Tehama County
Wednesday, June 11, 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

1. 8:31 AM 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 Martin Spannaus, Commissioner Adam Englehardt, Commissioner David Lester, and Commissioner Liz Merry
ABSENT	Commissioner Hal Crain, and Commissioner Jeff Godwin

2. Public Comment

A resident expressed their concern about a monitoring well and it's location. They had many questions on the monitoring well process.

Deputy Director Justin Jenson clarified the locations of the wells and how that is decided.

Commissioner Englehardt asked if the well in question impeded traffic flow or if it is the location in general that is of concern.

A resident clarified their concerns.

Jenson stated the goal of monitoring is to get data where there is no monitoring. We need to expand overall monitoring and fill in areas on the map where there is not a lot of data. If you look at polygon maps some have big areas with no monitoring.

Commissioner Crain asked how many deep wells have gone in with grant funding.

Eddy Teasdale with LSCE stated 8.

There was more discussion regarding the concerns of monitoring wells.

Commissioner Ward presented a PowerPoint created by a resident who is capturing data from wells in his region. The resident is monitoring wells around his area frequently and building a data set. They hope that DWR will work with the resident to establish another monitoring well in their area.

A resident expressed their concern on how often and what depth wells are being monitored at.

A resident spoke about the project he has initiated on his own land at his own expense. They have selected a site on their property for a pilot project. He hopes to get involvement from DWR.

Commissioner Hamer states he would like a presentation later down the road on the project details.

Commissioner Lester asks about acreage

The resident stated 150 acres of a little over 1000 acres, but there are 500-600 available for this treatment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Clerk & Recorder Lena Sequeira 25-1035

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 4/9/2025

RESULT: APPROVE
MOVER: Adam Englehardt
SECONDER: Seth Lawrence

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Crain, and Commissioner Godwin

4. Groundwater Conditions Update 25-1040

Deputy Director Jenson presented materials from the 2023-2024 water year annual report, as presented to the Board of Supervisors. He talked about the change in storage, historical data and the rapid decline we have seen.

There was discussion on measuring capacity and the different ways data is collected.

Jenson talked about the continuous drop in groundwater levels that we saw starting in the early 2000's. He talked about the different scenarios that can affect measuring a well at any specific time. The data from our original GSP shows measurable subsidence from 2008 to 2017

Commissioner Englehardt asked for clarification on the ordinance that was proposed last week.

There was discussion on the ordinance and different scenarios that would allow or not allow well installation in certain areas.

Jenson went over InSAR accuracy testing for an 8-year period with ground-based GPS.

Mr. Teasdale with LSCE talked about subsidence. He compared the accuracy of GPS vs inSAR data. He went over how this relates to the subsidence that has been detected, also differentiating between elastic and inelastic.

There is discussion on the data presented related to subsidence and Mr. Teasdale explained, since we don't have a GPS network in place this is the best way we can monitor.

Commissioner Lawrence asked if the subsidence is elastic or inelastic.

Mr. Teasdale stated that it is not differentiated by GPS. He talked about other subbasins and explained some data from Glenn County.

Englehardt asked what the cost would be to add GPS monitoring.

Mr. Teasdale stated that this would be considered as we get closer to the MT, with specific steps to be followed along the way. Since we are not there yet, the best course of action is to follow the best management practices recommended by DWR.

Commissioner Merry commented on the article that went out regarding subsidence and thanked Mr. Teasdale for explaining the finer points.

Supervisor Burroughs stated that the hillside by his house dropped almost half an inch over the last 10yrs. His opinion was that it is related to seismic activity and earthquakes are playing a part in the drop. He asked if it is a water issue or land movement issue?

Teasdale responded, stating that when looking into this you look at water use and levels. Seismic activity has not been looked at here, but it has been in other areas. His opinion is, that is not what's going on here

Jenson asked Teasdale; is it your belief there is measurable subsidence in the area due to lowering groundwater levels?

Teasdale responded, yes.

Jenson stated the reality is, we have falling groundwater levels in areas with measurable subsidence. If we get to the MT, the issues here will be significant. He stated that he wants it to be clear that nobody made anything up and he didn't write the news release, but this is happening.

