

MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordination & Stakeholder Advisory Committees Joint Meeting

DATE/TIME: November 3, 2025, 10 AM to 12 PM

LOCATION: Hybrid meeting with physical location at Merced County Farm Bureau conference room, 646 State Hwy 59, Merced, CA 95341 and online via Zoom

Coordination Committee Members in Attendance:

	Representative	GSA
☒	Bryan Kelly	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☐	Scott McBride	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Justin Vinson	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☐	Frank Verduzco	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Ken Elwin (alternate)	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
☒	Bob Kelley	Merced Subbasin GSA
☐	Gino Pedretti (alternate)	Merced Subbasin GSA
☒	Mike Gallo (online only)	Merced Subbasin GSA
☐	Nic Marchini	Merced Subbasin GSA
☐	George Park (alternate)	Merced Subbasin GSA
☒	Chase Hurley	Turner Island Water District GSA #1
☐	Justin Darnell (alternate)	Turner Island Water District GSA #1

Stakeholder Committee Members in Attendance:

	Representative	Community Aspect Representation
☒	Alvaro Arias	UC Merced
☒	Arlan Thomas	MIDAC member
☐	Bill Eisenstein	River Partners
☐	Breanne Vandenberg	MCFB
☐	Caitie Diemel	ESJWQC
☐	Craig Arnold	Arnold Farms
☐	Daniel Melendrez	City of Merced
☐	Danielle Serrano	Serrano Farms - Le Grand
☐	David Belt	Foster Farms
☒	Eddie Rojas	E&J Gallo Winery
☒	Emma Reyes	Martin Reyes Farm/Land Leveling
☒	Jean Okuye	E Merced RCD
☐	Joe Sansoni	Sansoni Farms/MCFB
☐	Joe Scoto	Scoto Brothers/McSwain School Dist.
☒	Scott Menefee	Clayton Water District
☒	Lisa Kayser-Grant	Sierra Club
☐	Maxwell Norton	Unincorporated area

☐	Nav Athwal	TriNut Farms
☐	Simon Vander Woude	Sandy Mush MWC
☐	Susan Walsh	City of Merced
☐	Thomas Dinwoodie	Master Gardener/McSwain
☒	Trevor Hutton	Valley Land Alliance
☐	Wes Myers	Merced Grassland Coalition
☐	Zachary Hamman	Cal Am Water
☐	Phillip Woods (alternate)	UC Merced
☐	Ben Migliazzo (alternate)	Live Oak Farms
☐	Blake Nervino (alternate)	Stevinson/Merquin
☐	Bill Spriggs (alternate)	Resident City of Merced
☐	Lou Myers (alternate)	Benjamin Land LP

Meeting Notes

1. Call to Order and Welcome

- a. Charles Gardiner (Catalyst) called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

2. Roll Call

- a. Coordination Committee members in attendance are shown in the table above.
- b. Stakeholder Advisory Committee members in attendance are shown in the table above.

3. Approval of Coordination Committee Meeting Minutes

- a. Quorum not available to approve minutes; tabled for future meeting.
- b. No comments received on minutes.

4. Public Comment

- a. None received.

5. Reports

- a. GSA Reports
 - i. Merced Subbasin GSA (MSGSA) – Lacey McBride provided several updates:
 1. MSGSA is preparing for the start of the allocation program in 2026 (based on policy/rules adopted Oct 2024). Deadline to opt in non-irrigation acres to share the allocation with continuous irrigated acres has passed (Oct 2025), but ability to opt in non-irrigated acres on same parcel is still open.
 2. MSGSA will recognize alternative sources of water and recharge, according to policy. There is now a form online that must be submitted ahead of time.
 3. Groundwater allocation rule recognizes actions growers took in anticipation of an allocation that would be in place (between Jan 2020 and prior to Jan 2026), such as use of alternate source of water for direct use or recharge (would receive a credit). This also has a form due 12/15/2025.
 4. Well consistency determination – formerly rule 1 allowed a cap at average historic use. Going forward, wells are considered consistent as long as they follow the allocation rule. This is a change that will be considered at the Nov 2025 GSA meeting.

