



Tulare Basin Watershed Connections Collaborative July 18, 2018 AGENDA

Time & Location: 9 a.m. – 12 noon, DWR-Fresno (3374 E. Shields Ave., Fresno, CA 93726)

Phone in conference line: (DWR conference line not working: TBWP conference line used)

Facilitator: Sarah Campe, Area Representative - Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Note-taker: Dezaraye Bagalayos, Program Coordinator - Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

Attachments: TBWCC Organizational Next Steps, Tulare Basin map

- 1. 9:00 – 9:15: Introductions, Agenda Review**
- 2. 9:15 – 10:15: TBWCC Organizational Next Steps Proposal/Discussion** (see TBWCC Organizational Next Steps attached) – *Matt Hurley, Carole Combs, TBWCC Participants*
 - a. Goal: specific consensus on structure of new TBWCC non-profit
 - b. Summarize consensus, discuss resulting next steps, timeline and action items
- 3. 10:15 – 10:30: Break**
- 4. 10:30 – 11:30: new TBWCC non-profit core components discussion** - *Sarah Campe, TBWCC Participants*
 - a. Goal: general consensus regarding core components of new TBWCC non-profit --management/administration (governing documents, Board, executive director, staff), fundraising, and program.
 - b. Summarize consensus; discuss/establish resulting next steps, timeline and action items
- 5. 11:30 – 12:00: Participant updates, general information sharing**
 - a. Abigail Hart, Director - Agricultural Lands Program, TNC – update regarding LTRID-PID Groundwater Planning Commission Land Conservation Pilot Program; report on behalf of Sandi Matsumoto, Associate Director - CA Water Programs, TNC – Tulare Basin GSA Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem map information
 - b. Chris Crawford, Princeton U – SGMA, Ag Land Use, and Riparian Restoration research
 - c. Roger Bales, UC Merced – Sierra Nevada Research Institute, UC Water progress
 - d. Daniel Mountjoy/Kelli McCune – Sustainable Conservation , SGMA-GRAT progress

NEXT MEETING: 1-4 p.m., Friday, October 26, 2018, Kings River Conservation District, 4886 E. Jensen Avenue, Fresno, CA 93725

Meeting Attendees:

Aaron Fududa – TID, MK GSA

Abigail Hart - TNC (phone)

Adam Livingston - SRT (phone)

Alex Heeren - UC Merced

Bruce Roberts - TBWP

Carole Combs - TBWP

Chris Crawford - Princeton U

Cindy Quezada - TBWP

Dave Hoffman - DCTRA

Dee Jaspar - TCWA GSA

Dezaraye Bagalayos - TBWP

Erin Tennant - CDFW

Jennifer Morales - CDWR

John Austin - TBWP

Julie Allen - SRT, SS RWMG

Julie Vance - CDFW

Justine Reynolds - Yosemite-Sequoia RC&D

Kelli McCune – SusCon (phone)

Larry Saslaw - TBWP

Matt Hurley – Attorney, At Large

Mike Hagman - EK GSA

Mike Hickey - TCiT

Richard Harriman - Attorney

Roger Bales - UC Merced

Sarah Campe - SNC

Soapy Mulholland, SRT

(Please Note: Departures from the prepared agenda were made as needed and appropriate.)

Pivotal discussion points:

(1) Sarah Campe (Facilitator):

- welcomed all, initiated round of introductions
- meeting purpose -- to bring together representative group to think holistically about watershed management and how that relates to water and “upper/lower watershed connections”
- meeting context—coordination of TBWCC since June 2014 by Michelle Selmon, CDWR Climate Change Specialist/Sr. Environmental Scientist who moved on to CDFW in February 2018; October 2017 Headwaters to Groundwater Symposium which created important next step expectations with no follow up next steps planned at the time
- questions – where do we go from here? what kind of organization do we want? how transition?

(2) Matt Hurley (TBWCC lead, previous Tri-County Water Authority GSA lead):

- The TBWCC is now at a juncture -- poised to move from a gathering of interested parties to take on responsibilities on a functional level relating to watershed health and groundwater management.
- Who will take over and move the TBWCC forward? The TBWP has stepped up, offering its IRS 501 (c) (3) as the legal basis for formation of the TBWCC as an IRS 501 (c) (3) organization –a critical next step for the TBWCC.
- The TBWP Board approved the above next step during a July 12 conference call.
- We are here today to decide what the TBWCC IRS 501 (c) (3) will look like. The scope of work is huge, with four major watersheds in the Tulare Basin, SGMA and GSAs/GSPs in need of projects and ideas to improve watershed management, and the need to broaden perspective from lower watershed management to include upper watershed management.

