

# Merced GSP Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting

January 24, 2024

Meeting will begin at 1:30pm or a few minutes after – thank you for joining us!

**Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA**  
**Merced Subbasin GSA**  
**Turner Island Water District GSA-1**

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

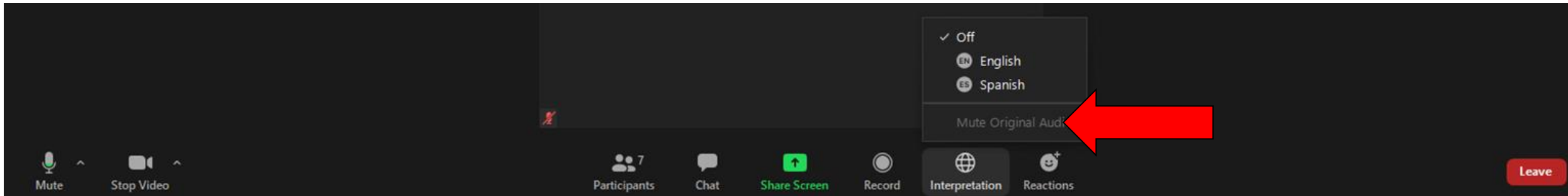
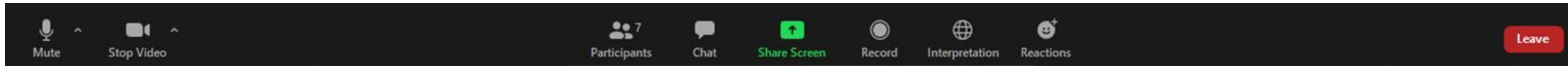


# Welcome, Instructions for Zoom

## Bienvenidos, Instrucciones para Zoom

We have two language audio channels available. English only speakers, please select English.

Si solamente habla español, debe seleccionar un canal de idioma



The meeting will have simultaneous interpreting, so you are welcome to comment in your native language.  
La junta será interpretada simultáneamente, así que le invitamos a que haga comentarios en su lenguaje nativo.

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# Agenda

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1. Call to Order and Welcome
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment
4. 2024 Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute Introduction (Self-Help Enterprises)
5. Reports
6. Discussion about 1/23/24 Merced County Board of Supervisors Meeting Considering Amendment to Merced County's Groundwater Ordinance Export Policy
7. Consideration of Updates to Sustainable Management Criteria
8. Next Steps and Adjourn

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members

Committee Member	Interest/Affiliation	Alternate	Interest/Affiliation
Arlan Thomas	MIDAC member	Ben Migliazzo	Live Oak Farms
Bob Kelley	Stevinson Representative	Blake Nervino	Stevinson/Merquin
Breanne Ramos	MCFB		
Craig Arnold	Arnold Farms		
Darren Olguin	Resident of Merced County		
Dave Serrano	Serrano Farms - Le Grand		
David Belt	Foster Farms		
Emma Reyes	Martin Reyes Farm/Land Leveling		
Greg Olzack	Atwater Resident		
Jean Okuye	E Merced RCD		
Joe Sansoni	Sansoni Farms/MCFB		
Joe Scoto	Scoto Brothers/McSwain School Dist.		
Jose Moran	Livingston City Council		
Lacy Carothers	Cal Am Water		
Lisa Baker	Clayton Water District		
Lisa Kayser-Grant	Sierra Club		
Adam Malisch	UC Merced	Phillip Woods	UC Merced
Maxwell Norton	Unincorporated area		
Nav Athwal	TriNut Farms		
Olivia Gomez	Community of Planada		
Caitie Diemel	ESJWQC		
Darcy Brown	River Partners		
Rick Drayer	Merced/Mariposa Cattlemen		
Simon Vander Woude	Sandy Mush MWC		
Susan Walsh	City of Merced	Bill Spriggs	Resident City of Merced
Thomas Dinwoodie	Master Gardener/McSwain		
Trevor Hutton	Valley Land Alliance		
Wes Myers	Merced Grassland Coalition	Lou Myers	Benjamin Land LP



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## Questions/Comments from Public:

For remote attendees, If you would like to make a comment, please type the comment in the chat or raise your hand to request to be taken off mute

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# 2024 Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute Introduction (Self-Help Enterprises)

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Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2024

Sue Ruiz  
Adriana Becerra

SELF HELP ENTERPRISES

# INTRODUCTION

SHE has been preparing and delivering Leadership Institutes in the Central Valley since 2013, increasing the capacity of rural community leaders to ensure their communities have safe and reliable water sources.

LI graduates are *ready* to more intentionally and effectively engage in regional water management decision making processes.

Water agencies are *required* to conduct “community engagement”.

It’s time to bridge the gap between community voices and their agencies.

Community Engagement Leadership Institute 2024 will provide tools, space, and place for this to take place.





