MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordinating Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: July 23, 2018 at 1:30 PM

LOCATION: Castle Conference Center at Castle Airport, 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA 95301

Coordinating Committee Members In Attendance:

	Representative	GSA
☐	Stephanie Dietz	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Justin Vinson	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Daniel Chavez	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Ken Elwin (alternate)	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Bob Kelley	Merced Subbasin GSA
☒	Nic Marchini	Merced Subbasin GSA
☐	Rodrigo Espinoza	Merced Subbasin GSA
☒	George Park (alternate)	Merced Subbasin GSA
☒	Larry Harris	Turner Island Water District GSA #1
☐	Scott Skinner (alternate)	Turner Island Water District GSA #1

Meeting Notes

1. Approval of minutes for June 25, 2018 meeting.
    - Minutes were unanimously approved
2. Stakeholder Committee (SC) Update
    - Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) provided an update on the third SC meeting held earlier in the day. SC members had questions, discussion, and clarifications on assumptions for the groundwater model
    - The Coordinating Committee (CC) gave feedback on the Stakeholder Communication Workshop with UC Merced
        - Framing of the content was interesting, but how questions were posed could be improved
        - Good points were made by participants on key basin issues
3. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
    - Plan area and authority
        - Some comments were received via email. CC members were asked to please let the Woodard & Curran team know if they plan to provide comments
    - Minimum thresholds

- Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) provided an overview. Technical work feeds into the policy decisions and informs what the basin will try to accomplish: identifying Undesirable Results (URs), Minimum Thresholds, and Measurable Objectives
- Groundwater Elevations
    - A list of the 6 sustainability indicators was provided. As previously discussed, seawater intrusion and storage are not considered relevant for the Merced Subbasin. Minimum thresholds are to be set where URs occur (e.g. lowest groundwater levels without UR)
    - Establishing what is undesirable/unreasonable is a policy decision. If a decision is made that an issue is significant and unreasonable that is occurring now, we can use as a 2015 data point
- Alyson Watson described the Minimum thresholds approach analysis for Corcoran clay. The approach is based on the information available for above, below, and outside the Corcoran clay. The consultant team's proposed approach looked at the CASGEM monitoring wells that are also located above the Corcoran clay and took into account the Tanked Water Program area. During the drought there were domestic wells that went dry in this area, which could be indicative of an undesirable result unless those wells have been deepened and the issues that occurred at those groundwater elevations have been addressed
- Alyson Watson also explained the minimum thresholds approach for outside the Tanked Water Program impacted area
    - An initial 20% buffer was established for the model to give an example of what this would look like in terms of thresholds. It is not suggested to have a threshold for every well, but to consider where the Tanked Water Program is and if there are some negative, undesirable results there
- Discussion and comments on the minimum thresholds approach were as follows:
    - Comment from Woodard & Curran (W&C): the question that must be asked is what undesirable results are occurring? For example, if all of the Tanked Water Program wells have been replaced, does this represent an undesirable result?
    - Comment from CC: there is not much data, nor many wells in the foothills of the Subbasin
    - Comment from CC: in selecting monitoring wells, it will be important to consider the age of the well and its anticipated additional life in terms of compliance
        - Comment from W&C: the CASGEM wells were selected because they have recorded dates that can be checked
    - Clarification given for question on adaptive management: a buffer is applied for operational flexibility. This process first considers well water for the lowest domestic wells and then looks at what happens when applying a 20% buffer
    - Comment from CC: there should be more substantiation behind the 20% buffer selection
    - Comment from W&C: the next step is to look at a 10% or 20% buffer, compare this to the data that the GSAs have, and figure out what is reasonable
- Water Quality

- Question was asked whether there are levels that could trigger issues with water quality. Response from W&C: this is very site-specific, and requires further work with staff from local agencies to understand this
- Alyson Watson (W&C) gave a brief introduction to the CV-SALTS (the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability) initiative and the ILRP (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program).
- Comment from CC: a data point on the TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) map "Average TDS Concentration BELOW Corcoran Clay (2000 – 2016)" was identified as surprising
- There was a brief discussion on salinity issues. Input from Alyson Watson (W&C): the challenge is that relatively few actions can be taken to address migration of salinity. The priority for the GSP is to identify undesirable results and how these are happening and prevent further impacts
- Input from Jim Blanke (W&C): there are some water quality issues that cannot be control (e.g. naturally occurring constituents). There are also existing programs that address some of these constituents

- Land subsidence
  - GW levels can be used as a proxy, or the GSP can use a rate of subsidence. However, even if all groundwater users in basin stopped pumping it is not known whether subsidence will continue. It is recommended by the consultant team to use this proxy and to ensure the GSP uses the same measurement approach as neighboring subbasins
  - Comment from CC: in the 1960s there was subsidence, but fewer wells and a high water table. The reasons for this are not well understood. Therefore, the GW level proxy might be a safer option
- Interconnected Surface Water
  - Alyson Watson and Dominick Amador (W&C) provided a brief overview of the interconnected surface water modelling
  - The model shows a segment north west of San Joaquin River and Merced River as an area of interest. The model will need to be adjusted to consider additional parameters for dry conditions
  - It is possible to look at how shallow wells have changed over time relative to stream losses. However, there are not many wells and there is fluctuation
  - The next step is to consider what are the undesirable results. Further work with be needed to determine GW conditions that are influencing low flows

a. Hydrogeologic conceptual model overview
   - This item was tabled to the next meeting due to lack of time

b. Current conditions baseline, projected water budget, and sustainable yield
   - Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) described how continued water use over 50 years will affect the water budget. The underlying assumptions are being refined
   - The sustainable yield is also being developed for discussion at the next meeting

4. Public Outreach update

- Plans for upcoming August 2 Public Meeting were discussed. Meeting materials are on the website

5. Coordination with Neighboring Basins
    - Hicham ElTal (Merced Irrigation District) reported there are upcoming meetings to sign agreements with Chowchilla and he is still working to set up a meeting with Delta-Mendota
6. Update DWR's SGMA Technical Support Services (TSS) opportunity
    - Hicham ElTal (Merced Irrigation District) provided an update. For Delta-Mendota, it might be possible to have two monitoring wells. He might be able to reach out to Chowchilla as well. Hicham also contacted DWR regarding Grant Agreement funding. DWR are not as concerned about whether the GSAs will receive funds, but that it might take longer for funds to be received
7. Public comment
8. Next steps and adjourn
    - Reminder given that Aug. 2nd is next Public meeting

Next Regular Meeting
August 27, 2018 at **1:30 p.m.**
Merced, CA – Castle Conference Center at Castle Airport (subject to change)
Information also available online at mercedsgma.org

Action may be taken on any item
Note: If you need disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting, please contact Merced County, Community and Economic Development staff at 209-385-7654 at least 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.