



MEETING MINUTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Stakeholder Committee Meeting #15

DATE/TIME: July 22, 2019 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 type="checkbox"/>	Arlan Thomas	Merced Irrigation District Advisory Committee (MIDAC), growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Migliazzo	Live Oak Farms, growers
<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	Brian Carter	D&S Farms, growers
<input 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 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 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"/>	Jean Okuye (alternate to Ladi Asgill)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maria Herrera	Self-Help Enterprises
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Maxwell	University of California, Merced
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maxwell Norton	Retired agricultural researcher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parry Klassen	East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rick Drayer	Drayer Ranch, Merced cattlemen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Simon Vander Woude	Sandy Mush Mutual Water Company, dairies

Meeting Minutes



1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review
 - a. Charles Gardiner (Catalyst) welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting agenda content. There was a brief round of introductions of attendees.
 - b. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) reviewed and provided an update on the last Coordination Committee. The CC had a similar agenda to the SC meeting. Leadership Council (LC) provided a letter focused on water quality issues (please see June 2019 minutes). Last meeting reviewed how to address issues for monitoring and representative wells. Acknowledged that the GSP in the next update will address getting additional information. Decision was to remove two problem wells. Discussed data gaps and heard comments related to the metering program. Discussed role of SC and that this will continue to be important and CC will continue to provide input. Decision was made to have quarterly meetings that are staggered so that there is adequate time to summarize decisions and information from one meeting to the next (e.g. for SC to the CC and vice versa). The CC discussed the water allocation framework. The CC recommended to include in the GSP the working definition of developed supply, and that this will be further refined during Plan implementation. How allocation will be distributed will also need to be further refined.
2. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
 - a. Public Draft GSP
 - i. Alyson (W&C) reviewed the GSP draft timeline and the availability of the public draft. The release of the Public Draft GSP was 19 July 2019. A Notice of Intent to Adopt is being sent to Cities and Counties on 22 July 2019.
 - ii. There are 30 days for public review. A list of public locations for hard copies provided is provided in the slide handout (and on the Merced SGMA website) and was sent out to the email distribution lists.
 - b. Highlights of key sections for review
 - i. Alyson (W&C) reviewed the Sustainable Yield (SY), including the main components that went into calculating SY. This number also includes the items that need to be refined (e.g. the seepage and conveyance estimates).
 - ii. Climate Change was reviewed. The climate change water budget starts with projected conditions baseline. A change factor (or perturbation factor) from DWR is applied to the Projected Data Baseline to simulate the impact of climate change. This creates the Climate Change Baseline, which is put into the Merced model. The output is the Climate Change Water Budget. This can be refined in the future to include the Merced Irrigation District (MID) operations model.
 1. Question: Where does the 4% on the slide come from? And are we using the 7% evapotranspiration (ET) forecast in our plan? Answer (W&C): The plan includes the study, but SY does not include climate change projections. We are using the 2070 information from DWR. The uncertainty is large, but the climate change analysis gives us a broader understanding of potential level of impact. DWR requires us to have an analysis. However, W&C recommends refining numbers to be more locally specific prior to using numbers to plan on local scale.
 2. Comment: We should get the plan done and submitted to the state, but the local governing bodies need to immediately insert climate change factors for planning.



