



## MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordinating Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: November 26, 2018 at 1:30 PM

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

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### Coordinating Committee Members In Attendance:

	Representative	GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephanie Dietz	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justin Vinson	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Chavez	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ken Elwin (alternate)	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bob Kelley	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nic Marchini	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rodrigo Espinoza	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Park (alternate)	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Larry Harris	Turner Island Water District GSA #1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scott Skinner (alternate)	Turner Island Water District GSA #1

### Meeting Notes

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes for October 22, 2018 meeting
  - a. Meeting minutes were approved.
3. Stakeholder Committee update
  - a. Update from the November 26 morning meeting was provided. W&C staff gave a presentation on the Data Management System (DMS). Comments were requested on the draft Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model (HCM). Some SC members provided some verbal comments. Additional review time was requested and document was re-sent to SC with comments requested by Nov 30. SC comments on the Projects and Management Actions will be discussed during the discussion portion of the Coordinating Committee (CC) meeting.
4. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
  - a. Next Steps in GSP Development
    - i. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) provided a brief overview of the GSP development timeline and what will be covered during the meeting.
    - ii. The HCM was sent out to the CC group in early November. This is part of a larger document (the GSP) with other sections. Deadline for comments is November 30<sup>th</sup>. However, if more time is needed to provide comments, CC members are asked to inform the W&C team.



- iii. Water budgets have been updated with inclusion of FERC flows. Sustainable yield for the Merced Subbasin is estimated to be approximately 500,000 TAF per year. Projections that account for FERC flows indicate a need for about a 25% reduction in groundwater use for the subbasin. This percentage reduction is similar to previous estimated without updated FERC flows.
  - iv. Alyson Watson (W&C) explained the different inflows and outflows of the projected conditions groundwater budget and changes in cumulative storage.
- b. Water Allocation Frameworks
- i. Alyson Watson (W&C) described different water allocation frameworks possible under SGMA.
  - ii. The allocation framework chosen will also need to address and connect back to avoiding undesirable results. Projects and management actions will be revisited to address impacts to thresholds. When the GW allocation approach, projects and management actions, and consideration for impacts on thresholds and objectives are combined, the creation of management areas may be considered for specific issues.
  - iii. Alyson Watson (W&C) reviewed the proposed decision-making timeline for the GSP. November will focus on discussing allocation approaches as well as projects and management actions. Under SGMA, GSAs have broad authority to implement the allocations. In December the CC will discuss making a recommendation to the GSA Boards as to which allocation approach is best for the subbasin. The GSA Boards will consider the approach in January. The CC will review projects and management actions benefits along with the SC in January.
  - iv. Question: How will we know what impacts these different allocation approaches have? Answer from W&C: We will be doing the technical work to determine these impacts and will discuss this together.
  - v. Question: How will this impact thresholds? Answer from W&C: The thresholds are driven by undesirable results, which can be addressed by projects and management actions.
  - vi. Implementation of the GSP will be phased and include monitoring. Updates can be made to the thresholds and the allocation approach every 5 years.
  - vii. Question: When would we discuss management areas? Answer from W&C: This is planned for February.
  - viii. Alyson Watson (W&C) explained the different kinds of allocation methods.
    - 1. Pro Rata Approach: Sustainable yield is divided total basin acreage. Advantages are that it is simple, and it recognizes the correlative (everyone has a right to access the basin) nature of groundwater rights. However, this does not account for appropriators/prescriptive rights, and does not differentiate between irrigated and unirrigated acres.
    - 2. Pro Rata Irrigated Areas Approach: This divides the sustainable yield by irrigated and urban areas. It is simple and acknowledges existing pumping. However, the approach does not account for unexercised groundwater rights nor account for appropriators/prescriptive rights.
    - 3. Historical Pumping Approach: This is based on historical use. This is less likely to result in conflict and accounts for appropriators and prescriptive rights. However, it requires more data and if unirrigated acres are excluded this also does not account for unexercised groundwater rights.



