



MEETING MINUTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Stakeholder Committee Meeting #10

DATE/TIME: February 25, 2019 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 type="checkbox"/>	Arlan Thomas	Merced Irrigation District Advisory Committee (MIDAC), growers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Migliazzo	Live Oak Farms, growers
<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brian Carter	D&S Farms, growers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Carol Bonin	Winton M.A.C.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Machado	Machado Backhoe Inc., construction industry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Darren Olguin	McSwain MAC
<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	Greg Olzack	City of Atwater resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	James (Jim) Marshall	City of Merced
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joe Scoto	Scoto Bros Farms / McSwain Union School District
<input checked="" 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
	*Jean Okuye attended as alternate for Ladi Asgill	



Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review
 - a. Charles Gardiner (Catalyst) welcomed the group and went over ground rules.
2. Presentation by Woodard & Curran on GSP development
 - a. Alyson Watson (Woodard & Curran) communicated goal of SC meeting is to provide input to the CC on the draft list of projects for the first iteration of the 2020 GSP.
 - b. Alyson Watson (W&C) briefly described the state intervention that would be triggered if there is no adopted GSP by the deadline. Several questions were asked as follows:
 - i. Question: Will our GSP have a *de minimus* fee? Answer (W&C): This will need to be determined by the GSAs.
 - ii. Question: What happens if we have something adopted and then 5 or 10 years down the road, we are not compliant? Answer (W&C): W&C will follow up on confirming specifics for this process.
 - iii. Clarification on *de minimus* users (W&C): These users who extract 2 AF or less per year for domestic purposes are subject to SGMA but cannot be required to meter. These are generally private users.
 - c. Water Allocation Framework
 - i. Alyson Watson (W&C) briefly reviewed the water allocation framework under consideration by the CC and explained that it is a framework to allocate the sustainable yield of the basin to each of the GSAs. The GSAs have discretion to determine how they allocate to their users.
 - ii. Alyson (W&C) provided a summary of feedback from the GSAs. Main points included: making metering a priority in the first 5 years, recommendation for a 10-year historical baseline, consider population growth and infill for cities, and establishing thresholds during period 2020-2030 to prevent over pumping.
 - iii. Clarification given (W&C) that GSAs will have the ability to enforce allocations through fees.
 - iv. Clarification given (W&C) that the water allocation framework will not go into effect immediately once the GSP is approved. There is a lead time including an outreach period to help ensure users are categorized correctly.
 - v. Comment from SC member: Member disagreed with not metering residential acres. Stated this would be good for planning.
 - vi. Clarification given on conceptual timeline for allocation framework: The allocation framework is established first, followed by consideration for projects. The goal is to investigate how both will avoid undesirable results.
 - vii. Question: Will these results be made available to SC? Answer (W&C): Yes, but these are not complete yet.



- viii. Question: Will the team run the project list through the model? Answer (W&C): Not all projects. The point of today is to look at priorities that help narrow the project list.
- ix. Comment: We should consider areas like the ranches in Mcswain that have landscape that can use a lot of water. Specifically consider whether they will be metered.
- x. Comment: A policy for *de minimus* users should be developed. Other basins have done this based on an analysis of what these users are extracting and on knowledge of the region.
- xi. Input from W&C: Yes, and there will also need to be a mechanism for people to have an opportunity to contest this policy.
- xii. Comment: The City of Merced is 100% metered. Residential usage is generally half an AFY. Agricultural use is significantly higher than urban use on a per acre basis.
- xiii. Question: Are high density houses included in this estimate for City of Merced? Answer (commentator): Yes, and these use even less AFY.
- xiv. Question: What is meant by determining partial allocations for rangeland? Answer (W&C): GSAs have to decide how to determine what this allocation should be and consider assumptions of what to do in the case of water market. For example, what must be considered in trying to prevent outside investment.

d. Projects and Management Actions

- i. Alyson reviewed the conceptual implementation timeline with respect to projects. Outreach will be important throughout this process. Updates will be every 5 years.
- ii. Comment: The allocation program should be phased in during the 2025-2030 time period.
- iii. Comment: SC should and is ready to start groundwater recharge projects. Projects should be started as soon as possible. Everyone in the basin needs to contribute in some way. Cities can set up their projects individually. This has been explored for a long time – need temporary use of working farmland. Details will have to be worked out by the governing bodies once we get that point.
- iv. Comment: Need to be working on securing grant funding to implement projects as soon as possible because this will take time.
- v. Comment: Projects for demand management will be painful. Should focus on recharge and supply projects first.
- vi. Alyson Watson (W&C) briefly explained the number of projects by GSA and their allocation.
- vii. The group discussed the permitting constraints around storing riparian water and flood flows. MID has proposed applying for a single Long Term Permit for Flood flows from the SWRCB. MBK will be providing a presentation to the CC next month on this topic.
- viii. Alyson Watson (W&C) asked the SC several questions including: What projects, programs, or actions do you see as the highest priority for the basin? What further questions or concerns do you have in considering projects? Which projects should be in a short list vs. a general running list of potential projects? Are there additional projects that can help the GSP address groundwater quality issues? Input from the SC discussion on projects & management actions is summarized as follows:



