



Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District
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James Totten, General Manager

Re: Proposed schedule for GMA 12 planning cycle 4

Good afternoon,

Based on the discussion at the May 6, 2022 meeting of Groundwater Management Area (GMA) 12, I have prepared three different options for possible schedules for the fourth joint groundwater planning cycle. The proposed options for the schedule for developing Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) are based on the feedback received during the last planning cycle, where last-minute changes to proposed DFCs left some stakeholders feeling that they had not be able to properly comment on the DFCs that were adopted.

To avoid this occurring again in future planning cycles, each of the three options I propose adds a second round of District review and public comments before the proposed DFCs are adopted. For each option, “preliminary” DFCs will be developed either by GMA 12 as a group (Options A and B) or by individual Districts (Option C). In all options, the preliminary DFCs will be ratified at the GMA level in December, 2025. After the preliminary DFCs are ratified, they will be sent to the member Districts for consideration and public comments. This would be the stage where “last minute” changes could take place at the District level. The Districts would then need to return any proposed changes to the DFCs, preferably with associated pumping files, to the GMA by March, 2026 so that the GMA can integrate any changes and verify that the new preliminary DFCs are feasible. The process for handling the review of the preliminary DFCs would be left up to each District to determine. At the District level the process could be as limited as a presentation to the Board followed by public comment or could include a full public hearing with written and oral comments accepted.

For all three options, the beginning and the end of the schedule is the same. For all three, the remainder of 2022 is spend determining the process to be used in the fourth round of planning and developing a baseline pumping file. After this is completed, one of these three options would be selected, which would determine the schedule that would be followed from 2023 to 2025. The three options for the schedule are outlined below.

Option A

The first option is similar to the process followed during the third round of joint groundwater planning, with the exception of the introduction of preliminary DFCs to the overall process. As with the third round of planning, the development of preliminary DFCs, including the evaluation of the nine factors found in Chapter 36, are done at the GMA level, occurring from January, 2023

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to October, 2025. At the conclusion of this, in December, 2025, the GMA will ratify the preliminary DFCs.

Option B

The second potential option includes a structural change from the last round of joint groundwater planning. This change focuses on how the GMA handles the evaluation of the nine factors. In previous planning cycles the nine factors have been reviewed in somewhat of a vacuum, at the same time that the DFCs were being developed by the GMA. Option B proposes that the review of the nine factors occurs in 2025, after the preliminary DFCs have been ratified by the GMA. By reviewing the nine factors in the context of already established preliminary DFCs, a more accurate evaluation of the factors will occur because they will be based on preliminary DFCs, which will provide a specific reference point for factors such as socio-economic and environmental impacts to be based on. This will also give the public and the Districts more time to weigh in on the preliminary DFCs and their impact on each factor. Under this option the work to develop the preliminary DFCs at the GMA level would begin in January 2023 and extend through October 2024, with a draft set of preliminary DFCs being approved in December 2024, one year earlier than in Option A. 2025 would be when the nine factors are evaluated at the GMA level, which would be based on the draft set of preliminary DFCs. After completion of the evaluation of the nine factors, the preliminary DFCs would be ratified in December, 2025.

Option C

The third option involves the most significant change to the schedule from the third round of joint groundwater planning. This option was developed in response to the discussions that have occurred at the GMA level regarding issues with the previous planning process, and the differing opinions between Districts regarding the process for developing DFCs. This option proposes to move the lion's share of DFC development work from the GMA level to the District level. This will allow each District to develop its own DFCs, and supporting pumping files derived from a common agreed upon starting (baseline) well file. This process is contemplated to take up to 18 months, occurring from January, 2023 to July, 2024. Between July and December, 2024 the GMA would be charged with evaluating the feasibility of combining the proposed DFCs from each District into a single set of DFCs with an associated pumping file and, if needed, finding a compromise solution between Districts that will lead to a final set of preliminary DFCs. Much like the process for handling the evaluation of preliminary DFCs, the process for how each District develops their DFCs and supporting pumping file is left up to the member Districts. Like Option B, the nine factors would be evaluated in 2025 under this option, and preliminary DFCs would be ratified in December, 2025.

