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Borrego Springs Watermaster

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

May 4, 2026

Today's Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Technical Scope-of-Work and Budget for WY 2027
3. Request for TAC Input on Technical Analysis of Water Rights Transfers
4. Public Comment

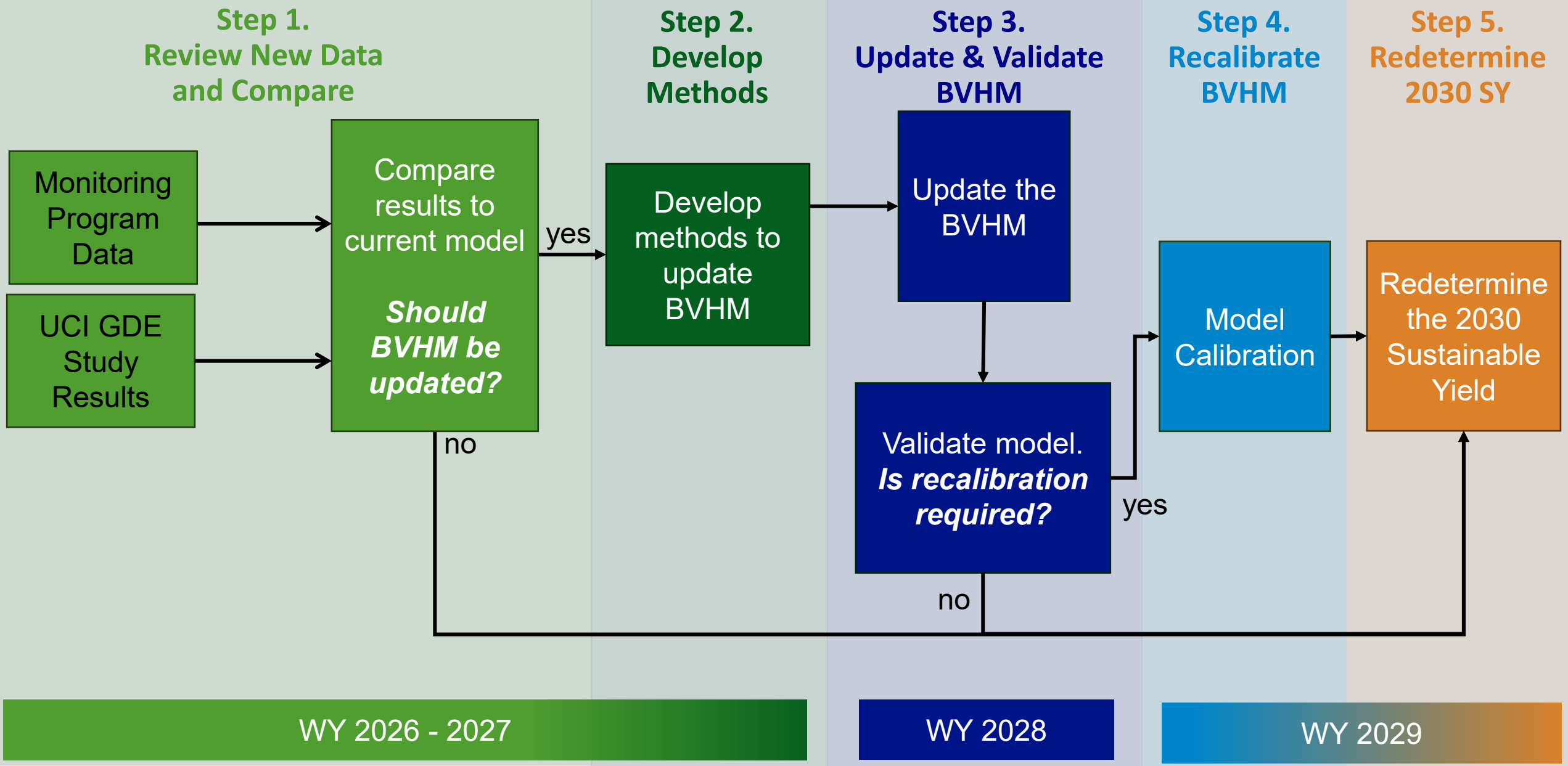
Technical Scope-of-Work and Budget for WY 2027

