



MEETING MINUTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Stakeholder Committee Meeting #7

DATE/TIME: November 26, 2018 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arlan Thomas	Merced Irrigation District Advisory Committee (MIDAC), growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Migliazzo	Live Oak Farms, growers
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Olzack	City of Atwater resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	James (Jim) Marshall	City of Merced
<input 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"/>	Maria Herrera	Self-Help Enterprises
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Maxwell	University of California, Merced
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maxwell Norton	Retired agricultural researcher
<input checked="" 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 gave an overview of the meeting agenda.
 - b. There were no changes nor comments to the past meeting minutes.
2. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
 - a. Jeanna Long (Woodard & Curran) presented on the Data Management System (DMS)
 - i. Jeanna Long (Woodard & Curran) provided an introduction to what a DMS is and how this is used. Questions and discussion from the Stakeholder Committee (SC) were as follows:
 1. Question: How long has this system been used or has been in place? Answer (W&C): Since 2010. This has also been used in Sacramento to manage their water resources data. This tool has been customized for the SGMA program and helps enable collection of data from multiple agencies into one place.
 2. Question: Is there a program or effort in place to enable something statewide like this? Answer (W&C): No, not for this data. Comment from committee member: There is, however, statewide data used for emergency management. This may be something the state can pull together based on the information they have.
 3. Jeanna Long (W&C) demonstrated the different filters that can be viewed in the Opti tool, e.g. to zoom in on a well and see the data for that well.
 4. Question: Where is the data from that are currently in the system? Answer (W&C): Much of this is from the previous Integrated Water Resources Management Plan and from SGMA Readiness work for Merced and CASGEM data.
 5. Clarification on well information collected: This information is collected for monitoring and data reporting requirements according to SGMA.
 6. Question: Do we have a way to track where the data came from? Answer (W&C): Data source, importing, and modifications are tracked within the DMS.
 7. Question: How would this help with e.g. if I want to increase fire flows in the City of Atwater? Answer (W&C): it is a matter of scale. Comment from committee member: We did this before and it worked out well as a planning tool.
 8. Comment from Hicham ElTal (MID): Data collected for canals is water quality data.
 9. Jeanna Long (W&C) demonstrated the functionalities of the DMS. Data is still being imported. W&C will send you the link and a user guide for accessing and using the portal once this is complete.
 10. Jeanna (W&C) explained how this will be used for meeting SGMA requirements. It provides participating agencies and entities access to data collected. It enables tracking of thresholds and supports decision making for management actions.
 - b. Next Steps in GSP Development



- i. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) provided an overview of the GSP Development overall timeline and roadmap plan.
 - ii. Several comments were provided on the Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model (HCM). However, the majority of SC committee members needed more time to review. Comments provided included:
 - 1. On page 26 determine if fault line is significant for subsidence.
 - 2. Do the maps on pages 38-39 need units?
 - 3. On page 41 clarify what the depth means.
 - 4. Comment for page 50: We have low recharge potential in the Eastern part of the basin.
 - 5. There did not seem to have much information on land use and who depends on this water. Clarification from W&C given that this section is intended to provide the hydrogeologic basin settings. There are other sections that will address land use and water users.
 - 6. Request made for a clarification on the losing and gaining streams interconnection section. This should be provided either via email or next meeting.
 - 7. Request was made to resent the links to the HCM. These were resent during the meeting to the SC.
 - iii. Alyson Watson (W&C) provided an update on the water budgets and sustainable yields. This update shows the new water budgets that account for the FERC flows. Clarification was given that this is an estimate. The Subbasin will need to reduce pumping by approximately 25% according to the estimates. This is similar to the previous calculations that did not account for updated FERC flows.
- c. Water Allocation Frameworks
- i. Under SGMA, GSAs have authority to establish groundwater extraction allocations. SGMA and GSPs adopted under SGMA cannot alter water rights. Alyson Watson (W&C) gave a brief overview of the different allocation frameworks to allocate the basin's sustainable yield, their pros and cons, and potential implications for gw users in the basin.
 - ii. Question: what about management areas? Answer (W&C): GSAs can determine if management areas are needed.
 - iii. Alyson explained the proposed decision-making timeline. Potential allocation approaches and values to consider are discussed in November. This would continued in December, with a goal of recommending a preliminary allocation approach to the GSA Boards. In January, projects and management actions will be further discussed by the SC and CC.
 - iv. Question: Where are the undesirable results? And are these clearly defined? Answer (W&C): This is an iterative approach. These were discussed previously but have not been finalized or formalized. These were discussed by sustainability indicator in prior meetings, and they will need to be revisited, finalized, and written up in tandem with consideration of what allocation approaches and projects and management actions are available.



