

**DRAFT Chapter 2**  
**Communications and Public Engagement**  
**Forebay Aquifer Subbasin**  
**Groundwater Sustainability Plan**

*Prepared for:*

Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

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Basin .....	Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin
Board.....	Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Agency Board of Directors
C&E Plan .....	Communication and Engagement Plan
County.....	Monterey County
CPE Actions...	Communication and public engagement actions
DWR .....	California Department of Water Resources
GSA.....	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP .....	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
ISP.....	Salinas Valley Integrated Groundwater Sustainability Plan
SGMA.....	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SVBGSA.....	Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

## 2 COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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### 2.1 Introduction

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) was formed in 2017 to implement SGMA locally within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin). GSA formation and coordination took place from 2015 through 2017 and included completing a Salinas Valley Groundwater Stakeholder Issues Assessment which resulted in recommendations for a transparent, inclusive process for the local implementation of SGMA and the formation of the SVBGSA. SVBGSA maintains commitment to the following requirements for stakeholder engagement as defined by SGMA:

- Consider the interests of all beneficial uses of water and users of groundwater (Section 10723.2)
- Encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin (Section 10727.8)
- Establish and maintain a list of persons interested in receiving notices regarding plan preparation, meeting announcements and availability of draft plans, maps, and other relevant documents (Section 10723.4)
- Make available to the public and DWR a written statement describing the manner in which interested parties may participate in the development and implementation of the GSP (Section 10723.2)

### 2.2 Defining and Describing Stakeholders for Public Engagement

The Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin provides water for beneficial users across Monterey County. The SVBGSA stakeholders are highly diverse. Groundwater supports economic activities from small domestic scale to large industrial scale. Groundwater is an important supply for over 400,000 people living within the County. Beneficial users in the Basin are the key stakeholders targeted for robust public engagement for GSP development and implementation. Beneficial users in the Basin are listed below:

**Agriculture.** Includes row crops, field crops, vineyards, orchards, cannabis, and rangeland. The Salinas Valley agricultural region supports a \$4.25 billion dollar production value and produces a large percentage of the nation's produce and healthy foods including 61% of the leaf lettuce, 57% of celery, 56% of head lettuce, 40% of broccoli, and 38% of spinach. Agriculture is the largest user of groundwater in the Basin accounting for approximately 250,000 irrigated acres

and 94% of pumping in the Basin. In the Forebay Subbasin Clark Colony Water Company provides irrigation water to approximately 2,000 irrigated acres.

**Domestic Water Users.** Includes urban water use assigned to non-agricultural water uses in the cities and census-designated places and rural residential wells used for drinking water. In the Forebay Subbasin the City of Greenfield is a domestic water provider. Urban water use includes small water systems and public water systems. Small water systems comprise about 80% of the total number of water systems, but only 5% of the total number of service connections in the SVBGSA jurisdictional area. Public water systems comprise about 20% of the total number of water systems and about 95% of the total number of service connections. There are 154 public water systems in the SVBGSA jurisdictional area.

**Industrial Users.** Includes industrial water users, such as quarries and oil production. There is little industrial use within the Basin.

**Environmental Users.** Environmental users include the habitats and associated species maintained by conditions related to surface water flows such as steelhead trout and groundwater dependent ecosystems including brackish and freshwater marsh and riparian habitats. Environmental users include native vegetation and managed wetlands.

Stakeholders associated with these beneficial users and uses include the following. These users are also represented on the SVBGSA Board and Advisory Committees as described in the next section.

- **Environmental organizations.** Environmental organizations that are stakeholders include Sustainable Monterey County, League of Women Voters of Monterey County, Landwatch Monterey County, Friends and Neighbors of Elkhorn Slough, California Native Plant Society Monterey Chapter, Trout Unlimited, Surfriders, the Nature Conservancy and the Carmel River Steelhead
- **Underrepresented communities (URCs) and Disadvantaged Communities (DACs).** Underrepresented communities and Disadvantaged Communities include the City of Greenfield, Castroville Community Services District, San Jerardo Cooperative, San Ardo Water District, San Vicente Mutual Water Company, Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
- **City and county government.** Cities of Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, Marina, and Salinas, Monterey County, Monterey County Environmental Health Department

- **Land use nonprofits.** Sustainable Monterey County, League of Women Voters of Monterey County, Landwatch Monterey County, Friends and Neighbors of Elkhorn Slough
- **Residential well owners.** Represented by public members and members of mutual water companies and Local Small or State Small water systems.
- **Water agencies.** Monterey County Water Resource Agency, Marina Coast Water District, Arroyo Seco Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Castroville Community Services District, Monterey 1 Water, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
- **CPUC-regulated water companies.** Alco Water Corporation, California Water Service Company,

## 2.3 SVBGSA Governance Structure

SVBGSA is governed by a local and diverse 11-member Board of Directors (Board) and relies on robust science and public involvement for decision-making. The Board meets monthly and all meetings are open to the public. The Board is the final decision-making body for adoption of Groundwater Sustainability Plans completed by the GSA.

