

MEETING MINUTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4

DATE/TIME: August 27, 2018 at 9:30 AM

LOCATION: Castle Conference Center, 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA

Stakeholder Committee Members In Attendance:

	Representative	Community Aspect Representation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alex McCabe	City of Livingston
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arlan Thomas	MIDAC, growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Migliazzo	Live Oak Farms, growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bill Spriggs	City of Merced, Merced Irrigation District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bob Salles	Leap Carpenter Kemps Insurance, insurance industry and natural resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brad Robson	Buchanan Hollow Nut Co. Le Grand-Athlone Water District, growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Breanne Ramos	Merced County Farm Bureau
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brian Carter	D&S Farms, growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carol Bonin	Winton M.A.C.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Machado	Machado Backhoe Inc., construction industry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Darren Olguin	McSwain MAC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Frenchy Meissonnier	Rice Farmer, rice growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Galen Miyamoto	Miyamoto Farms
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gino Pedretti III	Sandy Mush Mutual Water Company
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Olzack	City of Atwater resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	James (Jim) Marshall	City of Merced
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joe Scoto	Scoto Bros Farms / McSwain Union School District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ladi Asgill	East Merced Resource Conservation District / Sustainable Conservation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maria Herrera	Self-Help Enterprises
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Maxwell	University of California, Merced
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maxwell Norton	Retired agricultural researcher
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parry Klassen	East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rick Drayer	Drayer Ranch, Merced cattlemen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Simon Vander Woude*	Sandy Mush Mutual Water Company, dairies

* Nate Ray (Sandy Mush Mutual Water Company) was present as an alternate for Simon Vander Woude

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review
 - a. Introduction and overview of agenda items given by Charles Gardiner (Catalyst Group)
 - b. There were no comments for the past meeting minutes. Comments and questions from past meeting minutes and further input can be sent via email to Woodard & Curran.
2. Minimum Thresholds
 - a. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) provided an overview of sustainability criteria, a summary of the comments provided last month on undesirable results related to each criteria, and a description of how setting minimum thresholds will be an iterative approach.
 - b. Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels
 - i. Question: How will the state evaluate the basin's minimum thresholds? Answer: The state doesn't have its own threshold methodology by which a comparison will be made. They will be evaluated based on the GSP's rationale of setting thresholds based on describing undesirable results.
 - ii. Question: How will coordination of threshold-setting work with neighboring basins? Answer: Through our Interbasin coordination efforts with an understanding of different deadlines for SGMA for different basins.
 - iii. Question: Is there a breakdown of location of all the CASGEM wells (to help identify which ones are under particular jurisdiction)? Answer: Yes, we can provide that information from DWR's CASGEM database and map with locations. This was sent out to all SC members on 9/5/2018.
 - iv. Question: Have you taken into account historical cropping patterns in the basin? Answer: No, not explicitly, but whatever has been pumped at a particular location is most likely tied to crop history and is reflected in historical groundwater elevations.
 - v. Question: How do you take into account previous droughts or future droughts? Answer: Droughts are seen in the historical groundwater levels and we're going to define violations to thresholds in the future (e.g. could be based on number of wells below threshold in a normal year, % of wells in a dry year, etc.)
 - vi. Question: How far back does the DWR completion well database go back? Answer: In a review of the DWR database records for the Merced Subbasin, the "Date Work Ended" field (assumed to be well construction date) has entries as far back as 1941, though about 12% of all records have no date available.
 - vii. Concern was expressed by several Stakeholder Committee (SC) members and the Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability that having a threshold near the shallowest domestic well depth (25th percentile or higher) may not be protective enough.
 1. Members requested seeing the threshold analysis using the shallowest well instead of 25th percentile for reference purposes.

