

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2014  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING  
WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION OF YOLO COUNTY**

**1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair, Bill Marble.

Board members present: Bill Marble - City of Woodland, Chair  
Cecilia Aguiar-Curry – City of Winters, WRA Vice-Chair  
Jim Mayer – Yolo County Flood Control & WCD  
Sid England – University of California Davis  
Beverly Sandeen – City of West Sacramento  
Duane Chamberlain – Yolo County  
Robb Davis – City of Davis

Alternate members present: Tim O'Halloran – Yolo County Flood Control & WCD, WRA Treasurer  
Lewis Bair – Reclamation District 108  
Jim Hilliard – City of Woodland  
Mike Hall – Reclamation District 2035 (interim representative)

Associate members present: Lynnel Pollock – Cache Creek Conservancy  
Heather Nichols – Yolo County Resource Conservation District  
Jeanette Wrynski – Yolo County Resource Conservation District

Member agencies absent: Dunnigan Water District

Public & Agency Staff: Elisa Sabatini, Yolo County, WRA Technical Committee Chair  
David Guy - Northern California Water Association  
Tim Busch – City of Woodland  
Gary Bardini – California Dept. of Water Resources  
David Gutierrez - California Dept. of Water Resources  
Denise Sagara – Yolo County Farm Bureau  
Cindy Tuttle - Yolo County  
Yvonne LeMaitre – Yolo County Landowners Association  
Frank Siefertman - Yolo County Landowners Association  
Bob Schneider - Tuleyome  
Betsy Marchand – Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation  
Margaret Baum - The Daily Democrat  
Dave Pratt  
John McKean

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** The Board motioned, seconded and unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

**3. PUBLIC FORUM:** None.

**4. CONSENT ITEMS:** The Board motioned, seconded and unanimously approved the consent items.

- a. Approve minutes: September 15, 2014 Board meeting
- b. Receive financial reports: September-October 2014
- c. Receive minutes of Executive Committee (EC): 8/25, 10/20/14
- d. Receive minutes of Technical Committee (TC): 9/4, 10/2/14
- e. Approve letter of commitment for Westside's EPA Brownfield Grant Proposal
- f. Approve 2015 Officer Elections and Board Appointments
- g. Adopt changes to 2015 Board meeting dates

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**5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- a. Report from the WRA Chair: Bill acknowledged the passing of Vice-Chair, Cecilia Curry's father and offered condolences. Tim O'Halloran will participate in a session on groundwater management and legislation at the upcoming fall ACWA conference in December.

**6. UPDATE ON WATER LEGISLATION & REGULATORY ISSUES**

- a. Delta Update and FloodProtect: Cindy Tuttle last reported that FloodProtect completed a Regional Flood Management Plan (RFMP) and submitted a request to DWR to fund the next phase of the RFMP to implement components of the Plan. They are also moving forward with the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP). This is a multi-benefit project from the RFMP that incorporates fish, flood and farming. They also completed the Yolo County Flood Governance Study and gave a presentation to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors in October. That document is available online in the Delta e-Library: <http://www.yolocounty.org/general-government/general-government-departments/county-administrator/county-administrator-divisions/intergovernmental-affairs/delta-elibrary>.
- b. Legislation and Regulatory Update: David Guy, NCWA, gave this update.
- Voters passed both Proposition 1 and 2 at the November election. David gave a brief overview of what Proposition 1 will fund. Bi-partisan legislative support for both propositions was unprecedented.
  - The Governor's California Water Action Plan will provide the framework for continued discussions in 2015. David anticipates the administration will use this Plan to prioritize the State's budget and the implementation of Proposition 1.
  - Drought discussions will likely continue into the new year.
  - David explained how the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is proceeding on a new track this year regarding water right curtailments and their real-time response to winter storm events. NCWA in conjunction with MBK Engineers, has been advocating lifting the ban on pre-1954 curtailments as agricultural system demand decreases in November. The SWRCB responded by lifting 1914-1954 water right curtailments. This allows water users to move water in the system into storage. Ideally NCWA would like to get all curtailments lifted. Even if curtailment is lifted, Term 91 (water rights after 1965) is still in effect for those who are subject to it. David acknowledged the SWRCB is trying to be flexible knowing that water will be needed next year.

Lewis Bair, Reclamation District (RD) 108, gave an update on Propositions 1's impact on local storage projects. RD 108 is one of the seven agencies on the Sites Project JPA (<http://sitesjpa.net/>). Sites was uniquely named in the California Water Action Plan as the type of implementation agency that would benefit from Prop. 1. Prop. 1 has \$2.7 billion allocated for public benefit storage projects – surface water and groundwater. Potential projects will go through a defined public process to certify funding eligibility. Typically storage projects have multiple beneficiaries yet only the water users pay for the project. It is anticipated that a portion of the Sites Project will be funded under Prop. 1. This public benefit project will provide ½ million acre-feet of water annually, in addition to cold-water pool, recreation and flood control benefits. If Sites is built, there will be a large amount of water available to help improve Northern California environmental conditions. This would in turn further insulate RD 108's water supplies. As the cost of water rises (~\$500/ac-ft), he anticipates that more Northern California water users will invest in the Sites Project. Sites JPA agencies are identifying locally preferred projects/alternatives and the potential impacts of other planning efforts. A report will be published with this information. Extensive outreach has also been conducted with

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local landowners. The next step would be to meet with investors from a variety of groups, i.e. agencies, non-governmental organizations. Lewis answered questions.

