



## MEETING MINUTES – Merced GSP Stakeholder Committee

SUBJECT: Stakeholder Committee Meeting #16

DATE/TIME: October 28, 2019 at 9:30 AM

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

### Stakeholder Committee Members In Attendance:

	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Community Aspect Representation</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alex McCabe	City of Livingston
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arlan Thomas	Merced Irrigation District Advisory Committee (MIDAC), growers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ben Migliazzo	Live Oak Farms, growers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bill Spriggs	City of Merced, Merced Irrigation District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Salles	Leap Carpenter Kemps Insurance, insurance industry and natural resources
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Machado	Machado Backhoe Inc., construction industry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darren Olguin	McSwain MAC
<input type="checkbox"/>	Frenchy Meissonnier	Rice Farmer, rice growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Galen Miyamoto	Miyamoto Farms
<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	Jean Okuye (alternate to Ladi Asgill)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maria Herrera	Self-Help Enterprises
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Maxwell	University of California, Merced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maxwell Norton	Retired agricultural researcher
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parry Klassen	East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, growers
<input 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 Gardiners (Catalyst) welcomed the group. Attendees introduced themselves.
2. Finalizing Merced Subbasin GSP
  - a. Alyson Watson (W&C) provided an update on the status of responding to comments and finalizing the GSP. The CC will discuss the revisions to the GSP this afternoon and adoption hearings are being scheduled for late November/early December.
  - b. The consultant team worked with GSA staff on addressing comments that were received. The redline of the revised draft GSP and the master responses to comments are posted on the Merced SGMA website. The comment letters are also posted on the website. SGMA requires documenting public comments received.
  - c. Master response to comments was organized by 20 topics (see slide for full list). Master response and comment letters will be included as an Appendix to the GSP.
  - d. Alyson noted that SGMA does not require GSAs hold a public comment period. The Merced GSAs decided to hold the 30-day public comment period. This is an addition to the 60-day public comment period that DWR will hold once the GSP is submitted.
  - e. Alyson highlighted two topics for more discussion today based on topics CC will also be discussing: subsidence sustainable management criteria and water quality sustainable management criteria.
    - i. Subsidence discussion:
      1. Alyson provided some background information on subsidence in the basin: it is a gradual process that takes time to develop and time to halt. Subbasin may not be able to fully stop subsidence but can slow it and reduce impacts. She noted that despite wetter conditions 2017-2018, there was still between -0.17 ft/yr and -0.32 ft/yr observed in the portion of the subbasin.
      2. Alyson compared the sustainable management criteria that are included in the Merced GSP and in the neighboring basins of Chowchilla and Delta-Mendota.
        - a. Merced GSP management criteria based on historical subsidence rates observed
        - b. Chowchilla is using GWLs as a proxy for subsidence in the lower aquifer only (they are using this for both MT and MO). They are using an adaptive management approach with a trigger of -0.25 ft/yr for 3 years in Eastern main aquifer.
        - c. In Delta-Mendota they have measurable objectives that vary by GSP and region but most are between -0.01 to -0.1 ft/yr. For minimum threshold, they (again various by GSP) but have between -0.1 to -0.2 ft/yr. San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors: The MT is **narrative**: "that which **doesn't reduce SJREC's conveyance capacity without appropriate mitigation.**"
    3. Question from SC: Did Delta-Mendota use a different method for coming up with their numbers? Alyson: Yes, what was used to determine this is site specific. What they use cannot necessarily be used in Merced.