The SVBGSA Advisory Committee advises the SVBGSA Board. The Advisory Committee is comprised of 25 members. The Advisory Committee strives to include a range of interests in groundwater in the Salinas Valley and outlined in SGMA. Advisory Committee members live in the Salinas Valley or represent organizations with a presence or agencies with jurisdiction in the Basin including:

- All groundwater users
- Municipal well operators, Public-Utilities Commission-Regulated water companies, and private and public water systems
- County and city governments
- Planning departments/land use
- Local landowners
- Underrepresented communities
- Business and agriculture
- Rural residential well owners
- Environmental uses

- Water supply and management surface water users (if connection between surface and groundwater)

The Advisory Committee, at this time, does not include representation from:

- Tribes
- Federal government

The Advisory Committee will review its charter following GSP completion for additional members if identified as necessary by the Board. The Advisory Committee provides input and recommendations to the Board and uses consensus to make recommendations to the Board. The Advisory Committee was established by Board action and operates according to a Committee Charter which serve as the bylaws of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee reviews and provides recommendations to the Board on groundwater-related issues that may include:

- Development, adoption, or amendment of the GSP
- Sustainability goals
- Monitoring programs
- Annual work plans and reports
- Modeling scenarios
- Inter-basin coordination activities
- Projects and management actions to achieve sustainability
- Community outreach
- Local regulations to implement SGMA
- Fee proposals
- General advisory

Subbasin planning committees were established in May 2020 by the Board of Directors to inform and guide planning for the five GSPs due in January 2022. Membership is 7-10 people per Subbasin planning committee and all meetings are subject to the Brown Act.

Together the Board, Advisory Committee, and Subbasin planning committees are working to complete the six GSPs required within the SVBGSA jurisdiction. Subsequent to that SVBGSA, will complete a Salinas Valley Basin-wide Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP) that will detail project portfolios and groundwater sustainability programs to meet SGMA compliance for subbasins by 2040 and maintain sustainability through 2050.

The following graphic captures the phases of GSA development and GSP planning and implementation intended by the SVBGSA through 2050.

