Golden State Water Company
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DATE	March 26, 2007	JOB NO.	
ATTENTION	Dave Todd		
RE: Ojai Groundwater Management Plan			

TO DWR Office of Water Use Efficiency
901 P Street, Room 313A
Sacramento, CA 95814

WE ARE SENDING YOU ☒ Attached ☐ Under separate cover via ___ the following items:

☐ Shop Drawings ☐ Prints ☐ Plans ☐ Samples ☐ Specifications

☐ Copy of letter ☐ Change Order ☐ Adopted Ojai GW Management Plan

COPIES	DATE	NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	3/19/07		Notice of Adoption – Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Plan

THESE ARE TRANSMITTED as checked below:

☐ For approval ☐ Approved as submitted ☐ Resubmit ___ copies for approval

☐ For your use ☐ Approved as noted ☐ Submit ___ copies for distribution

☒ As requested ☐ Returned for corrections ☐ Return ___ corrected prints

☐ For review and comment ☐ _____

☐ FOR BIDS DUE ___ 20 _ ☐ PRINTS RETURNED AFTER LOAN TO US

REMARKS: The enclosed document will also be mailed to the cities and counties that received the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan for the Ojai System, as well as the California State Library.

COPY TO: _____

SIGNED: Katherine J. Lawson
Katherine J. Lawson, P.E.

G:FORMS/TRANSMIT

If enclosures are not as noted, kindly notify us at once.

Notice of Adoption

Golden State Water Company hereby adopts the attached Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Plan for incorporation into the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan for the Ojai System.

Roland S. Tanner
Vice President, New Regulated Business

Golden State Water Company

March 19, 2007

OJAI GROUNDWATER BASIN

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency to preserve the quantity and quality of groundwater in the Ojai Basin in order to protect and maintain the long-term water supply for the common benefit of the water users in the basin.

GENERAL APPROACH

The Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency (OBGMA or Agency) is required by law to have a Groundwater Management Plan (Plan) to guide its operations. This Plan has been developed based on studies done for the Agency by its engineering contractor (Staal, Gardner, and Dunn), input from well owners and water users, and recommendations made by the Agency's ad hoc advisory committee and by the Coalition to Protect Ojai Groundwater (COPOG).

The Plan consists of five broad goals. Each goal includes a number of action elements. While the five broad goals will provide the structure to the Agency's management efforts for several years, the Agency expects that the detailed action elements will evolve as the Agency's efforts progress. Elements approved with this Plan will be implemented in the form of Agency rules, regulations or ordinances. Prior to implementation, additional criteria to guide these actions will be developed in a public process by the Board and added to this management plan. Some elements - as noted herein - require more study and public review before specific implementation actions are approved. Additions will be made to this Plan as actions to implement these elements are reviewed by the water users and well owners in the basin and approved by the Agency Board of Directors (Board). Amendments to the approved Plan will be made only after full public review, consideration of any ad hoc advisory committee recommendation and formal approval by the Board.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the OBGMA is derived from its enabling legislation, SB 534, which became law in 1991; and from the expressed needs and concerns of the water users and well owners of the Ojai Basin. The Agency was established in the fifth year of a drought, amidst concerns for potential basin overdraft. The mission is in keeping with the history of the basin and the circumstances existing when the Agency was formed.

Based upon the studies conducted for the Agency in 1992, the water supply and demand in the basin is largely in balance and capable of meeting the annual demands of the

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overlying landowners and in-basin water users under present conditions.

However, after a series of dry years water levels in some wells in the basin drop to the point where an alternative water source must be used. In part, that is why water users presently import some 5,000 acre feet of Casitas project water into the basin annually, primarily for irrigation. If Casitas water was not available or not used in a series of dry years, considering the present knowledge of the hydrology of the basin and the existing wells and water users, some shallower and peripheral wells would probably not produce water.

Therefore, the focus of the Agency's efforts is on protecting and preserving the basin groundwater resource for in-basin use; and guarding against harmful export of water from the basin.

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

DETAILED ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1 - UNDERSTANDING THE BASIN

The Agency must have a comprehensive understanding of the hydrology of the basin under its jurisdiction in order to carry out its mission.

a. Monitoring. The Agency has a sound baseline study prepared in 1992, which includes a theoretical model of the basin hydrology. This model must be tested and updated regularly under a continuing monitoring program to serve as a basis for informed decision making. Monitoring will also enable the Agency to identify changing conditions and implement management programs when needed. Monitoring will include:

1. Surface water entering the basin
2. Recharge of the basin from rainfall
3. Stream flow seepage
4. Evapotranspiration
5. Discharge from the basin as surface flow from San Antonio Creek and subsurface flow
6. Extractions from the basin via public and private wells.

Monitoring results will be shared annually by the Agency with well owners, water users and the public.

b. Data Collection. Previous studies identified significant gaps in the current monitoring activities in the basin. Specific areas identified for increased data collection are basin water level and water quality monitoring. In cooperation with the Agency, the Ventura County Public Works Agency will add the additional wells recommended by Staal, Gardner, and Dunn to the wells presently measured routinely by Ventura County for water level. In addition Ventura County will expand the wells monitored for water quality as recommended by Staal, Gardner, and Dunn in the Agency study to the wells Ventura County presently monitors, and will provide that information to the Agency. If needed the Agency will use the services of University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) interns to do the field collection for this program. Permission from the well owners will be obtained by the Agency prior to initiating monitoring not already being conducted by Ventura County. This data will be analyzed and reported annually by the Agency. Additional data collection actions, including surface water discharged from San Antonio Creek and surface water inflow into the basin, will be considered in the future. This data will be analyzed and reported annually by the Agency. All results from each well measurement are to be shared

with the respective well owner.

c. **Well Registration.** The Agency adopted Ordinance No. 1 which required all wells in the basin to be registered with the Agency. Eighty-seven (87) wells have been registered and it is estimated that there are twenty-three (23) unregistered wells in the basin. The Agency will seek to have all wells in the basin registered, and will seek a formal agreement with Ventura County to insure that their well records are made available to the Agency and that any new well permits are properly registered with the Agency.

d. **Extraction Measurement.** The Agency is mandated by its enabling act to monitor well extractions. A reliable measurement of the amount of water extracted from the basin is important, along with precipitation and recharge data and water level monitoring, to understand the hydrology of the basin and to implement management efforts to maintain a balance between replenishment of the supply and water use. Agency Ordinance No. 1 required all wells in the basin to be metered. Subsequently the Agency adopted Resolution No. 94-3 which encourages voluntary metering and extends the deadline for mandatory metering until April 15, 1996.

The Agency is also committed to investigating alternatives to mandatory metering which would provide adequate and reliable information about water extraction in the basin, and to consider using those methods in the future in lieu of mandatory metering if they prove satisfactory. The Agency is also committed to implementing an effective, reliable method of monitoring well extractions. Currently, well owners are required to report, as precisely as possible, using meters or a variety of methods such as electrical power usage or crop factor, their annual water extractions.

GOAL 2 - CONTROLLING EXPORTS: PROTECTING AND MANAGING THE BASIN

In order to preserve the groundwater in the Ojai Basin the Agency will take direct management actions based upon a factual knowledge of the Basin and the needs and concerns of water users and well owners in the basin.

a. **Controlling Exports of Water from the Basin.** The Agency's enabling legislation mandates that no groundwater shall be exported from the basin except under permit issued by the Agency in full compliance with the policy and intent of the law. The law mandates the preservation of the groundwater for the common benefit of water users within the Basin. Based upon present hydrologic facts and circumstances, the Agency finds that there is no surplus water available for export. The Agency will review the existence of surplus from time to time, as dictated by the receipt and review of its annual report or as new, reliable information becomes available. The Agency will establish the conditions and criteria under which it would contemplate granting a permit for export, should a surplus be determined to exist. These conditions and criteria will include at least the following:

1. The applicant for a permit will bear the full financial and technical burden of demonstrating that a surplus of water exists which, if exported, would not cause harm to any existing groundwater user in the basin, now or in the future

2. The export permit will be immediately suspended in the event of a declared water shortage, predetermined basin storage threshold level, or upon other pre-established criteria

3. All export permits will contain conditions and criteria which will otherwise protect the in-basin users to the fullest extent allowable under the law.

b. **Establishment of Basin Thresholds and Triggers.** Water levels in the basin fluctuate considerably in response to pumping and recharge from seasonal rainfall. Presently the Ojai Basin is considered largely in balance. Groundwater use during 1993 was approximately 6,100 acre feet of which some 2,000 acre feet was pumped by Southern California Water Company for municipal and domestic supply. In addition three small mutual water companies and some 70 private wells supply both agricultural and domestic water in the basin. There is a great variation in the location, depth, and elevation of the wells in the basin, and their relative access to groundwater at low points in the hydrologic cycle. There is also variation in water quality in different parts of the basin. Taking into account the needs of the water users in the basin, overlying landowners and well operators and the existing conjunctive relationship between the groundwater used in the basin and the Lake Casitas water imported into the basin, the Agency will establish basin storage thresholds which would trigger special action by the Agency to assure protection of groundwater supplies in the basin.

c. **Transfer of Water Across Basin Cells.** Previous studies have revealed that the water in the basin is not perfectly contiguous, but moves differently within different cells in the basin. Therefore the Agency should evaluate and consider the impact of transfer of water across basin cells.

GOAL 3 - ENCOURAGING SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

With its limited resources the Agency must strive to achieve its goals in cooperation with and through the supporting activities of other agencies, and through the encouragement of supportive actions by water users.

a. **Data Collection and Storage.** Ventura County already routinely collects information on water levels and quality from wells in the Ojai Basin. In cooperation with the Agency this effort will be expanded to meet the monitoring needs of the Basin.

b. **Water Conservation.** The Agency strongly encourages water conservation

practices by both agricultural users and urban users. Market forces as well as good management practices are moving most agricultural users in the basin toward implementation of water conservation measures. Likewise, Southern California Water Company, the largest municipal supplier in the basin, has initiated a conservation plan approved by the Public Utilities Commission and supported by the City of Ojai.

The Agency will encourage the development, publication and sharing of information with these users that will encourage the optimum use of water resources in the basin. Further, the Agency will seek the assistance of various local, state, federal and private organizations to provide water conservation services and education programs for in-basin water users. The Agency will encourage in basin water users to incorporate conservation practices and will consider the development of a conservation plan in anticipation of drought conditions.

c. **Abandoned Wells.** A number of abandoned wells were identified in the basin in the 1992 study. Ventura County has an abandoned well program. The Agency will encourage a special effort by the County to implement that program in the Ojai Basin, to identify all abandoned wells, to make a determination if they pose any hazard to the quantity or quality of groundwater in the basin, and to identify the actions needed and help obtain the resources to rectify any problems. The Agency supports proper abandonment of wells in accordance with Ventura County standards and supports the County in its effort.

d. **Artificial Recharge.** The Ojai Water Conservation District was involved in an informal program of enhanced percolation of stream flow on San Antonio Creek until 1985. This involved the diversion of surface flows into a series of percolation basins and was highly successful. The program was discontinued after the emergency construction of a debris basin on San Antonio Creek by Ventura County using FEMA funds, following a major brushfire in the watershed. The result of that construction was the destruction of most of the percolation basins which were never restored. The artificial recharge of the basin from San Antonio Creek by the Ojai Water Conservation District is strongly endorsed by the OBGMA. Further the Agency will assist the OWCD in seeking to have Ventura County, using FEMA monies if possible, restore the percolation basins and gravity water systems that were destroyed by the emergency construction.

e. **Watershed Management.** The Agency will encourage the United States Forest Service to undertake management practices on the Ojai Basin watershed which will optimize recharge of the Ojai Basin from precipitation falling upon National Forest lands.

GOAL 4 - EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The effectiveness of the Agency will depend upon its ability, within its limited means, to meet the needs of the water users and well owners of the Ojai Basin. This will depend upon effective, two way communication between the Agency and the users it serves.

a. **Advisory Committee.** An ad hoc advisory committee with representatives of the well owners and water users in the basin has been created by the Agency Board and has been a means of developing a dialogue between users and the Agency. The ad hoc advisory committee will be used by the Agency Board as a nucleus of interested and affected users to consider and develop the details of actions proposed under this Groundwater Management Plan. During the process of completing the Plan the Agency Board and advisory committee will meet every month. Once the Plan is complete and as dictated by the needs of the Agency, the Agency Board and advisory committee may reduce the frequency of their meetings.

b. **Annual Report.** The Agency will prepare an annual report as required by law which it will publish itself at minimum expense. Technical contractors will only be used if required to perform technical analysis of data collected during the year. Information learned about the basin and water use in the basin will be shared by the Agency with all well owners directly and with water users in the basin through the general news media and the publications of local water purveyors. Actions or items of special interest will be shared with well owners by direct mailing newsletters, which will also include notice of Agency meetings and agendas. Agency Board members will be available to meet with basin water users to address issues of concern and the ongoing management activities of the Agency.

GOAL 5 - EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION

The resources available to the Agency to carry out its mission and serve the water users of the basin are limited. Therefore cost containment measures are essential. These measures will be developed and made part of this Plan.

a. **Funding.** By law the Agency's current funding mechanism expires in 1995. Under the law the agency may initiate a groundwater extraction charge not to exceed $7.50 per acre foot of water pumped. The amount of an extraction charge has not yet been determined. This must be done this fiscal year and whatever funding mechanism is decided upon put into place prior to the start of the next fiscal year, July 1, 1995.

b. **Minimum Requirements.** The Agency's enabling legislation requires the Management Plan to establish a minimum amount of groundwater extraction below which the requirements of the act will not be applied. The Agency will establish this criteria.