater use) to achieve the sustainability goal for the Napa Valley Subbasin and avoid undesirable outcomes.

4. **Who is developing the draft Plan?** The GSP has been in development over the last 18 months during the regular deliberations of a broad-based 25-member GSP Advisory Committee appointed by the NCGSA. The Committee's work has been supported by County staff; Luhdorff & Scalmanini, Consulting Engineers; and the facilitation firm of CONCUR Inc.
5. **What happens next?** The GSP Advisory Committee will complete the draft GSP in early October and post the entire document on-line for public comment. At that time, the GSP Advisory Committee will also consider recommending submittal of the draft GSP to the NCGSA. The NCGSA is slated to consider and receive public comments on the draft GSP in November and adopt the final GSP in December 2021. The Napa Valley Subbasin GSP must be submitted to DWR by January 31, 2022.

DWR has two years to conduct their review of the submitted Napa Valley Subbasin GSP. In the interim, the NCGSA will immediately begin evaluating which management actions it could employ to ensure the health of the subbasin during the current drought. SGMA Annual Reports are due to DWR every April 1; the next Annual Report is due April 1, 2022. The next GSP update will be completed by January 31, 2027.

6. **How I can get more complete information about the GSP planning effort?** For a more extensive set of FAQs, please see this website:

<https://www.countyofnapa.org/3080/FAQs>

NCGSA meetings are open to the public and typically occur on Tuesdays, to coincide with the Board of Supervisors regular meeting dates. Meeting schedule, agendas, recordings, and minutes are available on Napa County's website here:

<https://www.countyofnapa.org/3085/Governance-Meetings>

GSPAC meetings are open to the public and typically occur on the second Thursday of the month. As of September 9, sixteen GSPAC meetings have been held; all meetings are recorded and available here: https://napa.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=35

Draft individual GSP chapters have been posted during GSP development and are available for review and comment at:

<https://www.countyofnapa.org/3218/Draft-GSP-Sections-Surveys>

The full draft GSP will be posted in mid-October 2021.

I want to submit a follow-up question or a comment to the planning team. How can I do that? We would appreciate hearing your feedback on the plan at the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCGSA-Post-Public-Meeting-Survey>