3. Comment: For our projects, we also need to work toward the big number of what we need to reduce by in AFY overall for the Subbasin.
 4. Agreement from SC: Need to stay aggressive on projects.
 5. Comment/question: We should have a plan moving forward to include climate change into how we are managing the Subbasin.
 6. Agreement from SC: In the update, we should identify that the plan should include the climate change analysis and a way to manage the Subbasin with this. Need to focus on recharge and consider climate change when working toward sustainability and meeting future demand needs.
- iii. Sustainable Management Criteria
1. Alyson (W&C) reviewed what is in the draft GSP and each of the sustainability indicators including how Minimum Thresholds are determined. A summary slide containing information for all indicators was provided.
 2. Question: What does this look like in dry years? Answer (W&C): Violations of MTs are not projected to occur during dry years according to model simulations.
 3. Comment/question: For Depletions of Interconnected Surface Water, are we using groundwater levels as a proxy because measuring depletions directly is so difficult? Direct measurements are near impossible. Answer (W&C): Yes, but this is identified as something that can be refined.
- iv. Water Level and Protecting Domestic Wells
1. Alyson (W&C) explained that groundwater level MTs are the depth of shallowest domestic well in a 2-mile radius of each representative well (24 representative wells), or the minimum level pre-January 2015 (1 representative well). There are 25 representative wells total. The domestic wells are usually shallower than agricultural wells. A single domestic well going dry is not considered an Undesirable Result (UR). An UR is triggered if > 25% of representative wells fall below MTs in two consecutive wet, above normal, or below normal years.
 2. Alyson (W&C) asked the SC group for input on what we should be doing if a well is dewatered? And what do we do if an individual representative well reaches an MT but does not trigger an UR?
 3. Alyson (W&C) reviewed hydrographs to show the results of 50 years of modelled hydrology. Two of the wells out of the 25% of representative wells would reach MTs during a 6-year drought condition. This does not trigger an UR, and consequential state intervention. However, there is a possibility that we could be dewatering domestic wells.
 4. Question/comment: Need to define what we think are significant and unreasonable impacts and how to address these for disadvantaged communities. Concern is that we don't know what the impacts for the communities will be because we don't have representative wells in these areas.
 5. Comment: The state is asking for a plan. We know it is not going to be perfect. There are some projects that try to address issue (e.g. El Nido). If we focus on recharge, this can address/mitigate these issues.
 6. Comment: There should be a mitigation strategy given that it will take 5 years to get the data and install a monitoring well in these areas.



7. Clarification (W&C): The analysis does not project a potential reach of MTs to occur except once in a 50 year timeframe.
8. Comment: We could reach out to communities to see what kind of data they might have. Response (W&C): We can't establish MT wells now because there are currently no wells in those areas that meet reporting criteria. However, we could work toward this, including through projects.
9. Clarification (W&C): We have to wait until the 5 year update to adjust MTs.
10. Comment: We also have to consider the age of the wells. For example, if a well is 50+ years old, it might be nearing end of life use.
11. Question: What about monitoring in areas that currently have no monitoring wells? Answer (W&C): The CC can work on establishing new monitoring wells, but the approach for this needs to be agreed on. This is important for areas that do not have domestic wells, and especially wells with no historical data. Suggestions have been made at last CC but are not approved yet.

12. Water Quality

- a. Alyson (W&C) explained the MTs and what these are based on. Also received guidance from Merced County Division of Environmental Health. Leadership Counsel provided a letter and follow up letter to the GSAs.
- b. Comment: The Department of Pesticide Regulation already has several programs for the use of pesticides. We are not allowed to make changes that impact these programs. Response (W&C): We have focused on known areas where there are GW and salinity issues. However, we've heard concern over a variety of parameters. We are coordinating with existing programs to understand potential impacts. Depending on what is causing the issue, this may or may not fall within jurisdiction of SGMA.
- c. Comment: The recent approval of SB200, provides \$200M per year fund that could be a potential resource for funding (e.g. for projects).
- d. Comment: If you are requesting funding, you need to show that the plan is working toward improving water quality. Otherwise, may have difficulty in getting funding.
- e. Comment: Coordination with DPR and DWR is the best avenue for water quality.
- f. Comment: Protecting water quality for drinking purposes has been discussed. Commentator would like to see more that can be done in the plan.
- g. Comment: It is good to look at coordinating with water quality monitoring groups and agencies.

13. Projects and Management Actions

- a. Alyson (W&C) reviewed the requirements from DWR for project information, the criteria used in the GSP as a filter to prioritize projects, and the list of 12 priority projects.
- b. Question: What are the funding sources for those that have funding: Project #10 is partially privately funded, Projects #1-3 are Prop1 DWR funded (the SDAC projects), Project #12 uses Merced County funding.