**7. WRA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC) UPDATE**

*a. Technical Committee (TC) Activities and Westside IRWMP Update:* Elisa Sabatini, TC Chair, reported that the TC has good member agency participation including a few new TC representatives. In 2015, the TC will be reviewing our adopted documents that will also help the newer members familiarize themselves with the Yolo County and Westside IRWMP. Since so much of our focus has been on drought and groundwater, it will give a more holistic view of the WRA's regional efforts. Chair Marble added that we are not intending to re-write the Yolo County IRWMP, but it is appropriate for us to refocus on our priorities for Yolo County. With the advent of the Westside IRWMP as the prime regional planning document, this 2015 focus will be an overall strategic planning process rather than re-writing a technical document.

**8. The "YEAR of GROUNDWATER",** Tim O'Halloran, Yolo County Flood Control & WCD; Gary Bardini, Deputy Director Integrated Water Management, California Dept. of Water Resources

*a. Groundwater Legislation:* Tim informed that today's discussion is a follow-up to the November Board meeting's preliminary discussions regarding the new groundwater legislation. Today he would like to focus in more detail on the role and responsibilities of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). Tim acknowledged two groups that the WRA invited to today's meeting that are integral to the groundwater management discussion: the Yolo County Farm Bureau and the Yolo County Landowners Association. Participation of the private landowners will be a key component to successful implementation of the groundwater legislation in conjunction with the WRA's member agencies.

To frame today's discussions, Tim asked David Guy to give a summary of a NCWA meeting held earlier today on this topic. A larger regional group of Sacramento Valley water managers (8 counties), as well as, several DWR senior staff members discussed how to effectively implement the legislation to represent how groundwater should be managed to benefit local agencies and the region. A successful outcome would be a sustainable groundwater supply and everyone expressed commitment to this end. Tim reiterated that Yolo County is well-organized and has been effectively managing our groundwater for many years.

Tim gave an overview of the groundwater legislation presentation that he has given at least 15 times around Yolo County over the last few months. (Tim's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at: [www.yolowra.org/meeting\\_directors.html](http://www.yolowra.org/meeting_directors.html).) He highlighted two points: the GSA is to be formed by a local agency or a combination of local agencies and the GSA is required to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). There are two notable timelines: GSA formation by July 1, 2017 and GSP development by January 31, 2020.

(DWR website: [http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov/groundwater/groundwater\\_management/legislation.cfm](http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov/groundwater/groundwater_management/legislation.cfm).)

The previous work and outreach conducted in Yolo County over the last few decades had put us in a strong position of pro-active groundwater management. Beginning in January, the WRA will start discussing the harder questions about who should be the GSA and whether our groundwater is sustainable - has it been and will it continue to be. The choice of whether the WRA could be the GSA hinges on answering these questions. If our groundwater is sustainable, then it may not be critical who the GSA will be. If we determine our groundwater is not sustainable, then the authorities and responsibilities of the GSA are more crucial. Tim read directly from Chapter 5 of

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the legislation on the Powers and Authorities. The GSA may conduct an investigation for the purposes to:

- 1) Determine the need for groundwater management
- 2) Prepare and adopt a GSP and implement rules and regulations
- 3) Propose and update fees
- 4) Monitor compliance and enforcement

He then read the additional authorities of the GSA from Chapter 5 that may extend to regulation of groundwater extraction. Tim is well aware that this groundwater legislation language will raise concerns for many well owners. The legislation was written with the intention of local governance, but if a GSA is not established then the State will step in to manage. The legislation mandates that it has to be a local agency or a group of local agencies. Tim restated that if we can ascertain that Yolo County groundwater usage is sustainable already, then none of these regulations will have to be implemented.

Tim proposed that the WRA member agencies acknowledge their support for the following, *“The WRA, in coordination with the Yolo County Farm Bureau, will act as the planning forum for determining what agency or agencies will serve as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA).”* Tim opened the floor for discussion and questions. The following addition was suggested to the above proposal after the Yolo County Farm Bureau: *“and other interested parties,”*. The WRA may ask for letters of support for this proposal from its members. Tim offered to draft a sample letter or resolution for the January Board meeting. The Board discussed what changes the WRA may need to make to its organizational structure to become the GSA. Gary Bardini offered input on the questions raised. Tim gave an example of how the Regional Water Authority convenes as the Sacramento Groundwater Authority (a separate entity) to conduct business related to their groundwater management planning. This is a question that will need additional discussion.

