TEHAMA COUNTY GROUNDWATER COMMISSION

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

AGENDA FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025

8:30 AM

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; Lena Sequeira, Administration

This meeting conforms to the Brown Act Open Meeting Requirements, in that actions and deliberations of the Groundwater Commission, created to conduct the people's business are taken openly; and that the people remain fully informed about the conduct of its business. Any written materials related to an open session item on this agenda that are submitted to the Clerk less than 72 hours prior to this meeting, and that are not exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act, will promptly be made available for public inspection at Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, 1509 Schwab Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080 during normal business hours.

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

Public Comment

This time is set aside for citizens to address this Board on any item of interest to the public that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of this Board provided the matter is not on the agenda or pending before this Board. Each agenda item will have an opportunity for public comment at the time the item is called. Persons wishing to provide public comment are asked to address the Board from the podium. The Chair reserves the right to limit each speaker to three (3) minutes. Disclosure of the speaker's identity is purely voluntary during the public comment period.

For audio and real-time commenting via phone:
(530) 212-8376, conference code 142001. Press 5* on your phone keypad to raise your hand

to comment.

For live audio of the meeting:
Go to: https://tehamacounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 13 2025 **25-1970**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 8/13/2025

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - September 10 2025 **25-1971**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 9/10/2025

3. Groundwater Recharge Presentation by LSCE **25-1974**

Updated presentation on the status of recharge projects.

4. Well Mitigation Presentation **25-1973**

For discussion.

5. Standing Agenda Items **25-1972**

1. Groundwater Recharge
2. Grant Status
3. Demand Management Plan Working Group Update
4. Well Mitigation Plan Working Group Update
5. Annual Report Status
6. Outreach

6. Commission Matters

Adjourn

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.

Tehama County

Agenda Request Form

File #: 25-1970 **Agenda Date:** 11/12/2025 **Agenda #:** 1.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 13 2025

Requested Action(s)
a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 8/13/2025

Financial Impact:
None

Background Information:

Tehama County
Wednesday, August 13, 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

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; Lena Sequeira, Administration

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

8:31 AM

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

Public Comment

Liz Merry retracted her previous comment expressing displeasure with a law firm. She clarified that the firm provided the opinion on the 0.29 fee tax, but the county counsel chose not to follow it. She stated that the firm did not perform poorly; the decision was made by the county counsel.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES 25-1406

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 6/11/2025

RESULT:	APPROVE
MOVER:	Martha Slack
SECONDER:	Michael Ward
AYES:	Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Crain, Commissioner

	Spannaus, Commissioner Englehardt, and Commissioner Merry
ABSENT:	Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Lester, and Commissioner Godwin

2. Estimated Funds Required Presentation **25-1416**

Jenson provided an overview of the budget presentation, stating that the document was prepared with guidance from consultants and input from staff. He clarified that the figures reflect operating and compliance expenses and provided a detailed explanation of each expense category.

Jenson explained that PMA-based activities are divided into separate budgets for Demand Management and Well Mitigation. Incentive programs will be funded through Demand Management, while the well replacement program will be funded through Well Mitigation.

Englehardt asked if the funds will be held specifically for well replacement.

Jenson stated that the funds are maintained in a buffer account designated for Proposition 68 reimbursable expenses.

Englehardt asked if the yields from the account can be used to generate revenue.

Jenson confirmed that they can.

Discussion followed regarding baseline costs for Demand Management.

Merry asked how $200 would address an acre-foot of water.

Jenson explained that the amount is a budgetary estimate rather than a fixed cost. He described several scenarios used to develop the estimate and how the number was determined.

Continued discussion took place on Demand Management and the overall budget breakdown.

Jenson reiterated that he is seeking input to present to the Board. He explained that expenditures are similar across programs, with variations based on which program implements the work. He discussed different approaches and suggested that incentive-based methods may be more effective than imposing additional fees

Lester asked if the budget could be assessed annually.

Jenson responded that it represents a five-year estimate and can be adjusted as needed based on actual conditions.