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For all three options, once the preliminary DFCs are ratified in December, 2025, they will be forwarded to the member Districts and allow the Districts to take in public comment and suggestions and make any last-minute corrections desired before the GMA formally adopts the proposed DFCs. At the GMA level there would be time for at least one meeting to harmonize any changes to the preliminary DFCs and ensure that the DFCs remain feasible. This would also be the time where the variance would need to be evaluated and established as a way to smooth out any minor differences between the DFCs in each district before being formally adopted by the GMA as the proposed DFCs. The proposed DFCs would be adopted in May, 2026. The remainder of 2026 is similar to previous planning cycles, where the proposed DFCs are forwarded to the member Districts in order to conduct hearings from May through August. Final DFCs will be approved by the GMA in September, 2026, and the explanatory report is approved and submitted in January, 2027.

Please bear in mind that these proposed schedules were developed prior to receiving any of the public comment that was requested by the GMA in May. Each option and the included proposed changes were developed as possible templates for a path forward during this planning cycle. These can be modified, updated, or discarded based on the comments received by the GMA and the opinions of the member Districts. Regardless of the path forward that the GMA settles on, the schedules make clear that January, 2026 is not as far away as it seems.

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Option A

Sep, 2022	We are here. Panic
Oct, 2022	GMA 12 decision on processes
Nov, 2022	Continue to panic, begin developing bookend pumping files for each District .GMA 12 decision on processes (cont)
Dec, 2022	Finalize starting bookend pumping files for use by Districts in developing DFCs
Jan, 2023-Oct, 2025	Standard DFC development process at GMA level
Jan, 2023-Oct, 2025	Nine factor review prior to development of preliminary DFCs
Dec, 2025	GMA 12 ratifies preliminary DFCs and sends them to Districts for review and public comment
Jan-Apr, 2026	Districts hold hearings and take public comment on preliminary DFCs before making any needed changes to be sent back to GMA12
Apr-May, 2026	GMA 12 reconciles any modifications to preliminary DFCs and approves resolution sending DFCs to Districts for hearing
May, 2026	GMA adopts proposed DFCs
Jun-Sep, 2026	District hearings on proposed DFCs
Sep, 2026	Final GMA 12 approval of DFCs
January, 2027	Submit Explanatory Report

Option B		
Sep, 2022	We are here. Panic	
Oct, 2022	GMA 12 decision on processes	
Nov, 2022	Continue to panic, begin developing bookend pumping files for each District .GMA 12 decision on processes (cont)	
Dec, 2022	Finalize starting bookend pumping files for use by Districts in developing DFCs	
Jan, 2023-Oct, 2024	Standard DFC development process at GMA level	
Dec, 2024	Finalize preliminary DFCs and pumping file at GMA 12 level	
Feb-Oct, 2025	Nine factor review based on preliminary DFCs	
Dec, 2025	GMA 12 ratifies preliminary DFCs and sends them to District for review and public comment.	
Jan-Apr, 2026	Districts hold hearings and take public comment on preliminary DFCs before making any needed changes to be sent back to GMA12	
Apr-May, 2026	GMA 12 reconciles any modifications to preliminary DFCs and approves resolution sending DFCs to Districts for hearing	
May, 2026	GMA adopts proposed DFCs	
Jun-Sep, 2026	District hearings on proposed DFCs	
Sep, 2026	Final GMA 12 approval of DFCs	
January, 2027	Submit Explanatory Report	

Option C	
Sep, 2022	We are here. Panic
Oct, 2022	GMA 12 decision on processes
Nov, 2022	Continue to panic, begin developing bookend pumping files for each District. GMA 12 decision on processes (cont)
Dec, 2022	Finalize starting bookend pumping files for use by Districts in developing DFCs
Jan, 2023-Jul, 2024	District level development of DFCs and supporting pumping files
Aug, 2024	Districts send GMA 12 preliminary DFCs and pumping files
Oct, 2024	Feasibility review of preliminary DFCs
Dec, 2024	Finalize preliminary DFCs and pumping file at GMA 12 level
Feb-Oct, 2025	Nine factor review based on preliminary DFCs
Dec, 2025	GMA 12 ratifies preliminary DFCs and sends them to District for review and public comment
Jan-Apr, 2026	Districts hold hearings and take public comment on preliminary DFCs before making any needed changes to be sent back to GMA12
Apr-May, 2026	GMA 12 reconciles any modifications to preliminary DFCs and approves resolution sending DFCs to Districts for hearing
May, 2026	GMA adopts proposed DFCs
Jun-Sep, 2026	District hearings on proposed DFCs
Sep, 2026	Final GMA 12 approval of DFCs
January, 2027	Submit Explanatory Report