*Learn with and from each other  
Define our common goal  
Achieve it*

## LI GOALS

- Increase community leaders' knowledge about water sources and management in their region
- Increase water management agencies' knowledge and ability to connect with their communities
- Develop working relationships between communities and the agencies who manage their water
- Increase **sustained** community engagement in the water management decision making processes

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LI 2024

	Spring	Summer	Fall
March 16 9:30-3:30	<b><u>Water Leaders Kick Off</u></b> The players, what they do, and why engage		
April 19 9:30-3:30	<b><u>Water 101</u></b> UC Merced Vernal Pools		
May 17 8:00-5:00	<b><u>Spring Watershed Tour</u></b> From the source to the Valley		
June thru August	<b><u>Focus Groups</u></b> Individual communities and agencies engaged		
September TBD 9:30-3:30			<b><u>Working together</u></b> Consensus Building toward a specific project or goal
October TBD 8:00 – 5:00			<b><u>Fall Watershed Tour</u></b> Water use in the Valley
November TBD			<b><u>Wrapping Up/Graduation</u></b> Agency & Community Plan

## Define Community

Neighbors, friends, family

Not always geographic; can be around a specific topic or goal

Common lived experiences

The SJV!!!!

## Define Engagement

Empowered voices in the space created

Putting yourself in others' shoes

Teaching and learning together

Working together for a common cause

## Challenges

Communities:

Language barriers

Uncomfortable "formal" spaces

Lack of technical knowledge

Agencies:

Knowing who to connect with and how

Lack of data to provide real solutions

Getting people to respond/engage

Unrealistic guidelines imposed on available services

# FROM THEIR VOICES.... COMMUNITY AND AGENCY MEMBERS.....

## Potential Solutions

Communities:

Paid part time Community Navigators

Develop community member skills that already exist in the community

Create *informed* advocacy at the community level

Develop *partners* not just recipients of services and grants

Agencies:

Recognize this is something we have to do...and do it

Engage people early in the processes (before actions)

Create safe physical, less formal, spaces

Partner with other agencies

Fund Community Navigators; point persons within communities

# THE PARTICIPANTS



Community  
Members



Agency Staff



NGO Staff



YOU!

# HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

PROMOTING	SIGN UPS	COST & STIPENDS	COMMITMENT	LAUNCH
Flyers, Meetings, Word of mouth, Social Media	Individual community members and agency members register on SHE website.	No cost to participants. Funded by various Federal and Foundational funders. Community members can receive a Stipend.	Participants are expected to commit to ensure best relationship building, capacity building, and results.	Apply on SHE's website: <a href="https://bit.ly/SHELeadershipInstitute">https://bit.ly/SHELeadershipInstitute</a>

# SUMMARY



The majority of San Joaquin Valley residents desire to preserve the Agriculture based way of life we value. Rural community leaders want to engage with those making decisions about life sustaining water.

Community Engagement Leadership Institute 2024 is a first-time opportunity for Community members and Agency members to come into a "safe place and space" to collectively identify common goals and a path to reach those goals.

Recruitment and engagement of the right participants is key.

Both community members and agency members must sacrifice and commit to make this happen. But it will be worth it.



# THANK YOU

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# Reports

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Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced





# GSA Reports

- Updates from each GSA on activities they are undertaking in their own jurisdiction:
  - Merced Subbasin GSA
  - Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
  - Turner Island Water District GSA #1