Crain asked how many total irrigated acres are in the county.

Jenson replied that there are approximately 130,000 acres.

Discussion followed regarding fees, costs, and alternative implementation pathways.

Jenson commented that staff recommends breaking the budget into two sections.

Discussion followed on the timeline of grant funding, the volumetric method, and the number of wellheads.

Englehardt asked whether information is available from other subbasins.

Jenson responded that such data exists, but results vary widely. He encouraged the Commissioners to begin considering feedback and comments to share with the Directors, noting that each monthly meeting will build on the previous discussion until final recommendations are reached.

Further discussion took place regarding municipal water systems and the potential community impacts of charging fees.

Englehardt stated that he would like a better understanding of the assumptions behind the $200 cost for incentives and the $400 cost for projects.

Jenson responded that these figures will become clearer as Proposition 68 funding progresses.

Discussion followed on incentives and operating costs.

Jenson stated that, in his opinion, the group has a clear understanding of their current position.

Ward asked about spending projections and shared his perspective on long-term incentive projects.

Jenson explained that some elements of the plan are based on a five-year horizon and that funding will accumulate over time. He emphasized beginning baseline incentive activities immediately and recommended that fee collection start on day one.

Lawrence clarified that Well Mitigation funds may not be needed for the first few years; however, a dry year could require the use of all available funding.

Jenson agreed, stating that dry wells will be more challenging in certain years.

Slack asked if the fee structure that is decided will remain in place for five years.

Jenson stated that the fee will be set with a requirement to review it every five years, at which time adjustments may be made.

Englehardt asked how the use of surface water will be incentivized and whether that could be reflected in the fee structure

Jenson commented that by making groundwater more expensive, it creates an incentive to use surface water.

Lamkin stated that it may be useful to have an analysis of the fees showing what it would look like if the state were to assume management. She reiterated that there would be no benefit, as the costs would simply be paid to the state.

Jenson agreed that comparing the total volumetric cost of each option would help inform decision-making.

There was discussion about providing meeting materials in advance for commissioner review.

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

3. Standing Agenda Items **25-1400**

Groundwater Recharge
Jenson informed the group that outside legal services have been contacted to provide documentation on how to identify surface water supplies. This will help the group understand options for generating recharge. An Ad Hoc committee is associated with this effort and will compare available water with projects that use similar amounts.

Grant Status
Eddy Teasdale with LSCE provided an update on the grant status. He began by explaining the concept of DWR managing the subbasins, noting that if this were to occur, it would be temporary.

Teasdale began by discussing Demand Management and noted that there are two separate tracks. The Corning Subbasin is required to have its demand management program in place by 2027, while Tehama's must be completed by 2026. He presented the framework document developed by CSAB and reviewed the next steps related to demand management

There was discussion on the grant funds available to support the framework

Teasdale provided an update on the groundwater model and how it contributes to the periodic evaluation. He stated that efforts are being made to combine the models for the Tehama County and Corning subbasins, as it is inefficient to maintain separate models. He noted that it would be beneficial to utilize a single model countywide and explained the concept of extending the Tehama model into Glenn. Teasdale reviewed the different models currently in use and discussed the benefits of having one unified model across the county

There was discussion on the voluntary agreements in the Sacramento Valley

Teasdale stated that the GSPs have been approved and provided an explanation of the periodic evaluation, noting that efforts are being made to simplify the process to reduce the workload. He explained the difference between a periodic evaluation and an amendment, and noted that the next periodic evaluation is due in 2027

There was discussion on the process for submitting an amendment

Teasdale recommended moving forward with the periodic evaluation, noting that a plan amendment may be necessary in the future. He added that collecting additional data from the newly installed wells over the next few years would be beneficial.

There was discussion on setting MOs and MTs.

Teasdale stated that the GSPs were submitted to DWR and approved but noted that there are corrective actions to be addressed in the periodic evaluation. He reviewed those requirements Jenson stated that this will be brought back to the board for consensus.