1. Projects that already have funding should be prioritized.
2. It is important to understand what permits or regulatory requirements are applicable for each project.
3. Projects that result in direct GW recharge should be prioritized.
4. Go BIG project would address basin issues.
5. Projects should help address areas where there is the greatest need.
6. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a USDA funding program that can be used to for meters. This is a very good program.
7. The subbasin should also consider water quality projects from the SWRCB.
8. GSAs will also have responsibility to ensure continued pumping and access for areas needing water. This should be tied to minimum thresholds and avoiding undesirable results. Creating a fund for mitigation will be important to address needs arising between now and next 10 years. The sooner revenue is collected for that the better the state of the subbasin.
9. There are water treatment facilities, e.g. ponds in the Franklin-Beechwood area, that are antiquated and need to be addressed.
10. Addressing water quality is a part of any recharge program.
11. Comment from Hicham (MID): Have to consider with in lieu recharge, you are saving groundwater so that you can pump it when you need it. States he is not in favor of recycled water recharge because there are risks in introducing pathogens or poor water quality. It is better to keep groundwater where it needs to be. We can look at conveyance facilities that have an issue moving the water currently. This has the best cost/benefit ratio.
12. The subbasin will need to address the subsidence issue because this is part of why we were identified as a critically overdrafted basin.
13. Comment from Hicham (MID): MID is doing a study now with the El Nido Canal improvement project. The intent is to move water to subsidence areas and assist monitoring.
14. The subbasin should have near-term actions when it comes to projects.
15. Groundwater recharge, whether in lieu or direct, is important. Understanding permitting and regulatory permitting process is critical. Everyone should participate in finding a solution, including e.g. school districts.
16. Suggestion to limit outdoor watering to two days as general policy.
17. If the governor declares a drought emergency, then a 2 days policy is enforced. Per current ordinance, existing policy is 3 days for City of Merced.



18. Everyone should contribute. However, the way in which they contribute (e.g. pay) also depends on the user (e.g. ability to pay). Some people are going to benefit more than others.
 19. General consensus from SC group: If you are a groundwater user then you will have to pay or contribute somehow to the solution for the subbasin.
 20. Priority should go to those projects which are in planning and funding stages.
 21. The Go Big Super-Connect project would cover the most area with the most recharge potential.
 22. Comment from Charles Gardiner (Catalyst): The subbasin could look at conveyance projects that are not as large and are near-term.
 23. Comment from Hicham (MID): MID's Main Canal has been under the purview of Army Corps Engineers for flood control. MID could move water outside of MID starting March onward, but no one wants it then (e.g. could move 2,000 cfs from Bear Creek). Automation and capacity would be the first things to target. These could be one of the projects. We know what is in MID and where we could recharge, but outside MID we need to work with folks in the basin and see how we can move that water.
 24. Question: Could the SC suggest to the GSAs that constant drought conditions regulations be put in place? (e.g. in restaurants water given when requested)
Answer (W&C): Municipalities have the authority to enforce conservation, but the GSAs could work with the cities to encourage this. GSAs could apply for funding for the cities to implement a conservation program.
 25. Question: Are there areas within our basin we know have the greatest need – is there a way to determine where these areas are? Answer: There are areas where undesirable results have occurred in the past. The area serviced by the Trucked Water Program is an example.
 26. Comment: The areas with potentially greatest need are located along the eastern side of the subbasin.
 27. Comment from Hicham (MID): There may be \$5-10M in funds for implementing projects. This is a rough estimate.
- e. Next Steps in GSP Development
 - i. Alyson Watson (W&C) reviewed the timeline for draft GSP development.
 - f. Other Updates
 - i. Beta test link is available for the Merced GSP data management system.
3. Public Outreach Update
 - a. The next public workshop takes place in Livingston this evening.
 4. Interbasin Coordination Update



- a. None. Interbasin coordination is expected to pick up in the next couple of months.
- 5. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
 - a. None.
- 6. Next Steps and Next Meeting
 - a. Projects and Management Actions review
 - b. Minimum Thresholds and Measurable Objectives

Next Regular Meeting
March 25, 2019 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.