

Communication + Engagement Plan

for the Sutter Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan



Sutter Subbasin

July 2021

Prepared for Sutter Subbasin Groundwater Management Coordination Committee

Sutter County GSA
Butte Water District GSA
City of Live Oak GSA
Sutter Extension Water District GSA
Sutter Community Services District GSA
City of Yuba City GSA
Reclamation District 70 GSA
Reclamation District 1660 GSA
Reclamation District 1500 GSA

Sutter Subbasin

Communication + Engagement Plan

Last Updated July 8, 2021

How to use this Plan:

This Communication Plan provides a high-level overview of near- and long-term outreach and engagement strategies, tactics, and tools. Its purpose is to assist the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) of the Sutter Subbasin with stakeholder outreach and other related actions as required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014. It is presented as a working public draft and should be considered a living document that is continuously refined and updated as circumstances suggest.

Prepared by:

Woodard & Curran



Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.....	1
Sutter Subbasin	2
Data and Data Evaluation	3
GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES.....	3
GOVERNANCE	3
Sutter Subbasin Groundwater Management Coordination Committee (SSGMCC).....	3
GSA Boards	5
Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION	5
Audience Surveying	8
COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT	9
Forums.....	9
Tools	9
IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE.....	10
EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT	11
APPENDIX A GSA Board Members and SSGMCC Members	12
SSGM Coordination Committee Members.....	12
Contributing Members	12
APPENDIX B Links to SGMA and Groundwater Information	13
APPENDIX C Media Contact List	14

The Sutter Subbasin Communication + Engagement Plan is considered a living document. It will be updated as necessary throughout GSP development, public review, and implementation.

Please direct questions to Leslie Dumas, info@suttersubbasin.org.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

In 2014, California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to provide a framework for long-term sustainable groundwater management across California. SGMA requires that basins designated as high- or medium-priority be managed under a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) or a coordinated GSP. Additionally, under SGMA, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) identified 21 “critically overdrafted” basins and subbasins (COBs). The Sutter Subbasin, designated as Basin No. 5-021.62 in the DWR Bulletin 118, is part of the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR, 2016). The Sutter Subbasin is designated as a medium-priority subbasin by DWR and is not considered to be critically overdrafted.

As required by SGMA, GSPs must explain how the groundwater basin will reach and be kept in balance to achieve long-term sustainability. Once submitted to the State, DWR will evaluate each GSP as to how well it will achieve basin sustainability by the required deadline (2042 for GSPs submitted to the State in 2022 – see Figure 1 below). The primary goal of the GSP is to develop sustainable groundwater management practices for managing the groundwater basin or subbasin without causing undesirable results.

Figure 1: SGMA Milestones



In accordance with SGMA, nine groundwater sustainability agencies or GSAs were formed with the agreement to develop one GSP for Sutter Subbasin. Sutter Subbasin GSAs include:

- Sutter County GSA
- Butte Water District GSA
- City of Live Oak GSA
- Sutter Extension Water District GSA
- Sutter Community Services District GSA
- City of Yuba City GSA
- Reclamation District (RD) 70 GSA
- Reclamation District 1660 GSA
- Reclamation District 1500 GSA

As allowed under SGMA, the Sutter Subbasin GSAs collaboratively submitted an “Alternative Plan” to a GSP in December 2016. Although the Alternative Plan was not approved by DWR, suggestions were provided that will be incorporated into the January 2022 GSP, which will