Teasdale explained that the funds are set to expire in 2026 and noted there is hope that some may be extended through that year, though an official response is still pending. He provided a snapshot of projects requiring feasibility studies, noting that all but one have been completed

Teasdale provided an update on the status of water rights for groundwater recharge purposes.

An update on water rights was provided, noting that signatures are still pending. Once received, temporary water rights for recharge will be established. It was explained that if a declaration of imminent danger of flood is issued in the county, there is an opportunity to divert flood flows. The potential volumes are significant if storage options are available for later use, and it was noted that using surface water will be more cost-effective than pumping groundwater

Public Comment

A resident asked about the Bowman Subbasin.

Teasdale responded that Bowman did not receive funding through this grant for Bowman-specific projects, which is why it is not shown on the map.

Teasdale provided an update on the well monitoring video cameras that were purchased. He stated that funds are available to perform video inspections on wells, and the intent is for residents to be able to use the cameras on their own wells

Jenson commented that another potential benefit is determining whether a well is actually dry or if it has collapsed

Hal asked about the cost.

Teasdale responded that the cost is $9,000 each and noted that previously, a contractor had to be hired each time a video inspection was needed

Spannaus asked how deep the cameras go.

Teasdale stated that he believes the cameras can reach depths of up to 1,000 feet

Demand Management

Jenson provided an update, stating that a meeting has just occurred and the response list is being reviewed. He noted that the STRAW proposal has been presented and hopes discussions will begin with this group after one more meeting

Well Mitigation
Jenson provided an update, stating that the first working group meeting is now being scheduled. He noted that a proposal is in place, so the meeting will focus on providing commentary for potential changes

Annual Report
Jenson stated that this item was covered earlier in the meeting.

Outreach
Jenson informed the group that an outreach questionnaire email was sent out. The goal is to gather input on public perceptions of the issues at hand. He noted that once the data is received, an update will be provided and emphasized that completing the survey helps guide decision-making. Jenson asked attendees to promote the email, noting that the collected information could be very helpful in the future.

Merry commented on the survey, stating that she had issues completing it

4. Commission Matters

None

Adjourn

9:58 AM

Tehama County

Agenda Request Form

File #: 25-1971 **Agenda Date:** 11/12/2025 **Agenda #:** 2.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - September 10 2025

Requested Action(s)
a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 9/10/2025

Financial Impact:
None

Background Information:

Tehama County
Wednesday, September 10, 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 AM

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; Lena Sequeira, Administration

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

8:31 AM

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

Public Comment

Frank Andres goes over map and shows the area where he is measuring well water levels. The device he uses is 98-99 percent accurate and goes down to 2000ft. He is measuring 18 wells and gets the measurements once per month. Thinks that injection wells are the only way to refill the aquifer.

Martha asks what the average depth of the wells he is measuring.

Franks says 250-300ft. However two wells just went dry and to get a new well with enough water he had to go doen to 700ft. Another that went dry had to be drilled to 450 ft, the original well was 235ft. He has agreed t have the state come in to monitor some of his wells.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES **25-1574**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 7/9/2025

RESULT:	APPROVE
MOVER:	Martha Slack
SECONDER:	Liz Merry
AYES:	Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Lester, Commissioner Merry, and Commissioner Godwin
ABSENT:	Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Crain, Commissioner Spannaus, and Commissioner Englehardt

2. Annual Report Letter Corning Subbasin WY2024 **25-1573**

Dave Lester joined the meeting during the approval of the minutes (Item #1). Jenson reviewed a letter from the SGMA Management Office following submission of the annual reports. The letter requests additional information, noting that several monitoring points qualify for undesirable results and asking the county to report the maximum low. Jenson explained that a data gap occurred when wells were transferred from the state to the county, resulting in lost information. He noted that the state is responsible for tracking which wells were monitored during that period

Ward provided comments on the Red Bluff Annual Report.

Jenson said he had not officially received it yet.