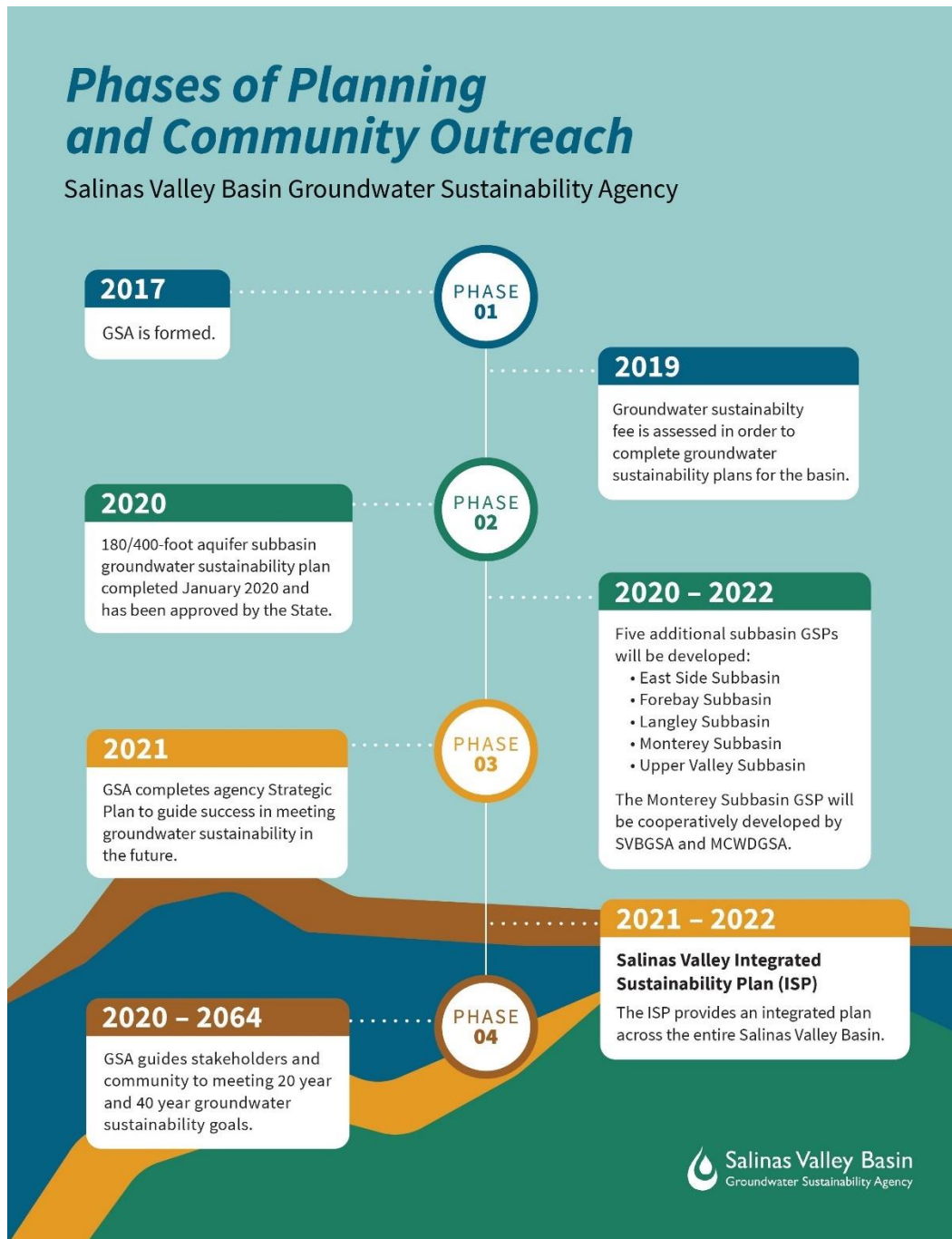


Figure 2-1. Phases of Planning and Community Outreach



## 2.4 Forebay Subbasin GSP Preparation

Given the importance of the Basin and the development of the Forebay GSP to the communities, residents, landowners, farmers, ranchers, businesses, and others, it is essential that inclusive stakeholder input continue to be a primary component of the Forebay GSP process. In order to encourage ongoing stakeholder engagement SVBGSA deployed the following strategies in the preparation of the Forebay Subbasin GSP:

- An inclusive outreach and education process conducted that best supports the success of a well- prepared GSP that meets SGMA requirements.
- Kept the public informed by distributing accurate, objective, and timely information.
- Invited input and feedback from the public at every step in the decision-making process.
- Established Subbasin Planning Committees for each subbasin and completed a comprehensive planning process including engagement on key items with the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee
- Publicly noticed draft [and final version] of the Forebay Subbasin GSP and allowed for required public comment periods as required by SGMA.

Additionally, a rigorous review process for each Chapter in the Forebay GSP and for the final plan was completed. This process ensures that stakeholders have multiple opportunities to review and comment on the development of the chapters. A graphical presentation of the planning process is presented below.

# Groundwater Sustainability Plan Development Process

**Opportunities for Community Input**

Community members are **invited and encouraged to participate** in the GSP development process for each of five subbasins. All committee meetings are **open to the public** and held in accordance with the Brown Act. Community members are also invited to attend virtual workshops and share feedback through the ongoing public comment form at [svbgsa.org](http://svbgsa.org).



**Integrated Plan Committee**

The Integrated Plan Committee meets as needed to ensure subbasin plans are coordinated.



Figure 2-2. GSP Development Process

## 2.5 Forebay Subbasin Planning Committee

Subbasin planning committees are comprised of local stakeholders and Board members and were appointed by the Board of Directors following a publicly-noticed application process by the GSA. Subbasin planning committees were convened in June and July 2020. Subbasin planning committees do the comprehensive work of plan development, review, and recommendations, with assistance provided by SVBGSA staff and technical consultants.

These committees represent constituencies that are considered important stakeholders to developing comprehensive subbasin plans for the Salinas Valley or are not represented on the Board. A list of the Forebay GSP Subbasin Planning Committee is included in the Acknowledgements section of this GSP.

Subbasin planning committee meetings are subject to the Brown Act and noticed publicly on the SVBGSA website. Public comment is taken on all posted agenda items. Subbasin planning committees have been engaged in an iterative planning process that combines education of pertinent technical topics through presentations and data packets and receiving GSPs chapters for review and comment. A live GSP comment form is available on the SVBGSA website for ongoing comment submission on all GSP chapters. GSP chapters posted for public review and comment include.

1. Introduction to the Forebay Subbasin
2. Communications and Public Engagement
3. Description of Plan Area
4. Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model
5. Groundwater Conditions
6. Water Budgets
7. Monitoring Networks
8. Sustainable Management Criteria
9. Projects and Management Actions
10. Plan Implementation

GSP chapters that have been taken to the Subbasin Planning Committee were also taken to the Advisory Committee for further review and comments. Community engagement and public transparency on SVBGSA decisions is paramount to building a sustainable and productive solution to groundwater sustainability in the Basin. At the conclusion of the planning process in

August 2021 for the Forebay GSP the SVBGSA will have held more than 32 planning meetings and technical workshops on each aspect of the Forebay Subbasin GSP.