- Judgment requires the Sustainable Yield to be re-determined by January 1, 2030 through a process that includes:
  - Collecting additional data
  - Refining the BVHM
  - BVHM runs → update the Basin water budget and Sustainable Yield

- In WY 2025, with TAC/TC input, the Board approved a "phased" scope-of-work from WY 2026 thru WY 2029 to update the BVHM and redetermine the Sustainable Yield **considering new data/info**:
  - New monitoring data (i.e., measured pumping and groundwater levels)
  - GDE Study Results

Figure 1. Workflow to Redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield for WY 2026-2029

**approved December 2024*



Technical Scope-of-Work and Budget for WY 2027

- Additional new data/info since WY 2025 (e.g., BVHM projections thru 2070; identification of model discrepancies; HCM may be incorrect; etc.)

- Board has requested the TAC to revisit the technical scope-of-work and budget for WY 2027 in an **appropriate and cost-efficient** manner

- Board priorities:
  - Focus on compliance with Judgment requirements
  - Recognition that a “perfect” model is not necessary
  - Focus on performing the minimum scope-of-work needed to:
    - Develop a defensible estimate of the 2030 Sustainable Yield
    - Evaluate the projected impacts of pumping under the 2030 Sustainable Yield

Table 1. Tasks Considered in the Workflow to Redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield

Task Name	Task Description	Cost Estimate to Perform Task 1 of the Workflow[1] (2024$)	If Task was previously considered by the Board (and when)
Evaluate Monitoring Program Data	The BVHM is extended from WY 2022 to 2026 (or the latest year with data) and run over the historical period of WY 1930 through 2026. The model results are compared to the metered groundwater pumping data and measured groundwater-levels. Based on the comparison, the TAC may recommend to the Board that either (i) the differences are significant and methods should be developed to improve the BVHM (proceed to Step 2) or, (ii) the differences are not significant, no changes to the model are recommended (skip to Workflow Step 5).	**$55,000**	Approved at the December 19, 2024 Special Board meeting as part of scope-of-work to Redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield. **(Has not yet been performed)**
Evaluate ET from the UCI GDE Study Report	The GDE study results are reviewed and compared against the current BVHM to determine if there are significant differences and, therefore, if model updates are recommended. Based on the comparison, the TAC may recommend to the Board that either (i) the differences between the GDE study results and the current BVHM are significant and methods should be developed to update the BVHM (proceed to Step 2) or, (ii) the differences are not significant, no changes to the model are recommended (skip to Workflow Step 5).	**$40,000**	Approved at the December 19, 2024 Special Board meeting as part of scope-of-work to Redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield. **(Has not yet been performed)**
Upgrade to Latest Model Platform	Potential new modeling platforms are researched and a "white paper" is prepared that evaluates and compares the different modeling platforms and the level of effort to convert the BVHM to these platforms. The white paper may also evaluate structural changes to the existing BVHM, such as removing the FMP. The white paper will be reviewed by the TAC and the TAC will have the opportunity to recommend to the Board that either (i) the model platform should be upgraded/migrated to another platform, and hence, methods should be developed for this migration (proceed to Step 2) or, (ii) the model platform should not be upgraded/migrated and the BVHM can be used to redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield (skip to Step 5).	**$60,000**	**Not** approved at the December 19, 2024 Special Board meeting as part of scope-of-work to Redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield.
Evaluate the HCM	New information/data are reviewed and compared against the current HCM, particularly in CMA and SMA where the under-pumping discrepancy is located, to determine if there are significant differences and, therefore, model updates are recommended. New information and data could include: AEM survey data, groundwater-level contour maps, groundwater levels, and sonic boring logs of the Rams Hill wastewater treatment facility monitoring wells. This task may also include an optional task to perform a site-specific investigation to obtain new hydrogeologic information if data gaps are determined. Based on the comparison, the TAC will likely recommend to the Board that the differences between the data and the current HCM are significant and methods should be developed to update the HCM (proceed to Step 2).	**$40,000** to **$60,000** (includes $20,000 optional task for site-specific investigation)	**Not** approved at the June 18, 2025 Board meeting as part of next steps to use the BVHM to evaluate sustainability of future pumping and complete the 5-Year Assessment Report.