A resident asked who was responsible for monitoring the wells and what the protocol is for that process

Jenson responded that the majority of wells in Tehama County are monitored by the county, though he did not have exact numbers available

Hamer discussed how the monitoring responsibilities for the wells are divided

3. Presentation on Volumes for Fee Setting **25-1580**

Jenson explained that this presentation is the next in a series aimed at reaching an agreement on how to proceed with fees. He reviewed the various ways fees could be allocated and provided data on the number of wells and connections within the basins, noting that the vast majority of water use in the basin comes from groundwater. He also discussed the total acreage within the county, including irrigated land, and compared crop type data with state figures.

Discussion on service districts serving domestic wells.

Jenson reviewed the percentages of land use and groundwater consumption, noting that the majority of groundwater is used for crop irrigation and densely populated areas. He explained that dividing costs based on the volume of water used could help determine a fair fee structure and guide the group's discussion on how to proceed Ward asked if the last part of the presentation would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Jenson confirmed it will be included on the next agenda. He explained that the upcoming presentation will focus on dividing funds across volumetric types and is intended to gather feedback on reasonable options moving forward.

4. Review of Draft Proposed to Demand Management Program Along with Current Status in Working Group **25-1584**

Jenson began by explaining that this is a detailed topic covering the proposed Demand Management Program. He noted that the STRAW proposal is divided into three parts: potential incentives to reduce use, defining key terms, and establishing triggers and actions to reduce demand when those triggers are met

The first part of the program focuses on incentives, using funds identified in the fee presentation to encourage reduced demand. Jenson explained that the goal is to provide direct incentives for growers to lower groundwater use. He discussed how improving irrigation efficiency would be the most impactful and cost-effective approach, providing several examples of possible methods. He also highlighted soil improvement as another strategy to enhance irrigation efficiency and further reduce water use

Jenson explained that there are two types of incentives that can be used. The first is a direct, or given, incentive—paying for something on behalf of the participant. The second is an avoidance incentive, where using less water results in lower costs. He noted that the proposed approach incorporates elements of both types and described how they would work together within the program

Ward stated that he wanted to discuss the use of surface water versus groundwater. He noted that he had spoken with several commissioners on the topic and that they felt it is an important component of the overall plan.

Jenson stated that much of that work is already being addressed through SGMA implementation funding

Ward asked if that work was being done through recharge efforts.

Jenson responded that there is in-lieu work included in the grant, with some projects already underway and partially funded through that source. He noted that a significant amount of research has been gathered and additional data is expected. Jenson emphasized that some form of incentive will be necessary to encourage participation and support change

Discussion took place on incentivizing change and implementing in-lieu projects

Discussion took place regarding water allotments for the water districts and how unused allotments could supplement groundwater usage. The group also discussed the reliability of the water districts.

Jenson began reviewing the definitions section of the Demand Management Plan in detail.

Discussion took place on the definition of a polygon and the considerations involved in developing it.

Additional discussion followed on how monitoring wells are measured and the overall process involved.

Ward shared his opinion on the definition of a trigger and emphasized its importance

Jenson began discussing the restrictive side of the program, as opposed to the incentive-based approach. He explained that the program is set up initially, but restrictions are delayed to allow exploration of other options first. This provides groundwater users time to adjust, gives the group additional time to collect data, and allows for evaluation of the effectiveness of incentive-based actions.

Jenson reviewed the management actions in detail.

Discussion took place regarding the provided percentages, the sources of the recommendations, and questions on how the fees would be assessed.

Jenson assured the group that a full legal review would be conducted by an outside consultant.

Discussion took place regarding water volume used and the associated cost to remedy or cure the usage

Jenson explained that administrative activities would reduce usage and groundwater levels would increase. He noted that once groundwater returns to the target level, no fees would be charged after two consecutive years. He emphasized that this outlines what would occur if the plan is adopted.

Brief discussion took place on how decreases in groundwater levels would be managed.

Discussion took place on lifting restrictions once groundwater levels stabilize and the timeframe for doing so.