In addition to regularly scheduled committee meetings, a series of workshops were held for the Forebay Subbasin Planning Committee as detailed below. These workshops were informational for committee members, stakeholders, and the general public and cover pertinent topics to be included in the GSPs. Workshops were timed to specific chapter development for the GSP. Subject matter experts were brought in as necessary to provide the best available information to Subbasin Planning Committee members.

Table 2-1. Subject Matter Workshops Held During GSP Preparation

TOPIC	DATE
Brown Act and Conflict of Interest	July 22, 2020
Sustainable Management Criteria	July 28, 2020
Water Law	August 10, 2020
Salinas Valley Watershed Overview	August 26, 2020
Web Map Workshop	September 30, 2020
Town Hall – Domestic Wells & Drinking Water	October 28, 2020
Pumping Allocations	November 18, 2020
Funding Mechanisms	January 27, 2021
Water Budgets	February 24, 2021
Communications and Implementation	March 31, 2021
Technical Modeling Workshop – SVIHM & SVOM	June 30, 2021

## 2.6 Forebay Subbasin and Arroyo Seco Cone Management Area Coordination Committee

The Forebay Subbasin GSP includes the Arroyo Seco Management Area to be managed by the Arroyo Seco Groundwater Sustainability Agency (ASGSA). Under an Implementation Agreement completed by the SVBGSA and ASGSA in April 2021, the two agencies have an established a Coordination Committee which is subject to the Brown Act and will meet quarterly through the year. The Committee is comprised of two board members each from the SVBGSA and ASGSA. The Committee does not have decision making authority but will make recommendations to each respective GSA Board of Directors. The Coordination Committee provides a forum for the GSAs to discuss the implementation or elimination of management actions, projects or funding mechanisms in each Agency’s implementation area to ensure that those actions do not negatively impact or impede the goal of sustainability for the Forebay Subbasin as a whole or individually in Forebay Subbasin or Arroyo Seco Management Area.

## 2.7 Communication and Public Engagement Actions

SVBGSA has been focused on communication and public engagement targeted at the public, including beneficial users, regarding the development of the SVBGSA's GSP for the Forebay Aquifer Subbasin. Communication and public engagement actions (CPE Actions) that have taken place during GSP development will continue during implementation of all SVBGSA GSPs. Communication and public engagement actions provide the SVBGSA Board and staff a guide to ensure consistent messaging about SVBGSA requirements and other related information. CPE Actions provide ways that beneficial users and other stakeholders can provide timely and meaningful input into the GSA decision-making process. CPE Actions also ensure beneficial users and other stakeholders in the Basin are informed of milestones and offered opportunities to participate in GSP implementation and plan updates.

Notice and communication, as required by SGMA (Section 354.10), was focused on providing the following activities during the Forebay Subbasin GSP:

- Clear decision-making process on GSP approvals and outcomes
- Robust public engagement opportunities
- Encouragement of active involvement in GSP development
- Completion of the Forebay Subbasin Implementation Agreement and creation of the Arroyo Seco Management Area in the Forebay Subbasin GSP

### 2.7.1 Goals for Communication and Public Engagement

Ultimately, the success of the Forebay Aquifer Subbasin GSP will be determined by the collective action of every groundwater user. In order to meet ongoing water supply needs, both for drinking water and for economic livelihoods, the basin must remain balanced into the future. This outreach engages the public early and frequently, and keeps the internal information flow seamless among staff, consultants, committee members and the SVBGSA Board and ASGSA Board regarding the goals and objectives of the Forebay Aquifer Subbasin GSP and associated monitoring and implementation activities.

Critical to the success of the Forebay GSP will be public understanding of the projects and management actions planned for sustainability, as well as sustainability implementation actions and other groundwater management activities. These important actions are identified below (not in order of priority) and specifically described in Chapter 9 of the Forebay GSP.

#### **Recharge Projects**

1. Multi-benefit stream channel improvements

2. Managed aquifer recharge of overland flow

**Projects that result in Reservoir Reoperation**

3. Winter releases with aquifer storage and recovery
4. MCWRA Interlake Tunnel and Spillway Modification
5. MCWRA Drought reoperation

**Management Actions**

6. Conservation and agricultural BMPs
7. Fallowing, fallow bank, and agricultural land retirement
8. Forebay Pumping TAC

**Implementation Actions**

8. GEMS Expansion
9. Well registration
10. Domestic water partnership
11. Dry Well Notification System

Additional important actions of GSP implementation will be the production of the required Annual Report by April 1<sup>st</sup> each year for the Forebay Subbasin. The Annual Report covers annual data collected each water year from October 1 – September 30. The Annual Report provides an annual benchmark for SVBGSA and ASGSA to provide to the public and stakeholders to assess progress towards sustainability. The Annual Report also includes assessment of the six sustainable management criteria for the Subbasin. The Annual Report provides an important opportunity to reengage the Forebay Subbasin Planning Committee in its review and to discuss sustainability status and goals.