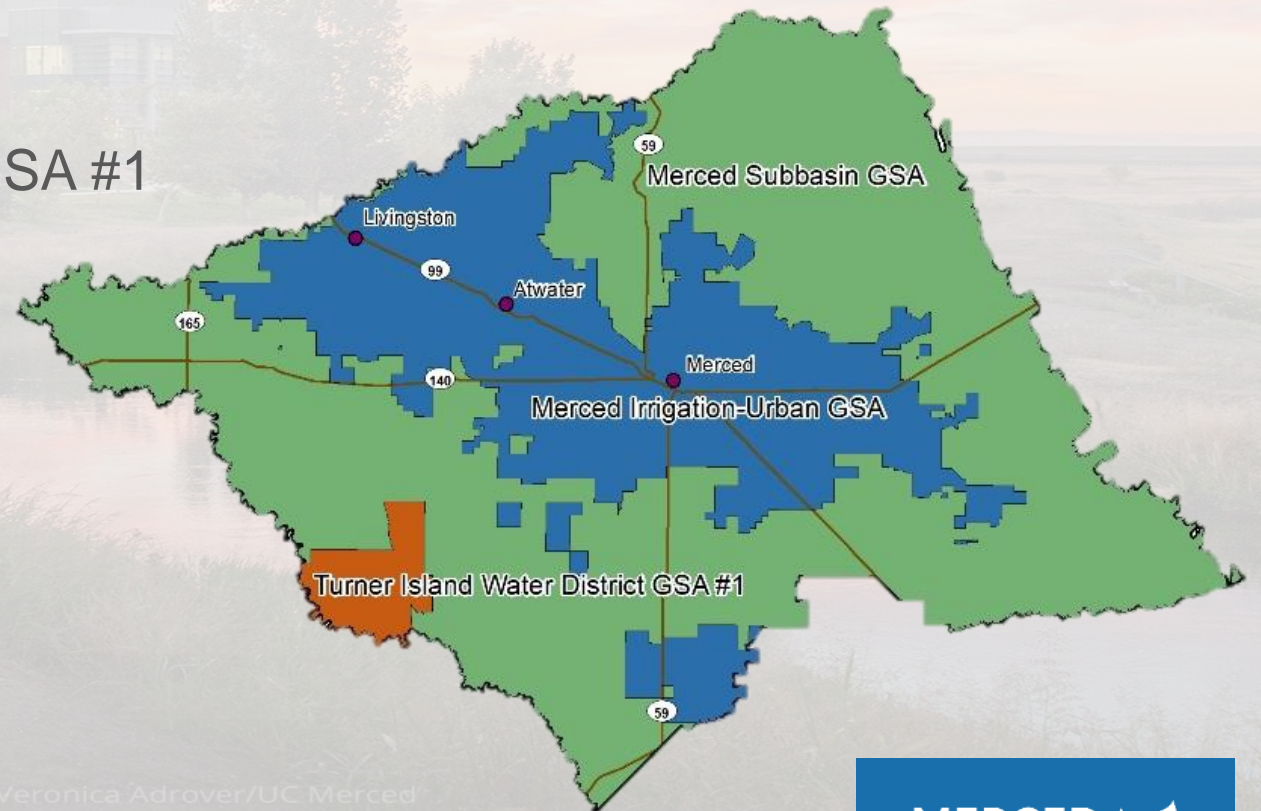


Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Current Conditions Report

See separate slide deck

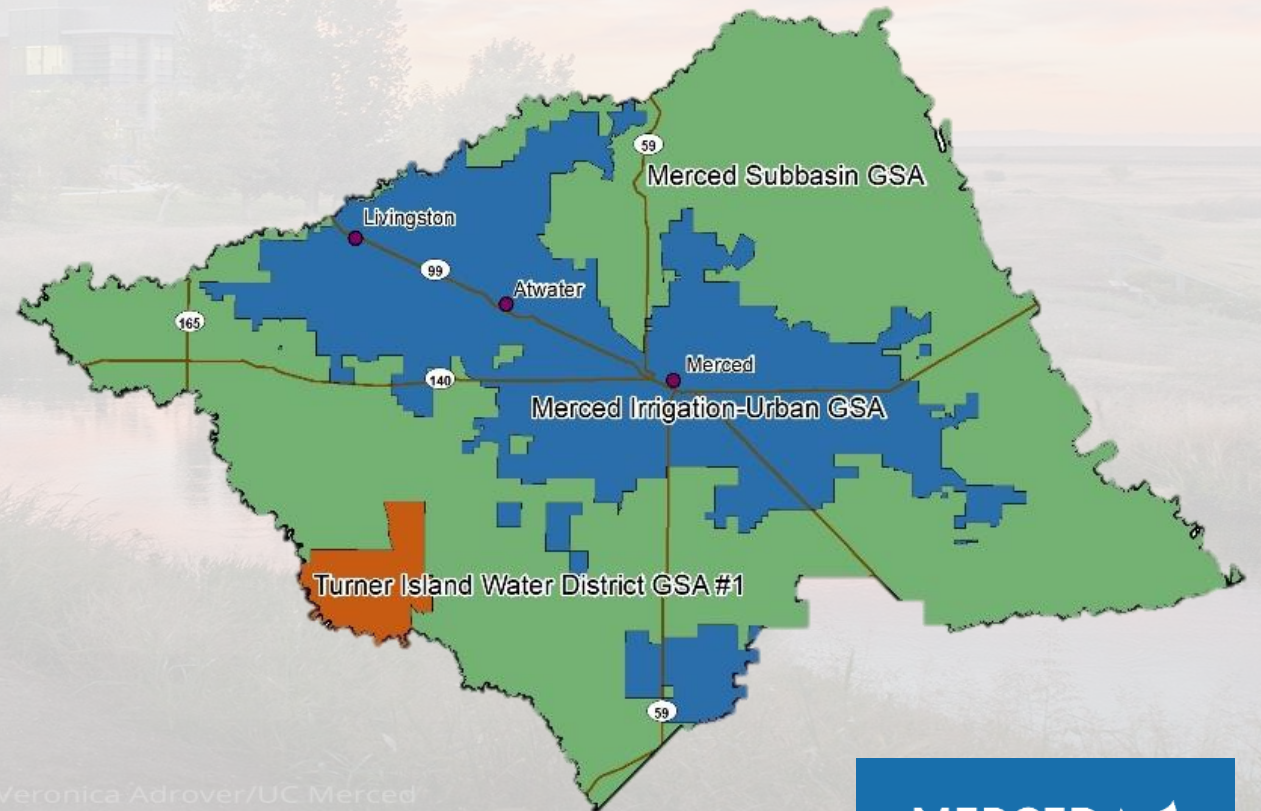


Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

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# Questions and Discussion

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Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced



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## Discussion about 1/23/24 Merced County Board of Supervisors Meeting Considering Amendment to Merced County's Groundwater Ordinance Export Policy

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Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced





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# Consideration of Updates to Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC)

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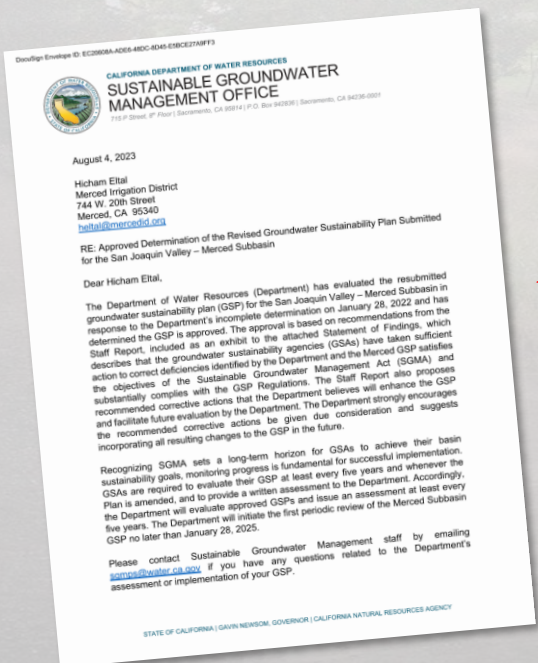
Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Timeline Overview

Recap from 9/18/23



- Initial GSP Development
- DWR Review of Initial GSP
- DWR Released “Incomplete” determination
- GSPs had 180 days to address deficiencies
- Public Comment and DWR review of revised GSP
- DWR announces Approval (Mar) and prepares and releases detailed letter (Aug)
- GSP Periodic Evaluation and Update development



## Recommended Corrective Actions

- Actions DWR “believes will enhance the GSP and facilitate future evaluation” by DWR.
- “Strongly encourages [that they] be given due consideration and suggests incorporating all resulting changes to the GSP in the future.”



