
State Water Resources Control Board

August 9, 2024

Mr. Paul Sweezey
Paul Sweezey Farm



CONDITIONAL APPROVAL OF GROUNDWATER LOCAL COOPERATIVE SOLUTION FOR PAUL SWEZEY FARM

Dear Mr. Sweezey:

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted an emergency regulation that went into effect on February 1, 2024, that establishes emergency minimum flows in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §§ 875-875.9) (Regulation). Under the Regulation, local cooperative solutions by individuals or groups may be proposed by petition to the Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director) as an alternative means of reducing water use to meet or preserve the emergency minimum flows, or to provide other fishery benefits, in lieu of curtailment. Section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D) describes three types of local cooperative solutions that are specifically available for overlying or adjudicated groundwater diversions for irrigated agriculture: Best Management Practices, Graduated Cessation Schedule, and Percent Reduction. The Deputy Director may approve a proposal submitted by an individual or group, provided that it meets the specific requirements of the applicable groundwater local cooperative solution type and satisfies the metering and inspection requirements.

Summary of Proposal

The State Water Board received a groundwater local cooperative solution proposal from Paul Sweezey (petitioner) that involves reducing water use from four groundwater wells that irrigate a total of 752 acres using the Best Management Practices and Graduated Cessation Schedule groundwater local cooperative solution options.

- **Best Management Practices Proposal:** Under the Best Management Practices portion of the proposal, the petitioner proposes to use a low-energy precision application (LEPA) system on 191 acres of irrigated land, use soil moisture sensors to inform irrigation timing, stop irrigating corners after June 15, and forgo the use of end guns.
- **Graduated Cessation Schedule Proposal:** The petitioner proposes to use Option 2 of the Graduated Cessation Schedule local cooperative solution for 561 acres.

The Option 2 schedule involves ceasing:

- At least 20% of irrigated acres by July 20,
- At least 50% of irrigated acres by August 20, and
- At least 95% of irrigated acres by September 5, with a maximum of 6 inches of water to be applied to the remaining 5% of irrigated acres during the remainder of the irrigation season. This 5% can be on land previously fallowed.

To meet the conditions of this graduated cessation schedule, the petitioner proposes to cease irrigation of 146 acres on July 20, 2024, which accounts for 26% of the total 561 acres. On August 20, 2024, irrigation will cease on an additional 141 acres, bringing the total irrigated acres with irrigation ceased for the season to 51%. Finally, on September 5, 2024, irrigation will cease on 274 acres to achieve 100% cessation of the total 561 acres.

The proposal was posted to the State Water Board's webpage for local cooperative solutions associated with the Regulation on May 22, 2024; a revised proposal was then posted on June 1, 2024. A further description of the site and water reduction measures is provided in the application submitted for this proposal. The application identifies Scott River Water Trust as the Coordinating Entity and includes a Binding Agreement that grants property access to verify compliance with the proposal.

Groundwater Metering

A groundwater local cooperative solution must include a description of metering in place for groundwater well extractions and a proposal to meter, record, and report such extractions to the Deputy Director or the Coordinating Entity, as applicable. If a meter has not been installed prior to the start of the irrigation season, the petitioner may submit a time schedule as part of the proposal that describes and substantiates the efforts, actions, and timelines for meter installation. The Deputy Director may waive the metering requirement for groundwater wells irrigating less than 30 acres or upon a determination that metering in a particular instance is not feasible.

The petitioner has not yet installed meters on the irrigation wells but has an active application with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for funding to install meters on the four wells that irrigate the total 752 acres, in addition to installing two pivots with the LEPA system and soil moisture sensors. The petitioner agrees to record and maintain a log of the meter data from the time of installation through one full irrigation season and submit it to the State Water Board.

Approval

The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the groundwater local cooperative solution proposal and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), and is approved with the following condition:

- The petitioner shall collect and maintain a log of the water usage data from the four groundwater meters from the time of installation through the end of one full irrigation season (anticipated 2025 irrigation season). The metering data shall be submitted to the State Water Board by the 10th of each month for the preceding month.

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- 3 -

August 9, 2024

The groundwater local cooperative solution proposal is hereby approved, as conditioned. Any failure to implement the proposal or violation of the conditions of this approval are subject to enforcement as a violation of the Regulation. Additionally, violations of other provisions of the Regulation (e.g., surface water curtailment) may result in termination of this approval.

If you have questions regarding this approval, please contact Division of Water Rights staff via email to: ScottShastaDrought@waterboards.ca.gov or by leaving a message on our dedicated phone line at: (916) 327-3113.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Ekdahl", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Erik Ekdahl
Deputy Director
Division of Water Rights

ec: Scott River Water Trust
scottwatertrust@gmail.com