Jenson reminded the group that the goal is to remove penalties once groundwater levels return to target. He advised that lifting restrictions as soon as practical is the preferred approach and stated that, in his opinion, this method achieves the desired outcome.

Lester stated that, in his opinion, it does not make sense to penalize someone for being within the sustainable range, which aligns with SGMA’s intended goals.

Discussion took place on structuring restrictions to change behavior, with the subsequent removal of the fee serving as the reward.

Discussion took place on incentives for having wells metered, as well as other options to reduce water usage that do not involve well metering.

Jenson discussed management action number two, Sustainable Yield Pumping, noting that it works in conjunction with management action number one. He explained the concept and emphasized that this action reduces groundwater extraction through ordinance.

Discussion took place regarding the fines associated with this section of the program.

Ward asked about the Corning Subbasin, specifically whether, if groundwater levels remain below the MT in 2031, the basin would immediately enter the Sustainable Yield Pumping phase at that time.

Jenson responded that yes, the basin would enter Sustainable Yield Pumping if the issue is not resolved within the next few years.

Discussion took place regarding sustainable pumping in the Corning Subbasin.

Jenson reviewed topics for further discussion, including MOs, MTs, and the timing of triggers.

Discussion took place regarding the remaining work that needs to be completed and the time required to accomplish it.

Jenson discussed triggers, explaining the difference between using an MT versus an MO to initiate action. He reviewed the polygon methodology and noted that a modeling system will be run to provide additional data on subsurface conditions, which will aid in decision-making. He also addressed the differences between inland and river-adjacent wells and their direct correlation with river levels.

Jenson explained how inland wells, particularly in the Red Bluff Subbasin, are affected by the river. He detailed how these wells can interact with river flows and noted that inland wells may actually be drawing from river levels.

Jenson explained the water portfolio management approach and expressed hope for general consensus on resolving the water trading program. He noted that the program cannot be fully developed before going to the board and would therefore require a separate plan. Jenson discussed how the basins affect each other and expressed hope that adjusting these dynamics over time will help achieve sustainable water levels. He stated that he is uncertain about conditions beyond the basin boundaries, including Glenn, Stony Creek, and Colusa. He outlined commitments that have been made, noting that conservation will be incorporated, though recharge remains uncertain. He also discussed fees, new development, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems. Ward commented that he hopes the commission will have the opportunity to provide input on recommendations related to new development.

Jenson stated that if the group wishes to address that, it can be added to the agenda as a separate item.

Hamer asked what was being requested of the commission today.

Jenson responded that he needed input on high-level issues, particularly regarding the use of MOs versus MTs for management. He noted that DWR's guidance is to manage toward achieving the goal.

Slack stated that she supports using MOs, noting that she believes this approach is a more progressive way to achieve the goals.

Merry stated that she agreed with Slack.

Further discussion took place on MOs versus MTs, with commissioners sharing their preferred methods. They reviewed additional details of the two approaches and discussed how to communicate the process and outcomes to residents.

Jenson stated that he is working with the RCD to develop collaborative relationships.

Discussion took place on how to differentiate a farm operation from smaller-scale operations, such as hobby farms.

Public Comment

A resident asked whether there are initial estimates for the maximum pumping rates.

Jenson responded that the estimates range from the high 4s to the low 5s.

A resident raised concerns regarding the trigger for voluntary measures and the fines imposed for pumping over the allocated amount. They asked whether this could be considered a nuisance and what actions could be taken. The resident also shared their thoughts on the fee structure, expressed opinions on litigation, and referenced an article about fees in San Diego.

Hamer responded, noting that the resident's reference to the 218 process was not applicable to the current discussion.

The resident continued to share their perspective on the article.
Jenson addressed the resident's concerns and discussed the balance between incentives and fees.

5. Standing Agenda Items **25-1567**

Groundwater Recharge: Jenson commented that they are still waiting to hear back from attorneys regarding where water can be sourced.

