



Napa County

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Legislation Text

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TO: Technical Advisory Group for the Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency

FROM: Brian Bordona - Interim Director of Planning, Building and Environmental Services

REPORT BY: Jamison Crosby, Natural Resources Conservation Manager

SUBJECT: Potential Water Conservation Actions to support the Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan

RECOMMENDATION

Provide an update to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on progress developing potential water conservation actions for the Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan (GPR Workplan). This will include a discussion of feedback on existing certification programs, on-farm water conservation practices, and broader water conservation practices. The presentation (see Supporting Documents) will summarize existing and potential practices under consideration for voluntary water savings, and a matrix summary format for organizing the practices. Several framing questions are included to receive feedback and direction from the TAG.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff and the technical team are continuing work on the GPR Workplan, following an initial presentation at the February TAG. It is anticipated that work will continue over the next several months. This is the second of several updates to the TAG. Information and updates since the last TAG meeting are being presented (see Supporting Document A), and updates will be ongoing as the technical team continues to receive feedback from the TAG and completes its work.

Procedure

Staff introduces the item.
Questions and answers with the TAG.
Public comments.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan (GPR Workplan, see draft outline, Supporting Document B) is being prepared to provide a roadmap for implementing measures to reduce groundwater pumping in the Napa Valley Subbasin. This Workplan is a companion document to the related document, the Napa County Vineyard and Winery Water Conservation Workplan. The GPR Workplan will describe the voluntary measures to conserve water, including reducing groundwater pumping. The GPR Workplan will include processes for improving the understanding of groundwater use in the Subbasin and evaluating the effectiveness of measures implemented to reduce groundwater pumping in relation to observed benefits to groundwater conditions and sustainability. The GPR Workplan will also include adaptive management and a process to invoke mandatory measures if voluntary measures are insufficient to achieve groundwater sustainability.

Napa County GSA Staff and the technical team are working on the GPR Workplan. It is anticipated that work will proceed over the next several months. This is the second of several updates to the TAG. Information and updates since the last TAG meeting are being presented (see Supporting Document A), and this will be updated as the technical team completes its work and receives feedback from the TAG.

FRAMING QUESTIONS FOR TAG DELIBERATIONS

The following framing questions have been prepared for the TAG in consideration of groundwater pumping reductions to achieve overarching GSP objectives for the Napa Valley Subbasin:

The GPR Workplan is being developed to specify options for reducing pumping to achieve sustainability benefits for the Subbasin. The GPR Workplan will focus on voluntary actions, leverage existing programs, identify cost-effective approaches to reduce groundwater pumping, and summarize water savings benefits for water conservation practices or suites of practices. The project team is conducting outreach to support analysis of existing and potential water conservation practices. This includes outreach to certification programs as well as other organizations and entities.

Voluntary water conservation actions should provide a benefit to the Subbasin and to individuals that adopt them. Certification programs are one way to realize value from voluntary actions. Existing certifications for winegrapes are currently being reviewed to identify the potential for certifying specific water management practices, and what value these types of labels may generate. A summary of the findings from review of and meetings with administration of certification programs will be presented in this meeting, as well as a list of other organizations for project outreach.

Question: Are there other entities, individuals, or certification programs that the project team should meet with as part of GPR Workplan development?

Water conservation practices must result in a quantifiable groundwater savings to be included in the GPR Workplan. A preliminary review of water conservation practices in existing certification programs is in progress. This review will proceed and come back to the TAG at one or more future meetings. A preliminary list of water conservation practices was included in the February 2023 presentation to spark initial discussion, which was revised and added to, following TAG feedback and additional analysis conducted by the technical team. Practices are grouped into on-farm, regional, and other water

management practices.

Question: Does the water conservation practices list appear complete? If not, what other practices should be included for analysis?

The GRP Workplan will include a detailed summary of each water conservation practice (see Supporting Documents). This summary will include costs and benefits for existing and potential practices, including vineyard-specific benefits and potential water savings that benefit the Subbasin. To organize and summarize findings in a concise format, a matrix concept was developed whereby practices would be ranked by criteria including costs, private benefits, water savings benefits, implementation timeline, overall feasibility, and other required studies. The concept is presented to the TAG in this meeting for feedback and discussion.

Question: Does the matrix concept provide a useful simplification of the GPR Workplan water conservation practices? What other criteria should be considered?

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A. ERA Economics Powerpoint Presentation: Napa Valley Subbasin, Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan, March 2023
- B. Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan, Draft Outline, February 5, 2023

Reviewed By: Jamison Crosby