1. Cost estimates are based on 2025 rates and reflect the costs provided to the Board at the time the task was first considered.

For Discussion

- **What tasks do you recommend performing as the scope to redetermine the 2030 Sustainable Yield? When should they be performed?**

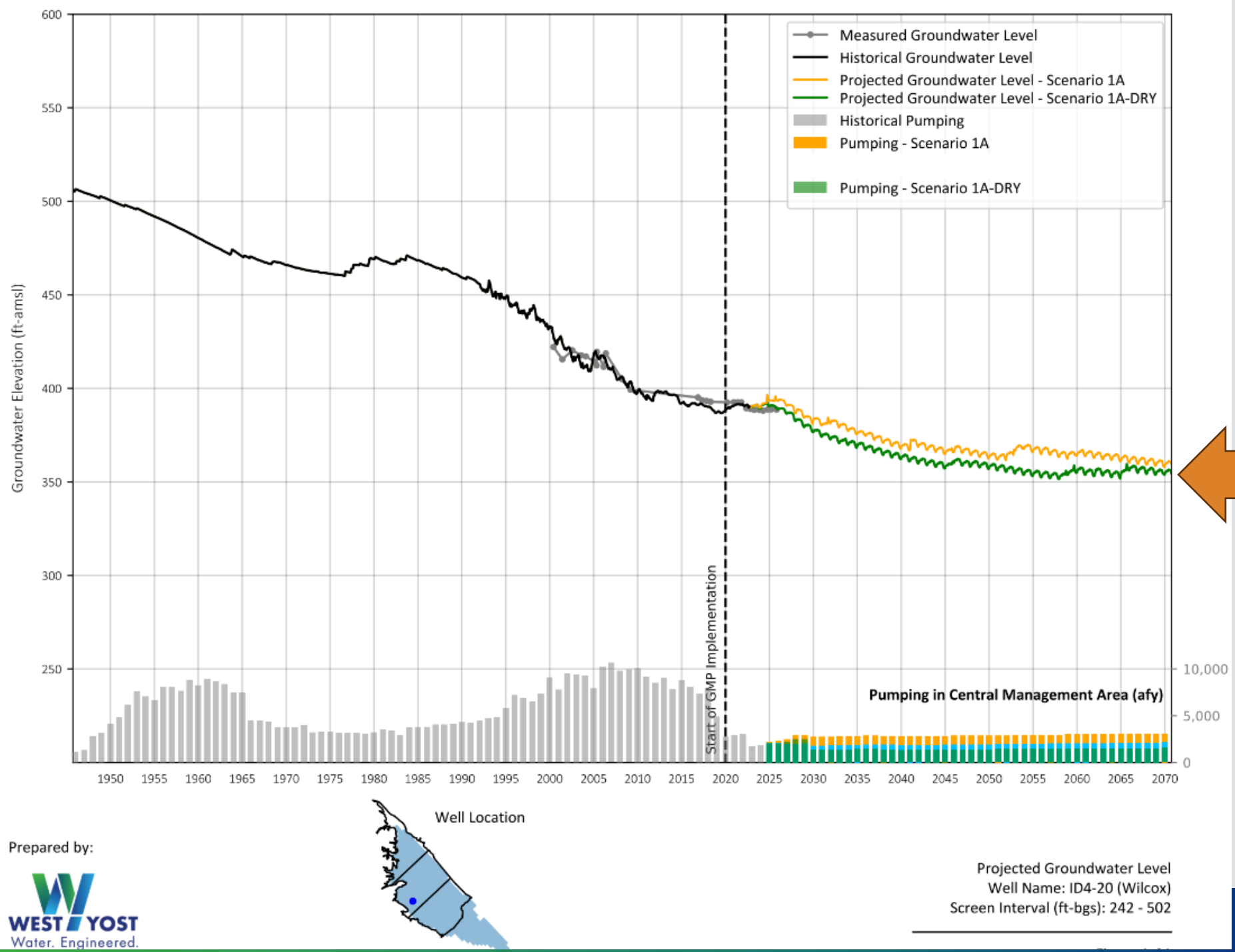
New Data or Information	Bennett	Detweiler	Driscoll	Wagner	Watson
Evaluate Monitoring Program Data					
Evaluate ET from the UCI GDE Study Report					
Upgrade to Latest Model Platform					
Evaluate the HCM					
Other Ideas?					

