



Tehama County
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 8:30 AM
Groundwater Commission
Meeting Minutes

Tehama County Board of Supervisors
Chambers
727 Oak Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080
<https://tehamacounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
Board Chambers

8:30 A.M. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

Rollcall

Present Commissioner Todd Hamer, Commissioner Martha Slack, Commissioner Kris Lamkin, Commissioner Michael Ward, Commissioner Seth Lawrence, Commissioner Hal Crain, Commissioner Martin Spannaus, Commissioner Jeff Godwin, Commissioner Liz Merry, Commissioner Adam Englehardt, and Commissioner David Lester

Commissioners: Martin Spannaus, City of Corning; Jeff Godwin, City of Red Bluff; Hal Crain, City of Tehama; Kris Lamkin, El Camino Irrigation District; Todd Hamer, Los Molinos Community Services District; Martha Slack, Rio Alto Water District; Liz Merry District 1; Adam Englehardt, District 2; Seth Lawrence, District 3; Michael Ward, District 4; David Lester, District 5; Justin Jenson, Flood Control/Water Resources Manager

Public Comment

General Member was called to speak and is reading a letter written by Tim Mesa, a Corning resident who moved away. He believes the county failed in regards to sustainability for groundwater management. He feels it is unjust that the people who don't use groundwater should be charged for it.

Shanna Long from the Tehama County Farm Bureau and Cattlemen requested status reports on outstanding projects within the next 30 days.

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

25-0198

Nomination and appointment.

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: David Lester

SECONDER: Michael Ward

AYES: Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Crain,

Commissioner Spannaus, Commissioner Godwin, Commissioner Merry, Commissioner Englehardt, and Commissioner Lester
RESULT: APPROVE
MOVER: Michael Ward

SECONDER: Liz Merry

AYES: Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Crain, Commissioner Spannaus, Commissioner Godwin, Commissioner Merry, Commissioner Englehardt, and Commissioner Lester

3. Presentation by LSCE on proposition 68 round 2 Grant status 25-0178
Presentation by LSCE on proposition 68 round 2 Grant status

Eddy Teasdale from LSCE begins presentation on Prop 68. Eddy reviews what the grant funding is for and reminds listeners that this is the use of state dollars to fund activities, there is no out of pocket cost to the tax payer. There are 5 main tasks (with sub tasks) to Prop 68 and they will go over them in this presentation as well as give updates on allocation of funds.

1. Project/Grant Management and Administration
Report progress to DWR per quarter
2. SGMA Compliance - Annual reports, support revisions, engagement and outreach, long term funding strategies, demand management and permitting and outreach, periodic updates.

There is discussion requesting additional details for the reports and where to find past reports. Deputy Director Jenson gives direction on that. Multiple commissioners request data packets ahead of time to prepare for meetings.

Discussion took place regarding outreach and allocation of funds. More discussion on outreach and the Prune Day presentation Jenson gave and suggestions were made to piggyback on other events to reach more individuals. In response Justin proposed the idea of recording presentations to post on our platforms.

Commissioner Ward requested more information before meetings. He wanted information on well mitigation funding and meetings for this. He believes time is running out for the Red Bluff Subbasin deadline. Deputy Jenson reiterates the importance of sticking to the schedule so goals can be met. In response County Counsel Daniel states the importance of keeping the group small (Ad Hoc) is why they can have the meetings. There is discussion on the working group meeting ahead of time to be on the same page.

3. Monitoring Network Enhancements - Funding ongoing monitoring for SGMA,

Monitoring wells, monitoring wells for surface water (major streams), studies to establish surface water resources, and studies to assess groundwater dependent ecosystems

Evan with LSCE discusses funding for 50 well devices to collect water well measurements and collect data for domestic wells (interested parties). There is discussion on who can register for the devices and monitoring gaps.

Grant funding can be used to fund ongoing compliance monitoring (groundwater samples)

sampling study on wider sweep of groundwater (isotopes) background data for potential recharge projects summer/fall. There is discussion on cost of samples and their importance/value.