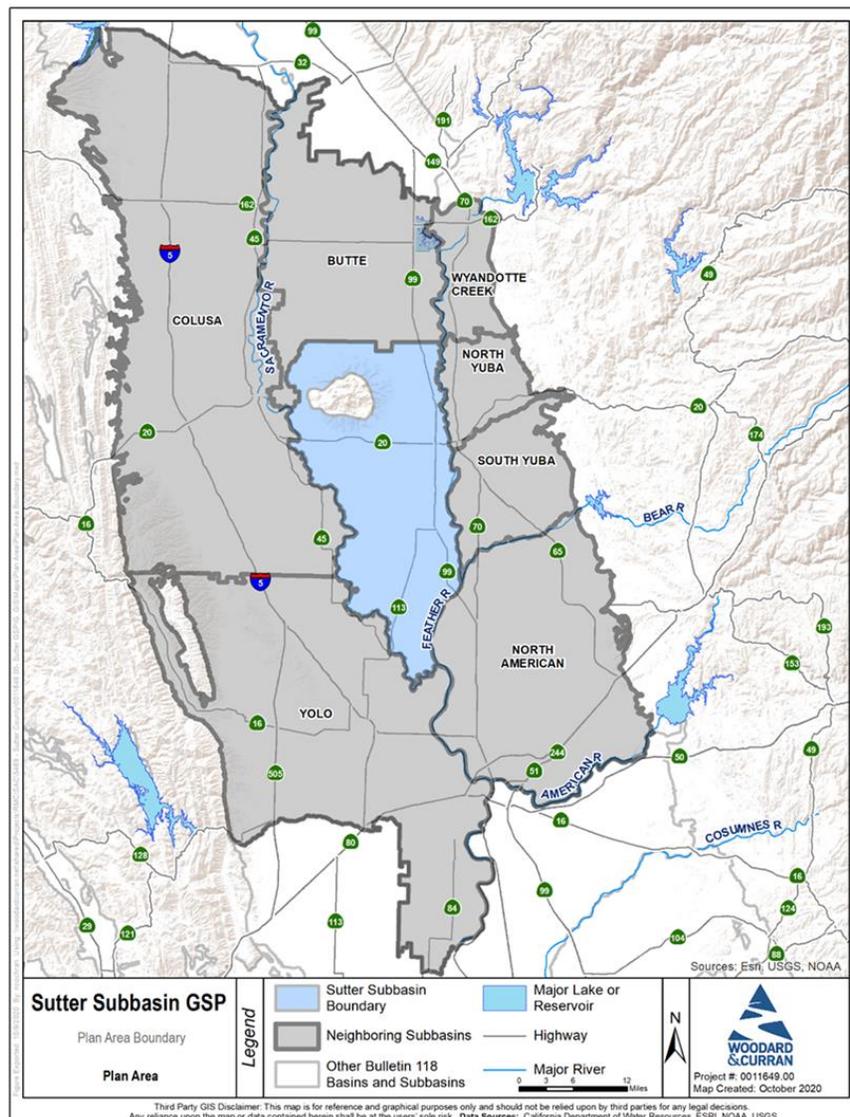
Sutter Subbasin

subsequently be updated every five years (as required by SGMA legislation). Links to additional information on SGMA can be found in Appendix B.

Sutter Subbasin

The Sutter Subbasin is generally described as being in the “central portion of the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin” in DWR Bulletin 118. It is bounded on the north by the Butte-Sutter County line (except for the Sutter County portion of Biggs-West Gridley Water District), on the west by the Sacramento River, on the south by the confluence of the Sacramento River and the Feather River, and on the east by the Feather River and the eastern boundary with the Sutter-Yuba County line. The Subbasin covers an area of approximately 445 square miles of the Sacramento Valley floor. Figure 2 shows a map of the Sutter Subbasin. Groundwater in the Sutter Subbasin is used conjunctively with surface water for municipal, industrial, irrigation, domestic, stock watering, frost protection, and other purposes.

Figure 2: Sutter Subbasin



Data and Data Evaluation

The Sutter Subbasin GSP will be developed using data, modeling, and evaluations of surface water and groundwater conditions, water uses, and water management options. Public outreach and engagement will be an important element of efforts to collect, review, validate, and refine the data and evaluations that will form the basis of the GSP and future management actions.

GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

This plan has been developed to support the preparation and implementation of a well-informed GSP. This Communication Plan contains outreach strategies and methods to address effective communication with stakeholders during development of the GSP.

The desired outcome of the *Sutter Subbasin Communication and Engagement Plan* is to consider the interests of all beneficial uses/users of groundwater in addition to the diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the Subbasin. This includes stakeholder input and coordination with adjacent subbasins.

The *Sutter Subbasin Communication and Engagement Plan* has been developed to achieve the following goals:

- Conduct an inclusive outreach and education process that best supports the success of a well-prepared GSP meeting SGMA requirements.
- Utilize a variety of outreach methods to enhance public participation, make it accessible, and encourage broad participation.
- Enhance understanding and inform the public about water and groundwater resources in the Subbasin and sustainable groundwater management.
- Conduct a comprehensive, transparent outreach and education process that builds understanding and trust among the various stakeholders including local agencies, elected and appointed officials, and the general public.
- Offer public engagement opportunities that coincides with the development of technical information at key points throughout the project to establish an atmosphere of clear, concise, transparent, reliable information flow and opportunities for input.