Communications and Public Engagement Actions provide outreach during the Subbasin planning efforts and assists SVBGSA and ASGSA in being receptive to stakeholder needs through communication tools. The Actions also forecast how SVBGSA and ASGSA will communicate during GSP implementation.

The goals of the CPE Actions are:

1. To keep stakeholders informed through the distribution of accurate, objective, and timely information while adhering to SGMA requirements for engagement (noted above).
2. To articulate strategies and communications channels that will foster an open dialogue and increase stakeholder engagement during the planning process.
3. To invite input from the public at every step in the decision-making process and provide transparency in outcomes and recommendations.

4. To ensure that the Board, staff, consultants, and committee members have up-to-date information and understand their roles and responsibilities.
5. To engage the public on GSP Implementation progress especially for project and management actions and Annual Reports.

## 2.7.2 Communication and Outreach Objectives

The following are the communications and outreach objectives of the CPE Actions:

- Expand Audience Reach
  - Maintain a robust stakeholder list of interested individuals, groups and/or organizations.
  - Secure a balanced level of participants who represent the interests of beneficial uses and users of groundwater.
- Increase Engagement
  - Keep interested stakeholders informed and aware of opportunities for involvement through email communications and/or their preferred method of communications.
  - Publish meeting agendas, minutes, and summaries on the SVBGSA website ([www.svbgsa.org](http://www.svbgsa.org)).
  - Inform and obtain comments from the general public through GSP online comment form and public meetings held on a monthly basis.
  - Facilitate productive dialogues among participants throughout the GSP planning process.
  - Seek the input of interest groups during the planning and implementation of the GSP and any future planning efforts.
- Increase GSP Awareness
  - Provide timely and accurate public reporting of planning milestones through the distribution of outreach materials and posting of materials on the SVBGSA website for the GSP.
  - Secure quality media coverage that is accurate, complete, and fair.
  - Utilize social media to engage with and educate the general public.
- Track Efforts

- Maintain an active communications tracking tool to capture stakeholder engagement and public outreach activities and to demonstrate the reporting of GSP outreach activities.

### **2.7.3 Target Audiences and Stakeholders**

SVBGSA stakeholders consist of other agencies and interested parties including all beneficial users of groundwater or representatives of someone who is. Under the requirements of SGMA, all beneficial uses and users of groundwater must be considered in the development of GSPs, and GSAs must encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population.

There are a variety of audiences targeted within the Basin whose SGMA knowledge varies from high to little or none. Given this variance, SVBGSA efforts are broad and all-inclusive. Target audiences include:

- SVBGSA Board of Directors, Advisory Committee and Subbasin Planning Committees
- ASGSA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee
- Forebay Subbasin and Arroyo Seco Management Area Coordination Committee
- SVBGSA Groundwater Sustainability Fee Payers
- Partner agencies including ASGSA, Monterey County Environmental Health Department, County of Monterey, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, and the Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Group
- Municipal and public water service providers
- Private and small water system providers
- Local municipalities: Cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, and Greenfield
- Elected officials within the Basin
- Beneficial uses and users of groundwater including, agriculture, domestic wells and small water systems, and environmental uses such as wetlands
- Diverse social, cultural, and economic segments of the population within the Basin including Underrepresented Communities
- The general public

Stakeholder involvement and public outreach is critical to the GSP development because it helps promote the plan based on input and broad support. The following activities summarize involvement opportunities and outreach methods to inform target audiences and stakeholders. It



is important to note that levels of interest will evolve and shift according to the GSP's implementation opportunities and priorities.

#### **2.7.4 Stakeholder Database**

A stakeholder database of persons and organizations of interest will be created and maintained. The database will include stakeholders that represent the region's broad interests, perspectives, and geography. It will be developed by leveraging existing stakeholder lists and databases and by conducting research of potential stakeholders that may be interested in one or all of the following categories: municipal users and groundwater users including agricultural, urban, industrial, commercial, institutional, rural, environmental, Underrepresented communities, state lands and agencies, and integrated water management.

#### **2.7.5 Key Messages and Talking Points**

The GSP planning process is transparent and direct about how the GSP will impact groundwater users.

- SVBGSA represents the groundwater interests of all beneficial uses/users of the basin equitably and transparently to ensure that the basin achieves and maintains sustainable groundwater conditions.
- SVBGSA is committed to working with stakeholders using an open and transparent communication and engagement process.
- As the overall GSP will be more comprehensive with an engaged group of stakeholders providing useful information, SVBGSA will create as many opportunities as possible to educate stakeholders and obtain their feedback on the GSP implementation and plan updates.