A resident asked if it was elastic subsidence.

Jenson stated he is not sure because levels have not come back yet.

Teasdale explained that in some areas it might be and went over data graphs.

Englehardt asked how residents and farmers could support LSCE's work and contribute to the overall effort.

Teasdale responded by emphasizing the importance of following the best management practices coming from DWR

There was discussion on the critical head and how, once groundwater falls below a certain level, recovery may no longer be possible.

Crain agreed that data collection should continue and emphasized the importance of installing GPS stations.

Commissioner Lester expressed his opinion on data collection and the proposal to add more wells in focus areas. He argued that adding wells in areas of concern is unjustified and emphasized the importance of monitoring water use.

A Resident expressed their opinion and concerns regarding the addition of wells to focus areas.

Mr. Teasdale explained the rise and fall of elastic subsidence and walked through a graph to illustrate the changes. He pointed out subsidence in Colusa County and mentioned that it has caused infrastructure damage in areas to the south.

Teasdale spoke about the periodic evaluation due in 2027 and mentioned that a plan amendment will eventually be necessary. He noted there will be a chance to propose updates to the plan, but it will be up to DWR to decide if those revisions can move forward. He also highlighted the importance of the newly installed monitoring wells, adding that if the data from those wells supports sustainability, it will be a strong benefit to the overall effort.

Teasdale provided an explanation of the BMP amendment and noted that, moving forward, we need to consider the impacts of climate change in these discussions.

There was more discussion on what needs to be done going forward and what strategies will be most beneficial.

Teasdale talked about Prop 4 funding and explained how we can put that to good use.

5. Discussion on Potential Recommendations to Board of Supervisors **25-1053**

Open Discussion

Jenson explained that in previous meetings, there had been discussions about The District coordinating with other county departments, such as Planning or Environmental Health. He asked for input from the Commission on what topics they would like to begin coordinating on and with which departments, specifically regarding groundwater issues. He clarified that he wasn't seeking a formal recommendation at this time, but wanted to begin the conversation, as the topic has come up several times.

Commissioner Ward stated that he would like to review both the general plan and any future planning efforts. He expressed interest in gaining a better understanding of how various departments are involved in the development and implementation of the general plan.

Jenson explained that each section of the county has its own authority over specific activities. He clarified that the District does not have control over well installations, land use, or land use changes. He emphasized that if there are particular issues to address or departments to work with, he would like the District to take the lead in identifying and choosing those areas for coordination.

Englehardt thanked Jenson for raising the question and expressed appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for their support of the Commission during last week's ordinance discussion. He noted that Jenson was fair in asking the Commission for input and suggested that the Commission should also be asking Jenson and Teasdale what additional resources might be available. Referring to public comment, he pointed out that the issue appears to lack adequate resources. He then shared some of his own ideas on how things could be improved moving forward.

Merry suggested contacting the recommended departments to find out what topics they would like to discuss.

Lawrence added that it would be helpful in the near future to review submitted well applications. This would allow them to identify where new wells are being proposed and whether those locations fall within focus areas.

Jenson stated that he can arrange with Tia from Environmental Health to get updates.

Tia from Environmental Health said that hearing about 8-2024 for the first time from the public was shocking to her. She suggested being more open and encouraged others to come to them with questions. She also expressed a desire for all departments to come together, discuss the same issues, and stay on the same page so they can collaborate effectively.

Ward asked how something like that could be made to happen.

Tia suggested meeting once a month to stay updated on what's going on.

Merry suggested that representatives from different groups within these departments attend and listen, similar to how the Demand Management meetings are conducted.

Englehardt asked if they would receive a formal update on the status of demand management.

Jenson replied that he is providing one today.

Englehardt expressed his belief that those meetings should be held in a public forum.

A resident spoke about their perception of the GSA's authority, expressing their

thought that subsidence is being overshadowed and that the county has put itself at risk. They asked Jenson and County Counsel Daniel Klausner what the District plans to do to address the conditions outlined in 8-2024.