Grant status: Jenson stated that preparing NOEs and landowner agreements are the next steps for this category.

Demand Management: Covered earlier in the meeting in detail.

Well Mitigation: Jenson noted that a meeting will be held next week with live listening. The plan is well-advanced, and there is strong consensus on its direction.

Annual Report: The report is complete, and a presentation will be given once it is released.

Outreach: Efforts are underway to distribute information to the public. Efficiency-based incentive outreach is being sent out, and a survey targeting private well owners has received a strong response. Jenson encouraged everyone to help spread the word to maximize input.

Discussion on the annual report and missing information.

6. Commission Matters

Martha discussed a notice she received from DWR regarding an agency currently in hearings and moving under state administration. She noted that the state plans to charge the agency $200 per acre-foot of water for management.

Jenson commented that it would be unfortunate if the state took over management, as they would also implement mandatory monitoring.

Adjourn

11:34 AM

Tehama County

Agenda Request Form

File #: 25-1974 **Agenda Date:** 11/12/2025 **Agenda #:** 3.

Groundwater Recharge Presentation by LSCE

Requested Action(s)
Updated presentation on the status of recharge projects.

Financial Impact:
N/A

Background Information:
N/A

Tehama County

Agenda Request Form

File #: 25-1973 **Agenda Date:** 11/12/2025 **Agenda #:** 4.

Well Mitigation Presentation

Requested Action(s)
For discussion.

Financial Impact:
Unknown

Background Information:
Review of well mitigation program from working group prior to legal review.

Tehama County

Dry Well Mitigation Ad Hoc and Working Group Overview

Prepared for the 11.12.2025 Groundwater Commission Meeting

Who's Involved

Working Group & Ad Hoc Members

- Martin Spannaus (Tehama County Farm Bureau)
- Tia Branton (Tehama County Environmental Health)
- Commission Ad Hoc Members
  - Martha Slack (Rio Alto WD)
  - Seth Lawrence (District 3)
  - Todd Hamer (Los Molinos CSD)

Staff and Support

- Justin Jenson and Adriana Langarica (District)
- Stephanie Horii, Facilitator for Working Group (CBI)

Well Mitigation Program Development Process & Current Status

Purpose

- DWR approved revised GSPs, included commitments to management actions (2025)
  - Board Resolution No. 3-2024 to develop Well Mitigation Program
- Address water well impacts from declining groundwater levels from GSA management activities during GSP implementation

Progress and Status:

- The initial straw proposal developed by the Ad Hoc during the summer
- Working Group met Sept 23 and Oct 16 to review the straw proposal and address remaining issues
  - *(Note: WG meeting information, including slides and audio recordings, are on website)*
- Staff conducting outreach and potential coordination with related programs and potential partners

Objectives and Discussion Topics/Issues

Objectives &

Guiding Principles

Fair and simple program

Focus help where it's needed

Fiscal responsibility

Timely, realistic service

Data-driven & Adaptive

Key Issues Discussed Included:

- Eligibility criteria and causation determination
- Application process and fee
- Age-of-well pro-rated
- Single reimbursement cap
- Reimbursement process
- Abandoning/sealing old well
- Well owner education
- Funding and financing
- Monitoring and adaptive management

Major tradeoff Considerations

Objective decision-making vs. case-by-case evaluation

- data-driven aligned with the GSP
- Use representative monitoring sites (RMS) wells and the GSPs' Sustainable Management Criteria

Fairness across well ages vs. unrelated wear & tear

- 40-yr framework same as DWR estimates; 2.5%/yr pro-rated;
- potential for proxy evidence

Single program/cap vs. Separate customized

- Single program and cap across well types
- Fair, clear steps, doesn't "reward" major overpumping

Affordability vs. cost recovery; deter misuse

- Application fee should be high enough to cover initial assessment costs and deter frivolous claims yet stay affordable

(not a comprehensive list of topics discussed)

Major tradeoff Considerations (Continued)

