



**EASTERN SAN JOAQUIN
GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY**

ESJGWA Steering Committee Meeting November 13, 2024

Today's Presenters



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Today's Agenda



- ✓ Presentation on 2024 **Stakeholder Engagement Survey Solicitation and Results**
- ✓ Discussion on **Communications and Engagement (C&E) Recommendations**
- ✓ Highlight of Anticipated C&E Plan Finalization and Adoption
- ✓ Q/A

Goals for Today's Discussion

- ✓ Review the logistics and discuss findings from the 2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey.
- ✓ Solicit input from the Groundwater Authority's Steering Committee on anticipated next steps for the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority Communications and Engagement Plan.



2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey Solicitation and Results

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey – Objective & Logistics

***Survey Objective:** The Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (ESJGWA) and its member Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) conducted a survey to gather feedback for updating their 2019 Communication and Engagement Plan. The goal of this update is to enhance outreach efforts and ensure effective communication with stakeholders and groundwater users in the region.*

SURVEY SOLICITATION PERIOD

JULY 29, 2024 – AUGUST 31, 2024

Outreach and Distribution Efforts

- Interested Parties Database
- GWA and GSA websites
- Advertisement during public meetings
- Direct email communications

Survey Accessibility

- Online via Survey Monkey (link and QR code access)
- Hard copies available during public meetings and distributed via ESJGWA & GSAs
- Spanish and English Versions

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey - Configuration

CATEGORY	QUESTIONS
<p>Background and Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1: Identifies which GSA respondents interact with • Q3: Assesses the respondent's knowledge of the SGMA • Q4: Determines if the respondent has read GSP documents
<p>Engagement and Interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q2: Gauges the respondent's main interest or involvement in regional groundwater issues. • Q7: Inquires about where respondents currently get their groundwater-related news and resources.
<p>Information Needs & Preferences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q5: Seeks feedback on improving readability and accessibility of GSP documents • Q8: Asks respondents to identify preferred methods for receiving groundwater-related information.
<p>Concerns and Opinions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q6: Measures respondents' concern about groundwater levels and water quality. • Q9: Solicits opinions on preferred approaches to address unsustainable groundwater use. • Q10: Provides an open-ended space for additional thoughts or comments.
<p>Survey Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q12: Assesses the difficulty level of the survey for respondents.

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey – Demographics

Survey received **52** responses, broken down by...

GSA	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	USER GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Eastside San Joaquin GSA	12	Agriculture Sector	34
North San Joaquin Water Conservation District GSA	10	City Water Systems	15
Stockton East Water District GSA	9	Private Domestic Well Owners	7
South San Joaquin GSA	8	Public Agency Representative	5
Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District GSA	8	Disadvantaged Communities	4
City of Manteca GSA	7	Small community Water System	3
City of Stockton GSA	5	General Citizen	1
City of Lodi GSA	4		
Linden County Water District GSA	3		
San Joaquin County GSA	1		
N/A - Unsure	1		

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey - Results

Awareness and Knowledge of Groundwater Management

Most respondents (77%) indicated a strong knowledge of SGMA, while a smaller group (23%) knew less

Eastern San Joaquin GSP(s) and Relating Documents	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS FAMILIAR
2022 Revised GSP	28
2020 GSP	23
2021 Annual Report	14
2020 Annual Report	9
2019 Annual Report	8
None of the Above	21

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey - Results

Sources for Groundwater Information

Preferred Sources: Local GSAs (26) and the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (ESJGWA) (25) were the most frequently accessed resources for groundwater information. Other sources included San Joaquin County (14), the California Department of Water Resources (10), and local organizations.

Preferred Communication Methods

Top Communication Preferences: Email was overwhelmingly preferred (42 respondents), followed by GSA meetings (23) and website updates (18). Other methods included U.S. mail (23) and social media (11), suggesting a blend of digital and traditional outreach could be effective.