GOVERNANCE

The Sutter Subbasin Groundwater Management Coordination Committee (SSGMCC) and the GSA Boards will work with Interested Parties and members of the public during the GSP development.

Sutter Subbasin Groundwater Management Coordination Committee (SSGMCC)

The SSGMCC was originally formed to support development of the Subbasin’s Alternative Plan. A formal agreement for



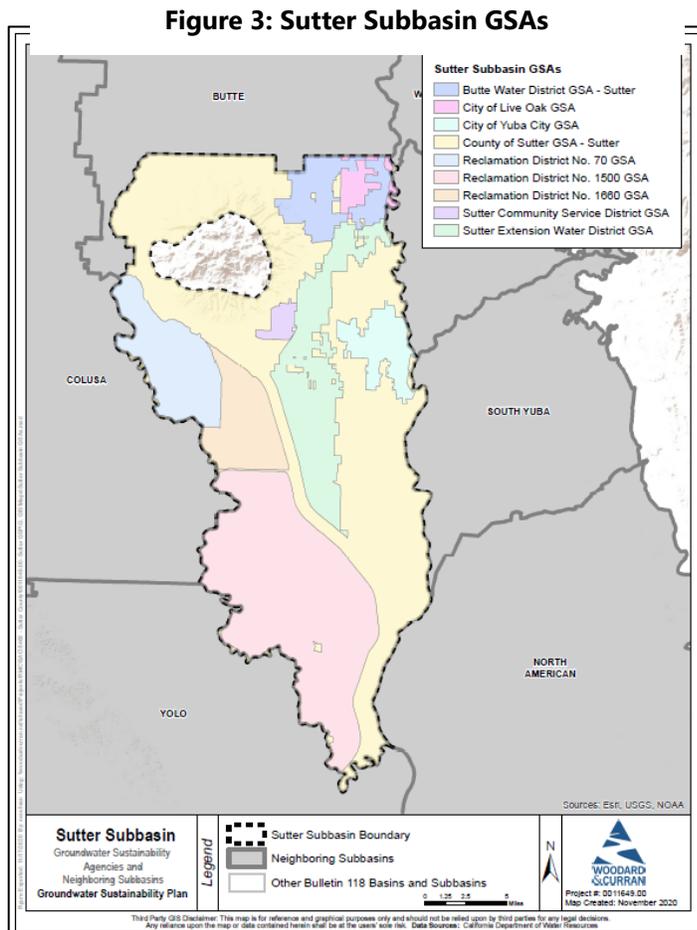
Sutter Subbasin

plan development and implementation was not prepared at this time; however, with the preparation of the GSP, the SSGMCC is currently working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to guide development and implementation of the Sutter Subbasin GSP long term.

The SSGMCC is comprised of voting representatives from each of the nine GSAs within the Subbasin along with non-voting representatives from non-GSA entities contributing to the development of the GSP. The SSGMCC generally follows a consensus-based decision-making

structure where each representative receives an equal voice; however, voting members provide the final decision-making structure and generally follows a simple majority vote process. The SSGMCC holds publicly-noticed regular coordination meetings to discuss GSP technical development and public outreach and engagement activities in order to prepare a GSP for ultimate adoption by the respective GSA Boards. Meeting notices and materials are posted on the Subbasin's website at <http://suttersubbasin.org>.

The SSGMCC agreed to a set of principles for engagement and operation that are intended to provide a framework of commitments among the members to work collaboratively, efficiently, and with the necessary dedication to promote the development, adoption, and submission of a SGMA compliant GSP by the statutory deadline of January 31, 2022.



The SSGMCC is responsible for:

- Sharing feedback from their respective GSA's related to GSP development.
- Making recommendations to their respective GSAs regarding the consideration and adoption of the GSP.
- Providing or ensuring the provision of timely responses and supporting information related to GSP development to the Consultants preparing the GSP upon request in order to meet the state-mandated deadline.
- Performing and supporting appropriate and coordinated outreach to stakeholders within the Basin.
- Ultimately delivering an acceptable GSP to all GSA Boards for adoption.

GSA Boards

The respective GSA's Boards assigned their SSGMCC members to work on the day to day development of the GSP and to conduct stakeholder communication and engagement. The GSA Boards are responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate communication and engagement is executed per the approved Communication and Engagement (C&E) Plan on behalf of their GSAs.
- Approving interim milestone to meet the mandated schedule for sustainability as set forth in the final GSP.
- Being informed about the GSP development by their designated SSGMCC members.
- Providing their respective SSGMCC members with their insights, perspectives, and opinions.
- Ultimately adopting the final GSP prior to submittal to DWR by January 31, 2022.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **GSA Boards** are the designated decision-making entity for the GSP process. Only applicable Board meetings will be noticed on the website, including for the adoption of the final GSP.

The **SSGMCC** is the primary body for providing input relative to GSP development, briefing the Sutter Subbasin GSAs Boards, and assisting with stakeholder engagement throughout the Subbasin. The SSGMCC will host public workshops in addition to their open regular meetings. Public workshops will be noticed 72 hours in advance, and agendas, meeting materials, and minutes will be available on the Sutter Subbasin website (<http://suttersubbasin.org/>). SSGM Coordination Committee members are listed in Appendix A.

Contributing Members support the SSGMCC and GSP development and implementation. These members are listed in Appendix A.

Public Input, no matter the method received (e.g., phone, email, public meeting), will be shared with the SSGMCC and planning team for consideration throughout the planning process.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Public engagement includes both stakeholder coordination and general public involvement. The goal of the public engagement effort is to understand the needs of stakeholders and groundwater users in the Subbasin, increase awareness and understanding of SGMA and the GSP, and promote active involvement in the process to achieve and maintain sustainability. Stakeholders with interest in water management are the target audience for this GSP Communication Plan. The general public will be engaged throughout the planning process to share information about the Sutter Subbasin and water management decisions and solicit input to the GSP. Stakeholders are encouraged to get involved in the GSP process and may:

- Attend regularly scheduled GSA Board meetings to receive updates on the GSA process and provide input.

Sutter Subbasin

- Attend regularly scheduled SSGMCC meetings noticed at <http://suttersubbasin.org/> and provide input on the GSP development and implementation process.
- Attend topical Sutter Subbasin Public meetings that will be noticed through the individual GSA Boards, local media, and the Sutter Subbasin website to educate on SGMA and provide opportunities for input into the Sutter Subbasin GSP.

Pursuant to Section 10723.2 of the California Water Code, each GSA must consider the interests of all beneficial users and users of groundwater within the Subbasin, as well as those responsible for implementing GSPs. These interests include the following:

- Agricultural users (e.g., farmers, ranchers, and dairy professionals)
- Rural, Ag-Residential, and Domestic well owners
- Municipal well operators
- Public water systems
- Local land use planning agencies
- Environmental users of groundwater
- Surface water users
- The federal government (not limited to the military and managers of federal lands)
- Tribal Governments
- Disadvantaged communities
- Entities monitoring or reporting groundwater elevations in the Subbasin
- Holders of overlying groundwater rights
- Adjacent Subbasins including: Butte, Wyandotte, North Yuba, South Yuba, North American, Yolo, and Colusa Subbasins

A list of key audiences that have currently been identified is included in the table below. The Plan relies on the SSGMC, GSA governing boards, and the public to expand the list of interested and affected audiences as the GSP process unfolds. This Communication Plan is a living document and the stakeholder list may continue to expand if additional stakeholders are identified.

Table 1: Key Stakeholders

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups/Organizations
California Water Code Section 10723.3 Stakeholders	
Agricultural Users and Domestic Well Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holders of overlying groundwater rights ▪ Small farms throughout the County
Municipal Well Operators and Public Water System Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Butte Slough Irrigation Company ▪ Pelger Mutual Water Company ▪ Tisdale Irrigation District ▪ Sutter Extension Water District

Sutter Subbasin

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups/Organizations
Local Land Use Planning Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sutter County ▪ County Agricultural Commissioners ▪ Farm Bureaus such as Butte County and Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau ▪ Integrated Regional Water Management program – Northern Sacramento Valley ▪ Adjacent GSAs
Environmental Groundwater Users	To be identified
Surface Water Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Yuba City
Federal Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ USDA Farm Services Agency ▪ U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Native American Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria ▪ Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians ▪ Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians ▪ Pakan'yani Maidu of Strawberry Valley Rancheria ▪ United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria ▪ Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yuba City ▪ Meridian ▪ Robbins ▪ Live Oak
Other State and Local Agencies that Monitor and Manage Groundwater Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ California Department of Water Resources, Sacramento ▪ State Water Resources Control Board, Sacramento ▪ Others to be determined
Adjacent Subbasins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Butte ▪ Wyandotte ▪ North Yuba ▪ South Yuba ▪ North American ▪ Yolo ▪ Colusa
Additional Stakeholders	
Elected Officials	Will not be engaged at this time.
State Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Headquarters, Mailing: P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 ▪ California Wildlife Conservation Board, c/o CDFW, 1416 9th Street, Room 1266, Sacramento, CA 95814 ▪ California Natural Resources Agency, 1416 9th St #1311, Sacramento, CA 95814 ▪ Colleges and Universities
Business Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workers and laborers in Sutter County ▪ Colusa Produce Corporation

Sutter Subbasin

Category of Interest	Stakeholder Groups/Organizations
Local Communities and Community Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ South Yuba River Citizens League▪ Shady Creek Outdoor Education Foundation▪ Community Alliance with Family Farmers▪ Local Government Commission
Disadvantaged Community Organizations	To be identified
Environmental Interests/Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ American Rivers▪ Union of Concerned Scientists▪ Audubon California▪ Sierra Club▪ Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust▪ The Nature Conservancy▪ Sacramento Valley Quality Coalition
Stakeholders that participated in the Alternative Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Individuals and corresponding contact information were identified from the previous Alternative Plan Update public workshops and stakeholder meetings.

Audience Surveying

A stakeholder survey will be incorporated into the first public workshop meeting to understand the various suggestions, concerns, and comments from stakeholders going into the process. A few questions will be interactive during the workshop. The full survey will be e-mailed to the stakeholder list and posted on the website following the workshop.

Questions include:

- Are you familiar with SGMA regulations?
- Are you currently engaged in activity or discussions regarding groundwater management in the region?
- Do you own, manage, or operate land in this region?
- Do you manage water resources? If yes, what is your role?
- What is your primary interest in land or water resources management?
- Do you have concerns about groundwater management? If so, what are they?
- Do you have recommendations regarding groundwater management? If so, what are they?
- What else do you want the planning team to know?
- Please provide contact information of anyone else that should be involved.

Responses received during and following the workshop will be documented and summarized and included in the GSP, in addition to informing the overall engagement and communication process.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Forums

Communication strategies have shifted in recent years due to the evolution of online access to information. In the midst of COVID-19, it is anticipated that the Sutter Subbasin GSP process will not be able to host as many in-person workshops as planned and therefore, flexibility with an online platform is required.

However, it is important to recognize that not all Sutter Subbasin residents have access to email and the internet. Therefore, the outreach methods include both online access and traditional means of hard copy information dissemination. Sutter County also has a substantial population that only speak Spanish or Punjabi. Therefore, supporting materials (online and hard copy) will be prepared in both languages. The GSP, however, will only be available in English. The following outreach methods will be used in order to engage stakeholders during this process:

GSA Board and SSGMCC: Utilize bi-weekly SSGMCC meetings for education and consensus building within the Sutter Subbasin. The GSA Boards will host their regular meetings, although items for the Sutter Subbasin GSP may or may not be included on regular agendas.

Public Workshops: At least four public workshops will be held during the course of the Plan creation. The public workshops are intended to inform stakeholders and the general public of GSP progress, solicit data and information to support planning and analysis for the Subbasin, and seek input on key decisions made throughout the planning process.

Public workshops will be held virtually until COVID-19 regulations allow public gatherings. Workshops will be held from 4-6 pm, outside of some normal working hours to accommodate the participation of stakeholders and the general public. If meetings return to in-person meeting, they will be rotated throughout the Subbasin to ensure broad and fair participation by members of the local public. Any changes to the location and time of public workshops will be considered to allow for meeting flexibility, as needed.

Tools

The Sutter Subbasin GSAs will use a variety of communications and engagement tools to keep the public informed and engaged in the planning process, including:

Website: The website (<http://SutterSubbasin.org/>) will house information about SGMA, the GSP process, the GSA Boards, SSGMCC, public meetings, project newsletters, project reports and studies, and groundwater data and information. The website provides options for contacting the planning team via email or in writing. The website will also provide information in Spanish and Punjabi.

The website will be developed with landing pages including a general overview of SGMA, information on outreach, scheduled meetings, SGMA resources (including links to completed deliverables and workshop materials), and the GSAs' contact information. Each page of the website will include an opportunity to sign-up for project emails. Landing pages will be also be available in Spanish at <http://suttersubbasin.org/espanol.html> and in Punjabi at <http://suttersubbasin.org/punjabi.html>.

Sutter Subbasin

Interested Parties List: The SSGMCC maintains a list of interested persons and routinely distributes meeting notices and relevant information to the stakeholders who have requested to be included. E-mail notices, the primary method of communication, will be sent to announce the availability of new materials on the website, project milestones, and workshop dates. E-mail notices will also be used to distribute the quarterly newsletters available on the website. Announcements will be distributed in English, Spanish and Punjabi as appropriate. This list will continue to grow throughout the GSP development process.

Informational Materials: Developing a variety of informational materials is critical to successful education and necessary to circulate consistent, accurate information. The SSGMCC will develop a range of materials, which may include:

- **Fact Sheets and Flyers:** Fact sheets to describe the GSP planning process, including, "What is SGMA" will be developed at the beginning of the GSP planning process.
- **Press Releases:** Press releases will also be used as a method of correspondence in local newspapers to notice for the release of the Public Draft GSP (listed in Appendix C).

These materials will be available on the Subbasin website at <http://SutterSubbasin.org/>.

Mailings and Utility Bill Notifications: Bill inserts and flyers will be used to notify the public about the GSP Planning process to encourage engagement.

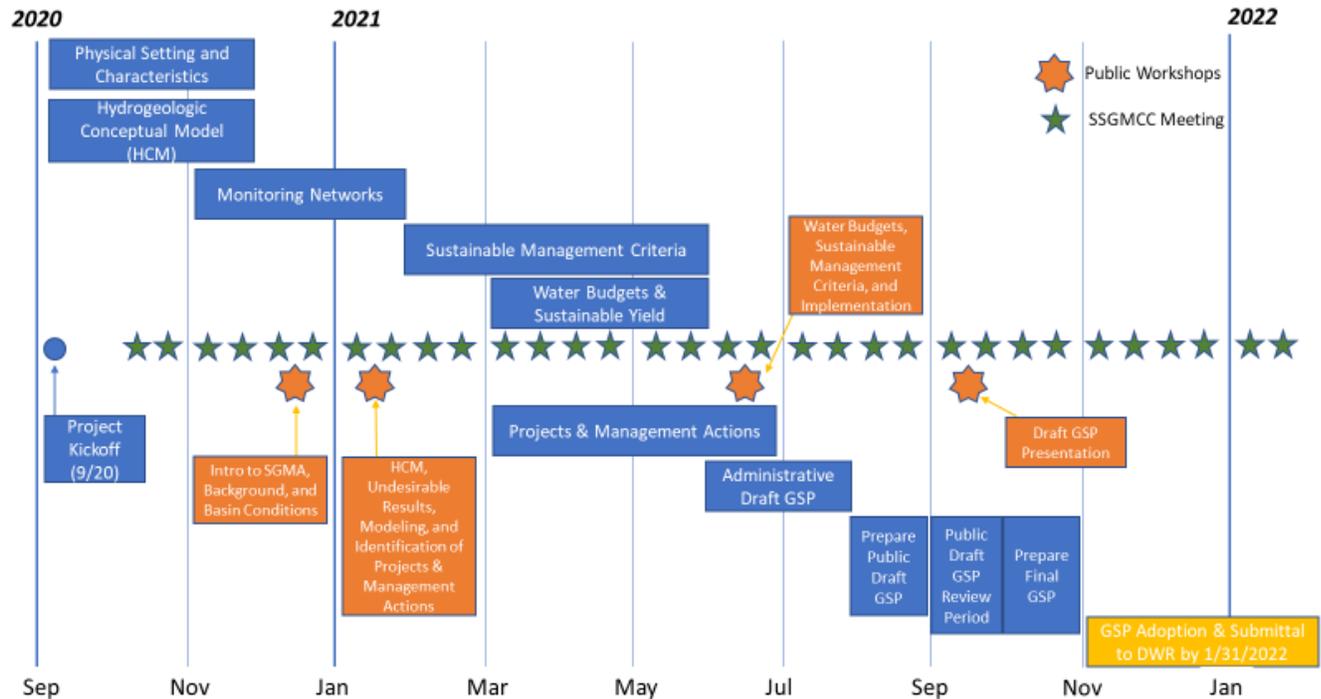
Surveys: Online surveys may be periodically used to solicit stakeholder feedback and input.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Using established GSP milestones, the GSP planning team has developed an initial roadmap for stakeholder engagement. The GSP Planning Roadmap aligns issue/topic discussions and education with the technical data as it is developed and evaluated.