These messages are being used as the basis for specific talking points/Q&A to support effective engagement with audiences. The SVBGSA Key Messages are also used to support communication with audiences (see Appendix B).

#### **2.7.6 Engagement Strategies**

SVBGSA utilizes a variety of tactics to achieve broad, enduring, and productive involvement with stakeholders during the development of the GSP. Below are activities that SVBGSA uses to engage the public currently and anticipated activities for GSP implementation:

- Develop and maintain a list of interested parties

- Offer public informational sessions and subject-matter workshops and provide online access via Facebook Live or via Zoom
- Basin tours (currently on hold due to COVID restrictions)
- SVBGSA Map Portal
- Salinas Valley Subbasin GSP Web Map
- Forebay Subbasin and Arroyo Seco Management Area Web Map
- Annual Report presentations
- FAQs – Offer FAQs on several topics including SGMA, SVBGSA, Arroyo Seco Management Area, GSP, projects, Monitoring Program, Annual Report, Programs and Groundwater Sustainability Fee
- Science of Groundwater – new examples (studies, etc.)
- Board, Advisory Committee, and other Committee Meetings
  - Regular public notices and updates; Brown Act compliance
  - Develop talking points for various topics and evolve as necessary
- Subbasin Planning Committees
  - Each subbasin will retain a committee to be convened for GSP updates and annual report reviews.
- Integrated Implementation Committee
  - The Integrated Implementation Committee will be convened to discuss Basin wide aspects to the six Groundwater Sustainability Plans in the Basin including public outreach. [TO BE UPDATED AFTER IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE STRUCTURE GOES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS]
- Online communications
  - SVBGSA website: maintain with current information
  - SVBGSA Facebook page: maintain and grow social media presence
  - Direct email via Mailchimp newsletter
- Mailings to most-impacted water users and residents – topics to include: Annual Report dashboard, What does your GSA do with the Sustainability Fee?, newsletter that accompanies each tax bill.
- Media coverage
  - Op-eds in the local newspapers

- Press releases
- Radio interviews
- Promote/Celebrate National Groundwater Week (held in December)
- Co-promotional opportunities and existing channels with agencies, committees, and organizations including email newsletters, social media, board meetings and mailings to customers.
- Talks and presentations to various stakeholder groups, associations, community organizations, and educational institutions.
- Educational materials

### **2.7.7 CPE Actions Timeline and Tactics**

- CPE Actions and GSP milestone requirements by phase
  - Prior to initiating plan development: Share how interested parties may contact the GSA and participate in development and implementation of the plan submitted to DWR. (Sec. 353.6)
  - Prior to GSP development: Establish and maintain an interested persons list. (Sec. 10723.4)
  - Prior to and with GSP submission:
    - Record statements of issues and interests of beneficial users of basin groundwater including types of parties representing the interests and consultation process
    - Lists of public meetings
    - Inventory of comments and summary of responses
    - Communication section in GSP (Sec. 354.10) that includes: agency decision-making process, identification of public engagement opportunities and response process, description of process for inclusion, and method for public information related to progress in implementing the plan (status, projects, actions)
- Supporting tactics to be used to communicate messages and supporting resources available:
  - SVBGSA website, updated regularly to reflect meetings and workshop offerings

- Direct email via Mailchimp sent approximately monthly to announce board meetings, special workshop offerings and other opportunities for engagement
- Outreach to local media to secure coverage of announcements and events, radio interviews, op-ed placement
- Workshops, information sessions and other community meetings
- Social media, specifically Facebook, updated regularly to share information and support other outreach efforts

### **2.7.8 CPE Actions – Annual Evaluation and Assessment**

- What worked well?
- What didn't go as planned?
- Are stakeholders educated about the GSP development process and their own role?
- Is the timeline for implementation of the GSP clear?
- Has the GSA received positive press coverage?
- Do diverse stakeholders feel included?
- Has there been behavior changes related to the program goals? Or improved trust/relationships among participants?
- Community meeting recaps and next steps
- Lessons learned
- Budget analysis

## **2.8 Underrepresented Communities and Disadvantaged Communities Strategic Engagement and Communications**

During development of the 2022 GSPs SVBGSA conducted the scoping of an engagement strategy for Underrepresented Communities (URCs) and Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) that would provide both an assessment of how URCs and DACs may be engaged with the GSA and to develop GSA materials that are accessible and culturally responsive (visual and in Spanish). These materials will communicate impacts of groundwater management on local water conditions in order to engage URCs and DACs into GSA plan reviews and develop pathways for future involvement.

## **2.8.1 Underrepresented Communities and Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley**

In this GSP, URCs and DACs are considered communities that currently have little or no representation in water management, or who historically have had disproportionately less representation in public policy decision making. URCs and DACs are inclusive of Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) and other communities that are traditionally underrepresented. The City of Greenfield is a DAC.

