



Best Management Practice Framework

Introduction to Best Management Practices

Chapter 7 of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), in Water Code Section 10729(d), states that, *"By January 1, 2017, the department shall publish on its internet Web site best management practices for the sustainable management of groundwater."* Prior to the completion of a best management practices (BMPs) document, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) was required to adopt regulations for evaluating groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs), the implementation of GSPs, and coordination agreements by June 1, 2016 (GSP Regulations), and Alternatives.

"Best management practice" refers to a practice, or combination of practices, that are designed to achieve sustainable groundwater management and have been determined to be technologically and economically effective, practicable, and based on best available science.

–GSP Regulations §351(h)

The GSP Regulations adopted in May 2016 are part of the California Code of Regulations in Title 23, Division 2, Chapter 1.5, Subchapter 2. The GSP Regulations address BMPs in Section 352.2 (Monitoring Protocols) and Section 352.4 (Data and Reporting Standards). Other than BMPs addressing monitoring protocols and monitoring sites, SGMA and the GSP Regulations provide no direction or limitation with respect to what type of BMPs or additional guidance should be developed to assist groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) with making sustainable groundwater management decisions.

DWR elected to publish two categories of information that can assist GSAs with developing GSPs – **BMPs** and **Guidance Documents**.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

BMPs are intended to provide clarification, guidance, and examples to help GSAs develop the essential elements of a GSP. BMPs rely on technical information from other groundwater management efforts, existing standards, or other guidance or reference reports. The BMP categories include the following:

- **BMP 1:** Monitoring Protocols, Standards, and Sites
- **BMP 2:** Monitoring Networks and Identification of Data Gaps
- **BMP 3:** Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model
- **BMP 4:** Water Budget
- **BMP 5:** Modeling

Guidance Documents

Guidance Documents are prepared for topic areas unique to SGMA, for either topics where no established practices in the water management industry exist or to provide suggestions with supporting graphics to aid GSAs in developing certain GSP components. The Guidance Documents in development for 2016 include the following:

- Preparation Checklist for GSP Submittal
- GSP Annotated Outline
- Establishing Sustainable Management Criteria (*In development*)
- Engagement with Tribal Governments (*In development*)
- Stakeholder Engagement and Communication (*In development*)

How to Utilize BMPs and Guidance Documents

BMPs and Guidance Documents are organized to follow a logical progression of SGMA compliance activities. **Figures 1 and 2** illustrate the general progression of work flow that GSA's will likely follow in preparing and implementing their basin-wide GSPs. DWR recommends that BMPs be utilized by GSAs in this order as they are preparing GSPs.

The BMPs and Guidance Documents are only intended to provide technical or general guidance to GSAs and other stakeholders. GSAs and other stakeholders have the option of using this material, but the content provided in these documents does not create any new requirements or obligations for the GSA or other stakeholders.

The BMPs and Guidance Documents do not serve as a substitute for the GSP Regulations or the provisions in SGMA. Those GSAs submitting a GSP are strongly encouraged to fully read the (GSP Regulations) and the text of the (SGMA). In addition, using these BMPs to develop a GSP does not equate to an approval determination by DWR.

The generalized workflow diagram shown in **Figure 2** identifies some of the key steps that may be used to establish, achieve, and maintain a groundwater basin's sustainability goal. This diagram refers to the initial set of BMPs and Guidance Documents presented in **Figure 1**, while focusing on how that information can be used to establish a sustainability goal and the criteria used to evaluate the basin's condition and progress toward achieving sustainability.

Figure 1. Steps to Sustainability and related BMPs and Guidance Documents

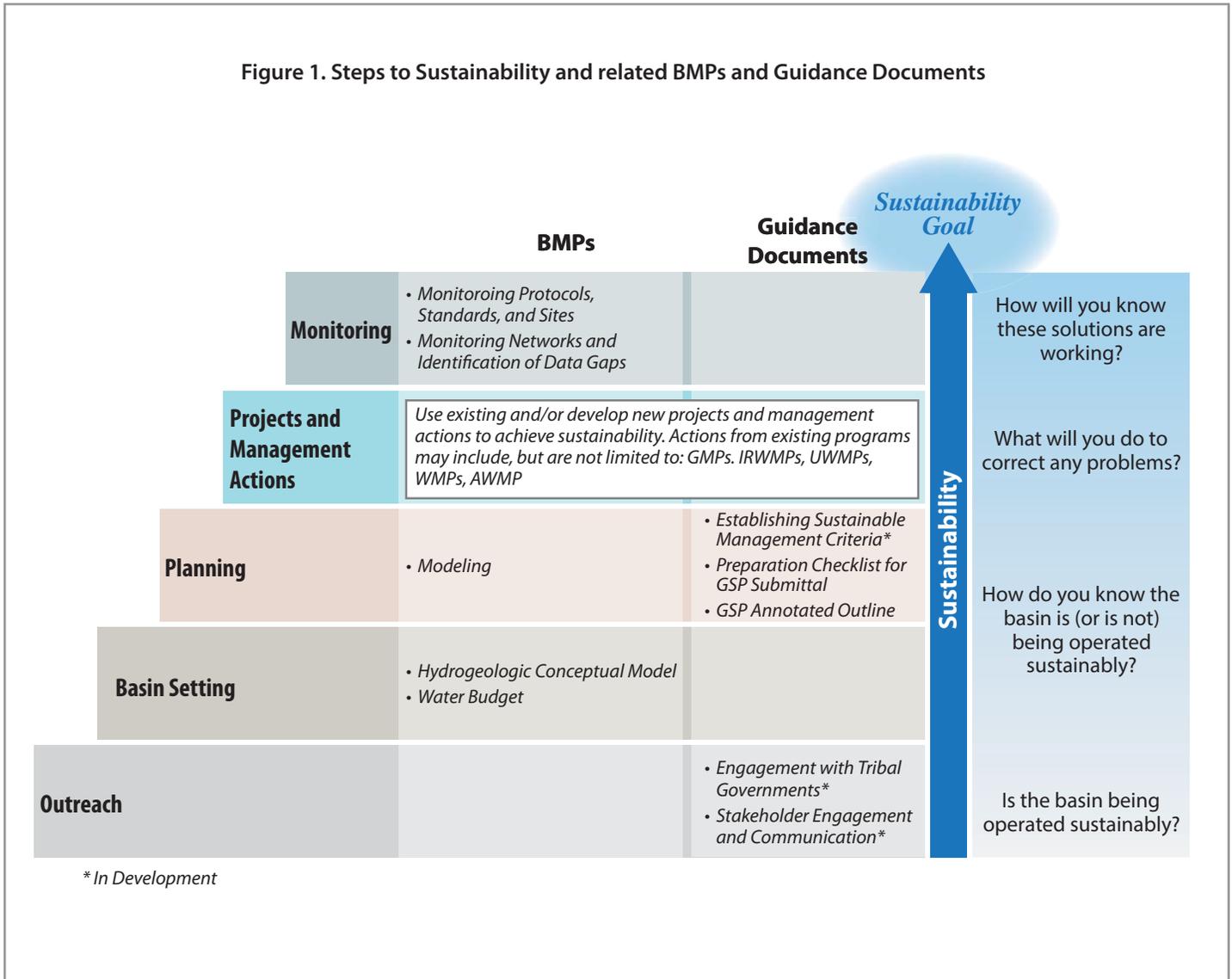


Figure 2. Interrelationship of BMPs and Guidance Documents in Generalized Workflow for Developing a Basins' Groundwater Sustainability Goal