# Summary of Recommended Corrective Actions

Recap from 9/18/23

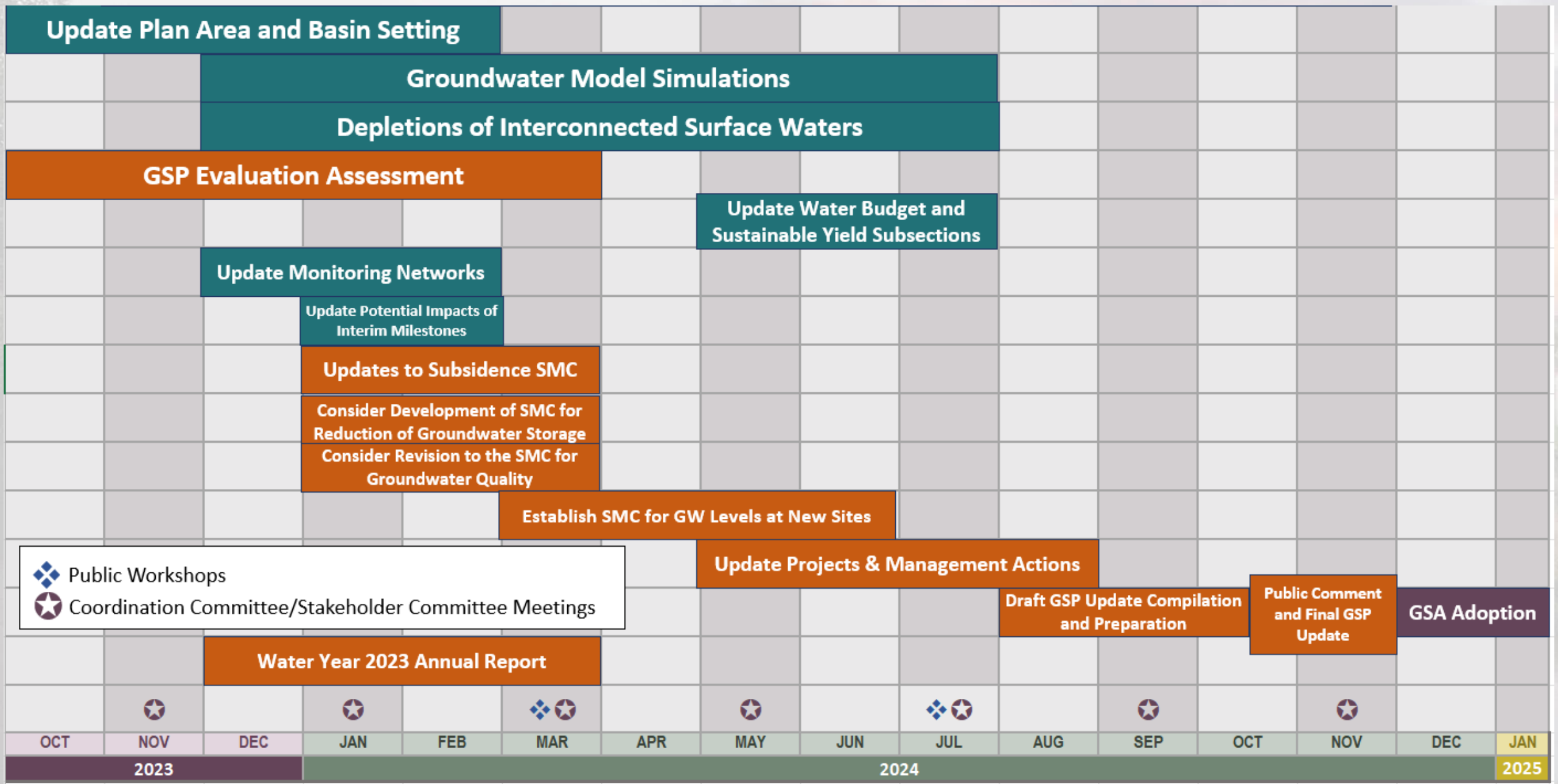
*Discussed today*

1. Implement Domestic Well Mitigation Program and evaluate water quality impacts from continued overdraft
2. Evaluate potential domestic wells impacts from continued overdraft
3. Identify total cumulative subsidence tolerable by critical infrastructure; revise definition of level of uncertainty
4. Investigate wells pumping from below the bottom of the basin
5. Establish SMC for groundwater storage
6. Explain/justify selection of SMC for WQ
7. Work towards SMC for interconnected surface waters
8. Fill data gaps for groundwater levels monitoring network
9. Explain how the timing and benefits of PMAs will reach sustainability by 2040

