



MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordinating Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: February 25, 2019 at 1:30 PM

LOCATION: Castle Conference Center at Castle Airport, 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA 95301

Coordinating Committee Members In Attendance:

	Representative	GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephanie Dietz	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Justin Vinson	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Chavez	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ken Elwin (alternate)*	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bob Kelley	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nic Marchini	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rodrigo Espinoza	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Park (alternate)	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Larry Harris	Turner Island Water District GSA #1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scott Skinner (alternate)	Turner Island Water District GSA #1

Meeting Notes

1. Call to order
 - a. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) called the meeting to order.
2. Approval of minutes for January 28, 2019 meeting
 - a. Meeting minutes approved with no changes.
3. Stakeholder Committee update
 - a. Alyson Watson (W&C) provided an update from the February 25 morning meeting. The SC reviewed feedback received from the GSA discussions of allocation frameworks. The SC discussed priorities for projects and management actions to send to the CC. These will be summarized for next meeting for discussion.
4. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
 - a. Alyson reviewed the decision-making timeline and explained that the CC will be trying to reach an agreement on a framework recommendation to provide to the GSA boards.
 - b. Question: Will the plan include the terms required to demonstrate the allocations are being demonstrated/adhered to? Answer: This is up to the GSAs. What would be in the plan is the framework including: the sustainable yield, how this is allocated to the GSAs, and what should be refined and considered in more detail.



- c. Clarification: It is anticipated that plan will need to have a process for determining how to handle classification for duck clubs, refuge lands, etc.
- d. Comment: It will be important that we have some clarity and a clear expectation of exactly what these allocations are and how they are estimated. Response (W&C): There will need to be a process for verification, especially for seepage.
- e. Comment: The plan should include an expectation of how to quantify allocation based on existing water rights.
- f. Alyson Watson (W&C) explained the Merced Subbasin Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requires the CC have unanimous decision on a recommendation to the GSA Boards.
- g. Alyson (W&C) provided a brief explanation on state intervention and what this mean in terms of potential fees. *De minimus* users (pumpers using 2AF/Y or less for domestic purposes) are subject to SGMA but not required to be metered.
- h. Alyson reviewed the conceptual GSP implementation timeline. Within the first 5 years the GSAs may want to focus on metering and monitoring and implementing projects that already have funding. Outreach is another key component. By 2040 have planned projects online and allocation framework in place.
 - i. Comment: The conceptual timeline should include a bullet for triggers for exceeding minimum thresholds up through 2025.
- i. Water Allocation Frameworks
 - i. Alyson (W&C) reviewed the framework steps 1-4 which include: 1) determining the sustainable yield, 2) estimating developed supply, 3) determine allocation of sustainable yield to appropriators and overlying users, 4) use as basis for allocations to GSA.
 - ii. Alyson (W&C) summarized the comments from both the previous SC discussions on the allocation framework and from the GSA review meetings. SC points were:
 - 1. Important to consider drought years in historical baseline period.
 - 2. Having a 10-year period seems to make sense.
 - 3. In general, not in favor of 100% allocation unirrigated lands. Somewhere between 25-50% is a good starting point. Need direction on how this can be used and sold.
 - 4. Need mechanism to later include these lands if start at a 0% allocation.
 - 5. Metering is important but should also keep in mind *de minimus* users are not required to be metered under SGMA.
 - iii. Alyson summarized feedback from individual GSA review meetings:
 - 1. Metering should be a priority in first 5 years.
 - 2. General consensus to review allocation annually, and review seepage potentially every 5 years.
 - 3. Cities are concerned about potential infill in the future. Keeping allocation at a fixed volume will lower the per capita per day. This needs to be reasonable.
 - 4. 2020-2030 should not be free-for-all to pump. People are not going to benefit from pumping more and might consequently end up needing to reduce pumping even more. Need to have clear triggers during this time to ensure we avoid any situations where we are in violation.



5. Need to ensure there is a verification method for seepage estimates.
6. Need to consider how to address rangeland, including partial allocations, and will need to be clear on rules for this in case of a water market. (e.g. who and how to sell/buy water in market).

iv. Summary of CC Water Allocation Framework Discussion:

1. Comment: We will have to be open and listen through this process to maintain the big picture of sustainability. We have a limited supply we are trying to allocate, and the allocation methodology is complex. To understand allocation, we must put this into context of water law. SGMA does not allow GSAs to alter water law, but GSAs can control groundwater by regulating it. Within description of sustainable yield, have seepage estimate off the top of the total sustainable yield. Question: is there a seepage credit for the applied surface water on the lands?
2. Answer from Hicham (MID): MID has gone through this situation with rice lands. The water applied to the lands is lost water in his opinion. This is different than seepage estimates which are decidedly directed as developed water.
3. Comment: This would depend on the crop types.
4. Comment from W&C: W&C can ask Brad Herrema, attorney from Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, and Schreck about this question.
5. Comment from W&C: Accounting for applied water would reduce the 400K AF amount that is considered at the basin scale and is rolled back up to GSA level, but does not mean that it affects the general allocation framework. The question of applied water is something that can be refined later and allow us to still move forward.
6. Question: What about a break down by agencies for the appropriative and prescriptive water use? Answer: The only appropriative users in this group are the cities within MIUGSA.
7. Comment: Suggestion of a 75% allocation for unirrigated lands made by Merced Subbasin GSA (MSGSA).
8. Comment from Hicham (MID): There are no appropriators in MIDAC (MID Advisory Committee). This group is made up of growers. The decision on allocation for unirrigated lands has to consider that there is not an existing financial impact to grazing grounds, but there is a financial impact to those who are pumping now. Hicham will relay the MSGSA suggestion to MIDAC.
9. Comment: We do not know what it will be like in 2040. We do know that MID will be a significant surface water supplier. The lands that are in the MSGSA just have one source. We have the most unexercised (unirrigated) users in our GSA and must to consider them. We are still going to need preserve the ability to produce food.
10. Clarification from Hicham (MID): If we have a GW market, this will be more active in the MSGSA. There will be more financial impact on the growers.
11. Comment: If the subbasin has a water market, need an understanding that there should be no transfers outside the basin.
12. Comment from public: Need to look at permanent crops and how these areas are impacted in wet and dry years.



13. General consensus from CC: The subbasin should have a water market and have 5-year updates.
 14. Question: How is this going to effect individual home owners? Answer: You would likely be a *de minimus* user who extracts 2AF/Y or less. The GSAs could charge a fee depending on how they try to fund the GSP implementation. Over time, the benefit is that the groundwater should stabilize.
- v. Partial allocation for unirrigated lands discussion:
 1. Comment: Need to start somewhere with partial allocation for unirrigated lands.
 2. Comment: Reiterates suggestion for 75% allocation for unirrigated lands.
 3. Hicham EITal (MID) will bring the suggestion back to MIDAC.
 4. Larry Harris (TIWD) will talk to folks at TIWD about the suggestion.
 5. Bob Kelley (MSGSA) to look into how this 75% number could move depending on the response from other GSAs.
 6. Question: have we looked at industrial use (e.g. commodity processing facilities) outside the cities? Answer (W&C): Not yet, but W&C can look into this.
 - vi. Consensus reached for the water allocation framework on the following:
 1. Agreement on overall framework steps.
 2. General support for developing a water market and addressing important considerations that should be included.
 3. Agreement on historical averaging period of 10 years using 2006-2015.
 4. Agreement on review of allocation every 5 years.
 - vii. Comment on applied water: There could be a credit for return flows using example of adjudications which have attributed these flows to the importing agency. If there's a desire for that type of credit, it is possible to develop a process for determining flows.
 - viii. Comment from W&C: This could be added to a list of what needs to be refined and addressed in terms of seepage within GSP. Currently, this data is not available.
 - ix. Comment: People who have grazing land have not contributed to the problem and feel are being punished unfairly.
- j. Next Steps in GSP Development
 - i. Alyson Watson (W&C) reviewed the overall timeline for draft GSP development.
 - ii. Hicham EITal (MID) states that MID has talked internally about using groundwater elevation levels as a proxy for other indicators with DWR. They could set up a meeting within the next couple of months and talk about the overall methodology in how we are building our GSP.
 - k. Other Updates
 - i. Reminder that the beta test link is available for the Merced GSP data management system.
5. Public Outreach update
 - a. The public workshop is scheduled to take place this evening in Livingston.
 6. Coordination with neighboring basins



- a. Continuing communication with Turlock. More coordination in the next couple of months.
- 7. Long Term SWRCB Permits for Flood Water
 - a. The Long Term Permits presentation is tabled to next month. Alyson confirmed with CC members that the meeting will extend to 4pm for March 25th.
- 8. Public comment
 - a. None.
- 9. Next steps and adjourn
 - a. Water Allocation Framework
 - b. Review projects and management actions

**Next Regular Meeting
March 25, 2019 at 1:30 p.m.**

Atwater, CA – Castle Conference Center at Castle Airport (subject to change)
Information also available online at mercedsgma.org

Action may be taken on any item

Note: If you need disability-related modification or accommodation in order 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.