4. Clarification: we expect that DWR will expect that we have a continued coordination for subsidence. But we do not expect that they will require neighboring basins to have the exact same measurements.
  - a. The consulting team and GSA staff were given direction by DWR that using groundwater level as proxy was not preferred. Neighboring subbasins got different input from DWR. (Chowchilla and Delta-Mendota).
  - b. SGMA is very specific that the Subbasins will come up with their own approach to creating MTs and MOs. We are not allowed to impact our neighboring basins adversely. However, we do not have to have the same measurements/mechanisms for measurement in order to get our plan approved.
5. Question: DWR will see the response to comments and comments themselves?  
A: Yes, these are in GSP appendix and response to comments and comments are on the MercedSGMA.org website.
6. Alyson further described Merced GSP approach. MT and MO set based on historical subsidence rates. Some level of future subsidence, likely at similar rates, likely to be underway already and will not be able to be prevented. GSAs will continue coordinate efforts with Chowchilla & Delta-Mendota to develop regional and local solutions to regional subsidence
7. Alyson explained the subsidence map, showing varying degrees of subsidence in the southern part of the basin.
8. Question to the group: thoughts? Is Merced GSP approach reasonable?
  - a. Comment: this is a good educated guess. The other basins are doing the same thing.
  - b. Question: is there an overall system or data system that is watching this?  
A: the Bureau (USBR) is likely the best current data system for this. We are using this data.
  - c. Hicham: DWR says they would like to see surface water stations used in our analysis. They were not as excited about using GWL, but we are in a good place to keep moving forward.
9. Question from public: what are you using for a standard measurement unit? Where are we right now and how are we compared to the other areas around us? Have to ask why how much is sinking over that time period in that particular location. A: **When there's groundwater pumping and you have permeable clay layers, you are creating these holes in the clay layers and these can compact and the ground can drop. And we can see this in the change in topography and that's where the map is from (using data from USBR). We're looking at directly** how much the ground surface is changing. Moving forward we have to work with our neighbors to improve how we are managing this.
10. Comment from public: can you coordinate the GWL data and the subsidence (surface change) data together? A: **That's the plan.** Think of this as step one. There will need to be more coordination and more data. More monitoring wells are being proposed for the future as well as more monitoring points for subsidence. There needs to be a consistency across the basins. Both sides have GWL and subsidence data, but will need to continued coordination. Next step is to look at



GSPs together and look at potentially regional plans and adjust. Confirmed: we are taking a big picture view.

11. Question: how much are we going to make specific points influence... **is there** going to be a blanket assessment? A: the MTs are location specific. You can have something greater or less than this at another location in the basin. However, the CC and the Boards can decide there is an issue somewhere and decide to do something there. Part of the reason for this is because of how site specific the issues might be.
12. Comment (Hicham Eltal MID): What we are saying is to look at the most drastic locations to ensure other areas also ok (measuring to the worst case in order to be protective).
13. Comment (Alyson Watson): we are using an approach that is protective of domestic wells in the subbasin.
14. Comment from public: when talking about El Nido, southeast side is very different than other areas. Drastic difference even within El Nido with difference of 3-5 miles.
15. Comment (Hicham): unless your areas become as bad as the other areas, will not be impacted by the restrictions.
16. Comment from public: worried about being lumped into another area and then having to be required to implement demand management actions/restrictions.
17. Clarification on whether GWL vs. subsidence surface measures as being more important: there is nothing in the plan that says there are demand management for areas of subsidence (e.g. for El Nido area). The plan will also be updated every 5 yrs.
18. Clarification from Hicham: you could still (according to discussion from DWR) have an increase in GWLs but still have subsidence.
19. Comment from public: basically, **they don't (DWR) know what is going on with** subsidence? A: right, we do not know the extent to which this will continue and severity.
20. Question: in the brown area of the map, is there a plan to put folks in that area (where subsidence is worst) on surface water?
  - a. Response from SC: there are no cities in that area, and the farmers in that area have procured surface water supplies
  - b. Clarification from Charles: we also have GWL objectives and thresholds in that area as well.
  - c. Clarification from Alyson: MID has also been doing work to get SW to these areas.
  - d. Hicham: folks in these areas have purchased meters. These folks are also getting water outside the district. MID Board has approved most of the time (not all the time) to move water outside the district. Previously has been the case 7 out of 10 years. In MID WRP also recognizes efforts outside the basin.
  - e. Comment: Madera, Chowchilla, and others have all been trying to get SW out to these areas.