- c. For Management Actions, there is a basin-wide allocation framework, and then the MSGSA allocation management action.

14. Plan Implementation

- a. Alyson (W&C) reviewed the timeline for the GSP implementation from 2020-2040, the components needed for first 5 years, and the estimated costs for plan implementation and projects.
- b. Comment: Report for the Prop 218 Landowner Fee pursued by MSGSA is available on the Merced County website (see link here: <https://www.co.merced.ca.us/3253/Proposition-218-Landowner-Fee>)
- c. Alyson (W&C) reviewed potential funding sources including what GSAs are enabled to do to raise funds through SGMA. This included funding authority given for extraction fees. Information included a brief review of options and process, with examples given of extraction fee and acreage-based assessment and fees.
- d. Question: How many wells are there for the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority? Answer (W&C): Not certain but can look this up.
- e. Comment: Fee break out when looking at total costs to implement and total acreage would be around \$4 or more per acre. Commentator thinks this is not bad.
- f. Comment: It was communicated in previous meetings that everyone who has a straw in the ground needs to contribute. Landowners should have a per acre fee, maybe for institutions or organization can use an extraction fee.
- g. Comment: There is not enough information to make a recommendation on which approach of fee to use, especially on behalf of disadvantaged communities.

3. Water Allocation Framework

- a. Alyson (W&C) reviewed the timeline of the initial discussions of the water allocation framework from Oct. 2018 to present. In summary: recently (in 2019) in March we discussed how allocate to overlying acres. In April there was a recommendation from the CC to the GSA boards. In May some disagreements in interpretation were identified. In June had Special CC session to discuss developed supply. For the Plan, the water allocation framework section is kept at a high level and further discussion with the CC is needed to agree on further detail.
- b. Alyson (W&C) went through an initial roadmap for continuing discussions. This included data gaps for allocation framework implementation, definition of developed supply, final allocation by GSA, procedure for new wells, and water credits & trading.
- c. Comment: Shouldn't it be that each GSA gets their allocation and should manage in a way that's tailored to their areas? Answer (W&C): The GSAs will have that discretion, it's just the process of getting there and agreeing on how.
- d. Question: Isn't there a project on streamlining well permitting? Answer from Merced County: This is a county project that is focused on above Corcoran wells. It involves an analysis of removing wells from below to above the Corcoran Clay layer, assists in removing the CEQA regulatory barrier, and should help protect against further subsidence.

4. Public Outreach Update



- a. Charles explained the public review process. There is a 30-day public comment period, ending August 19th.
 - b. Public can provide comments also via Merced SGMA email address (see Contact Us page on Merced SGMA website).
 - c. A Joint GSA Board Public meeting to take place in September to review comments received. The location of the Joint GSA Board meeting will likely be the Merced County Building.
 - d. Adoption hearings to be held in Fall 2019.
5. Interbasin Coordination Update
- a. Merced Subbasin team have an Interbasin Coordination call with Delta-Mendota tomorrow, July 23rd.
6. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
- a. Comment: The GSAs' job is to address groundwater overdraft and related water quality needs. Response from SC member: To strengthen our communities, we should address and have GSAs take responsibility in addressing WQ issues.
 - b. Comment: We could potentially have the SC and CC meet together to discuss this issue and reach decisions.
 - c. Comment: 30 days for public review period is aggressive to try to reach communities. Are the GSAs going to have further public outreach? Also, to the point made about joining the two committees, we should consider how this will impact decision making and who is able to make decisions.
 - d. Question/request from SC: Request to have the number of AFY the Subbasin needs to reduce by to reach sustainability on the first slide for future meetings.
7. Next Steps and Next Meeting
- a. Next meeting is currently to be determined. Once next regular or special meeting date confirmed, notices will be issued and outreach pursued.

Next Regular Meeting

TBD 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.