

Ukiah Valley Technical Advisory Committee Draft MOU Framework

This document presents a draft framework for a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to support the Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA).

1. Parties:

- Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- California Land Stewardship Institute (CLSI)

2. Goals

Provide technical information and expertise to the GSA for informed decision making in support of SGMA and sustainable water management. Support and coordinate groundwater and surface water management in the Ukiah Valley Basin and Upper Russian River watershed to support sustainable water management and compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), including consideration of the interests of beneficial uses and users of groundwater as defined by SGMA.

3. Key Principles of Agreement - Recitals

Clarify the present status of groundwater sustainability in the Ukiah Basin.

Surface and groundwater supplies are connected – Sustainable groundwater and surface water management can only be achieved if both surface water supplies (Potter Valley diversions, Lake Mendocino, Russian River and Russian River tributaries) and Ukiah Valley groundwater are managed in a coordinated manner.

Invest in science and technology – Develop a common scientific understanding of the processes that control the occurrence, distribution, and quality of groundwater in the Ukiah Valley basin and surface water in the Upper Russian River/Lake Mendocino system. (re-word – illustrate TAC is designed to respond to needs of the Board)

Regional collaboration and coordinated management is more effective and efficient – No single entity can solve the region's water issues. A regional effort that leverages available resources to comply with SGMA, the Russian River biological opinion, surface water rights/ regulations and other requirements will result in a more efficient and effective response to address

persistent water reliability issues in the Upper Russian River watershed. Cooperative action will also improve the region's position the region to obtain state and federal funding.

Education and Outreach - Coordination and participation in education and outreach for the purpose of preparation and implementation of an Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

Add section on the purpose of the TAC to provide advice to the Board on issues of technical nature related to the activates of the Agency.

4. Scope of Activities:

- Provide review and comments regarding technical data and analyses in support of SGMA implementation and management of Russian River/Lake Mendocino water supplies.
- Provide review and comment on the Ukiah Valley groundwater sustainability plan.
- Provide a forum to share information, discuss and coordinate various activities that could affect water resource management in the Upper Russian River Watershed and the Ukiah Valley basin.
- Identify and develop water management programs and activities of mutual interest for consideration by each parties' governing board (see section 6).
- Coordinate and partner where mutually agreeable on grant funding opportunities.
- Review and provide comment on other items referred to the TAC by the GSA.
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5. TAC Representation, Roles, and Governance

5.1 Representation

The TAC will consist of:

- Representatives from all Ukiah Valley GSA member agencies responsible for implementing SGMA in the Ukiah Valley Basin
- Representative from the Sonoma County Water Agency which has legal and regulatory obligations to manage water supply in Lake Mendocino and maintain minimum in-stream flows in the Russian River
- ~~Representative from the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District which has responsibilities for water management in Mendocino County including the Upper Russian River Watershed in Mendocino County.~~ Representative from the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District works with landowners, managers, and communities on voluntary programs and projects that protect water quality and

promote water conservation in Mendocino County including the Upper Russian River Watershed in Mendocino County.

- Representative from the California Land Stewardship Institute (CLSI) which works extensively with agricultural property owners in the Ukiah Valley Basin completing scientific monitoring and land and water management

5.2 Decision-Making

Rules for achieving consensus to make decisions/recommendations – The TAC shall strive for consensus (agreement among all representatives) in all of its decision making. Working toward consensus is a fundamental principle. Consensus means that all group members either fully support or can live with the decision or overall decision and believe that their member agency can as well. In reaching consensus, some TAC representatives may strongly endorse a particular proposal while others may accept it as “workable.” Others may be only able to “live with it.” Still others may choose to “stand aside” by verbally noting a disagreement, yet allowing the TAC to reach a consensus without them. Any of these action still constitutes consensus.

The TAC is consensus seeking but shall not limit itself to strict consensus if 100% agreement among all representatives cannot be reached after all interests and options have been thoroughly identified, explored, and discussed.

How will TAC’s recommendations be presented to and considered by GSA Board – To inform GSA decision making, the TAC will provide recommendations in reports and presentations to the GSA Board that are reflected in meeting materials and minutes. The recommendation reports will identify areas of agreement and disagreement among TAC members. The TAC may also request that one or more committee members present its recommendations to the GSA, including areas of agreement and disagreement, consistent with TAC deliberations. The GSA will consider TAC recommendations when making decisions. If the governing board does not agree with the recommendations of the TAC, the governing board shall state the reasons for its decision.

Meeting schedule and ground rules – The TAC will set their annual meeting calendar at their January meeting. Dates and locations of meetings will be posted on the GSA website. A notice of TAC meetings will be posted at the meeting venue at least seventy-two hours in advance of each meeting. These meetings will be announced by email to TAC members and interested parties that contact the Secretary of the TAC.

6.0 Activities and Programs of Mutual Benefit:

- Review and provide comment to the draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan.
- ~~Review and provide comment on other items referred to the TAC by the GSA.~~
- Collaboration on USGS Russian River Watershed study/coupled watershed/groundwater model development.
- Data sharing/collaboration to support update of Upper Russian River/Lake Mendocino reliability study.
- Coordination of monitoring programs that will be used to support implementation of SGMA, improved water management and forecast informed reservoir operations (FIRO) for Lake Mendocino.
- ~~Evaluate~~**Pursue** new water supply projects (e.g., recycled water, conjunctive use programs) that are aligned with SGMA and improve Upper Russian River/Lake Mendocino water supply reliability;
- Promote conservation/water use efficiency to promote water supply resiliency;
- Collaboratively pursue Upper Russian River drought contingency plans to reduce impacts of water shortages.
- Collaboration/coordination related to Potter Valley Project relicensing process.
- Coordinate and pursue funding opportunities to support initiatives of mutual interest.

7.0 Other MOU Elements

Adding New Members

Amendment process – The MOU can be amended in writing signed by all parties.

Process of Adopting – Adoption in counterparts