5. Stay tuned for customizations MSGSA is making to the groundwater accounting platform (e.g. alternate source water use reporting online). Also ability to identify inactive parcels.
 6. Q: How is this information being shared out? A: MSGSA has an eblast list they're using to communicate these details to growers and interested parties. Each member agency of the GSA has been doing outreach to their own growers as well.
- ii. Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA (MIUGSA) - Matt Beaman provided these updates:
 1. MIUGSA distributed account statements in late September.
 2. MIUGSA-specific stakeholder meeting anticipated for next 1-2 months.
 3. The first allocation period is set to end 12/31/2025; MIUGSA is reviewing policies and how they've fit into the rules & regs of the GSA.
 4. Coordinating with MSGSA on other policies, such as borderlands.
 5. MID growers have a grant opportunity open now where MID will use grant funding to provide a flow meter to grower.
 6. Q: Who is funding the flowmeter grant? A: CA DWR.
 7. Q: What types of meters are being used? What's the cost? A: Two meter options that a well owner can choose: mag meter or mechanical. Well owners pay for installation which can vary depending on the irrigation system (something like \$2K-\$5K).
 - iii. Turner Island Water District GSA-#1 (TIWD GSA-#1): Chase Hurley provided several updates:
 1. TIWD GSA-#1 is working to maximize surface water and minimize deep aquifer pumping. Around 25% of water used will be sourced from surface water this past year.
 2. Two shallow wells have been installed, 90% complete. They won't have a large flow volume, but the GSA is trying to be efficient about using shallow aquifer. Funded through DWR grant.
 3. The GSA is also modernizing the slough system used as a delivery channel to be more efficient about moving surface water through system.
 4. New landowner bought land in area, will change the land use and decrease the volume of water used overall.
 5. The GSA doesn't foresee an allocation being in place next year based on progress made this year, but still working on overall minimization of deep aquifer pumping.
- b. Current Basin Conditions
- i. Matt Beaman (MIUGSA) provided an overview of current basin conditions through hydrographs at monitoring wells.
 1. New telemetry installed at several wells throughout the Subbasin.
 2. Two Winton wells are resulting in anomalous readings that are inconsistent with the rest in the area; looking at the data currently. May have found a nearby well that is a candidate for replacement if needed.
 3. Working to install four dual completion (Above + Below CC principal aquifers) based on DWR funding. Griffith Rd was installed last week; mobilizing another this week; two additional coming soon. These are filling critical data gaps in the GSP. All will have telemetry.
 4. Q: What about getting subsidence readings in these spots? A: The wells are surveyed, but they don't have ongoing monitoring for subsidence at these spots. There aren't a lot, if any, Continuous GPs (CGPS) stations, and no extensometers, in the Subbasin. Relying on San Joaquin River

Restoration Program surveying and InSAR data for subsidence monitoring.

- a. Brad concerned about interpolation that is inevitably happening between SJRRP control points far apart from each other.
5. Q: For Harmon Rd well, surrounding wells in 2024-2025 went up after rain in 2023, but this one seems to have had a consistent downward trend. Why? A: Hard to tell right now, will need to look at next few months to see how it recovers.
6. Q: Are most wells deep or shallow in the Stevinson and north Merced Subbasin area? A: This region is where you see the Corcoran usually shallow and thinning out, so the below Corcoran wells tend to be shallower as well.
7. Q: In the presentation map, are these all dedicated monitoring wells? A: It's a mix. Many are irrigation wells, but not all are operating.

6. Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) Update

- a. Reyn Akiona (Valley Eco) provided an overview on MLRP including:
 - i. Purpose and structure of MLRP Program in Merced.
 - ii. Reyn provided a description of several upcoming and recently active implementation projects.
 - iii. New project solicitation open now for project development support:
 1. \$750K available, accepting applications until 1/30/26
 2. \$50K-\$200K per project.
 3. Can include permits, due diligence/studies, design and engineering, other pre-construction activities.
 4. Projects will not be implemented prior to 3/30/2027 but should achieve shovel-ready status by then.
 - iv. Please see more information on the Merced MLRP website: <https://www.mercedmlrp.org/funding-opportunities> or email questions to info@mercedmlrp.org
 - v. Reyn stressed that a lot of technical support is available to help prepare an application.

7. Annual Report Update

- a. Jim Blanke (Woodard & Curran) provided a brief update on DWR's review of the WY 2024 annual report and gave folks a heads up to expect a data request in the next few weeks for WY 2025.

8. Domestic Well Mitigation Program Development Update

- a. Matt Beaman (MIUGSA) reviewed some information provided previously about the ongoing development of the domestic well mitigation program and provided an update on the latest status of development:
 - i. Process anticipated to include an initial intake to conduct impact analysis. If approved, GSAs would provide reimbursement to well owner/applicant seeking mitigation. Owner gets to select their own contractor to do the work and not wait on the GSAs to take action.
 - ii. Eligibility criteria is largely the same as what was presented in August.
 - iii. Mitigation award would be a reimbursement of up to \$30K and approved Long-Term Mitigation Measures. It includes a retroactive component back to 7/19/2022 (approved GSP submission date).
 - iv. Next steps are to:
 1. Finalize policy language/document, including feedback received today.

2. Present to Board of Directors of GSAs, shooting for December. These presentations would have public comment as well.
3. GSAs coordinate implementation of the Mitigation Program; anticipating launch by April 2026.
 - v. Open items to be determined – which agency will implement, long-term funding.
- b. Q: What's the 1st year budget? A: It's one of the things to be coordinated.
- c. Comment (Brad Samuelson): Based on experience in Chowchilla, DWR will probably have a lot to comment on across all aspects of the program. Though, it may be different given that Merced has an approved GSP.
- d. Q: If someone can't front \$30K for implementation, is there an alternate? A: It would be handled via the appeals process.
- e. Comment (Chase Hurley): Chowchilla is implementing their plan. Delta-Mendota is still working on developing, but has more scrutiny due to SWRCB being more involved with that Plan.
- f. Q: Could a draft document be circulated to SAC? A: Yes, it's routing for internal review but will be available for public comment, including SAC, relatively soon.

9. Allocation Program Policies Coordination

- a. Lacey McBride (MSGSA) provided an update that GSAs have committees working on the interbasin coordination of allocation program policy in regard to parcels bordering GSA jurisdictions.

10. Next steps

- a. Jim Blanke (W&C) described some next steps and upcoming documents being developed statewide that the GSAs are planning to review once available.

11. Adjourn

- a. Meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM.

Next Regular Meeting

TBD Feb/Mar 2026

Meeting to be conducted as an in-person meeting with remote option (subject to change)
Information also available online at mercedsgma.org