1. Introduction

In 2014, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed by the Governor of the state of California, setting the framework for local agencies to sustainably manage California's groundwater basins. To avoid potential State intervention, SGMA requires groundwater basins/subbasins designated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as medium- or high-priority to follow four basic steps: 1) form a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA); 2) develop and adopt a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP or Plan); 3) implement the Plan to achieve a sustainability goal and avoid undesirable results within 20 years; and 4) report the implementation activities to the DWR to document whether the sustainability goal and the avoidance of undesirable results is being achieved. Ultimately, five GSAs were formed to manage groundwater in the North American Subbasin (NASb or Subbasin), completing Step 1. This GSP and adoption by each GSA will complete Step 2. This GSP will be assessed every 5 years, with amendments as needed to ensure the Plan is meeting its sustainability goal.

This GSP is a framework to provide for the sustainability of the NASb of the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin for the next 20 years. The NASb, designated as subbasin No. 5-021.64 by the DWR, is bounded on the north by the Bear River, on the south by the American River, to the west by the Feather and Sacramento rivers, and on the east by the Sierra Nevada foothills (*see* **Figure 1-1**). The NASb was designated by DWR as a high priority subbasin and therefore the formation of GSAs and the completion of a GSP is required to avoid potential State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) intervention. Surrounding subbasins were also designated as medium- or high-priority and are required to comply with SGMA. Groundwater is a critical resource to the Subbasin's community, economy, and environment by providing an average of 280,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) for public and agricultural supply or just under 50 percent of total water supply.

Agencies in the NASb have been actively managing groundwater for decades and have achieved positive groundwater management results. Groundwater levels within the Subbasin have been relatively stable for decades and have shown the ability to recover after periods of prolonged pumping and droughts. The passage of SGMA created an opportunity for a cooperative endeavor to develop a single GSP for the entire NASb. Beginning in January 2017, representatives of local agencies began coordination meetings that ultimately led to agreement to form five GSAs to cover the entirety of the Subbasin, while ensuring broad representation of the various stakeholder interests throughout the parts of the three counties comprising the NASb.

This GSP is organized into the following sections:

> Section 1 – Introduction – Provides an overview of SGMA and associated requirements and introduces the contents of the Plan.

Section 2 – Agency Information – Provides a description of each GSA, contact information, implementation authority, and estimated costs for Plan implementation.

Section 3 – Plan Area – Describes the geography, historical and projected land uses, jurisdictional areas, water use sectors and water sources, existing water resources management plans, existing monitoring networks, and conjunctive use programs. The section also assesses the potential effects of implementing the Plan on water supplies.

Section 4 – Basin Setting – Describes the geologic conditions that control how groundwater moves in the Subbasin, recharge and discharge areas, general water quality, and principal aquifers.

Section 5 – Groundwater Conditions – Describes historical and current groundwater levels, changes in groundwater storage, water quality, subsidence, change in storage, and identification of interconnected surface water and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

Section 6 – Water Budgets – Provides a historical water budget and forecasts future groundwater use for the next 50-years to assess whether groundwater conditions will remain sustainable including the influence of climate change.

Section 7 – Monitoring Networks – Describes the monitoring networks to be used to assess sustainability indicators and monitoring protocols. Establishes an annual reporting mechanism to assess the management performance and for 5-year assessments of this GSP to maintain the Subbasin's sustainability.

Section 8 – Sustainable Management Criteria – Describes locally defined sustainability goals and undesirable results for the SGMA groundwater sustainability indicators. Establishes management criteria, the operating range in which groundwater levels will be maintained, in the form of minimum thresholds and measurable objectives.

Section 9 – Projects and Management Actions – Identifies current, planned, and supplemental projects and management actions to maintain groundwater sustainability.

Section 10 – Plan Implementation – Provides an overview of how the GSAs will regularly perform the activities needed to manage the Subbasin.

Section 11 – Notice and Communications – Provides a summary of GSA activities with interested parties.

Section 12 – References – List of materials used to develop this Plan.

This Plan was developed cooperatively by the GSAs in the NASb along with input from stakeholders and in coordination with the adjacent South Yuba, Sutter, Yolo, and South American subbasins.

Figure 1-1. North American Subbasin

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