Daniel Klausner responded by saying that, looking at the past four years, he only takes action when asked by the board. If the board requests something, he follows through.

Jenson reiterated his intention to work with the Commission to determine the best way forward. He said he will present recommendations outlining the various options available.

6. Standing Agenda Items **25-1033**

Groundwater Recharge: The group is starting to meet and have discussions. Jenson explained how they have weeded through Prop 68 grant funding pilot tests to determine which projects are feasible to pursue. The group agreed on a ranking matrix to rate the feasible projects by starting priority. This is a “what to do next” guide when pilot tests don’t end up being feasible. There was discussion on how the projects are rated and costs associated.

Jenson explained the cost share with the Corning Subbasin. They pay for 1/3 of everything that goes into the Corning Subbasin. They requested to please consider having the Orland projects placed at the top of the matrix.

The ranking system for the matrix was based on most affected areas vs least affected areas. The goal today is to get input from The Commission and get a consensus to take to the board for approval.

Englehardt stated he is pleased with the initial matrix and the changes made to improve it. It is clear what qualified and it was not subjective. His opinion was that a vast majority of the projects can be completed. He reflected that data drove the conversations and talked about his opinion on the grant funding.

Jenson said he has been working separately with attorneys seeking groundwater rights for recharge projects. The goal is to see where water can be found, costs, timeframe, etc. These efforts will not be grant funded, they will have come out of the baseline budget.

A motion was made to approve taking the ranking matrix to the Board of Directors.

RESULT: APPROVE
MOVER: Adam Englehardt
SECONDER: David Lester

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Crain, and Commissioner Godwin

Grant Status: Jenson stated the biggest challenge has been timely issues with the billing and reimbursement processes. A meeting has been set up with DWR to see how we can make this more efficient.

The Cone Grove project is complete, so the focus can move to shallow monitoring wells.

Englehardt inquired about the presentation where they asked for landowner contacts.

A resident with the Tehama County Farm Bureau stated they could be involved in helping get landowner contacts.

Jenson said he can send the map.

Ward asked about an outreach workshop taking place.

Demand Management Plan Working Group: The last meeting was very productive. Jenson brought forward proposed pieces of the STRAW proposal and explained the fee structure. There will be incentivized actions built into the program that would eliminate fees to reduce use. Overall, the last meeting was successful because there was clear direction on how the group is going to proceed. We can expect a clear outline of a program very soon.

Ward asked if we are on track for the tech memo draft by the 25th.

Teasdale stated yes.

Englehardt requested a brief presentation of the proposed plan and how it would work with examples specific to a certain area. He felt it would be good to see how the process is applied in a real-time scenario.

Jenson responded stating he will do that once the plan is agreed on in the working group and after legal reviews.

Well Mitigation Plan Working Group: The group has a very well put together plan. Jenson says they are waiting before getting together with the Demand Management Working Group. After the 4th of July week they should be able to get together. Tia from Environmental Health will be a part of those meetings to give input. They have a very good baseline to present to the group.

Annual Report Status: Report Completed, no immediate response. There will be a presentation when the results are in.

Outreach: Jenson is doing a group get together on 6/24 in Los Molinos. The groups presenting are associated with SGMA. The event will target large AG groups in the area, making this a beneficial way to get information out to the public.

There was discussion on the details of the event and it was requested that the flyer be shared with the group.

Commission Matters

A representative with the Department of Water Resources wanted to extend the offer for any informational presentations. They support GSA's in the Northern Region and wanted to mention that DWR is having meetings with Nor Cal. They meet every other month for one year.

Jenson stated that he heard people saying they disliked DWR, so he wanted to bring up an important point. DWR is the vast majority for our data providers. The folks that work locally are our assistance group who do work for us for free, they are not our direct regulators.

The representative from DWR again encouraged residents to reach out specifically in regards to recharge. A lot of the smaller recharge projects are cumulative, and they make a difference.

A resident expressed their appreciation for the local DWR and stated they have always been helpful.

Commissioner Hamer requested that Jenson send out the presentations to The Commission.

Adjourn
10:49 AM

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