



MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordinating Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: May 29, 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 type="checkbox"/>	Ken Elwin (alternate)	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bob Kelley	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mike Gallo	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nic Marchini	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input 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) called meeting to order. Members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of minutes for April 22, 2019 meeting
 - a. Meeting minutes from April 22th were approved.
3. Stakeholder Committee update
 - a. Update from May 29 morning meeting provided by Alyson Watson (W&C).
4. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
 - a. Management Areas
 - i. Alyson Watson (W&C) defined Management Areas and how and why they might be implemented.
 - ii. Comment: Haven't come up with specific areas besides the subsidence area. Follow-up: may not need to call out a separate management area if there isn't subsidence in another part of the Subbasin – in this case, the same standards apply across the whole Subbasin.
 - b. Sustainable Management Criteria
 - i. Alyson Watson (W&C) walked through the sustainable management criteria for each of the sustainability indicators.



- ii. Question: For purposes of setting thresholds for groundwater levels, what is the difference between CASGEM wells and domestic wells? Answer: CASGEM wells are used for representative monitoring as they meet strict SGMA monitoring requirements. Domestic wells were used to define location-specific minimum thresholds and undesirable results (e.g. finding the shallowest domestic well within a 2-mile radius of each CASGEM well).
- iii. Comment: Need to come up with GWL threshold methodology for future additional monitoring wells where (1) there may not be domestic wells located within 2 miles or (2) there won't be historical groundwater record to help determine a minimum threshold since it is a new monitoring well.
- iv. Question: Certain areas of the Subbasin (e.g. West side, near San Joaquin River) already have high salinity above minimum threshold. How do we bring this into the discussion? Answer: The proposed minimum threshold for degraded water quality is 1,000 mg/L TDS but in areas where it's already higher, it's not considered significant and unreasonable because high salinity is already being managed.
- v. Lacey Kiriakou will check with Merced County Environmental Health for any feedback about constituents effected by groundwater pumping that we should consider setting thresholds beyond TDS.
- vi. Feedback from Amanda Peisch-Derby (DWR): Suggestion provided to review example of Paso Robles Draft GSP which is publicly available. For degraded water quality, the GSP picked a set of common contaminants and used MCLs for setting Minimum Thresholds. Areas with existing exceedances of the MCLs were not selected for representative monitoring (e.g. MT was not developed for these areas). Elsewhere, the definition of undesirable results was set so that multiple wells had to exceed the MT.
- vii. Comment: For about 10 years, Eric Swenson managed groundwater assessment and cleanup regulations for Merced County. Most of the concerns are in urban areas in domestic wells and large municipal wells. Practice was to carefully monitor constituents for exceedances of MCLs. Only 2 example wells where plume migration was observed.
- viii. Question: How come we don't have specificity on the year type for definition of undesirable results for land subsidence, though we do for groundwater levels? Answer: In part, land subsidence doesn't respond as quickly as groundwater levels, but this also doesn't allow much flexibility in extended drought.
 - 1. CC group requested that consultant team update the definition of undesirable results for land subsidence to apply only in non-dry/critically dry years, similar to groundwater levels.
- ix. Clarification on Interconnected Surface Waters: The MercedWRM model was used to determine what level of surface water flow reduction would be expected using the existing groundwater level minimum thresholds; the analysis did not determine a new set of minimum thresholds that meet known exact undesirable results for this sustainability indicator.
- x. Comment: Moving forward, should consider whether there is an opportunity to directly measure stream depletions so when five year update comes we can re-evaluate. May need to involve additional monitoring wells along streams as well.
- xi. Public question: Merced River floods ranch and water is seen as being wasted. Can the water be used to recharge aquifer and credited to the landowner? Answer: CC group has previously discussed possibility of having a permit for multiple diversion locations,

identifying places of use, etc. that would mean ability to have credits would exist in the future.

c. Implementation Plan



i. Alyson Watson (W&C) gave a brief outline on implementation planning steps for the GSP that are currently underway, as well as a schedule for future implementation of the GSP.

