



## MEETING NOTES – Merced GSP

SUBJECT: Merced GSP Coordination Committee Meeting

DATE/TIME: February 7, 2022, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

LOCATION: Online – Zoom Meeting

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### Coordination Committee Members in Attendance:

	Representative	GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hicham ElTal	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephanie Dietz	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Justin Vinson	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Chavez	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ken Elwin (alternate)	Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eric Swenson	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mike Gallo By MSGSA Board resolution, Kole Upton is standing in for Mike Gallo for SGM grant-related agenda items.	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nic Marchini	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	George Park (alternate)	Merced Subbasin GSA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kel Mitchel	Turner Island Water District GSA #1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tim Allan (alternate)	Turner Island Water District GSA #1

### Meeting Notes

#### 1. Call to Order and Welcome

- a. Jim Blanke (Woodard & Curran) called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

#### 2. Roll Call

- a. Coordination Committee members in attendance are shown in table above. The Committee reached a quorum.

#### 3. State of Emergency Teleconference Findings

**ACTION (motioned by Eric Swenson (MSGSA), seconded by Mike Gallo (MSGSA), all present voted in favor):** The Coordination Committee considered the circumstances of the State of Emergency and made the following findings per AB 361:

- a. The State of Emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person and/or
- b. State or Local Officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing.

#### 4. Approval of December 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- a. **ACTION (motioned by Kel Mitchel (TIWD-GSA#1), seconded by Mike Gallo (MSGSA), all present voted in favor):** The Coordination Committee approves the December 22, 2021 Coordination Committee meeting minutes.

#### 5. Public Comment

- a. Geoff Vanden Heuvel (via chat): "If a discussion is had about future meetings, as a member of the public, I would respectfully request that a remote option continue to be available."

#### 6. Reports

##### a. GSA Reports

- i. *Merced Subbasin GSA.* Lacey McBride (MSGSA) reported that the MSGSA is working on multi-benefit land repurposing initiatives. They will be discussing land repurposing and Prop 218 at their upcoming Board meeting. They would like to have a plan for voting by summer 2022. Eric Swenson (MSGSA) added that the MSGSA has also been working on project selection for the SGM grant.
- ii. *MIUGSA.* Hicham EITal (MIUGSA) described that the GSA has been working on policies, rules, and stakeholder input for the GSA's Stakeholder Guidance Committee. Additionally, MIUGSA has continued to administer grant funding.
- iii. *TIWD GSA #1.* Kel Mitchel (TIWD-GSA#1) has also been working on project selection for the SGM grant.

##### b. Current Basin Conditions

- i. Matt Beaman (MIUGSA) illustrated the monthly groundwater levels for each monitoring well by principal aquifer (Above the Corcoran Clay, Below the Corcoran Clay, and Outside of the Corcoran Clay) to better understand how the Subbasin behaves on monthly basis (not just biannually). Over the last year, groundwater levels have been relatively consistent. Groundwater levels Below and Outside of the Corcoran Clay have dropped between approximately 5 and 15 feet over the course of the last year. There are some groundwater level anomalies, perhaps due to pumping or measurement issues.
- ii. At several newly installed monitoring sites, pressure transducers have been recently calibrated, so more groundwater level data will be available with additional processing.
- iii. Recent measurements available from representative monitoring wells appear to be above Minimum Thresholds (MTs). Two representative monitoring wells are within 25 feet of the MTs – one far east in the Subbasin and one in the City of Atwater.

#### 7. Comments on Groundwater Sustainability Plan by the Department of Water Resources

- a. Jim Blanke (Woodard & Curran) provided an overview of DWR comments on the GSP in the preliminary consultation letter (1/18/2021) and final determination (1/28/2022).
- b. DWR outlined three primary GSP deficiencies:
  - i. *Non-consecutive dry years.* Drought-period declines do not apply to stream depletions, which currently rely on groundwater levels as a proxy.
  - ii. *Groundwater level sustainable management criteria (SMC).* DWR noted that NGO and other agency analyses suggested that the SMC for groundwater levels could potentially dewater domestic wells. Further investigation into data sources and studies will be conducted. Woodard & Curran will present current groundwater levels compared to other potential MTs (e.g., 2015 groundwater levels) at upcoming GSA technical meetings.

