

MEMORANDUM

May 11, 2011

To: GRA Board of Directors and Other GRA Volunteers
From: Vicki Kretsinger, Thomas Harter, Tim Parker, Jim Strandberg, and Brian Lewis
(attended April 26 Workshop and assisted the facilitator)

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF GRA CONTEMPORARY GROUNDWATER ISSUES COUNCIL
GOALS AND APRIL 26, 2011 WORKSHOP

This Memorandum summarizes the goals of the new GRA Contemporary Groundwater Issues Council and the results of the first workshop held on April 26. Draft notes have been assembled for the workshop, which are also being provided to the Board for its consideration at the upcoming quarterly Board Meeting and Annual Planning Meeting on May 14-15.

Concurrent with GRA's commemoration of its 20th Anniversary in 2011, GRA has formed the new Contemporary Groundwater Issues Council. The overarching vision of the Council is to help GRA identify the state's most pressing information, education, and networking needs which pertain to groundwater, thereby allowing GRA and other stakeholder organizations to effectively address integrated water resources and environmental stewardship issues. The goal for this vision is to meet the needs of the state's water stakeholders in providing opportunities, e.g., water forums, workshops, conferences, to share experiences with and potential solutions to the state's most pressing groundwater issues.

GRA has assembled a distinguished group to identify and discuss key groundwater issues while also providing critical advice and feedback to GRA on its wide array of educational, extension, and legislative outreach programs. The Council's input is also being considered during the planning and formulation of the program for the Biennial Groundwater Conference and GRA Annual Meetings. The new Council complements the roles of GRA's Board of Directors and GRA's Committees by providing external input on key ongoing or future groundwater-related issues, challenges, and opportunities.

The 31 Council members include a select group of executives and leaders from a range of disciplines and backgrounds at the local, state, and national level representing regulatory agencies, research and educational institutions, NGOs, water users, the public at large, and consultants sharing a common interest in the management, protection, and use of groundwater resources in California (<http://www.grac.org/cgic.asp>).

April 26, 2011 Council Workshop

The first Council workshop was held on April 26 where GRA sought Council members' input and varied perspectives on key ongoing or future groundwater-related issues, challenges, and opportunities. Twenty-three Council members (including Professor Jay Lund of the University of California, Davis calling in from the Netherlands) attended the workshop along with five GRA Board members. The workshop was facilitated by Dorian Fougères of the Center for Collaborative Policy, and two students (Reid Bryson and Simon Cook) in the University of California, Davis Hydrology Program assisted with notetaking.

Following the lunch break, Mr. Tim Quinn, Executive Director of the Association of California Water Agencies and also a Council member, provided a keynote presentation on "Sustainability from the Ground

Up: Groundwater Management in California, A Framework.” The presentation provided an overview of the ACWA’s board-approved review of groundwater management in California. The Framework document identifies broad principles that ACWA supports. The Framework also identifies goals, including sustainable management of surface water and groundwater resources statewide.

Reid Bryson assembled his and Simon Cook’s draft workshop notes (as well as information compiled on poster paper used during the workshop). The notes describe the discussion by Council members during the workshop, the results of the small group discussion, and some recommended considerations for next steps. The draft notes have been preliminarily reviewed and initially edited by the five Board members who attended the workshop and assisted Dorian Fougères with the group discussions. The draft notes are being provided to the Board for its consideration at the upcoming Board Meeting and Annual Planning Meeting on May 14-15. Concurrently, the draft notes are being distributed to all Council members for their comments and additional suggestions. A final summary of the April 26 workshop discussion and input is planned to be provided to the Board in June.

Overview of Workshop Results – Key Issues

Six broad key issues were identified through the voting and distinguished for consideration in the afternoon small group sessions: (1) Data management, (2) Conjunctive use, (3) Water quality impacts and disadvantaged communities, (4) Recycled water and managed aquifer recharge, (5) Economics, regulatory consistency, and sovereignty, and (6) Contaminant cleanup and water resources management.

Group reports on the key issues are contained in the draft workshop notes; below are potential planning/programming ideas for GRA’S Board to consider.

Conjunctive Use/Integrated Regional Water Management

Group Reporter: Ms. Kretsinger

- GRA could organize a technical committee to guide the white paper’s production and solicit input from others. The committee could include representatives from some of the Council members’ organizations.
- GRA could investigate water markets as a means of implementing conjunctive use management.

Data Management

Group Reporter: Mr. Parker

- GRA can identify and promote standards for high quality data collection.

Water Quality Impacts and Disadvantaged Communities

Group Reporter: Mr. Lewis

- GRA can help water managers identify key data needs in their basin(s).
- GRA can solicit community input and education by hosting various events/tours focused on public outreach in a way that recognizes initial tendencies and attempts to identify the sources of the problems. In reality, something else may be causing the problem.
- GRA could help identify source water protection methods or collaborative approaches between users (e.g., irrigation districts and domestic users that could collaborate to have agricultural users irrigate with nitrate impacted groundwater and domestic users use more surface water).
- GRA could facilitate studies for solutions to rural or disadvantaged community water treatment in collaboration with local residents and water districts.

Recycled water and managed aquifer recharge

Group Reporter: Mr. Strandberg

- GRA/Council could conduct a survey of water users regarding recycled water use/recharge.
- GRA/Council can conduct outreach regarding use of recycled water and the related technical issues.
- GRA/Council should seek involvement from stakeholders, such as California Department of Public Health (DPH) and water providers.
- GRA could apply funding (source unknown) to survey public perceptions of water recycling.
- GRA could encourage a fee to be collected to fund outreach and research.

Economics, regulatory consistency, and sovereignty

Group Reporter: Mr. Lewis

- As water becomes increasingly scarce, education of the public and decision makers as to the true value of water will be beneficial, specifically education that water can have beneficial uses downstream and that value varies spatially.
- Education should address the importance of the Delta in any water resources sustainability solutions.

Contaminant cleanup and water resources management

Group Reporter: Mr. Strandberg

- GRA could organize conferences to address identified concerns, including the affect of contamination source type (e.g., point source or non-point source) on best cleanup approaches and how best practices may vary between basins.
- Group proposed that the GRA/Council survey members to determine problems pertaining to the particular topic.
- GRA/Council could develop best management practices (BMPs) for groundwater management.
- GRA/Council could start working groups (four to six) to include water users not already in the Council to incorporate all useful perspectives.
- GRA member organizations could provide valuable in-kind services.

Following the small group reports, Mr. Fougères opened a brief discussion to allow the workshop participants a chance to comment on ideas from the small group reports that resonated with them.

Additional and/or Affirmed Ideas by Council – Potential GRA Planning or Programming Considerations

Mr. Orth: There is a need to help define to consumers how water is valued in different forms around the state (tap vs. bottled, basin to basin, etc.).

Dr. Kavanaugh: 10 cent user fee per 1000 gallons of groundwater drinking water use could generate \$25 million/year for research and management.

Unattributed: There is a need to develop data mining resources to take advantage of existing data.

Dr. Conklin: CITRIX and Microsoft are working on data mining of water data and might present potential funding sources.

Mr. Brill: In light of future resource scarcity, we need to identify sources of data and host workshop to coordinate data collection.

Ms. Creedon: Data quality is very important, particularly in light of the move towards increased transparency, perhaps a guiding document could be produced for groundwater data collection standards.

Dr. Macler: GRA could lead on setting up venues for truly candid discussions at all scales that allow members to build trust in the absence of the threat of legal or regulatory repercussions.

Ms. Scruggs: Homeland Security regulations limit the ability to share data and there is inconsistency between agencies regarding their interpretation of the laws and their ability to share data.