



MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordinating Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: March 25, 2019 at 1:30 PM

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

Coordinating Committee Members In Attendance:

	Representative	GSA
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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
 - a. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) welcomed and called meeting to order.
2. Approval of minutes for February 25, 2019 meeting
 - a. Meeting minutes from February 25th approved.
 - b. CC members found no issue in having this meeting available for listen-in only in the future.
3. Stakeholder Committee update
 - a. Update from March 25 morning meeting provided by Alyson Watson (W&C).
4. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
 - a. Water Allocation Frameworks
 - i. Alyson Watson (W&C) reviewed what the group will try to accomplish today, the decision-making timeline, and the conceptual GSP timeline.
 - ii. Comment: The Merced Subbasin should start to implement monitoring activities and have a countdown between 2020-2025.
 - iii. Alyson (W&C) explained next month's meeting will return to Undesirable Results and Minimum Thresholds.



- iv. Comment: If there are projects people can already implement, then they should start to implement or at least be able to implement.
- v. Comment: It is important to understand what the loss of recharge water is in the Subbasin.
- vi. Response and clarification (W&C): There may be recharge operations on a small scale that are already in place where someone should have an allocation credit that should be taken into account. There needs to be time for that process of reaching out and conducting public outreach.
- vii. Comment: A recharge water loss estimation could be done for areas where projects would be implemented.
- viii. Response (W&C): To conduct the loss estimation, need to gather enough information for the losses to determine whether an area is worth investing in for recharge. This could be done via scenarios as projects come up.
- ix. Comment: This estimation should be done on a case by case basis.
- x. Comment: The estimation could produce a map of contours of percentage loss.
- xi. Response (W&C): W&C team to discuss internally potential approach for loss estimation.
- xii. Comment: In looking at the previous Water Budget technical memo, it would be easier to understand the memo contents if we had the breakdown of the historical water budget numbers. For overlying use, it looks like there are federal lands and *de minimus* users. Where and how do both of these factor into the overlying use?
- xiii. Response (W&C): We cannot force the federal lands to comply because they are exempt from SGMA. These acres and water use are pulled out of the analysis, the analysis is conducted, and then these lands and associated water use are put back. *De minimus* users are not exempt, they just cannot be required to meter under SGMA. The W&C team is also verifying the number of acres for federal lands.
- xiv. Comment: Overlying user allocation is a critical part of the process going forward, especially with Merced Subbasin GSA being primarily overlying users. The MSGSA is concerned that overlying rights be considered and respected. The MSGSA has to manage the white areas and liability for their lack of surface water connection.
- xv. Alyson (W&C): We would like to get to an agreement on a partial allocation during this meeting.
- xvi. Comment: MSGSA would propose a geographic designation for the basin. Totals would be 327K AF for MSGSA, 151K AF for MIUGSA, and 12K AF for TIWD.
- xvii. Alyson (W&C): To clarify, that proposal would reflect a 100% allocation for unirrigated lands.
- xviii. Comment: MIUGSA recommends holding off on groundwater credits until we have the allocation finalized. Why not wait until we can fill those data gaps? We want to address the data gaps to better understand what the implications are of our allocation framework.
- xix. Comment: MIUGSA is ok with a 100% allocation, as long as the Subbasin does not allow credits to be exchanged until the GSAs have more data.
- xx. Comment: We need to clean up our assumptions before we make this kind of policy decision.
- xxi. Both MSGSA and MIUGSA representatives reiterate that there is likely less water out there than we think there is.