4. Comprehensive Approach: The advantages include less likelihood of conflict and an accounting of appropriative use and prescriptive rights. However, this approach requires data not that is currently available, and does not account for unexercised groundwater rights. The approach requires significant outreach and engagement.
5. Key differences between approaches were discussed. Some comments from the SC morning meeting were:
  - a. Questions and comments on whether to have a water market.
  - b. May need to limit water market access only to those who are in the basin.
  - c. Maybe take a hybrid approach with different tiers (e.g. if you are not irrigating you may be in a different tier).
6. Comments from the CC group on allocation approaches:
  - a. Prescriptive rights should be taken into account in calculations.
  - b. It does not make sense to allocate groundwater where historically it was not used. However, people have the ability to exercise their rights to pump water.
  - c. Input from Alyson Watson (W&C): Allocations can be adjusted as people exercise their rights.
  - d. CC comment: Monitoring and enforcement will be important. How are we going to monitor what comes online?
  - e. Input from Alyson Watson (W&C): GSAs have the authority to enforce.
  - f. CC comment: If you allocate by acre, the surface water dependent folks will get less. In the commenter's experience working with surface water it is possible to prohibit the movement of water out of the basin.
  - g. Comment: There is concern that people will buy useless land just for the water right.
  - h. Question: Can you really do a pro rata allocation approach? Answer (W&C): GSAs cannot affect rights but can check that fees are fair.
  - i. Comment: What are the enforcement actions available to GSAs? Answer (W&C): We will bring information to next meeting.
  - j. Question: What if an irrigator comes online and decides to pump, but has not historically been pumping?
  - k. Comment: With the County Ordinance that has been put into effect, there may likely be fewer new pumpers that will come online.
  - l. Input from Alyson Watson (W&C): If there is not a question of substantial change from irrigated to non-irrigated lands, then the question is whether or not rights holders who are not irrigating (and do not intend to irrigate) will be able to sell their rights to others.
  - m. Comment: It would not be a bad idea to look at other adjudicated basins and how this worked. Input from W&C: The example from the Mojave Adjudication which used a transferable allocations setup can be presented next meeting.



- n. Comment: There will need to be significant outreach especially related to monitoring and data collection for the wells for people to understand this and what is needed.
  - o. It would be useful to have the per capita usage for the cities per day.
  - p. Request made to CC members from W&C: Consider the allocation approaches discussed for next meeting.
- c. Projects and Management Actions
- i. Alyson Watson (W&C) provided an update from the SC meeting discussion.
  - ii. Question asked about criteria to assess projects: What are they being assessed for? Answer (W&C): The subbasin should be able to show what projects and what potential funding avenues are in the implementation plan for the GSP.
  - iii. Comment: It could be useful to have a high-level cost/benefit ratio for projects.
  - iv. Input from Alyson Watson (W&C): The subbasin should determine what to target and identify areas of greatest need, and then determine projects that help best address these.
- d. Other Updates
- i. Monitoring Networks and the DMS sections of the GSP are underway.
5. Flood-MAR
- a. This item was tabled to next meeting.
6. Public Outreach update
- a. There are two upcoming Public Workshops: Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> in Planada, and Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> in Franklin.
7. Coordination with neighboring basins
- a. Chowchilla and Delta-Mendota Subbasins will be ready early next year to continue coordination.
8. Public comment
- a. Bill Nicholson from the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), which regulates boundary changes, gave in input on relevant boundary applications. There is an application for an Owen's Creek Water District, which is on the edge of the basin on the San Joaquin River. There is an annexation for Le Grand-Athelone Water District. This is currently in the sphere of influence for MID but will need to be removed. This might have some impacts to TIWD. Bill will send information out to individual districts and will be looking for input on these applications as they move forward.
9. Next steps and adjourn
- a. Summary memo on the water budgets in progress.
  - b. Merced Subbasin GSA Board took place and the MIUGSA and TIWD Joint Meeting is upcoming.

**Next Regular Meeting**

**December 17, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.**

Merced, CA – Castle Conference Center at Castle Airport (subject to change)

Information also available online at [mercedsgma.org](http://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.*