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

SMC = Sustainable Management Criteria  
PMA = Projects & Management Actions

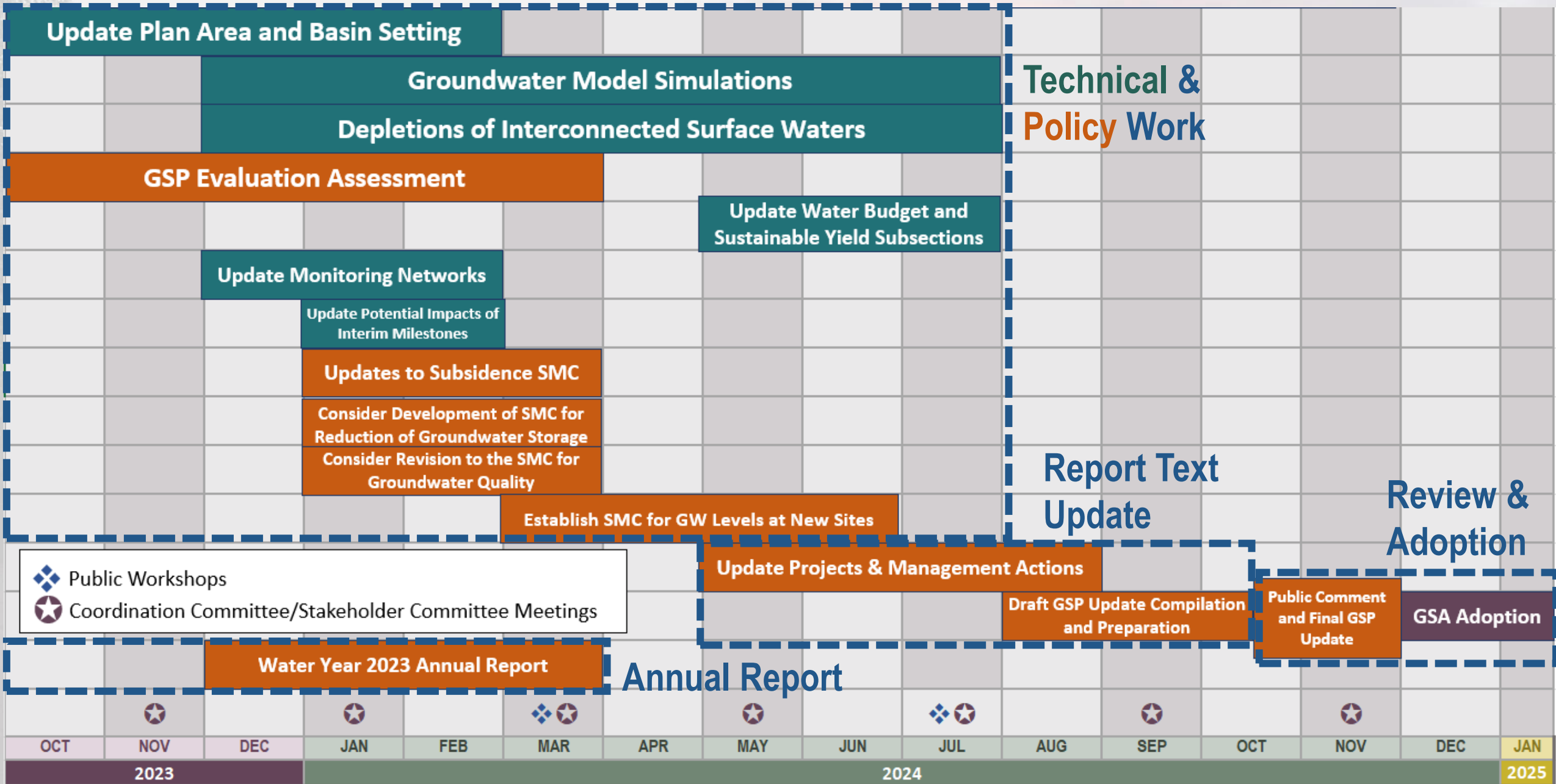
# Schedule Overview



◆ Public Workshops  
 ★ Coordination Committee/Stakeholder Committee Meetings



# Schedule Overview



Technical & Policy Work

Report Text Update

Review & Adoption

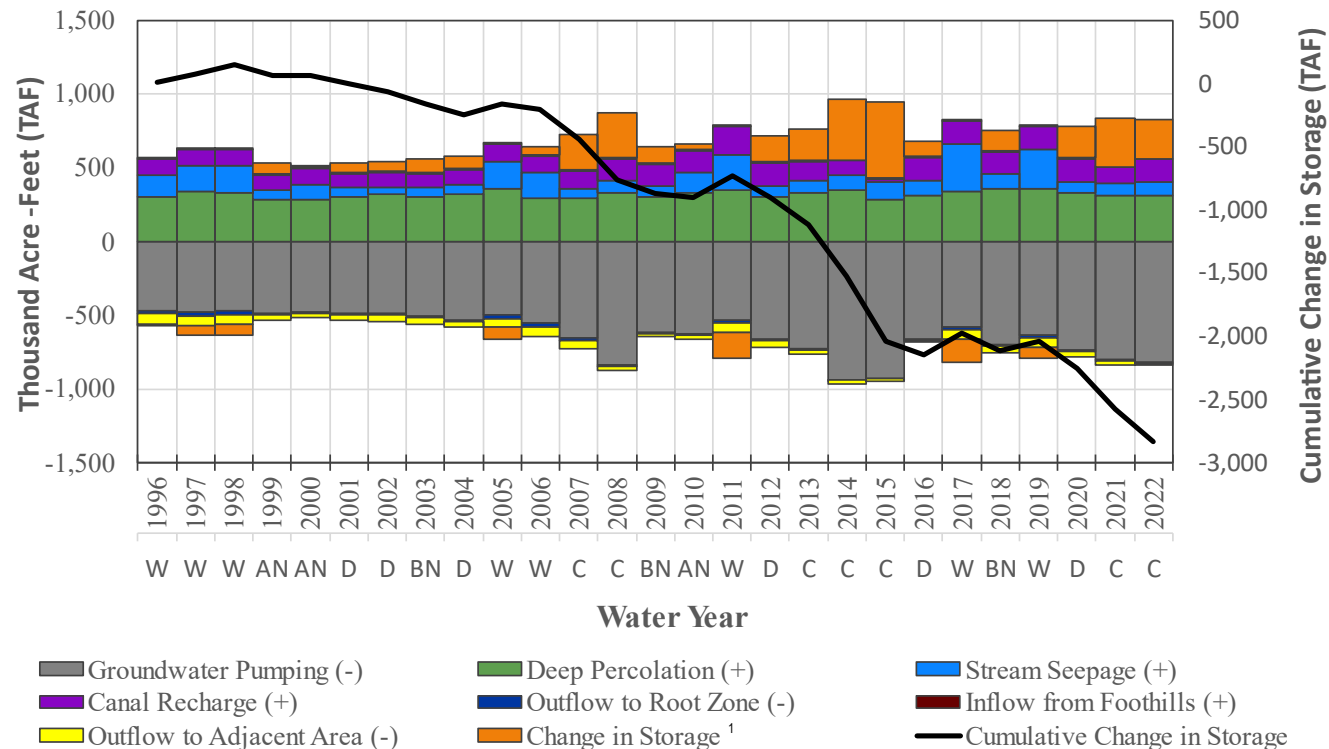
Annual Report

- Public Workshops
- Coordination Committee/Stakeholder Committee Meetings

OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
2023			2024												2025

