



Tehama County
Wednesday, April 9, 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

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

8:31 AM

Roll Call

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

Public Comment

Liz Merry states that the December minutes on the website are a mistake and not approved by the board. Justin says come see me after meeting.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Clerk & Recorder** **25-0575**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 11/13/2024

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Adam Englehardt

SECONDER: Martha Slack

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

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Clerk & Recorder Lena Sequeira** **25-0576**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 2/12/2025

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Martha Slack

SECONDER: Liz Merry

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Clerk & Recorder Lena Sequeira 25-0577

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 3/12/2025

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Martha Slack

SECONDER: Adam Englehardt

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

4. Update on Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Work 25-0581

Presentation by recent Chico State graduates, Ryan Turner and Sabrina Nealson. During their presentation they will give an update the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems investigation. A Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) is defined as “things that depend on groundwater to survive near the surface”. These studies have been done via satellite imagery. They have been trying to refine information/data taken to see what is really a GDE and what is just an image from the satellite. They want to go in the field ground to observe and take data. This would give them better information/data to be able to see what actual GDE’s are in the area. They need landowners help to access more land to get better samples. Doing this would help determine if areas have GDE’s or if we can eliminate them from consideration.

Evan with LSCE gives additional background on GSP process. This project is covered under Prop 68 grant funding to refine GDE data in the Corning and Antelope Subbasins. They want to take the satellite imagery and ground truth it to make sure the GSP is taking into consideration the actual GDE’s and not mistaking them for invasive species (not a beneficial user of groundwater) from satellite imaging.

Deputy Director Jenson states that the more we can allow this group to do, the more we can get water demand associated with GDE’s. We want to get the number of water use by GDE accurate so we can use the water elsewhere.

Englehardt asks if we have list of landowners for the areas in question.

Jenson says he thinks we can get that by working together. If there is willingness to review the list and see if people know the landowners to help reach out.

Evan states they can get names of parcel owners, but there is difficulty with that

data sometimes.

Ward asks if there is any effort to identify the GED's on the Sacramento River.

Evan responds that yes in the areas it borders the Corning and Antelope Subbasins. There is also a permit pending along the Sacramento River.

Lawrence asks if we can separate from surface water feeding these to groundwater feeding these GDE's.

Evan says yes, but there are parameters. They are looking at sampling plant matter for Water and getting its signature to see if from surface or groundwater. In process of adding more monitoring to see what is reliant and what is not. There are a few different models to determine the difference.

Turner says the only way to truly identify what is a GDE and what is not, is to be on the ground getting data.

Hamer asks if there are gages and/or shallow wells for monitoring on Burch/Thomes creeks?

Evan responds letting him know that each location where a shallow well is installed will be coupled with a stream gage within the next year.

Member of the public asks what they define as a shallow well.

Evan says shallower than 100ft, but mostly 20-50 feet deep.

Turnbull from the Capay area asks how they are handling areas where there is significant intermix of GDE's and invasive species. He says that invasive consumes a lot of water. There might be an occasional native tree, so how are you going to handle the intermix?

Turner responds to the question and says initially, no. A mapping assessment is done and they want to label the mixed areas as mixed or incorrectly mapped. From there complete more sampling and compare.

There is more discussion on the concern of protecting invasive species and how they are going to define invasive vs GDE's.

Turner states that the goal of this project is to identify only with no means of removal/management.

A member of the public goes over data he got from some well monitoring on his own wells. Some wells have dropped and some have come up. His project is to contact his neighbors that have drilled new wells and measure them to see the fluctuating levels.

Slack asks if the wells that came up have any relation to streams? Member of the public states that it did not.

Englehardt asks if his property is in a special management zone

Jenson says he thinks it is on the outside.

6. Resolution X-XXXX

25-0580

Recommend approval by Board of Directors

This resolution would authorize the Director of Public Works to approve exemptions to well screening and sealing depth regulations. Jenson states if you recall that gives authority to The Commission to approve a notice of exemption at the same time it approves a variance to the well screening requirements. This resolution allows skipping a step by coming here instead of going to the board to get approved. It was decided that having two resolutions was the better answer. This is IF the criteria is not able to be “rubber stamped.” Which would mean the situation did not meet the criteria and staff could not process the application. It has to be a black and white non-decision making application.

Lawrence says being on same APN can be tricky.

Jenson says that's why the strata is incorporated and explains why

Ward states the intent for replacing in kind is close proximity to original well. Are we ok not being close?

Lester comments you aren't going to get too far away. If it's the same capacity and same purpose, then the functionality is the same. And if it comes up bring it to The Commission and we will look at it.

Crain states allowing for replacement then the same pumping is taking place. Not replacing a 1000gpm with 5000gpm well.

Englehardt states this is tough, but it creates a great balance. True replacement is determined by staff and if there is an exception then it comes here for review.

Jenson comments that it could be far away which is why there is the requirement from same strata. This limits it to being relatively close.

Ward asks about cost involved.

Hamer responds stating moving the well farther away is a cost burden on the owner, not a cost to us.

Jenson states if a well is 50 ft away, safe to say it is in the same strata. A well 1000ft away is likely not in the same and must come to The Commission.

Lester states for a replacement “in-kind” you're just trying to replace what you have.

Burroughs says to consider this is made to expediate the time frame. We want to be able to have you as business owners move faster and get a well to you when it is needed.

