

**Napa County Groundwater
Sustainability Agency
Technical Advisory
Group**

*Stakeholder
Assessment Results*

September 14, 2023





Outline

The Stakeholder Assessment

The Interview Process

Findings & Discussion

Next Steps

Assessments identify

- **Problems and opportunities**
- **Key issues important to stakeholder**
- **Preferred communication approaches**
- **Learned lessons**

Who: People that need to be engaged/informed, and to what extent

What: Messages related to SGMA, GSAs, GSPs, and integrated water management

Where: Place-based, including virtual locations and focused outreach at audience related venues

When: Timing of communications and engagement opportunities.

Why: Objectives and approach will support successful Communications and Engagement

How: Communication and Engagement Methods

Stakeholder Assessment

- July to August 2023
- On-line Interviews with 36 people.
- Representative Sample of the Subbasin's Key Stakeholder Groups.
- Coordinated with the NCGSA.



The Interview Process

- In coordination with the NCGSA –
 - 115 potential participants were identified and invited to interview
 - Participants were organized into ten interview groups, by stakeholder types
- Discussion agenda with interview questions and background provided information in advance
- Anonymity
- Interviews ranged from 45-60 minutes for individuals and 60-90 minutes for groups
- 16 questions*
- *Not all questions applied in all interviews





Stakeholder Groups

- Planning Agencies/Districts
- Environmental/Conservation Groups
- Grape and Winegrowers
- Cities, Counties, and Water Agencies
- Community Groups
- Business Interests
- Environmental Justice and Public Health Interests
- Academic
- State/Federal Agencies
- Vineyard and Winery Management Companies



Questions

- **Background Information**
 - Overarching perspectives from stakeholders on general groundwater conditions and their involvement with water issues.
- **Groundwater Sustainability Planning**
 - Familiarity with groundwater sustainability requirements and level of engagement with the NCGSA and GSP development and implementation, if any.
- **Communications & Engagement**
 - Thoughts on current communications/engagement by the NCGSA; gathered insights on the best approached to share information within the subbasin.
- **Other Process Issues**
 - Advice to better inform the interviews and the CEP update; considering success for this project.



Findings

Findings from the stakeholder assessment will inform the:

- Communication & Engagement Plan Update
- Outreach strategies
- Informational materials, both audience-specific and general



Findings Highlights

- Perceptions of Napa water conditions and groundwater sustainability
 - Varied among the sectors
 - Some considered the existing water management practices paired with climate adaption and other on-going modifications (like irrigation improvements and cropping patterns) to be sustainable over the long term
 - Others reported a sense of urgency regarding the water situation, pointing to the exceedance of GSP minimum thresholds, observed changes in streams and rivers, and ecosystem impairment
- Perceptions of past and current GSA communications
 - General agreement on a need for increased communication and frustration with the current public input mechanisms
 - Varied communication issues listed - depending on sector
 - Complexity of accessing meeting information on the web/ difficulty of navigating the county website
 - Lack of proactive outreach
 - Technical presentations
 - Input dismissed or completely ignored
- Several interviewees reported an increase in communications over the last six months and what they viewed as a genuine effort by the County GSA staff to improve engagement



Findings Highlights

- Need for differing levels of communication
 - Develop more user-friendly content for non-technical audiences
 - Target communications relevant to the audience's' interests, physical environment, and geographical location
 - Frequency and volume of content
 - Communication methodologies utilized
- Communication for tourism audiences
 - Need to manage communications with thousands of individuals that do not live or work in the basin
 - Issues of cumulative impact
 - Potential for audiences to be advocates for the basin and its water
- Broad agreement on need for more education efforts as a part of communications and engagement
 - Range of perspectives
 - Groups and subjects
 - Differing perceptions of educational needs of urban/suburban and agricultural audiences



Findings Highlights

- Multiple modalities of outreach recommended
 - At the individual level there was a general preference for electronic communications, such as emails and texts
 - Use of more innovative and out-of-the-box types of communication methods
 - Tools like dashboards
 - Some discussion of physical mailers
 - Changes in the effectiveness of communications through the local newspaper
 - Use of social media was rarely mentioned
- Use of communication partnerships
 - Utilization of existing organizations and events to reach more audiences
 - Schools and youth organizations.
- Need for CEP to reflect the uniqueness of the Napa basin
 - Need for communicating how uniqueness impacts sustainability
 - Desire for broader conversations inclusive of climate change, surface water, ecosystems, housing, water quality and more
- With a few exceptions, appreciation for the opportunity to provide input on GSA communications and requests to be included in future outreach
- Generous participant follow-up emails with additional information and reference materials



Next Steps

- Continue to work on
 - CEP chapters
 - Informational materials
 - Content scheduling