# Reduction of Groundwater Storage

- GSP does not include sustainable management criteria for groundwater storage
- DWR recommended corrective action #5 requests establishing SMC
- Per DWR: Reduction of groundwater storage is applicable to the basin because:
  - Groundwater levels are anticipated to decline below historical lows prior to achieving sustainability by 2040
  - Basin has demonstrated an increased overdraft rate of 0.3% per year, indicating a reduction of groundwater storage



Merced GSP WY 2022 Annual Report  
Cumulative Change in Storage Graph

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# Reduction of Groundwater Storage – nearby basins

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- Neighboring basins (Turlock, Delta-Mendota, Chowchilla) have each established SMC for reduction of groundwater storage
- Each neighboring basin uses groundwater levels as a proxy and their SMC for groundwater storage are equivalent to those established for groundwater levels
- While the Delta-Mendota and Chowchilla GSPs were determined inadequate, the Department did not have any recommended actions for the basins' approach to using groundwater levels as a proxy for groundwater storage

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Considerations for Establishing Sustainable Management Criteria for the Reduction of Groundwater Storage

- Establish SMC for reduction of groundwater storage using:
  - a) Groundwater levels as a proxy (most common method used in GSPs)
  - or*
  - b) A set storage volume or annual storage volume change (least common method in GSPs)
  - or*
- Maintain current approach that storage is not a relevant indicator

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

SAC input:  
What do you think of the approach options?

# Degraded Water Quality

- Existing GSP includes SMC for only salinity (measured as total dissolved solids, TDS)
- GSP discusses other potential constituents of concern (COC) such as arsenic, iron, uranium, and manganese
  - Criteria not established because there is no distinct nexus between GSA management activities impacting/exacerbating these COCs
- DWR recommended additional justification and explanation be provided on:
  - How the other COCs will be managed and monitored as the GSP is implemented
  - If establishing sustainable management criteria for these COCs is warranted in the future

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Degraded Water Quality – nearby basins

- Neighboring basins (Turlock, Chowchilla, Delta-Mendota) and similar basins (Eastern San Joaquin) have identified similar COCs in their GSPs
- Minimum thresholds developed for:

Turlock	Chowchilla
Nitrate, TDS, arsenic at California maximum contaminant levels (MCLs)	MCLs at locations where exceedances above the MCL were not observed  [Current Concentration] * 120% in the event existing or historical concentrations already exceeded the MCL  For example: 540 mg/L (historical exceedance) + 108 (20%) = 648 mg/L (minimum threshold)

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Degraded Water Quality – nearby basins

- Eastern San Joaquin and Delta-Mendota are similar to Merced: TDS is only COC (Minimum thresholds equal to the secondary maximum contaminant level [SMCL])
- Eastern San Joaquin: SMC based on stakeholder concerns for drinking water and crop tolerances.
- Eastern San Joaquin, like Merced, does not have criteria for arsenic or nitrate. The GSAs plan to monitor these COCs to determine if criteria are needed in the future.

Crop Type	Salinity Tolerance (mg/L TDS)
Fruit & Nut Trees - Almonds	900
Fruit & Nut Trees - Apples	1,000
Vineyards - Grapes	1,100
Alfalfa	1,400
Grain - Wheat	4,000
Field Crops - Corn	1,100
Truck Crops - Tomatoes	1,500
Rice	1,700

*Eastern San Joaquin GSP  
Salinity Tolerances of Major Subbasin Crops*

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

# Considerations for Revising Degraded Water Quality Sustainable Management Criteria

- Already planned:
  - Continued monitoring of COCs which do not have established SMC in conjunction with local monitoring programs
- Potential new considerations:
  - Near-term task: graph groundwater elevation and COC concentrations to identify and evaluate trends that may exist
  - If no correlation observed: update GSP with this additional analysis
  - If correlation observed, return to Committees to discuss potential establishment of SMC or other follow-up actions needed