- xxii. Alyson (W&C): For GSP contents, we can have a preliminary framework, which includes how much water we have and how we are considering undeveloped and developed acres.
- xxiii. General clarification and agreement on allocation framework: Agreement reached on a 100% allocation to unirrigated lands, but with the caveat that GSAs will not allow transfer of credits until all three GSAs agree on parameters for trading and fill in data gaps / finalize the allocations.
- xxiv. Clarification: W&C can run sustainable yield scenario under this condition and see how that impacts undesirable results.
- xxv. Water Allocation Framework Agreement:
 - 1. Determine sustainable yield
 - 2. Subtract groundwater originating from developed supply to obtain sustainable yield of native groundwater
 - 3. Allocate sustainable yield of native groundwater to Overlying Users and Appropriative Users based on proportion of historical use
 - a. Use 2006 through 2015 as the averaging period for historical use
 - b. Appropriative user allocations based on fraction of historical use among appropriators
 - c. Allocation to overlayers will be based on acreage. All developed and undeveloped acreage (not including federal lands) to receive an allocation initially. GSAs agree that no water supply credits can be exchanged until and unless all three GSAs agree on parameters for trading and key data gaps are filled.
 - 4. Use this framework to establish total allocations to each GSA. GSAs can modify implementation and allocations within their own boundaries.
- xxvi. The above agreement was summarized as the Coordinating Committee recommendation and sent to GSA Board staff.
- xxvii. Question: How long will it take for GSP approval?
- xxviii. Response (MID and W&C): Estimate is that DWR may need to take the full time of two or more years. Review of only the critically overdrafted basins would take two years.
- b. Projects and Management Actions
 - i. Review of revised project handout and current draft list of projects including short list provided by W&C team. Follow ups for gathering additional project information will be conducted in preparation for next meeting.
- c. Climate Change Analysis
 - i. Alyson (W&C) explained W&C team is following the DWR guidance and moving forward on the climate change analysis. A section summary is anticipated for next meeting.
 - ii. Question: Do the climate change analyses seem to provide drier or wetter future conditions?
 - iii. Response (MID): From analysis conducted for DWR Flood-MAR, future conditions look slightly drier.
- d. Next Steps in GSP Development



- l. Question: What about a permit for specific streams?
 - m. Answer (W&C): We have talked in this group about submitting a single long term permit for the subbasin.
 - n. Comment: We have to have the projects first to be able to have the diversion points you will need to identify in the application.
 - o. Comment: If we want to exercise pre-1914 rights, we should identify projects and people who are able to recharge.
 - p. Question: Who would hold the water right on someone else's land? Answer (MID): Good question, may need to investigate this.
 - q. Comment: All of the GSAs could hold the water right. Response from MID: That would be preferred.
 - r. Alyson (W&C): If the CC were to move forward with a recommendation on this, we would need to have a project put in the GSP.
 - s. Comment: We could say that for the GSP could have one recharging water right identified under one project.
 - t. Comment: It would be helpful if we show a map that provides all areas where we would like to be able to implement recharge.
 - u. Comment: Something similar was done in another subbasin using a site specific approach. In this case, had to get specific sites and provide this data to the state board.
 - v. Comment: We could look at getting a cost estimate on a programmatic EIR? And an estimate on the overall acreage that could benefit from this?
 - w. Comment: First task is to come up with a project, and work on the 90% permit establishing which streams are we talking about and where are we able to move the water.
 - x. Comment: This can be seen as two different things. There's the GSP – including the projects we are thinking about implementing for the basin. Second, is what streams and what waters can be used to pursue implementation.
 - y. Comment: We should try to pursue this permit process now, at least to set up a study.
 - z. Alyson (W&C): Would we need to have a fee and scope of work for this?
 - aa. Comment: We can come up with an add hoc committee to discuss this.
 - bb. Group agreement: Ad hoc committee will be established to determine a fee and scope for pursuing a Long Term Permit. Members of the committee will include Hicham EITal, Larry Harris, and Nic Marchini
 - cc. Clarification: It is possible to include both surface water and groundwater within this permitting process. This does make it more complicated for the SWRCB folks. However, the process is similar.
8. Public comment
 - a. None.
 9. Next steps and adjourn
 - a. Focus for April will be on Minimum Thresholds and Measurable Objectives

**Next Regular Meeting
April 22, 2019 at 1:30 p.m.**

Atwater, 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.