(3) Larry Saslaw (retired BLM Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, TBWP Vice President):

- This timely transition is needed to look at the larger landscape and make a larger contribution from headwaters to groundwater.

(4) Matt Hurley:

- Our reference map is the DWR Tulare Basin map (attached to these meeting notes); this is a big area that needs coordination; GSAs have recognized this need.
- SGMA provides the incentive to rethink previous practices regarding uses of groundwater and will lead to land retirement.
- We don't know yet what the changes in land uses resulting from land retirement will look like but need everyone involved to re-envision the Basin.
- Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is willing to rechristen itself -- i.e. evolve to have its IRS 501 (c) (3) serve the organizational platform for the TBWCC as the “Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership.”

(5) Sarah Campe:

- The goal of this meeting is to get buy-in to this new transition, taking on the TBWP 501 (c) (3); the vision needs to come from the larger collaborative, and the 501 (c) (3) would be the fiscal agent.

(6) Matt Hurley:

- Historically 501 (c) (3)s are corporate entities, with top down management. What is being proposed here is that because the TBWCC is a diverse group of people that THAT (collaborative group) be the source of movement.
- E.g., the Tomales Bay Watershed Council, begun in the late 1990's, which has a 24 person council of diverse stakeholders and a foundation with a 501 (c) (3) as fiscal agent.
- We are here to decide what we want the TBWCC to look like, how we want it to move forward; we could go the typical corporate IRS 501 (c) (3) route or take a more "organic" approach.

(7) ?

- The council and fiscal agent sounds loose; we need a decider, a charter, and dedicated staff to get momentum and take actions.

(8) Matt Hurley:

- Does that mean we need a strong Executive Director?

(9) Soapy Mulholland (SRT Executive Director):

- We are talking about having a strong executive director that will be telling a bunch of independent people what to do; we need to be comfortable with the independence we need to be able to maintain.

(10) Sarah Campe:

- Maybe this group doesn't give directives but serves a more educational, facilitating, consulting role . . . How does the Tomales Bay Watershed Council work?

(11) Matt Hurley:

- It'd like the hub of the wheel; it keeps projects going, nurtures collaborations, cross checks and serves as a central clearinghouse, with qualified staff that is shares and a board of experts that does reviews. The TBWCC staff and organization formation will need to be suitable to our region.

(12) John Austin (retired SEKI NPS Planner, TB Floods & Droughts author, TBWP Board):

- We need consistency, a central point that keeps things going.

(13) Larry Saslaw:

- What can we do as an organization to add value? We can get more involvement from the upper watershed in order to get things done that wouldn't otherwise happen.

(14) Roger Bales (UC Merced Sierra Nevada Research Institute, UC Water):

- A nimble organization that responds to opportunities is clearly needed.
- This broader organization could provide the vision and goals needed to make the upper/lower watershed connections.
- When we start talking about headwater management we get into air quality issues and that goes into health issues; how far will the scope of this organization

go? Education? Policy? Investment?

- There are a large number of potential needs that will be embraced by diverse groups of people.

(15) Sarah Campe:

- These are all great points; we won't figure this all out today but we're making a start.

(16) Richard Harriman (Attorney, decades-long interest in Tulare Lake Basin):

- Focus is the issue. What is the work product we want out of today? What are our options?
- How open an organization do we want? (We should encourage openness and inclusiveness.)
- We might consider "confederation" as a name.
- We are talking about long-range land use. In 100 years, when we drive up from LA over the Grapevine, what will the Tulare Basin look like?

(17) Julie Vance (Central Valley Region Manager, CDFW):

- It's important to think back to the wildlife component of the original TBWP mission and goals; what we're hearing is far from that.
- With land retirement under SGMA I would like for there to be wildlife consideration beyond just the water, for wildlife to still be the focus, for GSAs to start taking wildlife into consideration and for this organization to present GSAs with mitigation and funding opportunities.