The basin wide SVBGSA program area also has well documented DAC designation including seven Census Designated Places (CDPs), 60 Block Groups and 20 Tracts. Additionally, work conducted by the Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP) identified 25 small DACs, SDACs, and suspected disadvantaged communities in unincorporated areas of the IRWMP region (IRWM, 2018).

SVBGSA seeks to engage more constructively with URCs and DACs moving forward in subbasin planning processes and ultimately GSP implementation. In August 2019, SVBGSA hired the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to conduct an assessment with URC and DAC community leaders via formal interviews. The purpose of the assessment was to capture insights and recommendations to inform an engagement strategy for URCs and DACs. CBI conducted 14 interviews and summarized findings from the assessment to identify initial strategic steps for work with URCs and DACs for GSP planning and implementation. Based on this work, an initial set of short and middle term actions to complete from January 2021-August 2021 was identified. The Board of Directors affirmed these short and middle term actions on February 11, 2021. Middle and long-term actions with Underrepresented communities were identified for 2022. The *Spectrum of Community to Ownership* will be utilized as a guide in further shaping SVBGSA work with URCs and DACs communities in the Basin in consultation with community leaders.

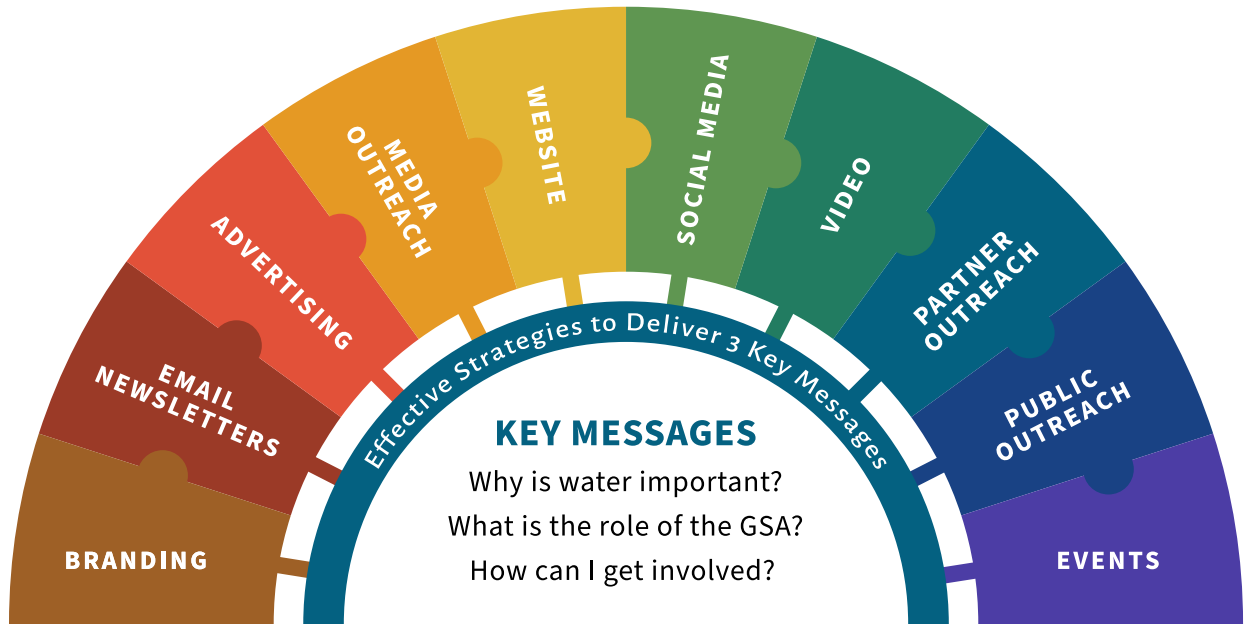
## **2.8.2 Additional activities scoped for engagement of Underrepresented Communities and Disadvantaged Communities include:**

- Conduct workshops with partners on importance of water and groundwater sustainability
- Identify URC and DAC concerns and needs for engagement
- Plan listening sessions around GSA milestones
- Coordinate with partner organizations to develop a “resource hub” where people can go for support
- Identify community allies in groundwater engagement work and bring down barriers for participation

- Consider particular URC and DAC impacts during routine GSA proceedings
- Convene a working group on domestic water, including URCs and DACs

# Appendix A. Agency-Wide Marketing & Communications Plan

## Marketing & Communications Plan



## Appendix B. Key Messages

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Initially, our message points focus on: (1) **getting to know your GSA**; (2) **an overview of groundwater sustainability planning for our community**; and (3) **how we got here**. The key messages will be expanded as the work evolves.