- f. Question: is MID interested in that? Hicham: yes, depends on system capacity. The SW has to go through El Nido first. (El Nido is in district)

ii. Water Quality:



1. Alyson provided an explanation of Merced GSP water quality sustainable management criteria. The MT is set at 1,000mg/L for TDS (Total Dissolved Solids, measurement of salinity). This is drinking water standard. There are numerous other authorities governing and monitoring drinking WQ and contaminants. There is a summary of the response to comments for WQ on the Merced SGMA website.
2. Alyson provided summary of response to WQ comments. Salinity is selected as an indicator. GSAs recognize the importance of protecting drinking water quality. There is a desire to coordinate with agencies and their ongoing efforts to avoid duplication of efforts and efficiently use limited resources. Coordination activities include: (see list on PPT).
3. Comment from SC: we discussed previously that there are all of these other agencies who are doing this work.
4. Comment from Charles: there is some concern for residential users who might not be on these systems that are being monitored by existing agencies
5. Comment from SC: two weeks ago, State Board approved CVSALTS. (there will be data on nitrates becoming available.
6. Comment from Charles: the permittees develop together a collective nitrates program. The management zone is a collaborative effort kind of like a GSA. It might take a couple of years for this to develop and implement this kind of monitoring and planning.
7. Comment from SC: the program will be monitoring the domestic wells. Who is actually going to do the work will be determined by the regional board?
8. Comment: anything we could change in the plan to satisfy commenters?
9. Alyson: we could add more MTs, **but there's not much** else we can do with the plan. What SGMA requires sets a basin standard, you can have projects, but from a thresholds perspective this is not the most effective way to address these issues for these communities.
10. Charles: the groups who are advocating for these communities are in the process of conducting a study and assessment of the specific needs and issues in DACs throughout the basin
11. Comment: SB1 is going in this direction as well (targets disadvantaged communities and groundwater levels)
12. Clarification: will not have additional specific requirements to dairies, will be subbasin wide.
13. Comment from Charles: the program (CVSALTS) brought up earlier monitor and have regulations.
14. **Comment from public: that's what we're hoping that if we are already adhering to the current regulations, that we are not creating a new agency we have to report to.**

- f. Dates for Adoption Hearings for GSA Boards – still being scheduled. Tentative dates below:



- i. TIWD GSA-1 is anticipated for Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>
- ii. MSGSA is TBD
- iii. MIUGSA is anticipated Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>

### 3. GSP Implementation Planning

#### a. Prop 68 funding opportunity (deadline Nov. 1, 2019)

- i. Alyson briefly summarized Prop 68 grant contents. These were developed by the ad-hoc working group.
- ii. We are submitting for the total amount we are eligible which is \$500K. Expected to be competitive. DWR has indicated they are prioritizing GSP development activities over implementation projects.
- iii. Contents include three components, 1) grant administration, 2) Addressing GSP data gaps, and 3) Developing a remote sensing decision support tool
- iv. The objectives include: prioritizing data gaps, increasing the number of wells in the monitoring network, monitoring gw use, and stakeholder outreach.
- v. We are soliciting letters of support and currently have 14 letters from various groups in the basin. We have also received letters from all three neighboring subbasins and provided them with letters of support.

#### b. Annual report preparation proposal from Woodard & Curran

- i. Alyson explained that W&C was asked by GSA staff to prepare a proposal for preparing the first annual report. The first annual report is due April 1, 2020 and must cover water years 2015-2019. The proposal includes optional tasks for project management, stakeholder engagement plan update, and evaluation of GDE Pulse Tool

#### c. Water Allocation Framework update

- i. Alyson explained that the GSAs are continuing to discuss this issue. The GSP does not include an allocation. It states that GSAs intend to allocate water to each GSA but have not yet reached agreement on allocations or how they will be implemented. Estimates of basin-wide sustainable yield and developed supply are included in the GSP for illustrative purposes.