- v. Pro Rata Approach: This divides sustainable yield by total basin acreage. Advantages are that this is simple and that it acknowledges existing pumping. Disadvantages include not explicitly accounting for appropriators/prescriptive rights and does not account for unexercised groundwater rights.
- vi. Pro Rata Irrigated Areas Approach: Divides the sustainable yield by irrigated and urban areas. It is simple and acknowledges existing pumping. However, it does not account for unexercised groundwater rights nor account for appropriators/prescriptive rights.
- vii. Historical Pumping Approach: This is based on historical use. This is less likely to result in conflict and accounts for appropriators and prescriptive rights. However, it requires more data and if unirrigated acres are excluded this also does not account for unexercised groundwater rights.
 - 1. Comment from CC: we will need to determine our historical reference point.
 - 2. Question: this assumes everyone is metered? Answer (W&C): This would require having a way to measure and could result in extensive metering.
- viii. Comprehensive Approach: The advantages include less likelihood of conflict and an accounting of appropriative use and prescriptive rights. However, this approach requires data not that are currently available, and does not account for unexercised groundwater rights. The approach requires significant outreach and engagement.
- ix. Alyson Watson (W&C) provided key differences. Some approaches do not address prescriptive rights (e.g. pro-rata approach). Some do not consider all acres (pro-rata with irrigated acres, historical or comprehensive based on historical use).
- x. SGMA and GSPs adopted under SGMA cannot alter water rights. The group discussed the types of groundwater rights in the basin – overlying users (correlative) rights, prescriptive rights, and developed/imported supplies.
- xi. Comment: Can look at historical use to find the ratios of what is used by cities vs agriculture.
- xii. Comment: Would be interesting to look into what we can do with a water credit system.
- xiii. Discussion comments on allocation frameworks from SC members:
 - 1. One consideration is to look at the estimates for allocations and see if they will impact cities' abilities to meet public health and safety needs. Water quality is also something that must be considered as some places have a single source.
 - 2. Who can participate in the market and how this affects disadvantaged communities is also important.
 - 3. We need to be aware of what happened in the Australian water rights credit system – external firms have come in and are driving up the price of water.
 - 4. Question: What about management areas? Answer (W&C): Projects and management actions and undesirable results will be revisited to address whether management areas will be needed. This will occur in February next year.
 - 5. If groundwater is not being banked, it should be possible to store this water and be able to use it later. If we can only use 500,000 TAF a year, can we bank it? I



would be best to save groundwater until it is absolutely needed. If someone doesn't want to credit it, they should be able to bank it. Should not be a use it or lose it.

6. Comment from Hicham EITal (MID): We will also be making adjustments as we monitor. We can implement an allocations framework and then find later on that this needs to be adjusted.
7. If crop allocation or historical allocation is used, an equitable amount should be determined (e.g. how many acre feet does it take to grow almonds). However, this is not cut and dry, and depends on soil type and water quality.
8. When looking at historical use, the subbasin should avoid rewarding inefficient use.
9. Having numbers with allocation scenarios will help us to know which allocation frameworks are best.

d. Projects and Management Actions (Discussion)

- i. Projects and Management Actions were discussed with a series of questions. The following are the general responses from the SC. Many of which were relevant for several questions:
 1. Idea suggested of why not spend the first 5 years on enhancing supply (all supply) and then look at allocation frameworks?
 2. Use of purple/recycled water can be increased.
 3. There is funding from the United States Bureau of Recreation for recycled water projects that could be pursued.
 4. General agreement that the supply side should be targeted more than demand.
 5. However, demand must be reduced because the subbasin is in overdraft. Projects take a long time to achieve, and there are many variables and high uncertainty (e.g. climate change). There are still families relying on tanked water right now.
 6. Improving water treatment especially in areas that do not have adequate clean water sources is an important consideration.
 7. Quantifiable goals should be set. For example, "the subbasin will increase groundwater recharge by X% in the next 5 years".
 8. Clarification on projects and criteria for assessment: It will be necessary to identify funding sources and pathways. The process started with a wide net for a range of projects. At a certain point, we will need to compare projects.

e. Other Updates

- i. Monitoring Networks and the DMS sections of the GSP are underway.

3. Public Outreach Update

- a. There are two upcoming Public Workshops: Dec. 4th in Planada, and Dec. 13th in Franklin.

4. Interbasin Coordination Update



- a. Chowchilla and Delta-Mendota Subbasins will be ready early next year to continue coordination.
5. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
 - a. Public comment given by Jeff Denham in printed form. This input will be scanned and sent out to the group.
 - b. Question asked: Is there excess surface water available in a regular rain year or when we have extra rain? Answer from Hicham ElTal (MID): This depends on a number of factors, including inflows from streams that have to be taken into account.
6. Next Steps and Next Meeting

Next Regular Meeting
December 17, 2018 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.