Today's Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Technical Scope-of-Work and Budget for WY 2027
3. **Request for TAC Input on Technical Analysis of Water Rights Transfers**
4. Public Comment

Technical Context

- The Watermaster needs a consistent approach to technically evaluate water rights transfer applications
- Recent modeling indicates potential for continued decline of water levels in portions of the CMA/SMA beyond 2040 – which is not consistent with the sustainability goal for the Basin
- The projections assumed less pumping than is allowed by the Judgment
- Additional pumping pursuant to rights may change the location and magnitude of potential impacts
- **TAC input is needed to define a technical approach to evaluate the impacts of transfers**



Prepared by:

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Under projected pumper plans, water levels will continue to decline beyond 2040 at several wells in the CMA and SMA.

This trend is projected at several wells, not just a few

Judgment Context

- **Section III.I.(5) – Transfer Restrictions**
  - Watermaster may restrict transfers based on reasonable, evidence-based concern that a transfer will cause or exacerbate undesirable results
  - Must be applied in a manner that is equitable to all affected pumpers
- **Section I.A.58 and IV.G – Role of TAC**
  - TAC is responsible for evaluating technical aspects of Basin conditions
  - Provides recommendations to Watermaster based on technical analysis
  - ***TAC input is required prior to implementing transfer restrictions***
- **Section IV.E.9 – Data, Estimates, and Procedures**
  - Watermaster shall use BVHM simulations and available data to support implementation of the Judgment
  - Where data are limited, sound scientific and engineering estimates are to be used
  - Allows for refinement of analyses as new information becomes available