Corning subbasin video logging survey on monitoring wells. Landowner information in the area has been hard to obtain and without this, the survey cannot take place. If reaching landowners is not achievable, the alternative is developing a video tech plan memo to use the funds to purchase the camera for the GSA. The camera could be used in future plans. This would allow us to capitalize on available funds available at this time.

Geologic study regarding AEM to expand the geologic knowledge of the subbasin. Contracted w/experts to connect on data collected from this study done with a helicopter. Seeing where we need to refine the model.

4. .1 Recharge Projects - Introduced Will with LSCE who speaks on multi benefit recharge groundwater/habitat recharge (specific requirements from nature conservancy) once the data is received it will get put into the report.

There is discussion on the discharge and recharge data.

In response the presenter says going forward we would like to see surface monitoring on what is going back to the creek. LSCE has received 5 permits for water redirect and is working on assigning subbasin pumping. The water has to be accounted for and there are specific state requirements. There is more discussion amongst the Commissioners regarding recharge regarding upcoming data from ATV survey.

.2 Creek Diversions - Will goes over sites/requirements for water diversion in Elder and Thomes Creek. He also goes over the permitting process and length of permits. Commissioner Crain and Commissioner Englehardt discuss the potential

recharge at the 3rd and 4th location with longer term permitting. Will goes over the hope for longer term/year round testing with the landowners. Englehardt asks about

the application process for this testing as a landowner.

.2 cont. LSCE presents Aquifer storage and recovery, which is taking surface water and injecting into existing wells, straight into the aquifer and then extracting from the same well later, when surface water is not available. This method is expensive on per volume basis for drinking water due to treatment that would be required. For AG the requirements are potentially different. They are investigating pilot projects in different areas. LSCE needs to develop a work plan for the pilot test and monitoring plan for the surrounding area. They will put into a package for state board to get approval for study. Once approved the study will be conducted. All the data will be put into a final report for the state board to review.

Commissioner Lester asks how this would affect domestic wells water quality. LSCE discusses the previous tests completed and vision for this test. Deputy Director Justin Jenson asks about the recharge significance. There is discussion on cost and effectiveness.

.3 Groundwater/storm water recharge these will be prioritized after flow analysis (volume). Public speaker asks if any anticipated problems on locations cooperating with pumping.

.4 Recharge Through Canals and Drainages - Pilot test (small scale) was completed in Oct 2024. Surface water from canal to creek while dry for groundwater recharge, measured input. When it is dry again the test will be repeated. This involves diverting water from canal and discharged into surface water bodies. There are multiple pilot tests ahead. The water will be provided by water district. There is an agreement worked out to have small volumes of water for tests.

.5 Recharge Pond South of Corning: Pilot test on storm water collection pond along a canal. This had a bad recharge rate, less than 1in per day. Big takeaway remaining funds for this task are hopefully going to be reallocated to another task.

.6 CA Olive Ranch - replace up to 1100ft of groundwater annually with surface water use and potential groundwater recharge. Designs are being reviewed by multiple entities, permitting will be going through Kirkwood water district. Funding will not cover complete project. The hope is to fund the construction, landowner would be responsible for the rest.

.7 (ties to 4.2) Stony Creek Diversions: This task was originally for diversion of

water. There was a water rights issue and water will be in the creek when diversion is available. Changed to a couple 180 day applications for similar recharge.

5. Water Transfers for In-Lieu Recharge - Maximizes surface water at water district level. Water districts have the resources they need to deliver surface water. Rapid appraisal carried out by sub consultant. Crain touches on extra water that is unused.

.2 Landowner Level - projects for pumps, filtration systems, and other infrastructure on landowner level. Developing matrix to decide ranking on benefit and trying to reallocate funds to add more to this section. Recharge committee hasn't met yet, but now they can with all this information.