(18) Julie Allen (retired USFS Planner, SRT & SS RWMG, TCWA GSA):

- I'm primarily concerned with redundancy and value added.
- Because there are a number of well-established organizations that are doing/coordinating projects, we need to start with a thorough understanding of what other organizations are doing and understand that another top down organization could be premature and destructive.
- What is coming along with SGMA is that there is going to be substantial land retirement; there are not a lot of organizations working on that now, which could be the most valuable program component of the TBWCC 501 (c) (3).

(19) Erin Tennant (Central Valley Region Environmental Scientist, CDFW):

- If we're just talking about a networking group, that's what we already have.
- If we are just trying to fund projects, then what kind of project are we going to do and what will those projects actually be?

(20) Sarah Campe:

- In terms of a work plan, we are looking for a smaller group of dedicated individuals to come up with options for what this group could look like.
- The October 2017 Headwaters to Groundwater Symposium is one of the big things that came out of the TBWCC thus far.
- A lot of great ideas were presented at the Symposium that we couldn't follow up on because we were too loosely organized; under a more formal group we could do more.

(21) Abigail Hart (Director, Agricultural Lands Program, CA TNC):

- I'm concerned about the cost of creating a whole new organization funded by grants which could result in staff burdened by raising grant funds rather than supporting regional projects.

(22) Carole Combs (Executive Director, Board Secretary-Treasurer, TBWP):

- There are a number of other funding models already established, one of which is the Kings Basin Water Authority IRWM JPA which is supported by annual membership dues and voluntary fees for interested parties. This organization would need to be/could be supported by an amalgam of funding approaches.

(23) Sarah Campe:

- The State has a lot of money for projects, but not for collaboration.
- There is a need for organizations that can do project work; there are not a lot of nonprofits doing work in the Southern Sierra and even fewer in the San Joaquin Valley in general.
- This presents a realistic opportunity to launch a group to fill this gap.

(24) Roger Bales:

- Let's talk about practical use—UCM is looking for partnerships with non-profits, to work with farmers, to connect with groups that can do collaborations and that are nimble. Could this be a group that could do this?

(25) Justine Reynolds (Project Manager, Yosemite-Sequoia RC&D):

- A lot of grant opportunities support collaborative projects but the problem has been lack of capacity for cooperative planning; this group can help with connecting people who can collaborate to do design and facilitate cooperative/collaborative projects.
- This group has the expertise to do this, so collaborative/cooperative planning design and implementation should be considered as a feature of this organization.

[BREAK]

(26) Sarah Campe:

- We are going to move toward tangible next steps now. Considering the accomplishments of the Symposium, the topics covered at the Symposium, the calls from growers and landowners afterwards and the realization that we hadn't planned for follow up, the approach we can take includes UC Merced's great work in determining the amount of water that can come from the headwaters, an education component, and on the ground projects.

(27) Larry Saslaw:

- I'm seeing a subcommittee structure.
- Can Valley floor interests be encouraged to invest in upper watershed projects, can Valley floor growers help fund projects in the headwaters? This is a nice we could fill.

(28) Sarah Campe:

- The Valley floor needs the headwaters (the source of much of their water), and the Valley floor is where the political power is; it's important to get Valley floor

interests to invest in the headwaters.

(29) Dee Jaspar (President, Dee Jaspar & Associates, Inc.- Civil Engineers, TCWA GSP lead):

- As a grazer and civil engineer what I see as a need here is that SGMA is a great driver; when you are in irrigated Ag you are wondering what the future of irrigated Ag is in the Valley. Where are we going to secure the water? Everyone in Ag is impacted.
- A focus of this group needs to be to pull Ag into these discussions and determine how they might help. How can we work together to develop projects that benefit wildlife, Ag, and people.

(30) John Austin:

- The upper watersheds are on the verge of enormous change, loss of snowpack and new precipitation patterns.
- Projects are needed that will respond to what will happen on the Valley floor while changes are happening in the Sierra.

(31) Julie Allen:

- Some upper watershed federal agency people are interested in upper-lower watershed project linkages, but there is no money for NEPA analysis and documentation. If there were funding for NEPA documentation, there would be more opportunity for upper-lower watershed collaboration.