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey - Results

GSP Documents Accessibility

- **Common Suggestions:** Respondents recommended improvements for GSP readability, including:
 - ✓ Clickable tables of contents, summaries, and fact sheets on major topics like storage changes and management actions.
 - ✓ Simplified language and visuals, with icons for infrastructure locations and clear explanations of technical terms.
 - ✓ Requests for brief, layman-friendly summaries (2-3 pages) and accessible formats beyond online platforms

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey - Results

Groundwater Levels and Quality

High Levels of Concern: Most respondents expressed significant concern about groundwater levels and quality, with 24 being "extremely" concerned and 19 being "very" concerned. Comments cited issues like declining groundwater levels, land subsidence, and worries about water quality in areas with increased development.

Preferred Approaches for Addressing Unsustainable Groundwater Use

Top Approaches: The most popular strategies for addressing groundwater issues were groundwater banking programs (35) and incentives for using available surface water (34). Urban-agriculture partnerships (28) were also supported, while expanding public water systems and limiting groundwater pumping received moderate support. Comments reflected interest in increasing regional water supply through infrastructure projects and recycled water use

2024 Stakeholder Engagement Survey - Results

Additional Feedback and Concerns



GSA Engagement &
Transparency



Land Use (Urban
Development and
Agricultural Land)



Public Awareness of
GSA Compliance
Efforts



Equitable Fees



Communications and Engagement Recommendations

Menu of Options

PRIORITY CATEGORY	PRIORITY OPTION(S)
Legislation Driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enterprise Management System Management and Transparency
SGMA Driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications and Engagement Tracker• Outreach Toolkit
Community Driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interested Parties Database• Speakers Bureau• Target Outreach• Workgroups or Committees• Tribal and Sacred Land Contact List• Website Management• Comment Portal• Funding and Finance• Outreach Coordinator

C&E Plan Recommendations

ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** SB 272 §6270.5.(a)
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs and/or ESJGWA maintain a catalog of data management systems (e.g., interested parties databases). To maintain full transparency around the information collected, uses, and management processes for those systems, it is recommended that the GSAs (and/or ESJGWA) publish their methodology for how they maintain and use the data collected within these systems. This could be as simple as a memorandum included in the GSAs' and/or ESJGWA website.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Memorandum
- **Responsible Parties:** GSAs with coordination and collaboration support from ESJGWA, as needed.

Legislation
Driven

C&E Plan Recommendations

SGMA
Driven

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT TRACKER

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** [CWC §10723.8.\(a\)\(4\)](#)
- **Reasoning:** The level of communications and engagement SGMA requires that GSAs participate in necessitates a level or organization and record keeping that goes beyond the GSAs current practices. Therefore, it is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s) and with the support of the ESJGWA where necessary and feasible—that the GSAs establish a comprehensive tracker that catalogues the type and timing of outreach manually input by the GSAs. While the GSAs would be responsible for populating the tracker regularly, the tracker could be housed and maintained by the EJSGWA as part of its coordination duties. As an example, this format could look like a standard fillable PDF that all GSAs have access to. Upon completion of an outreach activity (e.g., meeting notification, public workshop, distribution of educational materials), the GSAs could then forward the completed (filled) copy outlining the details of that outreach activity to ESJGWA staff for cataloging into the database. This will also be helpful for reporting engagement statistics during meetings and in documents such as the Annual Report and the GSP's 5-year updates.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Fillable PDF and database that together comprise a communications and engagement tracker. This could also be a webform that funnels into a database.
- **Responsible Parties:** The ESJGWA could develop the initial tracker and support GSA updates to it, or the GSAs could maintain a copy (in identical formats for consistency) of their own and send regular updates to the ESJGWA for inclusion in meetings or workshops, reports, and each iteration of the GSP.