Gary Bardini, DWR, began with some background to provide context for the groundwater legislation and then will discuss details about the legislation itself and its implementation. He first acknowledged the great foundation that Yolo County has established with the WRA's membership and stakeholders for two decades. He distinguished that the legislation is not really about sustainable “groundwater”, but about sustainable “water management”. Gary gave a brief historical overview of how water legislation and management deliberations began in the early 1900's. At that time, they chose to focus on surface water and water rights. Recent water conditions and drought impacts lead to the push for the current groundwater legislation. He reviewed the State's adopted Water Action Plan that also laid the foundation for prioritizing water issues. The legislation has four phases: establishing/identifying the institutions to manage, developing a sustainability plan, reviewing all the plans from a statewide perspective to coordinate management strategies (a DWR task), and ongoing progress toward sustainability through identifying water supply options, projects/programs and effectiveness of dealing with authority issues. This whole process will likely take more than 20 years. Lastly Gary discussed implementation of the legislation. He introduced David Gutierrez who has been asked to take a leadership role in the management of this process. He has experience in a variety of executive DWR positions and has a clear understanding of state water management. Currently they are in the initial planning phase and securing the budget needed to move forward.

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There are several strategies for supporting the legislation's implementation:

- Providing facilitation or other services to assist with formation of the GSAs
- Utilizing the existing State data programs and technical evaluation like CASGEM
- Providing planning assistance under the Bulletin 118 statewide groundwater program
- Providing additional financial assistance under Proposition 1
- Providing inter-regional water planning assistance

Next Gary discussed more specifics about the assistance to be provided for the initial GSA formation. He explained the groundwater basin priority ranking set by DWR to comply with the groundwater legislation that simply identifies how reliant a basin is on groundwater. The second issue being resolved is the basin boundary definition. Currently the boundaries are defined by Bulletin 118. He briefly explained the definition parameters. DWR will be flexible with local input to consider how these boundaries may need to be adjusted to satisfy some regional needs. Concern has been expressed as to what will comprise the Groundwater Sustainability Plan, since many AB3030s have already been adopted. Discussions will be held with the practitioners with a stakeholder process to resolve any issues. Gary reviewed the legislation deadlines and answered questions. Question topics included basin boundary changes/timeline, multiple agencies wanting to become the GSA, possibility of a sub-agency within the GSA, how will small non-WRA agencies that purvey water participate in the process, method of sharing best practices statewide as the process is developing, concern that the WRA will become a regulatory focused agency and lose the collaborative forum established that fosters valuable work on projects and sharing of information.

Chair Marble asked the Board for their input and opinions on information presented and next steps for action. Each Board member weighed in with their opinion about the formation of the GSA and the WRA's potential role. Consensus was that a detailed conversation should continue with the inclusion of broader outreach to other agencies/stakeholders in the county. The proposal of the WRA, the Yolo County Farm Bureau and other interested parties acting as the planning forum for determining the GSA was supported by the Board. Another suggestion was to hire facilitation assistance for the planning forum so that the WRA chair can fully participate. Chair Marble stated that this conversation will continue at the January WRA Board meeting. He invited each of the WRA representatives to return to their respective Boards and codify today's information to garner support of the planning process using Tim's proposed statement.

(Note: Materials from a webinar in October 2014 by the UC Davis Extension Land Use and Natural Resources on *Groundwater Legislation in California 2014* have been posted on the WRA's website for reference that includes the SGMA text, a deadlines/timeline flowchart and table of deadlines. [http://www.yolowra.org/meeting\\_directors.html](http://www.yolowra.org/meeting_directors.html))

**9. PRESENTATION: Local Drought-related Projects**

- City of Winters Water Re-use: Cecilia Curry summarized this project. The City was approached by a local landowner that is in close proximity to their wastewater treatment plant who was interested in utilizing secondary water for his prune orchard. Permits had been difficult to secure prior to the drought, but they were finally able to acquire one and the re-use project has been successful with this landowner.
- City of Woodland Water Recycling: Tim Busch reported that the City is in the early stages of implementing the water recycling program. The City secured \$2 million grant funding through the Prop. 84 Drought Solicitation under the Westside IRWMP/WRA to fund this program. They

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are in the process of planning, designing and permitting the project so they can start construction in April 2015 for completion by the end of 2015. Tim detailed the targeted uses for the recycled water and water conservation/cost savings that will be realized. Tim's short PPT is available at: [www.yolowra.org/meeting\\_directors.html](http://www.yolowra.org/meeting_directors.html).

- YCFC&WCD Drought Preparedness Canal Modernization: Tim O'Halloran reported that the District also secured \$2 million grant funding through the Prop. 84 Drought Solicitation under the Westside IRWMP/WRA for their canal modernization program. Tim explained how this is an extension of the Winters canal modernization project.

**10. MEMBERS' REPORTS & FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**, Nothing additional was discussed.

**11. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** Monday, January 12, 2015 from 3-5 pm, Woodland Community Center.

**12. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna L. Gentile

Board Secretary & Administrative Coordinator