

Formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency in the Owens Valley Groundwater Basin

SGMA overview

Formation of groundwater sustainability agencies

Owens Valley considerations

Recommendations



County of Inyo Board of Supervisors meeting, October 4, 2016

SGMA Goal: Sustainable Management of California's Groundwater Resources

The goal of SGMA is to achieve sustainable groundwater management in California. The legislation defines “sustainable groundwater management” as the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing an “undesirable result,” which is defined as any of the following effects occurring throughout the basin:

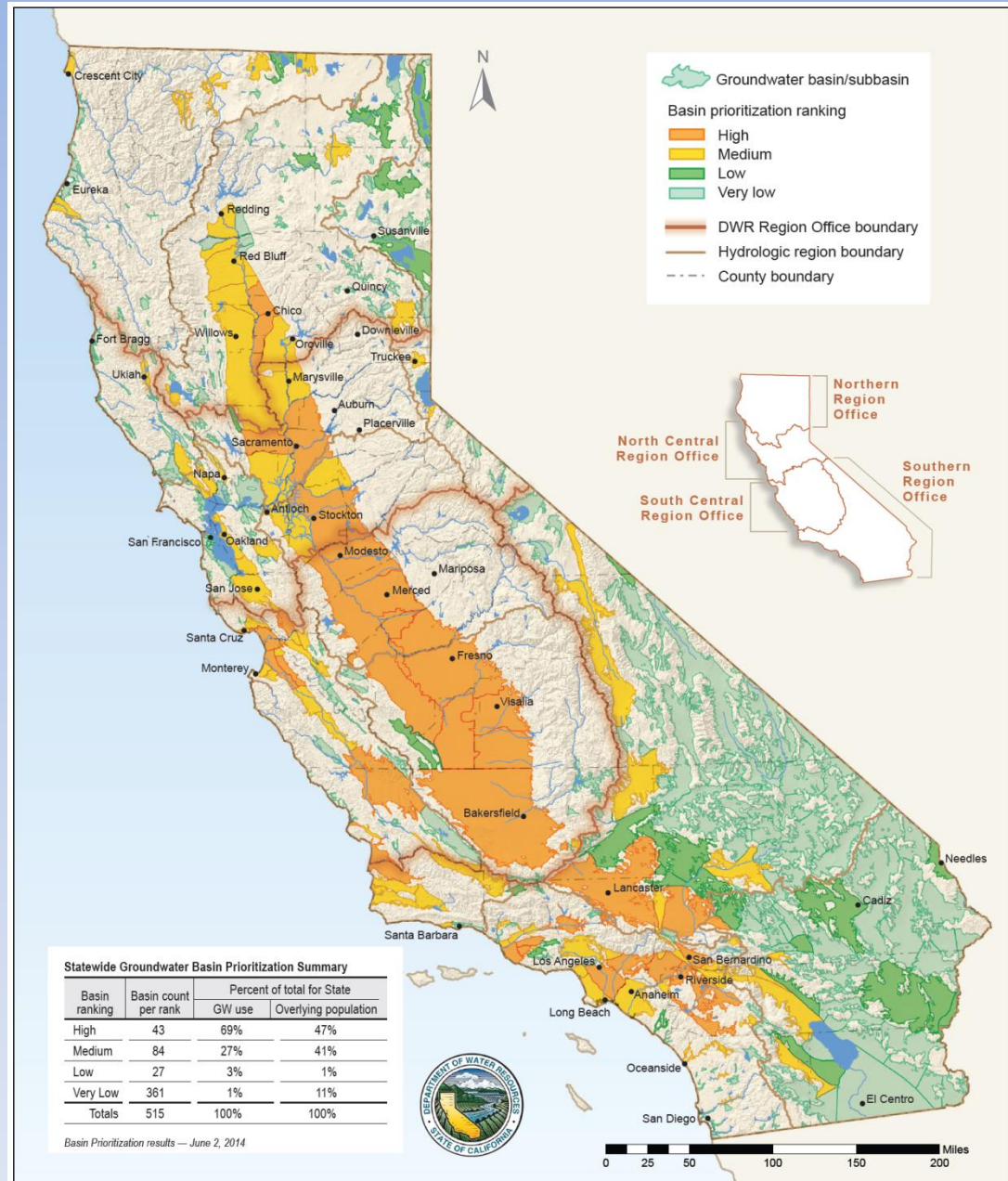
- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels
- Significant and unreasonable reductions in groundwater storage
- Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion
- Significant and unreasonable degradation of water quality
- Significant and unreasonable land subsidence
- Surface water depletions that have adverse impacts on beneficial uses of surface water

SGMA Overview:

- Groundwater basins are the geographic management unit.