Today's Ask

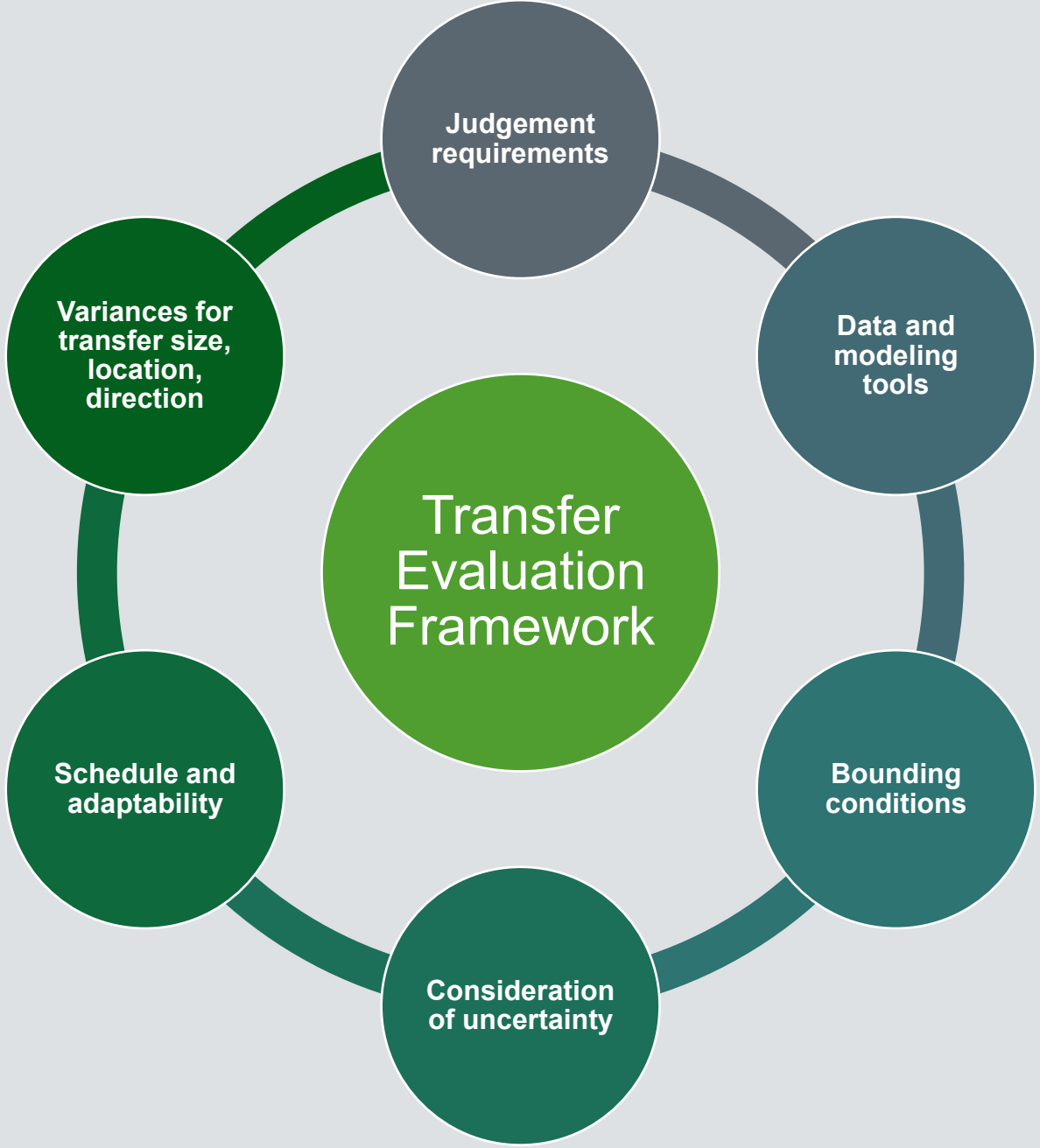
- **How** should Watermaster technically evaluate transfer applications to determine whether a transfer:
  - Affects the ability to achieve sustainability goals
  - May cause or exacerbate undesirable results
  - May result in localized impacts to nearby pumpers
  - May improve Basin conditions

Next Steps:

- Staff will summarize initial TAC imput and present it to the Bord on the May Board meeting
- Potential additional discussion at late-May, early-June TAC meeting
- Present a final recommendation on a technical framework to the Board in July

Input should consider…

- Decisions to approve or deny applications should be supported by a technical demonstration that can be documented and explained if questioned or challenged
- An upper bound projection of future pumping conditions has not been evaluated
- Transfer applications will be submitted and require Board action before model refinements to address uncertainty can be completed
- Carryover transfer applications will need to be approved in October 2026



Example Conceptual Framework For Analyzing Impacts of Transfers

- Use the BVHM to characterize impacts of transfers
- Use Bounded Baselines for establishing potential range of outcomes without transfer
  - Upper Bound – Judgment Scenario (maximum allowable pumping going forward)
  - Lower Bound – Current Plans of the Pumpers (such as Scenario 1A)
- Adjust baselines to include transfer and run BVHM
- Compare outcomes across key metrics – groundwater levels compared to MTs, groundwater level trends, storage, etc.
- Characterize the effects of the transfer and inform the Board if the transfer will impact ability to achieve sustainability, cause or exacerbate undesirable results, result in localized impacts, or improve Basin outcomes relative to the baseline(s)

Discussion

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Next TAC Meeting

Late May 2026:

- Review and discuss Board comments on the draft Technical Scope-of-Work and Budget for WY 2027

Thank You!