(32) Julie Vance:

- Another niche for this organization could be the building of recharge basins, which would be a huge benefit to wildlife and open up funding opportunities.

(33) Sarah Campe:

- Our niche could be watershed solutions to watershed management.
- One committee could focus on the upper watershed projects and the other on lower/Valley floor watershed projects that aren't being done.

(34) Soapy Mulholland:

- Sustainable Conservation and the SRT collaborated on a grant on farm recharge, looking at habitat creation and water ponding. The SRT would love to take that grant and what we did and expand it.

(35) Sarah Campe:

- There is a lot of great information out there and pilot projects that have been done; the missing component is an entity that can take those projects and expand them and do education and outreach.
- Watershed solutions, education, sharing results of pilot projects, and showing the do-ability – a direction for the TBWCC 501 (c) (3).

(36) Dee Jaspar:

- We have designed 2,000-3,000 acres of recharge facilities in Kern County. At no time as designers have we considered wildlife friendly design.
- One of the things we could do in a collaborative way is incorporate practices that could benefit wildlife.
- We could utilize this group to get ideas and collaborate on projects that benefit all.

(37) Bruce Roberts (retired Chair- CSUF Plant Science/Agronomy Division, TBWP Board):

- Many ponds in the Valley were re-designed to limit wildlife; it will be great to have a diverse collaboration to start reversing those designs and practices.
- Moving forward, we need to be cognizant of having everyone at the table.

(38) Julie Vance:

- Many GSAs are considering paying for their entity by charging per acre fees without taking into consideration what is actually being done on that land.
- Lands held for wildlife (e.g. CDFW ecological reserves) could take a huge hit.
- No one is minding the store regarding this huge issue (pointing toward another need/niche the TBWCC 501 (c) (3) could fill).

(39) Sarah Campe:

- The TBWP worked with Conservation Strategy Group in the past [Carole's note: on advocacy relating to creating fundraising opportunities for Tulare Basin collaborative projects].
- Some potential collaborators have indicated in the past that they will not join if this group engages in "policy" [Carole's note: i.e. IRS reportable advocacy engagement with state or federal lawmakers or officials].
- Should this be addressed in a charter for the TBWCC 501 (c) (3)?

(40) Larry Saslaw:

- We can identify policy issues that inhibit project implementation without fully getting into "policy".

(41) Matt Hurley:

- The Tri-County Water Authority GSA (TCWA) was specifically "built" to meet the needs of landowners who are not utilizing groundwater but may face fees.
- We could be the go-to group where concerns such as the above are addressed, to serve as an information resource to avoid re-creation of inefficiencies such as the above in the GSP process.

(42) Richard Harriman:

- **Volunteering to serve with Matt as a "plumber" to implement legal necessities regarding the TBWCC 501 (c) (3) – ACTION ITEM.**

(43) Justine Reynolds:

- In terms of structure of the TBWCC 501 (c) (3), the following capacities are desperately needed in the Southern Sierra: fiscal sponsorship, a coordinator-facilitator, a chair that provides the mission drive, a person in charge of directing and legacy building.

(44) Sarah Campe:

- The organization should be open to all stakeholders but we need an Executive Committee. Where do we go from here?

(45) Matt Hurley:

- We need a **listing (matrix) of NGOs, agencies, stakeholder groups so we know who we're working with – ACTION ITEM.** (Who is willing to spend time doing that work?)

(46) Sarah Campe:

- On the model of the Sierra leadership group she has been working with, a **charter** is needed to help refine the direction of the group—including mission, statement of facts, role to be filled in solving issues, membership, governance, strategic plan and work plan – **ACTION ITEM**. (Who willing to do this work?)
- Looking for a handful of **volunteers from upper, middle, and lower watersheds to join in a series of meetings/conference calls over the next four months to develop options for consideration at the October 26 TBWCC meeting – ACTION ITEM**.