Immediate water needs vs. Program costs

- District covering drinking water costs up 3-6 months
- Leverage NVCF drinking water program

Other cost-saving and fiscal responsibility strategies:

- Objective criteria to streamline determinations
- Aim to leverage internal resources and District staff as much as possible
- Leverage partnerships and existing programs like NVCF for emergency drinking water
- Require competitive contractor bids

(not a comprehensive list of topics discussed)

Next Steps and Topics Still to be Addressed

Next Steps

- No additional Working Group meetings planned at this time
- Legal review
- Board review and potential approval in December
- Program effective January 1, 2026
  (may be a few months before District is ready to process first application)

Ongoing Issues for Program Development and Implementation

- Costs validation and long-term budgeting
- Legal considerations
- Implementation timing and staff/resource capacities
- Improving monitoring network in key data-sparse areas
- Well owner education and outreach

Tehama County Well Mitigation Program

Straw Proposal

I. Program Overview

In response to Department of Water Resources (DWR) Incomplete Determination Letter, the Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) has committed to undertake mitigation actions for water well impacts resulting from declining groundwater levels that occur from Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) management activities during the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Implementation Period. The District will develop and implement a Well Mitigation Program (Program) Program to address these impacts aligned with the requirements under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

A. Key Terms Defined

1. District – Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
2. Dry well – a groundwater well that has gone dry due to GSA-management activities that have resulted in chronic declining groundwater levels.
3. DWR – California Department of Water Resources
4. GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency
5. GSP – Groundwater Sustainability Plan
6. NVCF - North Valley Community Foundation
7. Program – refers to the Tehama County Dry Well Mitigation Program
8. RMS – Representative Monitoring Sites (refers to wells in the monitoring network)
9. SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
10. SMC – Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC specifics like undesirable results, minimum thresholds, and measurable objectives are defined in subbasin GSPs)

B. Program Structure and Guiding Principles

The Program will be a **single, unified program for all well types (domestic and non-domestic)** with clear, objective criteria that targets wells most likely impacted by GSA management-related chronic groundwater declines and stays financially and operationally viable for the District.

Guiding Principles

1. Mitigate dry-well impacts caused by GSA management-related chronic declines in groundwater levels.
2. Ensure timely access to water via temporary supply, then a replacement well with clear steps and timelines
3. Advance balanced fairness with a single program with a single monetary cap to avoid inequities between domestic and non-domestic wells, while also prioritizing protecting basic household water needs.

4. Balance near-term mitigation with the long-term groundwater sustainability goals established in the GSPs' Sustainable Management Criteria (SMCs).
5. Ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability through objective criteria and processes, requiring competitive bids and appropriate documentation, etc.
6. Be data-driven and adaptive by using nearby monitoring wells, improve monitoring where needed, and adjust as conditions change.

C. Program Services

Key services that the Program will provide include:

- **Educational information** to well owners before applying and paying an application fee.
- **Initial assessment** and **eligibility determination**
- Coordination support for **temporary drinking water**
- **Monetary-capped reimbursement** to the owner for required well abandonment/sealing and construction of a replacement well (including equipment)

II. Program Eligibility and Application

A. Who Can Apply

- Applications can only be submitted by Property Owners; lessees may be considered on a case-by-case basis (consult legal counsel).
- No income threshold to be eligible for the Program.
- Applicants must be in good standing with District and Environmental Health Department at the time of application.
- Limited to one reimbursement per parcel. The designated monetary value shall be used once per specified parcel and will be recorded with title.

B. Well Documentation and Requirements

- Applicants must submit documentations pertaining to the well, such as initial installation or maintenance paperwork.
- Applicant will not be eligible if well permit application recommendations were not followed for wells installed on or after October 2021 (e.g., screens or seal depths).

C. Age of Well Pro-ration

- Eligibility will not be limited by age but there will be a pro-rated rate by age of well. The District will apply a 40-year framework with a pro-rated reimbursement value of 2.5% annually up to 40 years.
  Note: the 40-year cap aligns with CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) typical well/equipment lifespan standard.