There is discussion between commissioners, LSCE, and Deputy Jenson on the ranking matrix.

4. Presentation regarding addition of language to streamline the well screening ordinance "in kind" replacement exception 25-0181

Presentation regarding addition of language to streamline the well screening ordinance "in kind" replacement exception

To recommend addition.

Deputy Director Jenson opens up discussion regarding "in kind" well replacement. He addresses that we need an easier and more mainstream process to make "in kind" well replacement happen. Jenson proposes language recommendation and will work with legal to write it up. What this language does is allow district staff to consult with the county about CEQA requirements. It could then be brought to this board and be approved all at once, eliminating other steps when approving an exception of the ordinance. Specifically referring to Class 2 categorical exemption of CEQA, class 2 replacement and reconstruction states "consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures/facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose/capacity as the structure replaced." He states that the goal today is to get directors approval to tidy this up and get it mainstream. This would skip a step and get applicants to understand CEQA exposure prior to coming to this process.

Commissioner Crain requests input from Ian Turnbull. Mr. Turnbull states that he thinks it just needs to be allowed, not an exception, that it is being replaced in kind. We are not taking any more water out of the aquifer so it should be allowed for inanimate or catastrophic well failure. He says this qualifies as a CEQA categorical exemption. He states that Glenn County allows this and thinks we need to do the same.

Crain follows up by clarifying that this should be handled at staff level, that if its "in kind" then it's "in kind"

Jenson follows up saying that he believes that one person making that decision will be a problem for us later on and there are concerns with doing it on an administrative

level. He believe judgment calls should be done by a body, not a single person. Further discussion takes place regarding the ordinance and crop/agricultural emergencies due to lack of water if a well fails. The meeting is recessed for 30 minutes for Jenson to discuss with legal and come back with some more answers.

RECESS

Meeting went into Recess at 11:30 A.M.

RECONVENE

Meeting Reconvened at 12:00 P.M.

Jenson states that if the owner has the info to check boxes, it is ok.

Anything that is not obvious needs to come back here for review. Willing to be re-written to state the differences. Daniel states there have been suggestions that legal review is a road block, legal review is to let you know you are in uncharted territory. District is not at stake if they lose, it will be the landowner responsibility. Commissioner Hamer requests

it to be re-written to check mark exact copy and any question comes to the commission in an emergency 3-5days. 72hrs minimum to keep timeline to minimum. Wording will be clarified. Re visit next meeting

5. Resolution 8-2024 repeat for clarification

25-0182

Deputy Jenson states that he think this item needed clarification so everyone knows what this resolution was and is now. This was created in response to a requirement of the board to limit installation of production wells in March of 2024. CSGSA's attorney said there are legal boundaries. Language established gave the authority to GSA's and by Aug 2024 it was cleared up. The resolution now states the county is not required to seek input/approval from the district to permit production wells in any area. Jenson states that 8-2024 still has a reason to exist due to future regulations.

There is some discussion on wells being installed in troubled areas and what the current permit process is as well as what it might look like in the future.

Further discussion determined that at this time there is no restriction on the installation of wells or the volume pumped, it is about water that is allowed to be used. The resolution of this item is that 8-2024 will be left as is for now and it can be re-visited after the Demand Management meeting results if needed. That this item is not something we use currently, but might need in the future.

6. Well Mitigation overview and request to begin working with Farm Bureau and Tia on program details

25-0184

Well Mitigation overview and request to begin working with Farm Bureau and Tia on program details

Deputy Jenson presents an Excel sheet comparing mitigation plans. Goes over the plans in effect and the plans in process as listed on the sheet.

Jenson says he has had a hard time finding volunteers for a well mitigation group. We have two appointees for the group and Tia has also volunteered to also be in the group. With permission, he will set up the group for a meeting next month.

7. Demand Management working group update

25-0185

Commissioner Ward gives Demand Management update and speaks of specific interest regarding the Los Molinos Subbasin. There was discussion on the negative decline in the area. Eddy Teasdale spoke on how the data is collected and gave an overview on some factors on why the results are what they are.