Volunteers at the meeting who agreed to (or were discussed as) serving on the TBWCC 501 (c) (3) “Planning Committee”:

- Julie Allen – representing a “wide range of upper/lower watershed interests”
- Adam Livingston – representing the SRT
- Armando Quintero (Mohammad Safeeq, or others) TBD – representing UCM Sierra Nevada Research Institute
- Erin Tennant – representing CDFW
- Aaron Fukuda – representing TID, MK GSA and Valley Floor Ag and water interests
- John Austin – representing climate change flood and drought considerations
- Dezaraye Bagalayos – representing outreach opportunities
- Carole Combs – representing TBWP Board responsibilities during transition
- Denise and Kayode Kadara representing disadvantaged community interests
- TBD – regional tribal representative(s)
- TBD – regional IRWM representative(s)
- TBD -- Tulare Basin Sub-basin GSA representatives (Kings, Kaweah, Kern, Tule and Tulare Lake)
- Richard Harriman – legal plumber, will work with Matt on money, time, and communication
- Matt Hurley – lead organizer and lead legal plumber (agreed to convene the first conference call during the week of July 23)

Participant Updates:

(1) Abigail Hart:

- TNC has drafted and signed an MOU with the Pixley and Lower Tule GSAs to develop the Land Conservation Pilot Program (LCPP) to do pilot projects similar to what has been discussed during the meeting. The LCPP will identify lands most ripe for land retirement, prioritize retired lands for habitat restoration opportunities and help landowners navigate the permitting process.
- TNC Associate Director for Water Programs Sandi Matsumoto and staff have developed a groundwater mapping tool for use under SGMA, a link for which specific to Tulare Basin GSA Sub-basins will be distributed soon. Sandi would like to present on this topic at the next meeting of the SJV SGMA

Practitioners Roundtable.

(2) Chris Crawford (Princeton U Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy PhD candidate):

- Worked for 3.5 years with Sustainable Conservation; visiting to prepare research topics for dissertation focusing on SGMA, Ag, and Ecosystem Restoration in the Central Valley
- Specific interests include Ag land use and processes that cause Ag to change in regard to wildlife, riparian and flood plain restoration, opportunity costs of flood plain and riparian restoration, ecological thresholds and prioritization of areas for such projects
- Working with landowners, interviewing them in regard to changes happening in Ag.
- Plans to reach out to many involved in the TBWCC and would like to add value to the TBWCC

(3) Roger Bales:

- UCM SNRI work includes continued assessment of wildfire impacts on water quality in the Kings Basin.
- [Jim Roach paper and news releases reference – please clarify~!]
- The Critical Zone Observatory has ended its 11th year, has a one year funding extension from the National Science Foundation, and efforts are underway to secure future federal funding to continue the CZO.
- UCM SNRI has new papers coming out on drought impacts, temperatures driving evapotranspiration impacting not just the trees but the understory.
- Alex Heeren is researching the food-water energy nexus.
- Mohammad Safeeq and Ryan Bart are working with Bobby Kamansky (SS RWMG Coordinator) on climate change information for the SS RWMG Plan Update.
- Safeeq will prepare and submit an application to the WCB Upper Watershed Streamflow Program (due Sept. 4).
- The UC TV Channel continues and could be a resource for the TBWCC, which would have to pay for content use.
- UCM continues to promote the film “Beyond the Brink” and is looking for an outlet in Fresno. Dezaraye Bagalayos suggested the Science Café as a good venue.

(4) Kelli McCune (Senior Manager, Conservation Incentives – Sustainable Conservation):

- Regarding the Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool (GRAT), the audiences are irrigation districts and GSAs in the process of developing GSPs. The GRAT helps identify where to do recharge and how to capture as much water as possible through recharge.
- GRAT runs multiple recharge scenarios, optimizes recharge scenarios for inclusion in GSPs.
- GRAT programs are underway with Tulare Irrigation District and Madera Irrigation District, and the Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District is its

newest client.

- Sustainable Conservation is working on getting more GSAs to partner with to use GRAT, and is receiving a lot of useful input regarding which features to add, how to identify good recharge zones in the context of lack of conveyance or new conveyance needs, and plans to work with TNC regarding redesigning recharge basins to be more habitat friendly.
- [Sarah Campe—is there a role for a group like the one we’re proposing to help get your projects and information “out there”?] Yes, there is definitely a need.

[End note reads sic: a public “groundwater exchange” that will link everyone’s great work in regard to groundwater management. Co leads Cristina Babbet and Water in the West, and Maven’s notebook. Links to TNC and GRAT. Get in touch with these folks] PLEASE CLARIFY/RE-WRITE IF THIS NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED.