



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 1/4/2022

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File #: 21-1849

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Public Works

**Agenda Section:** Time Certain Matter

**SUBJECT:**

9:30 a.m. - Informational Update on Eel River Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adjourn as the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors;
2. Convene as the governing board of the Humboldt County Groundwater Sustainability Agency;
3. Receive a staff report regarding the administrative draft Eel River Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan;
4. Receive comments from the public;
5. Direct staff to return at the Board of Supervisors meeting scheduled for Jan. 25, 2022, to consider adoption of the final Groundwater Sustainability Plan;
6. Adjourn as the governing board of the Humboldt County Groundwater Sustainability Agency; and
7. Reconvene as the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

General Fund (1100)

**DISCUSSION:**

The Eel River Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) encompasses the lower reaches of the Eel and Van Duzen River valleys and the communities of Fortuna, Ferndale, Rio Dell, Loleta, Carlotta, Hydesville, Alton, Metropolitan, and Scotia (Attachment 1 - Location Map). The Basin is subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) which requires formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency and preparation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). On May 5, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved formation of the Humboldt County Groundwater Sustainability Agency through Resolution 20-39. The County of Humboldt received a grant from the California Department of Water Resources to develop a GSP for the Basin. On Nov. 22, 2021, Public Works released an administrative draft of the Eel River Valley GSP for public review. The purpose of the GSP is to present a framework for sustainably managing groundwater resources within the Basin for economic, social and environmental benefits through local control and based on the best available science and technical information. The executive summary of the draft GSP is provided in Attachment

2. The complete draft GSP is available here:

<https://humboldt.gov/2820/Eel-River-Valley-Groundwater-Basin-Resou>>. The public review period for the draft GSP ended on Dec. 24, 2021. Comment letters received on the draft GSP are provided in Attachment 3. The deadline for submission of a GSP to the Department of Water Resources is Jan. 31, 2022.

At this meeting, Public Works will provide an information report on the draft GSP. Public Works will revise the draft GSP based on feedback from the Board and the public comments received and will return to the Board on Jan. 25, 2022, for the Board's consideration of adopting the final GSP.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Costs for Public Works to prepare the GSP are funded through a grant from the Department of Water Resources. Expenditures are reimbursable through Jan. 31, 2022. The maximum reimbursable amount under this grant is \$1.9 million. The costs for implementing the GSP are currently being evaluated and have not been determined. The costs for implementing the GSP could affect the General Fund. The final GSP will include an estimate of the costs for implementing the plan over the next five years. If costs exceed the baseline funding for the Water Management budget, Public Works will bring a staff report back to the Board for guidance and direction on a funding strategy.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

The recommended actions support the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Framework by providing for and maintaining infrastructure and creating opportunities for improved safety and health.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

California Department of Water Resources, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, United States Geological Survey, water providers in the Eel River valley

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Executive Summary of Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan
3. Comment Letters on Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: C-29

Meeting of: August 18, 2021

File No.: 20-1015