- viii. Question: Will thresholds be set for the whole basin vs areas of the basin? Answer: Thresholds are set at a specific monitoring well only but are meant to be representative of the entire basin in total.
- ix. Question: Why aren't we using elevation thresholds to inform management areas? Answer: Thresholds are for measuring implementation of the plan and not a direct management tool.
- x. Public Comment: Timing of spring/fall measurement of CASGEM wells may not align with seasonal peak domestic well pumping (e.g. domestic wells may be temporarily dewatered in August, which wouldn't be caught by March/October monitoring).
- xi. Question: Does domestic well data show where the pumps are? Answer: No, it's not consistently part of the dataset.
- xii. Question: Were disadvantaged communities overlaid or incorporated in the spatial portion of the analysis? Answer: No, we included all confirmed CASGEM wells, but disadvantaged community locations can be something we use when actually selecting the wells that will be used for regulatory purposes.
- xiii. Marco Bell (Merced Irrigation District [MID]) noted that MID does record biannual measurements from production wells (e.g. not dedicated monitoring wells) as long as they're not actively running (e.g. static conditions) and meet other CASGEM program requirements.

c. Degraded Water Quality

- i. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) provided an overview of constraints on measuring and setting thresholds for groundwater quality constituents. SGMA will involve a focus on understanding issues and coordinating with other agencies who are managing water quality efforts.
- ii. Questions: If GW elevations decline to a certain point, there may be drinking WQ issues, so how do we plan to handle this? Answer: This is going to be covered under setting minimum thresholds for groundwater elevations based on undesirable results.
- iii. Comment: Growers require high quality water, so if growers encounter a saline well, it doesn't get used. Thus it's been somewhat of a self-regulating issue. Areas of high salinity will see crops that are salt-tolerant.

d. Land Subsidence

- i. Question: Why don't we use actual subsidence values or rates (e.g. ft/yr) as a threshold? Answer: It is hard to accurately predict subsidence rates in order to develop our threshold and the Subbasin has no way to correct inelastic subsidence should a violation occur, but a related way to measure would be to use groundwater elevations as a surrogate with 1/1/2015 levels as a goal.

e. Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water

- i. Comment: The areas where connectedness exists are very sandy and have a high salt content.
- ii. Hicham EITal (MID) noted that the Merced River is a gaining river (groundwater provides to the river) and when wells pump along the river, the river level goes down. Additionally, MID

has recently added two groundwater elevation measuring points along the lower portion of the Merced River.

- iii. Question: Can the Merced GSP emphasize that the San Joaquin River needs more water to help groundwater levels? Answer: Potentially yes, if we can link river flows to undesirable results for groundwater.

3. Projected Water Budget

- a. Multiple comments related to sustainable yield assumptions will change a lot of depending on State Water Board decision on the Substitute Environmental Document (SED) for Lower San Joaquin River and Southern Delta. (ability to manage flood flows and recharge as much as possible is important)
- b. Question: How much will we be including snowpack changes in future (different beyond historical hydrology)? Answer: We'll be including a climate change analysis, though it inherently considers a longer timescale beyond our 25 year regulatory horizon.

4. Public Outreach Update

- a. Charles Gardiner (Catalyst Group) provided a summary of discussion and comments recorded during the August 2 public workshop presentation.
- b. Comment: Having this workshop was valuable and important to inform the public about the process.
- c. Comment: We can bring more people to workshops by coordinating with Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs)
- d. Self-Help Enterprises will be using some of their DWR grant funding in Merced to continue door-to-door outreach before workshops as well as neighborhood meetings.

5. Interbasin Coordination Update

- a. A preliminary meeting was held with the Chowchilla Subbasin to facilitate information sharing.
- b. The Turlock Subbasin meeting series is ongoing but it was noted that Turlock has a SGMA deadline 2 years behind Merced.
- c. Preliminary Delta-Mendota Subbasin discussions have started and formal meetings will be scheduled soon.

6. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

- a. No comments were made.

7. Next Steps and Next Meeting

Next Regular Meeting
September 24, 2018 at 9:30 a.m.

Castle Conference Center, 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA
Information also available online at mercedsgma.org

Note: If you need disability-related modification or accommodation 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.