C&E Plan Recommendations

SGMA
Driven

OUTREACH TOOLKIT

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** [DWR Emergency Regulations §354.10 \(d\)\(1-4\)](#); [CWC §10727.8\(a\)](#)
- **Reasoning:** There is ample room for the public to be exposed to mixed messages and varying levels of detail with so many parties involved. Therefore, it is recommended that the GSAs—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s) and with the support of the ESJGWA where necessary and feasible—establish a suite of template materials for notices, announcements, meeting materials, and educational materials for use by the ESJGWA and its member agencies. These template materials would benefit from following the same style guide. The GSAs would need to decide what all they would like developed and what style they would like those materials to take on to maintain uniformity; the ESJGWA could undertake development of the toolkit with support of its staff or an Outreach Coordinator. Tangentially, collecting and maintaining a library of memorandums, guides, and/or white papers relevant to communications and engagement is recommended. Having easy access to beneficial guides in a central location may help facilitate an environment built on best practices where outreach is concerned.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Template outreach materials and a collection of memos and guides focused on outreach best practices for GSAs to reference.
- **Responsible Parties:** ESJGWA

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

INTERESTED PARTIES DATABASE

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** CWC §10725.2c; CWC §10723.2; CWC §10723.4; and CWC §10723.8.(a)(4)
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s) and with the support of the ESJGWA where necessary and feasible—that a shared and comprehensive Interested Parties Database (IPD) be established. This IPD should allow the ESJGWA and/or member agencies to distribute information to those in their jurisdiction or to the entire Subbasin. The new IPD should have fields that allow the sender to tailor the end reader by GSA jurisdiction, the entire subbasin, or even by target audience where possible. It is recommended that this database be housed by third-party such as through MailChimp or Constant Contact for easy maintenance, easy access for all responsible parties, standard style and messaging, and to track public receipt and engagement for all distributed content. This new IPD could be managed by the ESJGWA and/or the Subbasin’s Outreach Coordinator. This will also be helpful for reporting engagement statistics during meetings and in documents such as the Annual Report and the GSP’s 5-year updates.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** A combined and comprehensive Interested Parties Database that can be sorted by audience and track audience statistics to monitor engagement success (e.g., MailChimp or Constant Contact). Branded customer relationship management communications templates should be created for the ESJGWA and separately for the GSAs for consistency in communications going forward.
- **Responsible Parties:** GSAs with coordination and collaboration support from ESJGWA, as needed.

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Applicable Codes and Regulations: CWC §10723.2

Reasoning: It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs develop and implement a Speaker’s Bureau. This tactic involves developing relationships with non-governmental organizations and other community groups and attending/presenting at their meetings at a regular frequency to provide information on SGMA implementation. Attending the meetings and gatherings of these organizations or groups of community members may be one step in the right direction for trust building and improved engagement.

Suggested Tools and Materials: N/A

Responsible Parties: GSAs and ESJGWA

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

TARGETED OUTREACH

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** [CWC §10723.2](#)
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs outline and implement specific efforts, possibly through a workgroup or committee as mentioned below, to identify, contact, educate, and engage with underrepresented groundwater users and non-English speakers on groundwater resource management in the Subbasin. This tactic would heavily benefit from close communication and coordination with local non-governmental organizations and other community groups. If a Speaker's Bureau were to be implemented, this workgroup could be responsible for its management and implementation. This also includes engagement with underrepresented communities and speakers of other languages. It is, therefore, highly recommended that outreach materials be developed in a timely fashion, well ahead of engagement opportunities, to allow for translation in other languages where feasible. Those materials could then be distributed concurrently with their English counterparts and reach a wider audience. In tandem with that effort, verbal interpretation services may be utilized to build upon this effort and ensure more seamless engagement with attendees speaking languages other than English.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Guides and memos denoting strategies and best practices for engagement with underrepresented groundwater users. Preferred translation and interpretation vendors should also be identified. Community partnerships could be leaned here as well.
- **Responsible Parties:** GSAs with coordination and collaboration support from ESJGWA, as needed.

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

WORKGROUPS OR COMMITTEES

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** [CWC §10727.8\(a\)](#) and [DWR Emergency Regulations §354.10\(d\)\(3\)](#)
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs consider establishment of a Small Community/Under-represented Community Committee or workgroup to engage on well protection and other related projects and management actions that affect underrepresented groundwater users.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** N/A
- **Responsible Parties:** GSAs with coordination and collaboration support from ESJGWA, as needed.