### Key Messages: Get to Know Your GSA

- The SVBGSA is on a mission to develop a Salinas Valley Integrated Groundwater Sustainability Plan by 2023 and achieve groundwater sustainability in the Salinas Valley by 2040.
- Our groundwater basin is comprised of 6 subbasins one of which is identified as “Critically Over-Drafted” – the 180/400-Foot Aquifer.
- The rate of the community’s current water use is unsustainable. To meet our community’s ongoing water supply needs now and into the future we must balance the basin.
- The State has put us on a tight timeline to fix the problem. We ambitiously accept the challenge.
- As of 2020, we have GSP for the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin and have scoped projects and programs to bring the subbasin back into balance.
- From 2020 through 2022 we will work on GSPs for the other five basins.
- We will start implementing our plans immediately and efficiently use our GSA sustainability fee to work towards sustainability.
- Developing a sustainability plan for groundwater impacts everyone. That’s why the SVBGSA Board and our Advisory Committee are diverse and include stakeholders from every walk of life in the Salinas Valley.
- We have an unprecedented opportunity, and responsibility, to work together collaboratively and develop a science-based Groundwater Sustainability Plan.
- Join us! Visit our website, sign up for updates, attend the next meeting and follow us on Facebook.

### Key Messages: Groundwater Sustainability Plan

The Forebay Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan and Salinas Valley Integrated Sustainability Plan are our 20-year plans to ensure that the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (SVGB) will be managed sustainably for our current and future generations.



- Aquifer subbasin planning is not only critical to our future - it's mandatory. SGMA mandates that science-based GSPs be developed for the Basin by 2020 and 2022, and that the plan be implemented by 2040.
- The stakes are high. Should we choose not to act, or fail to meet the 2020, 2022, or 2040 milestones, the State can intervene with required (and hefty) pumping restrictions and extraction fees.
- To meet these milestones, we have been granted the authority to develop GSPs, monitor and measure the basin and individual wells within the basin, implement capital projects, and assess necessary fees for planning and implementation.
- Six "Sustainability Indicators" will be evaluated in the GSPs and used to gauge what we need to do to bring our groundwater supply and demand back into balance.
- Given the hydrologic and geographic diversity of the SVGB, the ISP will identify overlapping projects and programs which benefit the basins. Our planning process includes initiating planning committees for the subbasins and maintains our governance structure of the Board, advisory committee, and planning committee.
- Stakeholder engagement is a key component to the development and implementation of the GSP. We encourage and invite the community to get involved. Attend our monthly Board meetings, attend a Subbasin Planning Committee meeting, sign up for our newsletter.

## **Key Messages: Our History**

- The Salinas Valley Basin GSA is firmly rooted in stakeholder engagement.
- From 2015-2017, local agencies and stakeholders worked with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to facilitate the formation of the GSA.
- In 2015, CBI began by conducting a Salinas Valley Groundwater Stakeholder Issue Assessment, which included interviews and surveys. This process resulted in recommendations for a transparent, inclusive process for the local implementation of SGMA and the formation of the GSA.
- Following the Issue Assessment, The Collaborative Work Group of stakeholders representing a broad range of interests met from March 2016 through April 2017 and developed recommendations on the governance structure, voting, and legal structure of the GSA.
- The Stakeholder Forum was simultaneously held throughout 2016 and served as a critical element for interested stakeholders and the public to learn about and provide input on the GSA.

- After nearly two years of community engagement led by the top consensus-building professionals in the nation, the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency was formed in April 2017 with a broad and diverse foundation of support.

## **Appendix C. Media Policy**

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The press is an important partner for getting our message out to the community. To maximize our effectiveness in working with the media, a consistent protocol will be followed by staff, consultants, board members, and committee members.

### **Agency Spokesperson(s)**

- The primary spokesperson for all media inquiries is the General Manager (GM). Media inquiries should first be directed to the GM to coordinate a response.
- Reporters may want to also interview board and community members. Some board members may enjoy media conversations, while others do not. The SVBGSA will maintain a standby list of a few board and community members, who will be prepared and can be called on for media inquiries.
- In preparation for the interview, the GM and Public Information Officer (PIO) will work closely with the spokespeople in preparation for media interviews. Factual and coordinated talking points will be provided in advance of the interview.

### **Responding Quickly**

- Reporters work on tight deadlines. To ensure an opportunity is not missed, all media inquiries should receive an immediate response and referred to the GM at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **The Back-Up Plan**

- If the GM is unavailable and cannot be reached for comment, media inquiries should be directed to the Board's back-up media representative. The Board's representative will contact the PIO to determine whether a response is necessary. If the response is not urgent, offer the media an appointment time for when the GM is available. If it is a time sensitive and urgent matter, a statement will be released from the Board representative in close coordination with the PIO.

### **News Monitoring and Tracking**

- Following the interview or statement, if published, the GM or PIO will circulate the coverage to the Board and committee members.