There was more discussion on the Demand Management meeting framework. Deputy Jenson stated that we will have to make decisions based on the best data we have, knowing that it's not perfect.

Jenson stated one thing a lot of time has been spent on was things that they wanted to be in some upcoming conversations for putting together a technical document for Demand Management framework. The next meeting will be with consultants and there will be a presentation following that on the outcomes.

Commissioner Ward brought up that he would like to see the Demand management meeting recordings posted on the website timelier. Jenson said it was requested to wait (there was more discussion on the topic) and County Counsel Daniel states we cannot issue a legal opinion in a Brown Act Meeting. Jenson states that the recordings shouldn't be posted until a report out has been done which is why there is a delay in posting online.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Ward speaks on the value of this meeting. He requests a list of standing agenda items, to know the following cannot be done every month, but wants what can be touched on and at least know where we stand on the following items:

- Where we are at on groundwater recharge
- Resolution/Ordinance issues
- Grant status every month
- County drought resilient plan
- Groundwater dependent ecosystems and what they are
- Demand management working group, well mitigation working group (annual report status)
- Outreach/Follow up

Ward wants the commission to agree to the above and asks to add more to list if wanted.

Commissioner Hamer clarifies that Ward would be ok to hear no new news

Deputy Jenson says no involvement in drought resilience. Tia volunteers to give a presentation at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lamkin thanks for reports and if we can have the backup in agenda packet

before it goes out to get questions together before the meeting

Jenson says there could be problems in printing that big of a doc. Maybe we can do a link instead of a document.

Hamer asks if Jenson is ok with having all of these on the agenda every month. Justin says that is fine. Crain says as long as we aren't being charged by consultants, it is important to have a standing agenda. Commissioner Englehardt wants materials ahead of time for productivity. Standing agenda ok and ward will provide list

Adjourn
1:06P.M

APPROVED _____
Chairperson

Tehama County Groundwater Commission

by _____ Deputy

We have been tasked with making decisions that will affect not only our children, but our children's children. As abundant as we might consider water to be when it is under our boots, it becomes an infinitely finite and invaluable resource, which is why our decisions and management actions must reflect the weight of this responsibility. So far, I believe, as do several experts in the field of hydrology, that we as a county, have failed. The state also believes that we have failed, as shown by their twice-fold rejection of our sustainability plan. We must now assume that the path we are on is the wrong one. If we must change paths, then we should do so with a purpose and strength of will and character in order to make several hard decisions to protect our groundwater. If we were anything but a rural county that has, as of the 2022 report by Ludroff & Scalmanini, 66,000 people, and with only 25,000 households according to the 2020 census; I would agree that the population base should be more responsible for reducing its consumption. However, in a 2006 report from the Department of Water Resources, it was determined that 95% of all pumped water went to agricultural interests. Therefore, it is unjust to expect that the county's population restricts their water use when they are responsible for only 5% of all pumped water. Thus, the responsibility for maintaining this resource must fall to the ag industry, which, by necessity, must stop its unfettered expansion and well drilling bonanza until we can establish through careful research, monitoring, and measurements, that our water table levels have stabilized. To manage our water at this moment, we must implement an Ag well moratorium. We must use our zoning ordinances to stop southern ag companies from expanding into historically dry grazeland. We must start a fallowing program to reduce the stress on the upper reaches of our aquifers that lay in the foothills. We must reinvest into our surface water districts and use our allotments from the Bureau of Reclamation. We must stop any more half-baked recharge plans that at most will put in hundreds of acre feet, instead of the tens of thousands that we require to sustain our current agricultural output. I am not blind, and I see that agriculture is the backbone of our economy and that people whose livelihoods depend on it will be disproportionately affected by these management actions. Many of you here today would see this as unfair, and unjust, and I sympathize with your outrage, hell, I've even shared it. Because by what right does any man have to be able to tell me what I can and cannot do on my own land or with my own property? But in that same breath, by what right does your pursuit of happiness by doing what you will with your own property supersede my right to life, that life being access to clean, safe, and reliable amounts of drinking water? By what right do a few dozen men's actions and pursuit of profit have to affect the wellbeing of the tens of thousands of Tehama County citizens who rely on well water? So now, I must ask, how can our elected officials continuously vote against the best interests for the future of the county? The best interests for your, mine, and everyone else's descendants. Will our children's children look back on us with pride in their eyes and their heads held high? Or will they hang their heads in shame and wish that we had made the difficult decisions required to protect the welfare of our county and manage its resources correctly so that it will outlive us and hopefully our descendants, until the very end of time itself. This is why we must come together as citizens, neighbors, friends, and family to jealously guard and protect our water for our future generations against those who would exploit it for profit, notoriety, or their otherwise selfish, self-serving interests.