Merry suggests looking at what other counties do if we really want to help in an emergency. Sutter County has emergency repairs available. You can start repairs, call the well driller, then get permit within 48 hours.

Jenson responds stating if you are re-drilling an agricultural well, an E log can be started without drilling and can be started before permit is obtained.

Englehardt comments that this strikes a good balance.

There is discussion on verbiage used in the resolution and requests to maybe change some wording.

A resident expressed their thoughts on keeping this simple and encouraged to think more on the resolution before making a decision.

RESULT: APPROVE
MOVER: Adam Englehardt
SECONDER: David Lester
AYES: Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Crain, Commissioner Spannaus, Commissioner Englehardt, Commissioner Lester, Commissioner Merry, and Commissioner Godwin
NAYS: Commissioner Ward

5. Resolution X-XXXX

25-0578

Recommend resolution for approval to board.

This resolution authorizes the Groundwater Commission to approve Notices of Exemption related to an in-kind replacement of a groundwater well. It is essentially same resolution as above, incorporating the same criteria as before. The intent is to allow The Commission to approve the NOE (Notice of Exemption). The well owner would bring the NOE with exemption request to The Commission, skip a step and get everything approved all at once. Anyone can dispute an NOE at any time since it is posted publicly. This would shorten the time for a response for the well owner and protect whoever is doing the well installation.

Ward asks if he wanted to challenge and NOE how would he know it is issued?

Jenson responds through the state agency since it is posted publicly.

Hamer states one thing getting back to APN discussion. It says same site, do we need to clarify as APN?

Jenson responds stating CEQA uses the word site. He suggests leaving flexibility in the language and that this is his recommendation to keep verbiage in line with CEQA.

Englehardt states if the application did not meet staff approval, then this resolution makes it so the well owner can bring it to the commission. Then The Commission can decide and make the judgement call

Jenson clarifies that this is correct.

Lester states we would be able to have the authority to approve or deny and skip going to the board.

Hamer comments that this takes care of CEQA exemption and does it all in one step.

Jenson comments when Steve went through this before it was harder and there was more risk and delay. Doing things this way allows for more confidence in the application

Ward states he does not disagree with intent but has issues with some of the language. He questions if we have this authority to approve and would like to see this language in well construction regs.

General member of the public suggests walking through the process as if he was going to get an application. If he was not involved in this how could he know the process works?

Jenson clarifies that he created a bullet point direction sheet to give to Tia at Environmental Health. They would give the document and application to the applicant at the same time. Everyone who applies is informed on what the potential process could be at that time.

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: David Lester

SECONDER: Adam Englehardt

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

NAYS: Commissioner Ward

7. Standing Agenda Items

25-0579

1. Groundwater Recharge

The consultants have made a qualification matrix for recharge projects. There will be a recharge Ad Hoc for this group. This associates funds associated with projects to see what we get for our dollar. This will help us know what projects come first. Ad Hoc will decide then bring it here to The Commission for approval.

2. Grant Status

We are nearly done with multi completion monitoring wells. After that will be the shallow interval wells. We have completed a significant number of pilot studies.

Still working on, getting reimbursements from DWR. This is difficult and there has been a lot of time spent trying to get these done as efficiently as possible.

3. Demand Management Plan Working Group Update

Had working group meeting with presentation and run down. Jenson is working on STRAW proposal. Consultant time will not leave enough to get down to the technical memo. Basic direction from working group will get built in and put together.

Englehardt asks about collaboration with Corning Subbasin?

Jenson states they have a meeting date.

Englehardt expresses that cohesion would be very much appreciated.

4. Well Mitigation Plan Working Group Update

First couple Well Mitigation Ad Hoc meetings have taken place. They are getting parameters compiled to have it put together. After the framework is built they will take it to the working group.

Englehardt expresses that the matrix was very helpful

Jenson states the Ad Hoc is working really well.

5. Annual Report Status

Annual reports are in and Eddy will be presenting at the next meeting.

6. Outreach

Nothing major to report.

There is discussion to get more people to understand what is happening. The public in Tehama County tends to be hard to get in touch with. Thinking maybe a post card or a poll to get more responses.

Englehardt asks about GDE's. Can we make it an action item to provide a list of property owners so the commission can help us get in touch.

Jenson states this is a good idea to get peers involved. Residents will most likely be more willing if it comes from people they know rather than the government.

Englehardt - Decision for what route we pursue we are more strategic

Martha states they are moving forward well in well mitigation and it is working well.

Lawrence agrees that they are making progress quickly.

7.Commission Matters

Jenson introduces Adriana, the new Engineering Tech in Flood. Her role will be important to free up some time and divide to tackle projects.

Adjourn

10:03 AM

The County of Tehama does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its buildings, facilities, programs, services, or activities. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may be forwarded to the County's ADA Coordinator: Tom Provine, County of Tehama, 727 Oak St., Red Bluff, CA 96080, Phone: (530) 527-4655. Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and/or services or other accommodations for effective communication in the County's programs and services are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the affected department or the ADA Coordinator. For aids or services needed for effective communication during Groundwater Sustainability Agency Groundwater Commission meetings, please contact the ADA Coordinator prior to the day of the meeting. This notice is available in accessible alternate formats from the affected department or the ADA Coordinator.