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

TRIBAL AND SACRED LAND CONTACT LIST

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** CWC §10723.4
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs submit and receive Tribal and Sacred Land tribal contact list to the Native American Heritage Commission. Remaining apprised of and in contact with any recognized Indigenous communities within the region is not only a best practice, but a core component of inclusive engagement especially where project implementation is concerned. This could be a task undertaken by the suggested workgroup/committee noted above.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** N/A
- **Responsible Parties:** GSAs with coordination and collaboration support from ESJGWA, as needed.

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

WEBSITE MANAGEMENT

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** CWC §10725.2c and CWC §10723.4; DWR Emergency Regulations §354.44 (b)(1)(B) and § 354.10 (d) (1-4); CWC §10727.8(a)
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs establish web pages on the ESJGWA and GSA websites, as applicable, to contain clear and accessible audience-specific mapping, informational resources, notification processes for meetings or events, the GSAs’ and ESJGWA’s administrative and financial records, project and management action updates, governance structures, up to date meeting information and materials, decision-making structures, etc. These webpages should receive regular updates with meeting information and materials, the status of ongoing projects and management actions, and materials designed for public consumption. Regular can mean any number of different frequencies (e.g., weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly) as long as they are consistent. The GSAs must decide if, to comply with SGMA, they would prefer to maintain their own webpages on a “per GSA” basis or if they would prefer the ESJGWA to maintain a host of webpages on its site with all the aforesaid updated regularly on the GSAs’ behalf.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** N/A
- **Responsible Parties:**
 - Option 1 – GSAs maintain their own webpages with the elements listed above.
 - Option 2 – ESJGWA maintains all of the GSAs’ webpages on its website with the elements listed above for each GSA.
 - Option 3 – Some combination of options 2 and 3 at the comfort and discretion of the GSAs wherein some GSAs manage their own webpages with the elements listed above and for other GSAs (by their own choosing) have the ESJGWA maintain a webpage specific to that GSA on its website.

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

COMMENT PORTAL

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** CWC §10723.8.(a)(4)
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the GSAs and/or ESJGWA establish, maintain, and respond to public comments through an email contact portal. The portal should collect data on the commenter in a similar fashion as the IPD, and comments should be submitted with tags denoting them as general, project, or document specific. Links to the portal would be available and clearly mapped/labeled on ESJGWA and/or member agencies websites.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Comment Portal
- **Responsible Parties:** GSAs with coordination and collaboration support from ESJGWA, as needed.

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

FUNDING AND FINANCE

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** DWR Emergency Regulations §354.10
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that the ESJGWA evaluate in coordination with its member agencies funding, grant or in-kind support resources for facilitation, media relations, or outreach coordination services so support the addition of new staff to its ranks, a dedicated outreach coordinator for the Subbasin, or some other combination of increased staff to support communications and engagement efforts related to GSP implementation.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Grants and Loans
- **Responsible Parties:** ESJGWA

C&E Plan Recommendations

Community Driven

OUTREACH COORDINATOR

- **Applicable Codes and Regulations:** All mentioned above
- **Reasoning:** It is recommended—in compliance with the above-mentioned code(s)/regulation(s)—that an outreach coordinator be contracted to assist the ESJGWA and its member agencies, as necessary, with the tactics listed in this C&E Plan as well as any other or ongoing communications and engagement efforts occurring in the Subbasin (as needed). This could be an internal staff member within the County’s (as they are the plan manager) existing operations, a new hire, or consultant staff. The ESJGWA and GSAs would need to decide if/how to share costs surrounding the involvement of an outreach coordinator, if chosen.
- **Suggested Tools and Materials:** Outreach Coordinator
- **Responsible Parties:** ESJGWA



C&E Plan Next Steps and Anticipated Schedule

C&E Plan Next Steps

Please note that the public review period dates were slightly altered after the November 13, 2024 ESJGWA Steering Committee meeting to allow for additional time needed to prepare the public facing C&E Plan.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD OF DRAFT C&E PLAN ***NOVEMBER 20 - DECEMBER 5***

Comments to be sent to khandriale.clark@stantec.com no later than 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 5

- C&E Plan to be revised and finalized and ready for approval shortly thereafter.
- GWA to adopt the C&E Plan by end of December.

Questions?

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