

## DRAFT Tri-Valley survey mailer

### **The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and the Owens Valley Groundwater Authority:**

In 2014, the California Legislature enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which requires local public agencies overlying groundwater basins that are designated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as high- and medium-priority basins (as opposed to low or very low-priority basins) to form separate legal entities known as “groundwater sustainability agencies” (GSAs) and to prepare “groundwater sustainability plans.” If local public agencies in high- and medium-priority basins fail to satisfy these requirements, the state may intervene resulting in the preparation and enforcement of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by the State Water Resources Control Board. Low- and very low-priority basins are not subject to state intervention. SGMA does not regulate households that pump less than 2 ac-ft/year for domestic purposes, but all beneficial users of groundwater in a basin are encouraged to participate in the development of a GSP.

In 2015, DWR designated the Owens Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin), which includes the Tri-Valley region in Mono County, as a medium-priority basin, requiring a GSA to be formed and a GSP to be prepared or else risk state intervention. In 2018, the multi-agency Owens Valley Groundwater Authority (OVGA) was formed as the GSA and was awarded a state grant to prepare a GSP.

In early 2019, DWR reclassified the Basin as low priority. A GSA and GSP were no longer required for the Basin. Several OVGA members dropped out, including the Tri-Valley Groundwater Management District, but Mono County remained and the OVGA continued to prepare the GSP because grant funds had been awarded.

#### **Question:**

#### **Circle one**

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| 1. Is internet connectivity poor or not available to you?   | YES | NO |
| 2. Have you viewed the Owens Valley Groundwater Association’s webpage? <a href="https://ovga.us/">https://ovga.us/</a>  | YES | NO |
| 3. Would you like to receive more information about SGMA, the OVGA, or be placed on the OVGA’s email list?  | YES | NO |
| 4. Would you like OVGA staff to contact you directly by phone or email for a discussion about SGMA, the OVGA, the GSP, or any other groundwater management issues in the Tri-Valley area? | YES | NO |

If answering “Yes” to question 1, 3, or 4, please provide your contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Staff will contact you to discuss upon receiving this request.

*The remainder of the survey is about the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Please provide us with your input to ensure Tri-Valley interests are recognized!*

**A. Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)**

The OVGA’s mission is to safeguard the sustainability of the Basin through locally tailored management of groundwater resources to protect and sustain the environment, local residents and communities, agriculture, and the economy.

The OVGA’s duty is to develop a GSP that provides a detailed road map to ensure sustainable groundwater conditions in the basin are maintained or attained by 2042, as defined by the OVGA with public input. The GSP will first describe the groundwater basin’s physical environment and overall hydrology including the movement, distribution, supply, and use of groundwater. The first section divides the basin into Management Areas that will be used for specific goals and management actions. The Tri-Valley is one of the Management Areas.

Next, the GSP will set Sustainability Criteria (SMC) by defining Undesirable Results and establishing goals for six indicators mandated by SIGMA specific to the Management Area (two of the SIGMA indicators are irrelevant to the Tri Valley; seawater intrusion and degraded groundwater quality). Staff and the consultant have drafted Undesirable Results and goals, however more input from the public is needed before the OVGA considers adopting the plan. To measure progress towards these goals and/or Undesirable Results, the GSP will need to identify measurable objectives and develop a monitoring plan for them.

Last, the GSP needs to include projects and management actions that are realistic and sufficient to achieve sustainability. The projects and actions do not need to be designed before the GSP is adopted but should include a timeframe and general cost. Supplemental plans and actions to address future uncertainties also need to be included.

**Question:**

A1. What particular groundwater management concerns do you think should be addressed in a GSP for the Tri-Valley area?

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**B. Setting Goals Step 1: Undesirable Results**

The OVGA must identify undesirable results; *significant and unreasonable effects for four sustainability indicators listed in SGMA caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin.*

Staff and the consultant have identified Sustainability Indicators relevant to Tri-Valley, shown in the table below. These have not been adopted by the OVGA and addition input is desired. The Indicators relate to specific concerns within the Tri Valley:

- Consistent lowering of groundwater levels
- Reduction of groundwater storage. Groundwater storage depletion is related to lowering water levels and is proposed to be assessed using water level monitoring.
- Depletion of connected surface water

**Question:**

**Circle one**

B1. Do you know the water level in your well(s)? YES NO

B2. Are you concerned about declining water levels affecting your well or water supply? YES NO

B3. Are you concerned that groundwater management or depletion could affect the economy or environment of the Tri-Valley area? YES NO

B4. Are you aware of, or concerned about the potential effects of pumping on springs in Fish Slough or groundwater dependent vegetation in Fish Slough, Benton, Hammil, or Chalfant valleys? YES NO

**Draft Undesirable Results**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Undesirable Results</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Minimum Threshold</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>
Lowering of Groundwater Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased pumping costs</li> <li>Drying out shallow domestic wells</li> <li>Loss of existing monitoring wells</li> </ul>	GW elevation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water levels from domestic well vulnerability assessment (in progress)</li> <li>Bottom depth of monitoring wells</li> </ul>	Jan 1st, 2015 water levels (SGMA benchmark date)
Reduction of Groundwater Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased ability to maintain status quo pumping during extended drought periods</li> </ul>	GW elevation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water levels from domestic well vulnerability assessment (in progress)</li> </ul>	Jan 1st, 2015 water levels
Surface-water Depletion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction of groundwater discharged to the surface resulting in impairment of GDEs</li> </ul>	Spring Flow/GW elevation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0.1 cfs instantaneous flow <i>(to protect springs and ponds in Fish Slough)</i></li> </ul>	0.5 cfs instantaneous flow <i>(to protect springs and ponds in Fish Slough)</i>
Land Subsidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General infrastructure damage</li> </ul>	InSAR GW elevation <i>(satellite based measurement)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowest GW elevation estimated to result in 0.3 ft of subsidence in a single year</li> <li>or over 5 years</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>0.3 ft of subsidence within a single year or over 5 years</li> </ul>	Average GW elevation from WY 2001-2010 -OR- Average GW elevation for most recent 10 years AND 0 ft of subsidence

**Question:**

Staff and consultants have suggested the Undesirable Results to the OVGA shown in the table above. Would you add any

**Circle one**

YES      NO

undesirable results from pumping for the indicators or state any of those listed differently?

If YES, what would you like added?

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C. Setting Goals Step 2. Set Sustainability Indicators

Minimum threshold - A quantitative value for each Sustainability Criteria (SMC) that defines undesirable results. It is set by OVGA but cannot be an arbitrary number.

**Question:**

**Circle one**

C1. Do you consider the thresholds proposed in the table above to represent undesirable results that should be avoided? YES NO

C2. Would you like additional information from the OVGA to evaluate the proposed thresholds? Measurable Objective – A specified quantifiable goal for the maintenance or improvement of groundwater conditions. Included in the GSP to document if the basin is sustainable. Set by OVGA but must comply with SGMA YES NO

C3. Recognizing that values for some objectives are set by SGMA, do you consider the objectives proposed in the table above to represent sustainable conditions? YES NO

C4. Would you like additional information from the OVGA to evaluate the proposed objectives? YES NO

D. Timeline: The goal is to have a final draft of the GSP by October 2021.

**Question:**

**Circle one**

D1. Can you volunteer your well to be used by staff for monitoring purposes? YES NO

D2. Would you be interested in cooperating for ongoing water level monitoring? YES NO

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

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