#### d. Implementation and Stakeholder Committee Involvement

- i. Discussion: What topics are of most interest to the stakeholder committee?
  1. Funding: How and who will pay for this? MSGSA has done a Prop 218, MIUGSA is underway with this.
  2. Monitoring and reporting: SC members report hearing concerns in the community that someone will try to turn off their wells. Comment: **Biggest question I get, who's turning my pump off? Nobody is going to tell me to turn off my wells.**
  3. Allocation: **What's the allocation and how is it enforced?**
  4. Projects
  5. First 4 bullets (allocation framework, monitoring and reporting GW use, funding, and projects) are the key topics
  6. Water Quality – comment: there are 5 government agencies watching that. Do not think this plan needs to get specific about this.



- ii. Composition of Stakeholder Committee
  - 1. Charles suggested they may want to discuss who wants to stay on and whether have the right representation. He noted there have been two resignations from the committee during the course of GSP development and that we are at a natural **milestone to confirm who wants to stay on committee and what committee's role moving forward will be.**
  - 2. Group discussed wanting to stay involved if input is used and valuable. Some members expressed desire to interact directly with the CC committee. Charles suggested possibility of holding joint discussions with CC around key topics.
  - 3. Group wanted to meet no more than needed. Agreement that mapping out topics would be useful. Having summary of what was previously discussed also useful.
- e. Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP)
  - i. This effort is continuing and there was a second call for projects. These are all available online.
- 4. Public Outreach Update
  - a. GSA Adoption hearings will be coming up in late November/early December.
- 5. Interbasin Coordination Update
  - a. Coordination with neighboring basins will continue, especially for topics like subsidence.
- 6. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
  - a. Question: are we still trying to keep the water in the GSAs? Reply: the GSAs will need to agree together with how to split up the water allocation amongst the GSAs. Then there is also a requirement in SGMA to not adversely impact your neighboring basins. There is a general framework that has been laid out in the plan. However, the big question is how to allocate in a fair manner the water amongst the three GSAs.
  - b. Public comment submitted: member of public provided letter they received from Department of the Air Force concerning groundwater sampling for PFOS/PFOA. (attached)
- 7. Next Steps and Next Meeting
  - a. Will be submitting the Prop 68 grant application
  - b. Dates for adoption hearings will be posted on the website.

Next Regular Meeting  
TBD at 9:30 a.m.

Castle Conference Center, 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA  
Information also available online at [mercedsgma.org](http://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.*





**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
AIR FORCE CIVIL ENGINEER CENTER

October 11, 2019

AFCEC/CIBE  
2261 Hughes Avenue, Suite 155  
JBSA Lackland TX 78236-9853



The Air Force is currently investigating whether perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and/or perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is present in the groundwater near the former Castle Air Force Base (Castle AFB) in Atwater, California. Samples of groundwater on the former Castle AFB have confirmed the presence of PFOS and/or PFOA. The next steps in the Air Force investigation are to determine whether PFOS/PFOA are present in the water from private drinking water wells near Castle AFB.

While PFOS and PFOA are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued Lifetime Health Advisories (LHA) and is continuing to study PFOS/PFOA to determine if regulation is needed. Please see the attached Fact Sheet for further information on these substances.

A review of the water well record databases maintained by the Air Force, the California Department of Water Resources, the City of Winton, and the City of Atwater indicates you may have drinking water wells on your property. If you do, the Air Force requests permission to take water samples from your drinking water wells. The Air Force will sample your wells at no cost to you and will share any information obtained from the well sampling.

To that end, we would very much appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete the enclosed Private Well Survey form and allow us to take samples from your wells at a mutually agreeable time. The Air Force, through its authorized agent, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood), will contact you soon to schedule the sampling and discuss the procedure and requirements. Please return the Private Well Survey form in the enclosed self addressed, postage paid envelope or email a copy to Ms. Mary Jo Heassler at [maryjo.heassler@woodplc.com](mailto:maryjo.heassler@woodplc.com).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Roy Willis at 210-395-9452 or [roy.willis@us.af.mil](mailto:roy.willis@us.af.mil).