



MEETING MINUTES – Merced GSP Stakeholder Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: June 1, 2022, 9:30 to 11:30 AM

LOCATION: Hybrid meeting with physical location at Merced Irrigation District, Franklin Yard Facility, 3321 North Franklin Road, Merced, CA 95348 and online via Zoom

Stakeholder Committee Members in Attendance:

	Representative	Community Aspect Representation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arlan Thomas	MIDAC member
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Migliazzo (alternate)	MIDAC member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Kelley	Stevinson Representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blake Nervino	Stevinson/Merquin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Breanne Vandenberg	MCFB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Craig Arnold	Arnold Farms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darren Olguin	Resident of Merced County
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dave Serrano	Serrano Farms - Le Grand
<input type="checkbox"/>	David Belt	Foster Farms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emma Reyes	Martin Reyes Farm/Land Leveling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greg Olzack	Atwater Resident
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jean Okuye	E Merced RCD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Joe Sansoni	Sansoni Farms/MCFB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joe Scoto	Scoto Brothers/McSwain School Dist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jose Moran	Livingston City Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lacy Carothers	Cal Am Water
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lisa Baker	Clayton Water District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lisa Kayser-Grant	Sierra Club
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Maxwell	UC Merced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maxwell Norton	Unincorporated area
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nav Athwal	TriNut Farms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Olivia Gomez	Community of Planada
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nataly Escobedo Garcia (alternate)	Leadership Counsel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parry Klassen	ESJWQC
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darcy Brown	River Partners
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rick Drayer	Merced/Mariposa Cattlemen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Weimer	Weimer Farms
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Simon Vander Woude	Sandy Mush MWC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Susan Walsh	City of Merced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bill Spriggs (alternate)	Merced resident
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Dinwoodie	Master Gardener/McSwain
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trevor Hutton	Valley Land Alliance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wes Myers	Merced Grassland Coalition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lou Myers (alternate)	Benjamin Land LP

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Welcome

- a. Charles Gardiner (Catalyst) welcomed the group.

2. Introductions and Roll Call

- a. Charles Gardiner (Catalyst) reviewed the agenda and meeting guidelines, conducted roll call, and reminded attendees that past meeting materials are available online at mercedsgma.org.

3. Drought Check-in

- a. Allocation started at 13 inches and is now at 27 inches due to series of late storms and demand remaining low.
- b. Merced Farm Bureau: Newsom administration has put out materials for land purchasing, pending final budget.

4. Potential Revisions to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

- a. Jim Blanke (W&C) reminded the group that DWR's comments focused on chronic lowering of groundwater levels, impacts to beneficial users, and land subsidence.
- b. Groundwater levels
 - i. Jim Blanke (W&C) shared that, after considering input from the committees, the GSAs have decided to pursue historical lows (Option B, as presented at the April meeting) as the minimum threshold approach. The GSAs are also incorporating a domestic well mitigation program, with primary financial responsibility with MSGSA, and a management action to explore different levels above Corcoran in the subsidence area for more flexibility in responding to subsidence issues.
 - ii. Jim Blanke (W&C) reiterated that the GSA decision was based on balancing two competing interests (protecting beneficial uses and users and using available water resources) and noted that all sustainable management criteria can be reevaluated during the 5-year update if needed.
 1. Comment (Jean Okuye): Believe the Subbasin should go with 2015 groundwater levels (Option A) to get state approval. The GSAs should review Madera's Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation (SALC) grant application and pull ideas and coordination techniques. The GSP should focus more on demand and land repurposing and less on supply. The GSAs should also consider the effects of climate change in the modeling scenarios.
 2. Comment (Nataly Escobedo Garcia): I second Jean's comments.
 3. Public Comment (Stacie Ann Silva): CDFW/WCB also have funding available for another Regional Conservation Investment Strategy which is a non-regulatory program which identifies areas for redevelopment and allows landowners to engage in the process to garner mitigation dollars.
 4. *Additional comments were provided, but details were lost due to technical issues.*
 - iii. Jim Blanke (W&C) reviewed the modifications of measurable objectives and interim milestones to retain consistency with the revised minimum thresholds. The measurable objective will be developed to provide operational flexibility, while interim milestones will be developed based on phasing in of projects and management actions (which hope to stabilize and increase groundwater levels).
- c. Comments were provided, but details were lost due to technical issues. Subsidence
 - i. Jim Blanke (W&C) presented the subsidence minimum threshold option under consideration by the GSAs: 0 feet per year, with condition of uncertainty. Other options include total subsidence (rather than rate) or the stipulation of a 5-year rolling average. USBR measurement issue is approximately +/- 1 inch and will be

discussed with DWR. The final option is to set groundwater levels as a proxy for subsidence, which would involve extensive rework of the subsidence section.