The Sutter Subbasin GSP will be developed within a tight timeframe. Because the Alternative Plan was not approved by DWR, the Sutter Subbasin GSP must be adopted and submitted to DWR by January 31, 2022. The GSP is scheduled for completion in Fall 2021, providing ample time for adoption and approval by the GSA Boards. The project schedule is designed to solicit, consider, and address public and stakeholder input regarding the important planning elements, including Basin conditions, groundwater modeling, sustainability goals, management actions, implementation plan, and the draft and final GSP. The Planning Roadmap indicates the suggested timeline of stakeholder education needs, workshops and other opportunities for public review and input, and the sequencing of key issues for discussion with the SSGMCC.

Figure 4: Sutter GSP Planning Roadmap



EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

Existing and future data associated with the planning process will be made available to the public through the public workshop series. Project maps and data tables will be presented and reviewed with stakeholders in order to garner input and feedback. Input will be gathered and included in the Draft and Final GSP as appropriate. The release of the Draft and Final GSPs will follow noticing procedures outlined in the Outreach section above.

Please direct questions to Leslie Dumas, info@suttersubbasin.org

APPENDIX A
GSA Board Members and SSGMCC Members

SSGM Coordination Committee Members

Guadalupe Rivera	Sutter County GSA
Mark Orme	Butte Water District GSA
Scott Rolls	City of Live Oak GSA
Lynn Phillips	Sutter Extension Water District GSA
Leland Correll	Sutter Community Services District GSA
Kathy Willis	City of Yuba City GSA
Andy Duffey	RD 70 GSA & RD 1660 GSA
Brad Mattson	RD 1500 GSA

Contributing Members

Andy Duffey	Meridian Farms Water Company
Jon Munger	Garden Highway Mutual Water Company & Sutter Bypass Butte Slough Water Users Association
Todd Duncan	Tudor Mutual Water Company
Dan Duncan	Feather Water District
Paul Schubert	Golden State Water Company

APPENDIX B

Links to SGMA and Groundwater Information

California Department of Water Resources, SGMA: <http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/>

California Department of Water Resources Critically Overdrafted Basins:
<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/cod.cfm>

Department of Water Resources, Draft Guidance for GSP Stakeholder Communication and Engagement http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/pdfs/GD_C&E_Final_2017-06-29.pdf

Department of Water Resources, Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Digital Toolkit
http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/digital_toolkit.cfm

UC Davis SGMA Resources: <http://groundwater.ucdavis.edu/SGMA/>
Union of Concerned Scientists, A Guide to California's Groundwater Sustainability Plans, in English and Spanish: <https://www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/ca-and-western-states/groundwater-toolkit#.WnSt5KinFPY>

Union of Concerned Scientist, SMGA information: <https://www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/regional-information/california-and-western-states/sustainable-groundwater-management-act#.Wne0ga2ZPq0>

Community Water Center, Union of Concerned Scientists, Clean Water Fund, Stakeholder Guide for Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation:
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/communitywatercenter/pages/52/attachments/original/1438102537/SGMA_Stakeholder_Engagement_White_Paper.pdf?1438102537

USGS, California Water Use: https://ca.water.usgs.gov/water_use/2010-california-water-use.htm

APPENDIX C **Media Contact List**

There are no media outlets, except for Sutter County News Center, that exclusively cover the Sutter Subbasin. All other media outlets listed below cover the Sutter Subbasin and surrounding areas.

Media Outlet	Website Link
ABC 10	www.abc10.com
Appeal-Democrat	www.appeal-democrat.com
CBS	sacramento.cbslocal.com
FOX 40	fox40.com
Gridley Herald	gridleyherald.com
KUBA Radio	kubaradio.com/category/local-news/
Sutter County News Center	www.suttercounty.org/newscenter
Territorial Dispatch Online Newspaper	territorialdispatch.com