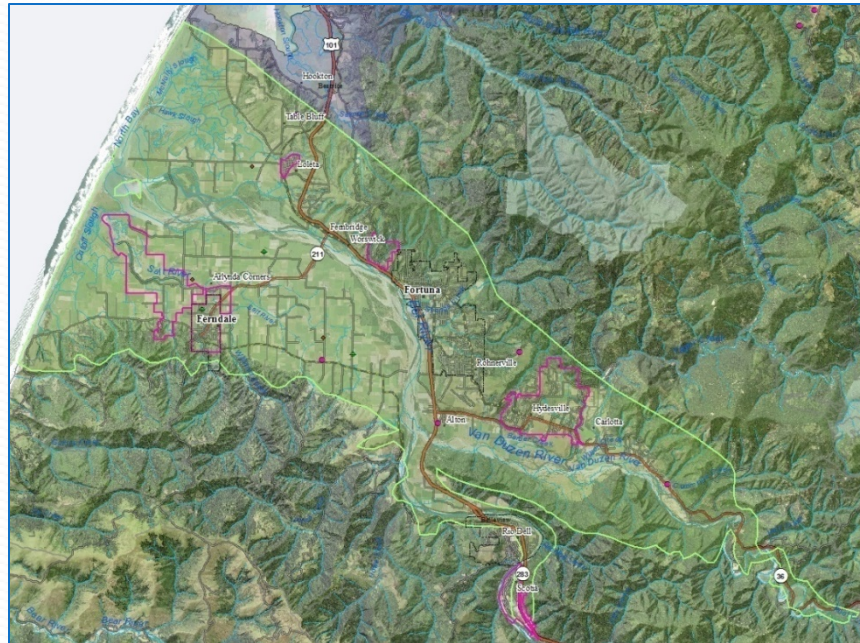


Eel River Valley Groundwater Working Group

March 5, 2020 // 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Humboldt County Agricultural Center



Department of Public Works

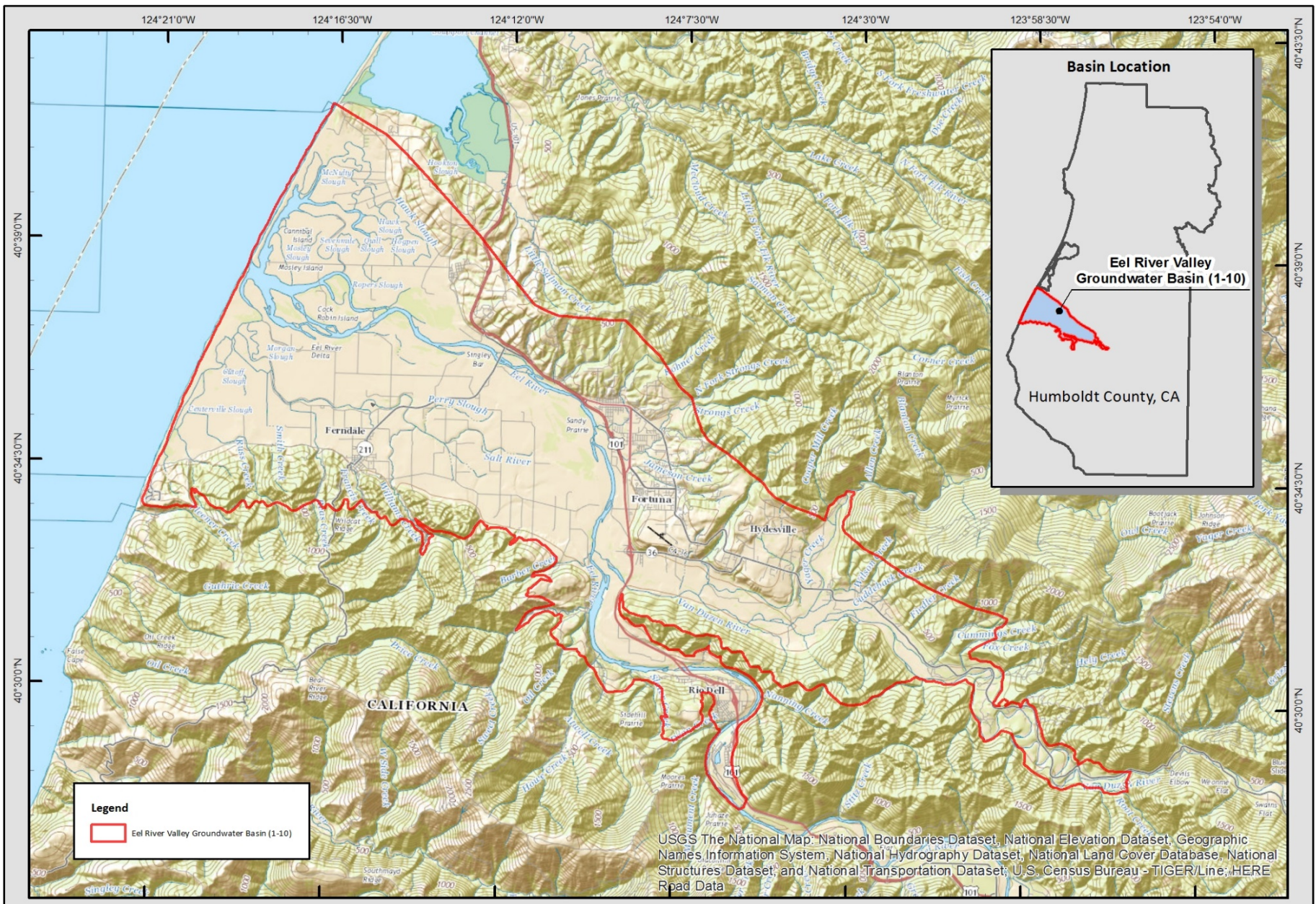
<http://humboldt.gov/groundwater>

Today's agenda

1. Introductions
2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Compliance
 - A. Background review
 - B. Need for Groundwater Sustainability Plan by January 2022
 - C. Need for Groundwater Sustainability Agency by April 2020
 - D. Next steps and timeline
3. Set next meeting



March 5, 2020



Imagery: ESRI Basemap
 Created: December 29, 2016
 Humboldt County Public Works

**Eel River Valley Groundwater Basin (1-10)
 Humboldt County, CA**



0 1.5 3
 Miles

**Figure 1-1
 Site Location Map**

Background Review

- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“SGMA”) passed in September 2014: mandatory compliance for medium- and high-priority basins
- Data collection and analysis for Eel River Valley in 2016 (\$250,000 grant from DWR)
- Groundwater Sustainability Plan (“GSP”) Alternative submitted in December 2016
- Humboldt County continued with data collection and annual reporting
- July 2019: DWR indicated its intent to disapprove the GSP Alternative
- November 2019: The GSP Alternative was formally disapproved

Summary of DWR’s Primary Reasons for Disapproval:

- Objective management criteria were not established for at least 10 years prior to 2014
- The GSP Alternative did not demonstrate the absence of all undesirable results
- A quantitative estimate of sustainable yield has not been developed
- The GSP Alternative should have quantified the impacts of groundwater use on surface water systems and determined at what point they are significant and unreasonable
- DWR did not conclude that the basin is, or has been, managed unsustainably

Need for Groundwater Sustainability Plan by January 2022

- A full GSP that meets the requirements of 23 CCR §§ 350-358.4 is needed because the GSP Alternative was disapproved
- In November 2019, Humboldt County applied for a grant from DWR for funds (\$1.9 million) to develop a GSP for the Eel River Valley groundwater basin
- No local cost-share requirement due to benefits to disadvantaged communities
- Notification of funding is expected within a few weeks, contingent upon formation of a GSA
- Work would begin in May or June 2020
- The grant scope of work emphasizes working with partners and stakeholders
- The budget includes funding for assistance from the Humboldt County RCD, U.S. Geologic Survey, and an outreach specialist



Need for Groundwater Sustainability Plan by January 2022

Major components:

1. Stakeholder engagement and outreach
2. Data collection and analysis
 - 23 new monitoring wells
 - 6 flow meters for voluntary flow measurement of irrigation systems
 - Utilize local weather station installed in early 2019 (Alexandre Dairy)
 - Work with DWR to update agricultural irrigation water use estimate
 - Continuous water level measurements in 35 wells
 - Surface water flow measurements at 10 locations
 - Water quality testing in 15 wells, saltwater intrusion testing in 30 wells
 - Topography, bathymetry, imagery
 - Aquifer parameters (hydraulic conductivity)
 - Assessment of groundwater dependent ecosystems
 - Assessment of surface water beneficial uses



Need for Groundwater Sustainability Plan by January 2022

Major components:

3. Hydrologic modeling

- The models must be able to simulate the processes that could have a significant influence on sustainability indicators
- In particular, the models will account for the effects of pumping on streamflow and quantify the depletion of interconnected surface waters

4. GSP document

- Hydrogeological conceptual model
- Water budget
- Sustainable management criteria
- Monitoring network
- Projects and management actions to meet the sustainability goal of the basin (if needed)



Need for Groundwater Sustainability Agency by April 2020

- Formation of a GSA is needed if a GSP Alternative is disapproved
- Under SGMA, if one or more local agencies do not form a GSA for a regulated basin, the county is the presumed GSA, unless the county notifies DWR that it will not be the GSA
- To become the GSA, the county must hold a public hearing and submit notification to DWR
- The State Water Board is authorized to intervene if requirements for a GSA and GSP are not met



Need for Groundwater Sustainability Agency by April 2020

- Humboldt County proposes to become the GSA for the Eel River Valley groundwater basin and to form a groundwater resources advisory committee
- Implementation would be led by the Department of Public Works
- The advisory committee would likely meet quarterly and have approximately five to nine members
- This process would emulate recent actions by Napa County
- Advisory committee meetings would replace the working group meetings
- The organizational structure and funding mechanism for the GSA could be revisited in the future
- Alternatives:
 1. Creation of a joint-powers authority
 2. Involvement by the Humboldt County RCD



General Proposed Timeline

April 21, 2020	<p>Board of Supervisors holds public hearing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider resolution forming a GSA for the Eel River Valley groundwater basin 2. Direct staff to solicit applications for members of an advisory committee and return with a recommended structure
May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute grant agreement with DWR • Release Request For Proposals for professional services
June/July 2020	Board of Supervisors decides on structure and membership of advisory committee
July 2020	Consultant team begins work
July 2020- December 2021	Implement grant work to develop the GSP
January 2022	Due date for adoption of GSP



Discussion

1. Proposal #1 – Humboldt County proposes to serve as the GSA

2. Proposal #2 – Humboldt County proposes to form a Groundwater Resources Advisory Committee that would advise the Board of Supervisors on groundwater matters in the Eel River Valley and provide guidance and assistance to Public Works in developing the GSP
 - Is an advisory committee needed
 - How to ensure appropriate representation for multiple interests
 - Number of members and how they are appointed
 - Meetings: frequency and location
 - People who would be interested in serving on the advisory committee



Other Humboldt County Advisory Committees

Title	# Members	Composition
Fish and Game Advisory Commission	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor of each district appoints 3 members
Aviation Advisory Committee	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor of each district appoints 1 member Four at-large members appointed by the full Board
Williamson Act Advisory Committee	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five at-large members: nominated by the district supervisor they represent, approved by the full Board
Forestry Review Committee	7 voting 2 non-voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor of each district appoints 1 member Two at-large members appointed by the full Board
Fire Safe Council	13 voting 3 non-voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor of each district appoints 1 member; if possible, appoint 2 reps from local fire protection organizations, 2 reps from local fire safe councils, and 1 rep from insurance industry Four at-large members appointed by the full Board Four members appointed by Fire Chiefs Association, CAL-FIRE, Hoopa Valley Tribe, County OES