1. Public Q (Geoff Vanden Heuvel): How do you explain the zero subsidence demand in light of the language of the SGMA law that talks about an undesirable result being damage to infrastructure of statewide importance. The undesirable result is what SGMA requires us to avoid, confused as to why working toward zero subsidence now. Suggest not conceding to DWR at this point.
 - a. A: Clarified that DWR is leaning heavily on the legislative intent of SGMA and, in particular for Merced, concerns about Eastside bypass and impacts to this critical infrastructure.
 - b. Wes Myers: Agreed. "0" Subsidence is an impossible objective considering residual subsidence/geology/etc. We should push back on DWR.
 2. Name not given: How will residual subsidence be accounted for in the minimum threshold?
 - a. A: Interim milestones will assume some level of subsidence through 2040, both residual and new.
 3. Public Comment (Stacie Ann Silvia): If the IM are going to assume subsidence through 2040 it would seem that MT need to be rethought to include consideration that subsidence can occur without violating a Minimum Threshold over the implementation period.
 4. Additional comments were provided, but details were lost due to technical issues.
- ii. Jim Blanke (W&C) introduced the proposed management action for the subsidence area: goal is to target pumping reduction (or recharge activities) within Subsidence Focus Area (defined by region with 2015-2021 average less than -0.15 ft/yr) to achieve positive annual storage change. Noted that exact details will be developed as part of the management action determined after GSP is updated.
1. Hicham ElTal (MIUGSA) clarified that the area with maximum subsidence is within the Chowchilla Subbasin. Noted that GSAs and neighboring Subbasins will need to work together to ensure all are working to prevent subsidence.
- d. Domestic well mitigation
- i. Jim Blanke (W&C) provided an overview of the management action for a domestic well mitigation program. Explained that, while identification of the need for such a program will occur during GSP implementation, it is envisioned that a board or committee will review claims (which would need to be tied to regional groundwater conditions), with the primary financial responsibility coming from MSGSA, through negotiations. Details to be developed.
- e. Adoption / public input opportunities
- i. Jim Blanke (W&C) provided an overview of the remaining GSP revision process, which includes a meeting with DWR to review proposed changes and continued development of MOs/IMs to complete the redline GSP for Board review and adoption.

5. GSA Reports

- a. Adriel Ramirez provided an update for the Merced Subbasin GSA: Applied for land repurposing grant funding (long-term program); unsuccessful in first round, but future funds may be available from the Department of Conservation next year. Committed to working with both the Department of Conservation and partners to strengthen application.



- b. Matt Beaman provided an update for the Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA: MIUGSA performed a water balance analysis for 2016 to 2021. In the scenario used, pumping was set at 1.1 AF per developed acre; results show a large discrepancy in groundwater storage balance among the three GSAs. MIUGSA has been a positive contributor to the basin, even as groundwater levels have declined.
 - i. Hicham ElTal stated that MIUGSA believes that setting the minimum thresholds lower than 2015 levels may expose the GSAs to additional liability for those impacts, and the need for additional liability for impacts that may occur. MIUGSA should not bear mitigation or liability for setting minimum thresholds at historical lows.
- c. *No update provided for Turner Island Water District GSA #1.*
- d. SAC questions and discussion
 - i. Q (Jean Okuye): How does Merced River compare to Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers as to low groundwater levels?
 - 1. Hicham ElTal (MIUGSA) noted that all have similar issues depending on the groundwater levels modelled.
 - ii. Comment (Jean Okuye): Think we should stick with 2015 GWLs as MTs.

6. Public Comment

- a. None.

7. Next steps and adjourn

- a. Meeting was adjourned at 11:53am.

Next Regular Meeting

Tentatively scheduled as a joint meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Coordination committee at 1:00pm June 27, 2022

Meeting to be conducted hybrid (physical + virtual; subject to change)

Information also available online at mercedsgma.org