

**MID-KAWEAH GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

MINUTES

March 7, 2022 – 3:00 pm

This Committee Meeting was held remotely with no physical location due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Governors Executive Order N-29-20.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Geoff Vanden Heuvel, Richard Garcia, Jessi Snyder, Eric Correia, Blake Wilbur

MEMBERS ABSENT: Soapy Mulholland, Lee Johnson

GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT: Aaron Fukuda (Interim General Manager), James Fisher, Diana Zegarra

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Andrew Hart, Steve Jackson, Johnny Gailey, Rosalinda Alexander, Peter Petrelis, Dave Van Groningen

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Blake Wilbur at 3:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Wilbur called for public comments. None were forthcoming.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Committee Member Correia motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for both October 25 2022 and February 7, 2023. Chair Wilbur seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. MKGSA GSP

- a. GSP Review – DWR Determination
 - i. Aaron Fukuda provided the update. On March 2nd, the Kaweah Subbasin’s Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was deemed “inadequate” by DWR. Of the 12 determinations released, the Kaweah Subbasin was one of six subbasins deemed inadequate, along with Chowchilla, Delta Mendota, Tule, Tulare Lake, and Kern Subbasins. The East, Mid, and Greater Kaweah are regrouping into the Kaweah Subbasin Technical team to address DWR’s deficiencies as soon as possible before a potential probationary hearing with the SWRCB to avoid Board intervention. The East Kaweah just hired INTERA as their hydrogeologists and the Greater Kaweah hired Thomas Harder. Therefore, the Subbasin has 2 more hydrogeologists than last year.
- b. MKGSA Groundwater Allocation and Pumping Cap Proposal – Invoice Protests and Changes
 - James Fisher presented a list of changes to the initial round of invoices from the Emergency Ordinance on water usage. Rather than listing out each individual case in detail, invoice corrections/changes were lumped into 10 categories. Fisher

requested the Advisory Committee consider the methodology used for each of the changes.

1. De Minimis Parcels – the EO applies to parcels greater than 4 assessed acres and whether or not any portion of the land is actively used for agriculture. However, the definition may need to be more nuanced. There were two examples of fruit grown within city limits on a small scale (1-2 acres) that technically fall under the rule of the Emergency Ordinance, but not the spirit of the rule. Two parcels that had less than 1.5 acres of irrigated acreage in a small portion of a parcel were considered exempt from the EO
 2. Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 charges – The Emergency Ordinance states that buying tiered water is optional. However, the MKGSA assumes growers want to buy the full allocation, because whatever isn't used will roll over as a credit in future years. There were several instances where growers did not want to buy tiered water beyond 2022 usage.
 3. Parcel Splits – Tulare County can take 2 years to acknowledge a parcel split and assign a new APN number. If there were parcels bought/sold during 2022, staff recommends creating new parcels by hand, as described in the Deed, until the county publishes the newly assigned APN numbers.
 4. Adjust Billing Destinations – When a parcel was not enrolled in the Water Dashboard, the invoice was directed to the landowner tied to the APN. In some instances, that landowner would redirect the invoice to the renter responsible for groundwater usage.
 5. Land Fallowing Applications – Fields unirrigated for at least 6 months could fill out a land fallowing application to “zero-out” the net ET usage.
 6. GKGSA/MKGSA Boundary Adjustment – The original MKGSA boundary submitted in 2020 to DWR was incorrect, there were clerical errors which included approximately 20 parcels from the GKGSA in error. Staff recommends exempting all of these parcels from the MKGSA invoices.
 7. Corrective Actions for Groundwater Dependent to Surface Water User Designations – Tier 1 and Tier 2 water is \$160 and \$210 respectively for groundwater dependent users. Conversely, surface water dependent users pay \$10/AF. Parcels that were considered groundwater dependent but could pay \$10/AF. Parcels that were considered groundwater dependent but could pay \$10/AF.
 8. Surface Water Adjustments – Growers that did not have surface water included from ditch companies could scan in their ditch stock or invoices to incorporate that.
 9. Dairy Parcel Adjustments – A programming error affected some dairy operations and overestimated the cost of the invoice. Invoices were reprinted and resent.
 10. Metering Appeals – Of the 460 invoices sent out, 5 contested the ET readings with well meter data. Staff recommended accepting the 5 metering appeals and recommended an additional verification step of meter calibration for future years.
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5. LandFlex Grant Application – Update
 - a. The MKGSA applied, but was not awarded funds from the initial round of the LandFlex grant.
 6. KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES
 - a. Proposition 68 Implementation Grant – Update

- Westberry construction was awarded the contract. Construction of the basin will begin in late-summer while canal work will be postponed until the water run is complete, which could be delayed as far as late-November.
 - b. SGM Round 1 Implementation Grant – Update
 - No update
 - c. SGM Round 2 Implementation Grant – Update
 - No update
 - d. Department of Conservation Multi Benefit Land Repurposing Grant – Update
 - No update
 - e. Kaweah Subbasin Water Marketing Strategy – Update
 - The Kaweah Subbasin Water Marketing Strategy Committee (KSWMS) is re-evaluating trading zones, rules for trading once a hydrologic zone is impaired, and discussing special case scenarios such as parcels only partially within the Kaweah Subbasin boundaries. The rules and concepts for the “transfer bucket” was also further refined in the KSWMS.
7. Committee Member Reports, Updates or Other Items of Interest
- a. Chair Wilbur asked if there were any other comments of note. None were forthcoming.
8. ADJOURN
- Wilbur adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting date is June 6th at 3pm.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair