North Sacramento River Corridor Interbasin Coordination
Public Webinar
Wednesday, January 28, 2026
12:00-1:00pm PST

Meeting Summary

Meeting in Brief

Representatives from Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the North Sacramento River Corridor (NSRC) have been collaborating to advance regional interbasin coordination efforts under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The NSRC consists of seven groundwater basins – Antelope, Butte, Colusa, Corning, Los Molinos, Red Bluff, and Vina Subbasins.

An informational public webinar was held on January 28, 2026 to introduce and share updates on the North Sacramento Valley (NSV) Interbasin Coordination (IBC) Framework and NSRC IBC Work Plan development and elicit public input.

Approximately 95 participants attended the webinar. Attendees asked about the hydrological connectivity and technical accuracy of current groundwater models, emphasized the urgency of aligning coordination efforts with the January 2027 regulatory deadline, and inquired about how regional programs (e.g., dry well mitigation, recharge projects, and ecological thresholds) will be managed across subbasin boundaries.

Links to meeting resources are provided below and are posted on the webpage. Next steps include the GSA representatives meeting in mid/late February to revise the NSRC IBC Work Plan and an in-person public workshop later in the spring.

Meeting Resources

- North Sacramento River Corridor (NSRC) Interbasin Coordination (IBC) Webpage
- North Sacramento Valley IBC Webpage
- NSRC IBC Factsheet
- North Sacramento Valley IBC Framework Report
- NSRC IBC GSA Representatives Roster
- Jan 28 Webinar Slides
- Jan 28 Webinar Recording

Welcome and Introductions

Tania Carlone, facilitator with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), welcomed participants to the webinar about coordination efforts among seven groundwater basins in the North Sacramento River Corridor (Antelope, Butte, Colusa, Corning, Los Molinos, Red Bluff, and Vina Subbasins). The North Sacramento River Corridor is part of the larger North Sacramento Valley that includes the Feather River Corridor (Butte, Wyandotte Creek, North Yuba, and Sutter Subbasin).

Tod Kimmelshue, Butte County Supervisor and Butte County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) representative for Vina and Butte Subbasins, provided opening comments. He emphasized that because subbasins are hydrologically connected, actions in one subbasin inherently affect their neighbors. Interbasin coordination helps protect this shared water resource and reduce duplicative efforts.

T. Carlone explained the primary goals for this webinar were:

1. Introduce the Interbasin Coordination Framework and workplan development
2. Provide an update on its implementation
3. Elicit public input

Interbasin Coordination Framework

T. Carlone oriented participants to the framework for interbasin coordination in the Northern Sacramento Valley. The framework was mutually agreed upon and established by 11 subbasins in the Northern Sacramento Valley during the development of their Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) in 2020 and 2021. It formalizes a commitment by GSAs to ongoing collaboration across subbasin boundaries.

The Northern Sacramento Valley Interbasin Coordination Framework consists of Five Pillars for collaboration:

1. Information-sharing
2. Joint analysis & evaluation
3. Coordination on mutually beneficial activities
4. Coordinated communication and outreach
5. Issue-resolution process

While the framework applies to the broader region, it identified specific corridors based on shared common features for more focused coordination. Discussions among GSA representatives for the NSRC seven subbasins began in late 2025 to develop a formal NSRC IBC Work Plan. The work plan is intended to guide interbasin coordination across the seven NSRC subbasins, particularly for upcoming timely processes, such as the Periodic Evaluations due in 2027, as well as longer-term activities through 2032, such as interconnected surface water (ISW) efforts. The work plan can serve as a tool for GSA representatives to report interbasin coordination accomplishments and commitments in their periodic evaluations to DWR and to their respective leadership and communities.

Pillar 1: Information Sharing

T. Carlone reviewed the first pillar on how the GSAs can share knowledge across the subbasins. This can include information resources such as changing groundwater conditions, annual/interim progress reports, and other technical information.

Progress/Implementation Update: NSRC GSA representatives committed to holding at least one coordination meeting annually (can be supplemented with as-needed sessions and informal neighbor-to-neighbor outreach). They also intend to maintain regional communication by leveraging existing collaborative venues such as the Northern California Water Association (NCWA) and the North Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning group.

Pillar 2: Joint Analysis and Evaluation

T. Carlone then presented Pillar 2, which focused on creating a shared understanding of groundwater conditions and assessing potential impacts at subbasin boundaries. GSAs committed to evaluating and comparing the contents of their GSPs to identify significant differences and uncertainties related to basin interactions.

Progress/Implementation Update: Activities under Pillar 2 are essentially complete with a joint GSP evaluation in 2025 by technical consultant Montgomery & Associates (M&A). They prepared comparative technical memos for the NSRC and Feather River corridors, with webinars/slides available [Here]. The results of this work provided a foundational snapshot of boundary conditions that will inform the subbasins' state-required periodic evaluations due in 2027.

Pillar 3: Coordination on Mutually Beneficial Activities

T. Carlone introduced Pillar 3, which involves the GSAs communicating and collaborating on mutually beneficial activities, such as joint monitoring, regional modeling, and collectively pursuing grant funding.

Progress/Implementation Update: Building on the analysis from Pillar 2, the GSAs identified coordination on interconnected surface water (ISW) as a top regional priority to address critical data gaps. Surface waters like the Sacramento River and Butte Creek cross multiple subbasin boundaries, requiring a shared regional management approach rather than working in silos.

Christina Buck with Butte County and the NSV IBC technical liaison shared that a specific ISW Work Plan is currently being drafted by technical teams to support the state-required periodic evaluations. The ISW Work Plan consists of two main components: 1) regional technical analysis that identifies where/when to collect data to better characterize the system and conduct model refinements and analysis to further understanding of ISW in the Sac Valley, and 2) Framework document with potential approaches for ISW SMC and to support GSAs in addressing ISW within their subbasin. Beyond ISW, representatives are also discussing coordination on recharge projects, monitoring at boundaries, and aligning domestic well mitigation and demand management programs.

Pillar 4: Coordinated Communication & Outreach

T. Carlone explained how Pillar 4 focuses on regional-scale collaboration to promote public awareness, enhance trust, and maintain institutional knowledge. GSAs committed to transparent and open communication to ensure stakeholders understand the highly technical nature of groundwater management.

Progress/Implementation Update: Recent and forthcoming implementation activities include this public webinar and an in-person spring workshop to gather regional input on the NSRC IBC workplan. To support these efforts, the group has developed outreach materials such as a NSRC IBC factsheet that explains the importance of coordination. Additionally, the NSRC IBC webpage is continually maintained to provide updates, meeting materials, and other work products.

Pillar 5: Issue Resolution Process

For the final pillar, T. Carlone noted that Pillar 5 reflects the GSAs' commitment to establishing and following an agreed-upon process for identifying and resolving conflicts. For instance, the framework provides a pathway for subbasins to establish and follow an agreed upon process for resolving conflicts that could lead to a more formal interbasin coordination agreement.

Progress/Implementation Update: GSA representatives confirmed the intent of this pillar to have a proactive conflict resolution process approach that could be used, if needed. Representatives are keeping in mind potential scenarios that may warrant considering a more formal interbasin coordination agreement (e.g., if a joint cost-sharing arrangement becomes necessary, etc.)

Questions and Eliciting Feedback

Participants raised the following issues during the Open Q&A:

- **Geological and Hydrological Connectivity.** A participant raised concerns regarding the east side of the Colusa subbasin, citing unique geological features like the Sutter Buttes and the Willows Fault. He suggested that these features might mean the area is not hydrologically connected to the west side, necessitating different policies.
- **Modeling and Boundary Flow Analysis.** Attendees asked about the status of the boundary flow analysis and the standardization of modeling platforms. C. Buck explained that while DWR's C2VSim Fine Grid model provides a regional foundation, the drafted ISW Work Plan will further refine these tools by incorporating local field data to better represent physical systems like streams and bypasses.
- **Timeline Urgency**. Concerns were voiced regarding the tight window to coordinate and amend GSPs before the January 2027 deadline. T. Carlone clarified that the draft ISW Work Plan would be shared with GSAs and the public in the coming months to ensure it can be incorporated into evaluations by late 2026.
- **Surface Water and Ecological Thresholds**. There was an inquiry regarding how surface water uses are factored into groundwater coordination and whether ecological thresholds would be established. C. Buck explained that while surface water use is accounted for and reported in annual report estimates, specific policy settings like ecological thresholds remain under the purview of each individual GSA.
- **Interagency Programs.** Participants asked if coordination extended to groundwater substitutions or in-lieu recharge agreements with the Bureau. While current focus remains on data gaps and ISW, GSAs are using this forum to learn from neighboring programs, such as Colusa's well mitigation program, to inform their own local decision-making.

Through an informal poll, participants identified the following questions/comments for the GSA representatives to keep in mind as the group moves forward:

- **Ecological thresholds.** Will there ever be a Interbasin discussion about establishing an ecological threshold for key stone species?
- **Private property well water use**. How is it affected or included in these research projects?
- **Hydrogeologic modeling accuracy.** Incorporate the unique geological formations as appropriate (specifically cited Sutter Buttes and the Willows Fault - south portion of the east side of the Colusa Subbasin). Consider adopting a uniform boundary flow (BFW) model (Berkstresser 1973 suggested).
- **Projects coordination.** Will groundwater substitution and in-lieu groundwater recharge projects occurring within subbasins be coordinated?
- **Groundwater flow dynamics.** Do existing studies indicate that groundwater flows toward large-diameter well pumps? (e.g., Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District Test-Production Well Installation and Aquifer Testing of March 2009 suggested aquifer zones sources screened in the test production well is most likely from the foothills and mountains to the east and north).

Next Steps

T. Carlone thanked attendees for their input and noted the NSRC IBC GSA coordination group will meet in mid/late February to review public feedback and refine the NSRC IBC Work Plan. Interested parties can find updates and resources related to these interbasin coordination efforts on the NSRC IBC webpage, including the webinar slides and recording.