- If age-of-well records are missing, the District may consider proxy evidence (e.g., home age for domestic wells) or initial assessment documentation. This would likely be handled in an administrative appeal.

III. Mitigation Measures and Well Owner Obligations

A. Eligible Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures that are eligible for reimbursement within a single-monetary cap include:

- Abandonment/sealing of the existing well to protect public health and groundwater quality.
- Temporary access to drinking water (if applicable). Well owners may be eligible for receiving drinking water through other programs such as the North Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) DWR-funded emergency water delivery program.
- Construction of replacement well, including necessary equipment.

B. Temporary Drinking Water Support

- The District will be taking actions to mitigate, prior to installation of new well by giving applicant access to drinking water (consult legal).
- The District will cover up to three (3) months with the potential for an extension (up to three additional months) per documentation rationalizing the delay.

C. Initial Assessment and Eligibility Determination

Eligibility determination for mitigation will be based on evaluations of impact being induced by groundwater overdraft conditions such as chronic lowering of groundwater levels.

The appropriate Program mitigation measures for each mitigated well will be informed by and determined following a structured, programmatic initial well evaluation process involving (but not limited to):

- District response and scheduling the in-field initial assessment within ten (10) business days of submitted application. (Note: the eligibility determination may take additional time)
- Inspection of the conditions of the well, including assessment of the current or anticipated operational issue(s) associated with the well and underlying causes of those impacts. Assessment will be conducted by the District or District Contractor.
- Determination that the well impacts are related to groundwater management during the GSP Implementation Period (e.g., not related to effects of normal wear and tear on drinking water wells).

- Determinations should be based on the nearest Representative Monitoring Sites (RMS) and the subbasin's SMCs.

D. Well Owner Obligations

After application is deemed eligible, the well owner will be required to do the following obligations:

1. Complete a course on well education if admitted to the program
2. Ensure the property owner (or the owner's assigned representative at the time of application) is on site at the scheduled appointment for the in-field initial assessment and provide site access.
3. Obtain and provide the District with documentation of at least three (3) competitive bids from contractors to confirm reasonable cost.
4. Seal and abandon the old well once the replacement becomes operational.
5. Post-mitigation responsibilities (ex. operations, maintenance and repair of well)

IV. Funding and Financing

- **No Income Threshold.** As previously mentioned, there will be no income threshold to be eligible for the Program.
- **Application Fee.** There will be a non-refundable application fee. The application fee will include an initial assessment of the well, which will offset the cost if approved for the mitigation program.
  - Note: To date, the exact monetary value for the application fee has not been determined. Cost considerations include offsetting the initial assessment costs, deterring frivolous applications, while still remaining affordable.
- **$40,000 Reimbursement Cap**. Total monetary value will be capped at **$40,000**. The amount is subject to change (e.g., available funds for the Program). A single monetary cap across all well types supports fair treatment across different well uses.
- Note: To date, the exact reimbursement method and process has not yet been determined. Process considerations include timeliness and efficiency (e.g., possible contingency options if reimbursement takes long than 30 days).

V. Program Implementation

- **January 1, 2026:** Program adopted upon adoption the District Board of supervisors will, within 180 days, approve the ordinances necessary to implement the program
  Note: Additional time will likely be needed after January 1, 2026 before the District is able to complete its first application.
- The GSA will continue to improve the monitoring network. New RMS wells in data-sparse areas will help ensure better accuracy informing eligibility determinations.

- District staff will keep the Groundwater Commission and the Board of Directors apprised of Program activities (e.g., number of applications, approved eligible candidates, well installations, etc.).

Tehama County

Agenda Request Form

File #: 25-1972 **Agenda Date:** 11/12/2025 **Agenda #:** 5.

Standing Agenda Items

Requested Action(s)

1. Groundwater Recharge
2. Grant Status
3. Demand Management Plan Working Group Update
4. Well Mitigation Plan Working Group Update
5. Annual Report Status
6. Outreach