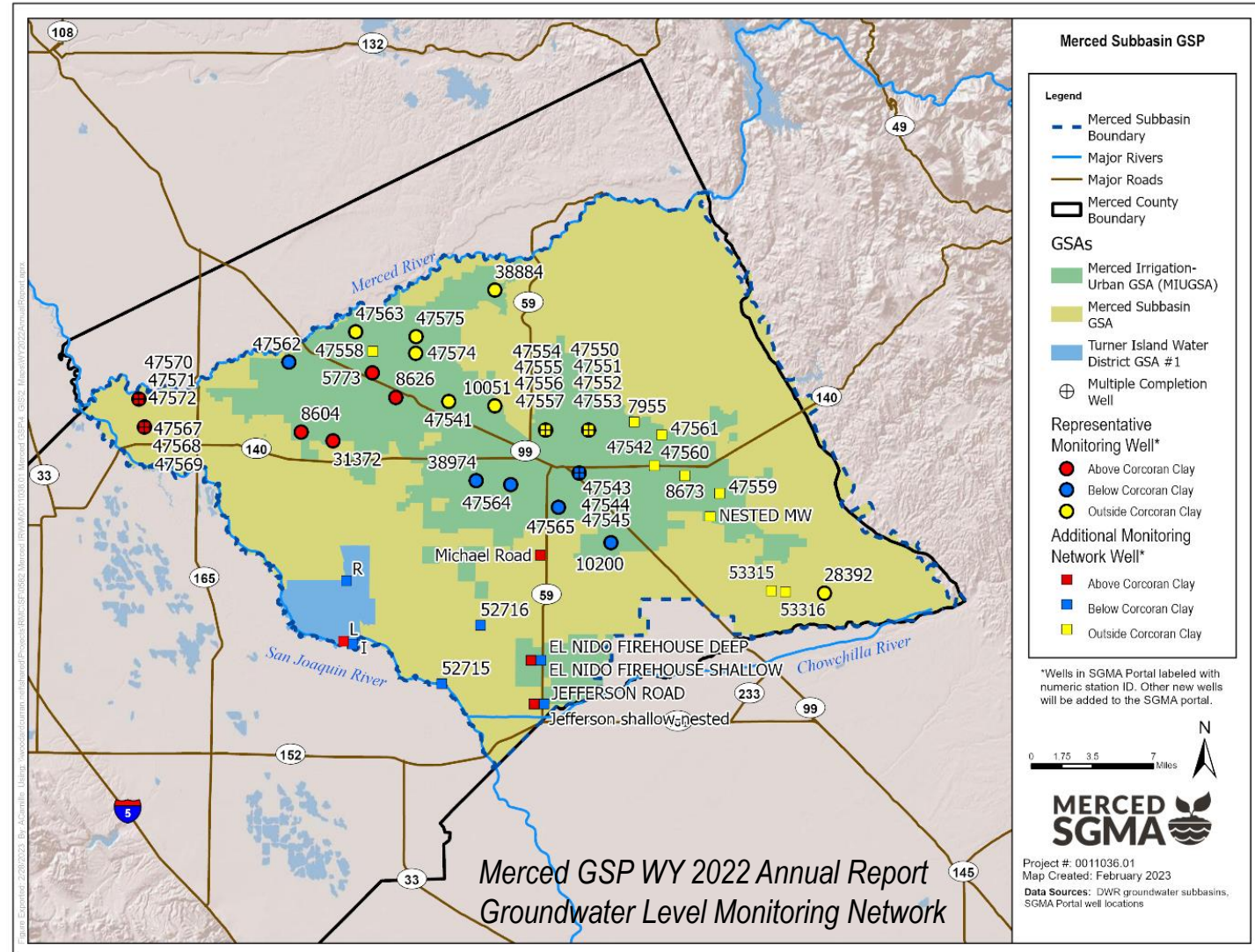
Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

SAC input:  
What water quality concerns do you have and should they be included in the GSP?  
What do you think of the planned and potential approaches?




# Expanding the Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels Representative Monitoring Network

- GSAs have made progress in filling data gaps in the monitoring network
- Efforts continue at additional sites
- Next step – turn new monitoring wells into representative monitoring wells



# Expanding the Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels Representative Monitoring Network

Sustainability Indicator	Minimum Threshold (MT)	Interim Milestone (IM)	Measurable Objective (MO)	Undesirable Result
 Groundwater Levels	Fall 2015 groundwater elevation	Based on range of projected values that account for hydrologic uncertainty	November or October 2011 groundwater elevation (measured, or estimation if historical record not available)	Greater than 25% of representative wells fall below MT in 2 consecutive years

- New wells don't have historical data from 2011 or 2015 to set MOs/MTs
- Some new wells aren't located near existing wells with a longer monitoring history
- Propose to evaluate use of linear regression to set MTs and MOs at these sites
- Will return to Committees with draft results



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# Next Steps

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Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced



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# What's coming up next?

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- Adjourn to next meeting, proposed March 20, 2024 at 10am
- Anticipated topics:
  - Subsidence sustainable management criteria
  - Annual Report summary
- Public Workshop being planned for late March or early April

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

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# Merced GSP Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting

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January 24, 2024

**Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA**  
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**Turner Island Water District GSA-1**

Image courtesy: Veronica Adrover/UC Merced