1. Hicham EITal (MIUGSA): Suggestion to invite Irrigation Training & Research Center (ITRC) from Cal Poly in to talk about one way we might implement one mechanism for incentives and groundwater tracking.

a. CC interest was expressed from multiple members.

2. Suggestion: it would good to come up with other creative ideas for incentivizing better groundwater use, e.g. a funding mechanism establishing a dollar amount per year to incentivize people to fallow land.

a. Eastside Water District has a program like this. Alternatively, a program could work to incentivize recharge, too. Could bring member of Eastside to present, too, in addition to ITRC above.

3. Hicham EITal (MIUGSA) proposed writing a letter re: Prop 68 to DWR requesting that the previously funded projects for SDAC funding shouldn't be counted against the ~\$2M funding cap.

a. CC group approved a motion to direct Lacey and Hicham to write and submit a letter.

4. Hicham EITal (MIUGSA) shared some proposed changes to DWR Technical Support Services (TSS) application, originally for monitoring well and extensometer funding for Merced/Delta-Mendota shared set of monitoring wells along southwest side. Since Subbasin is moving away from using groundwater levels as proxy for subsidence, proposal is to focus only on funding a continuous GPS station for subsidence monitoring which will be cheaper and easier to implement overall.

a. CC members approved motion to submit TSS application based on this updated proposal.

5. Recommendation from SC to implement policy in GSP to limit/exclude exporting of water from the Subbasin (albeit maybe with little authority to enforce).

a. CC response: legally complicated to include in the GSP, probably not necessary to include since the County has the existing Ordinance. Proposed allocation framework has measures for limiting export of water from the Subbasin.

d. Water Allocation Framework

i. Hicham EITal (MIUGSA) shared a proposed clarification on Item #4 in 4/2/2019 water allocation framework update TM to GSA staff "Use framework above to establish total allocations to each GSA. GSAs can modify the implementation and allocations within their GSA Boundary."; To avoid a perverse incentive of groundwater mining prior to implementation, MIUGSA would like to modify text so that internal GSA management is



allowed except transfer of groundwater from non-developed to developed lands. However, groundwater credit exchange for in-lieu recharge (recharge, surface water, FloodMAR, etc.) would still exist.

- ii. Discussion ensued about various rules under this proposed scenario and other clarifications.
 - iii. Public Comment and Suggestion: What does this updated scenario mean for several different landowners? E.g. rangeland, 1000 acres owner, 5000 acres large property owner who wants to pipe 2 miles down road from allocations, etc.; Response: it is possible to come up with some examples for this in a future meeting.
 - iv. Public comment: Difficult to follow the overall conversation about framework modifications. Response: Team provided commitment to provide additional information in packet for next meeting with reference on framework memo discussion.
- e. Next Steps in GSP Development
 - i. Included a summary of upcoming section review drafts to expect, as well as a review of steps for submission (e.g. notice of intent to adopt).
 - f. Other Updates
 - i. Included a summary of upcoming section review drafts to expect
5. Public Outreach update
 - a. The next public workshop will take place May 29th at the Atwater Community Center. Notices and additional information are posted on the Merced SGMA website.
 6. Coordination with neighboring basins
 - a. A meeting with Turlock was just held. Also developing a draft agreement on how to coordinate in the future with Delta-Mendota (which is on a tight timeline and does not expect to be able to coordinate on data sharing unless there has been sufficient time for internal review).
 7. Public comment
 - a. Question: Is Merced annexing property near UC Merced? Response: Not sure of details.
 - b. Question: Geologists say we are past due for a big earthquake. What would it do to our basin and is there any potential effect on sustainability of groundwater? Answer: See Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model for more information about the faults. We have not considered dam failure (while not required by SGMA, MID has been working on this separately).
 - c. Question: How many more meetings will be held? Answer: We will talk about this at the next meeting. Will be meeting in June and most likely in July as well. August we will likely spend discussing comments and how to support adoption as well as what additional meetings are required.
 8. Next steps and adjourn
 - a. Focus for June will be on comments on draft sections and process for GSP Adoption and next steps.

Next Regular Meeting

June 24, 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.