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January 27, 2025

Dear Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Directors,

On behalf of the Tehama County Farm Bureau and Cattlemen Water Committee, we hope this letter finds you well and that you are settling into your roles as you begin or continue to represent the citizens of Tehama County.

Our committee believes recharge is one tool available to reach groundwater sustainability under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. We also believe that in lieu surface water is one of multiple avenues to access creeks, streams, reservoirs, and rivers to help us reach SGMA's goal of groundwater sustainability by 2040.

With that in mind, could you please provide us with a status report in writing or agendaize the following items and address them at an upcoming meeting:

- Description of each project and overdraft quantity in Acre Feet (AF) for each subbasin as submitted in the GSP
 - Recharge projects
 - In lieu/surface water project
 - 3F water delivery status
 - Water rights filing status and time expectations for granting those rights
- Timeline for implementation of each project
- List of projects that are feasible and expected to move forward
 - Conceptual design ideas for each feasible project, including AF recharge target
- List of projects unable to move forward and why
- Water deliveries into existing ag wells
- Containment structures
-

• Grant status

- How much of the \$15 million has been spent and what are the plans to implement Task 4 – Groundwater Recharge (\$4.1 million)
- How much of the \$15 million has been spent and what are the plans to implement Task 5 – Regional Water transfers, Full Surface Water Allocation (\$1.2 million)
- Can any of these grant funds be used to hire temporary county staff

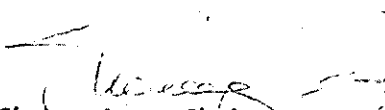
The mission of our committee is to protect and preserve water resources for the sustainable use of Tehama County agriculture for generations to come. We believe this is in our mutual interest.

Thank you for serving the citizens of Tehama County. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Janet Rabo, President

Tehama County Farm Bureau


Shanna Long, Chairman

TCFB Water Committee

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

- GROUNDWATER RECHARGE (monthly)
- RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE ISSUES (monthly)
 - Ordinance 2023-1 (Commission Bylaws)
 - Resolution 11-2022 (Review of Appeals Process)
 - Resolution 11-2022 (Inclusion of "REPLACE IN KIND" language to Well Regulations)
 - Resolution 11-2022 (Review of what's Discretionary)
 - Resolution 8-2024 status
 - Resolution 9-2022 Status
- GRANT STATUS (monthly)
 - Percent completion of each Task
 - Percent of funds available for each Task
- COUNTY DROUGHT RESILIENCE PLAN SB552 (monthly)
- GROUNDWATER DEPENDENT ECOSYSTEMS (monthly)
 - Status of GDE investigations
 - Property access issues
 - Correlation to Interconnected Surface Water (ISW) MT's.
- DEMAND MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP (monthly)
- WELL MITIGATION PLAN WORKING GROUP (monthly)
- ANNUAL REPORT STATUS (monthly during the 1st quarter of each year)
- OUTREACH
 - Transparency
 - Web site can be more of an outreach tool than it currently is.