In medium and high priority basins:

- Local agencies form groundwater sustainability agencies, develop groundwater sustainability plans, and implement plans to manage groundwater
- If local agencies fail to form groundwater sustainability agencies, or develop and implement groundwater sustainability plans, State Water Resources Control Board implements interim plan



LOIA (list of initializations and acronyms)

DWR – California Department of Water Resources.

GSA – Groundwater sustainability agency. Local agency undertaking groundwater management.

GSP- Groundwater sustainability plan. A plan adopted by a GSA to manage groundwater.

GW – Groundwater.

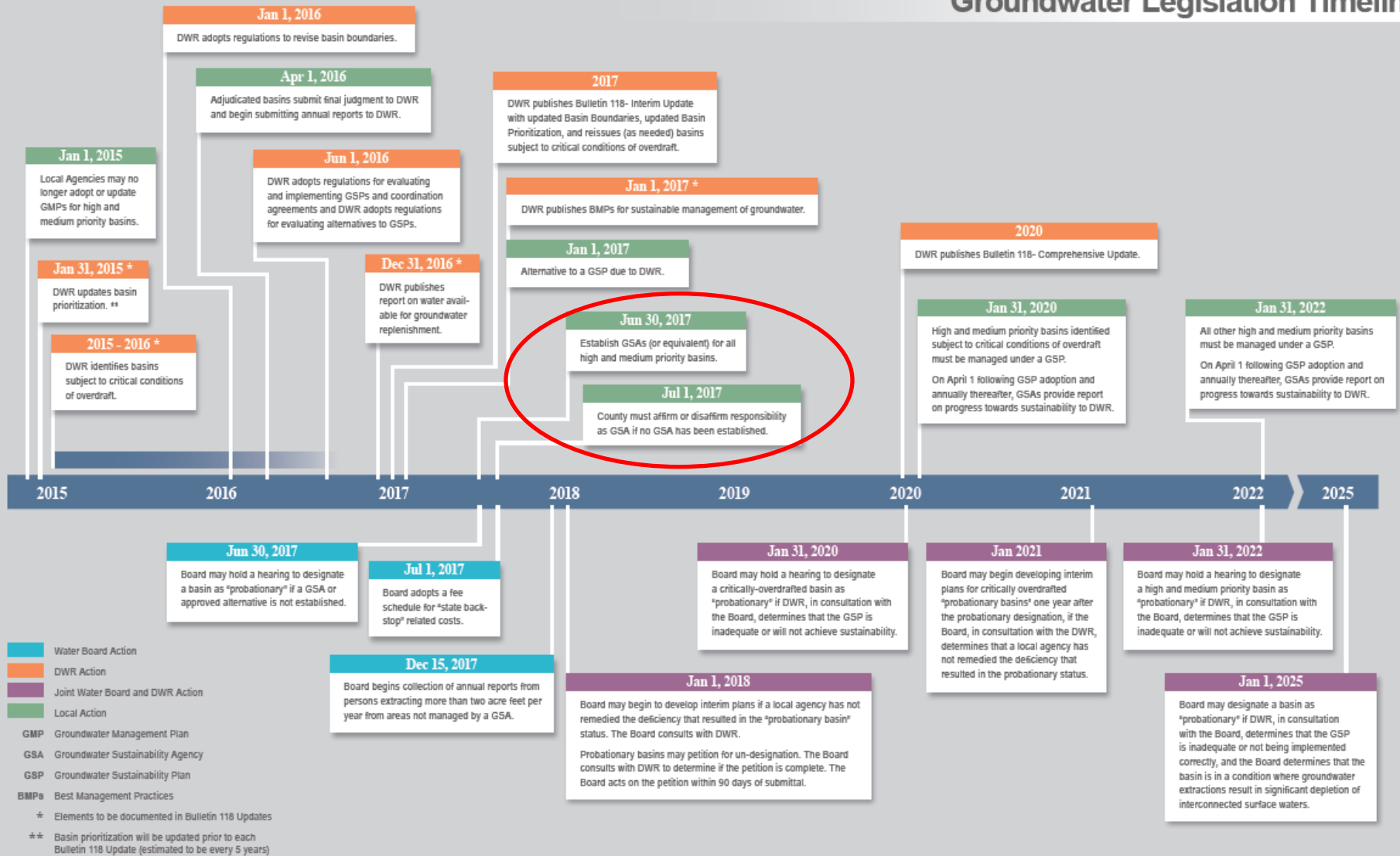
LA/LADWP – Los Angeles/Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power

SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The new groundwater law.

SWRCB – State Water Resources Control Board.

TVGWMD – Tri Valley Groundwater Management District.

Groundwater Legislation Timeline



Options for GSA formation

Formed by local agencies (cities, counties, water districts, etc.)

Single or multiple GSAs; single or multiple GSPs:

- A single GSP covering the entire basin developed and implemented by one GSA.
- A single GSP covering the entire basin developed and implemented by multiple GSAs.
- Multiple GSPs implemented by multiple GSAs and coordinated through a single coordination agreement that covers the entire basin.

Associate membership, delegated voting, or committee membership provides for non-local agency representation.

Required for a local agency to apply to become a GSA:

Before deciding to become a groundwater sustainability agency, the local agency or agencies shall hold a public hearing in the county or counties overlying the basin.

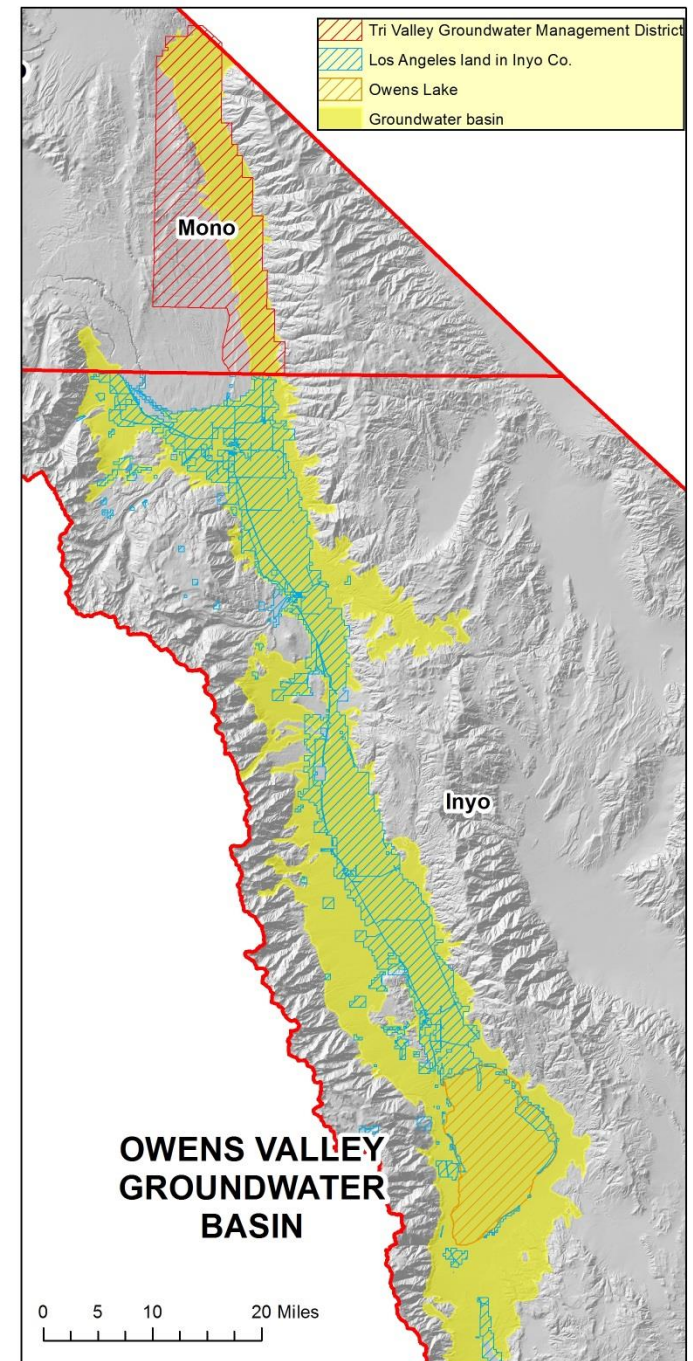
A local agency is required to submit the following information to DWR in order to complete the GSA formation notification requirements:

- Information that shows the GSA formation notification was submitted to DWR within 30 days of the decision to become or form a GSA.
- A map and narrative indicating (1) the local agency's service area boundaries, (2) the boundaries of the basin or portion of the basin the agency intends to manage, and (3) the other agencies managing or proposing to manage groundwater within the basin.
- A copy of the resolution forming the new agency.
- A copy of any new bylaws, ordinances, or new authorities developed by the local agency.
- A list of the interested parties developed pursuant to CWC §10723.2 and a detailed explanation how the GSA will consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater, as well as those responsible for implementing GSPs.

Once DWR deems that the required materials have been submitted, DWR posts the material on its web site. If no overlapping applications are received within 90 days, the applicant becomes the exclusive GSA; if there is an overlapping application, the applicants must resolve the conflicting overlap.

Owens Valley Groundwater Basin

- Basin extends from Haiwee Res. through Tri Valleys to Nevada.
- DWR intends adding Fish Slough subbasin.
- LA land in Inyo is treated as adjudicated: no plan required.
- GSA &GSP required for remainder of basin.
- SGMA has no authority over federal and tribal land.
- CSDs are eligible local agencies; numerous in OVGB.
- Tri Valley GW Management District is exclusive GSA for their area unless they opt out.
- Swall Meadow is in Mono and not within TVGMD area.
- Owens Lake
 - LA plans to develop gw for dust control through leases from CSLC.
 - Suspended dispute between over LTWA applicability to Owens Lake.
 - SGMA/GSP applicability to CSLC lease to municipality to pump gw.



Recommended GSA structure

- TVGMD elects to be a stand-alone GSA for their region;
- For the Owens Valley portion of the basin, Inyo County determines with Bishop and the CSDs whether the GSA will be solely the County or a JPA including multiple agencies (consider non-voting associate membership for federal, tribal, and Los Angeles entities);
- Inyo and Mono counties develop an MOU to include the Swall Meadow area in the Owens Valley GSA boundary;
- Owens Valley GSA develops planning, technical, and funding/financial advisory committees;
- TVGMD and the GSA for Owens Valley agree to develop a single plan for the whole basin;
- Inyo County administers a state grant to prepare a single GSP for the basin.

In the event that TVGMD desires to partner with other agencies to form a single GSA for the whole basin, the above structure would be modified to include TVGMD in a multi-agency GSA.

If no multi-agency agreements are settled on, Inyo County should submit a notice to DWR of its intent to be a GSA for the Inyo County portion of the basin.

Timeline

Fall, 2016 – Confer with other local agency staff in OVGB to discuss and examine feasible GSA structures. Other activities that should be undertaken this fall are assembly of a list of interested parties and identification of beneficial users of groundwater in basin.

Fall-Winter, 2016 – Hold public meetings to inform the public about SGMA and the options for forming a GSA, and to get comments and opinions from the public. Report these meetings back to the governing boards of the involved local agencies.

January-February, 2017 – Prepare an explanation of how the GSA(s) will consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater. Prepare necessary agreements and maps to form GSA(s), and get approval from Boards. Boards adopt resolutions to form GSA(s).

February-March, 2017 – Hold public hearing and submit required material to DWR to form a GSA.

Statewide GSA formation status
(as of September 19, 2016)

Basin Priority

- Pale green – v. low
- Green – low
- Yellow – medium
- Orange – high

GSA Application Status

- Blue – applied to be GSA
- Dark Blue – overlapping apps.
- Dark green – exclusive GSA