- iii. *Subsidence*. The GSP currently allows for some level of continued subsidence, while DWR is looking to minimize or stop subsidence under sustainable conditions. Also, DWR noted that more work is needed to identify what is significant and unreasonable (for flood control and water supply infrastructure, etc.) and how differential subsidence between basins will play a role.
  - c. DWR did not criticize the GSPs' groundwater quality approach.
  - d. Response to DWR
    - i. GSAs have 180 days to respond (by 7/27/22) and address deficiencies. If deficiencies are not satisfactorily addressed, management is assumed by the SWRCB.
    - ii. The GSA representatives met with DWR on 1/10/2022 to review DWR's comments
    - iii. A likely deliverable to DWR will be an updated, redline version of the GSP
    - iv. Hicham EITal (MIUGSA) described that GSAs will have only a few chances to work with DWR to appropriately address the deficiencies, so caution is advised for final determination of GSP updates.
  - e. **ACTION (motioned by Hicham EITal, seconded by Eric Swenson, all present voted in favor):** Recommend GSA Boards approve a contract amendment with Woodard & Curran to develop modifications to the GSP in response to comments from DWR, as described in scope provided by Woodard & Curran
  - f. Kel Mitchel (TIWD-GSA#1) and Hicham EITal (MIUGSA) recommend that Coordination Committee meetings be held monthly and that meetings could be cancelled if not needed.

## 8. Potential future funding opportunity

- a. Mike Gallo (MSGSA) discussed a potential future funding opportunity from DWR. Mike Gallo is working with Karla Nemeth (DWR) to identify funding for projects that are ready to implement, can provide benefits quickly, and are scalable.
- b. Eric Swenson (MSGSA) suggested using extra funding opportunity to fill gap of projects with lowered requested grant funding for SGM grant.
- c. There are other funding opportunities through the federal government's Infrastructure Bill.
- d. For those interested in participating in follow up conversations with DWR, contact Mike Gallo (MSGSA) within the next week or two to coordinate.

## 9. Round 1 SGM Implementation Planning and Projects Grant

- a. Jim Blanke (Woodard & Curran) provided an overview of the project scoring and selection process, including the process and rationale for reranking. Coordination Committee members scored each project based on DWR evaluation criteria. GSA representatives reviewed the aggregate scores and recommended modifications to the ranking and funding request amounts based on other considerations including water rights, cost per acre-foot, project location, among other factors.
- b. Project proponents will be notified of the revised grant request for each project to ensure they can proceed with the project with local/other funding sources.
- c. Kole Upton (MSGSA) encourages GSAs to prioritize projects that keep water within Merced County. This may be discussed further at upcoming GSA meetings.
- d. Project proponents will need to provide additional information including shapefiles and backup documentation, as well as prove eligibility (e.g., Agricultural Water Management Plans). GSAs need to provide resolutions authorizing MIUGSA to provide apply for the grant on the Subbasin's behalf.



Liz DaBramo (Woodard & Curran) will follow up with individual project proponents to provide required information.

- e. **ACTION (motioned by Eric Swenson, seconded by Hicham ElTal, all present voted in favor):** Recommend GSA Boards direct staff to submit grant application for the projects, and share costs for preparation of grant application, as described in the presentation, incorporating \$100,000 for grant administration.

## 10. Next steps and adjourn

- a. Kel Mitchel (TIWD-GSA#1) motion to adjourn, Hicham ElTal (MIAGSA) seconded. Adjourned at 11:59 am.

**Next Regular Meeting**  
**TBD, but expected to be in March 2022**  
Information also available online at [mercedsgma.org](http://mercedsgma.org)