

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

MINUTES

January 17, 2022 – 3:00 p.m.

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: Blake Wilbur, Geoff Vanden Heuvel, Jessi Snyder, Mike Lane, Soapy Mulholland, Lee Johnson, Eric Correia

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Brassfield, Richard Garcia

GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT: Aaron Fukuda (Interim General Manager), James Fisher, Trisha Whitfield

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Andrew Hart, Bryant Platt, Johnny Gailey, Lisa Walsh, Sonia Sanchez, Marlene Ferreira, Maryse Suppiger, Peter Petrelis, Juan Pantoja, Dave Van Groningen, Christopher Hunter, Derrick Williams

1. CALL TO REGULAR ORDER

The meeting was opened by Chairman Wilbur at 3:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Wilbur called for comments from any members of the public present at the meeting. None were forthcoming.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee member Vanden Heuvel motioned to approve the minutes with that edit, seconded by Committee member Richard Garcia. The November 2021 minutes were unanimously approved by all Advisory Committee members present.

4. STATUS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Fukuda recommended there be a Vice-Chair position made available in case Chair Wilbur ever has scheduling conflicts for regularly scheduled Committee Meetings. Maryse Suppiger applied for membership in the advisory committee. Suppiger represents a large landowner in the Tulare Irrigation District. All current committee members will be contacted if they wish to continue serving as their terms expired on December 31, 2021.

5. KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES

Fukuda provided the updates for all the Subbasin activities.

a. **Kaweah Subbasin Manager's Report**

The Kaweah Subbasin Management Committee Meeting was rescheduled to February 2, 2022. This meeting was rescheduled to allow managers time to prioritize projects for the \$7.6M SGMA Grant (non-competitive, available for all critically over-drafted subbasins), which was awarded to the Kaweah Subbasin. The 3 GSAs will coordinate on how those grant funds will be most efficiently, and fairly allocated.

b. Prop 68 Planning Grant

The money that would otherwise be used for underwater well videoing will be used for pressure transducers and water quality pumps. Scheduling underwater well videoing is challenging in a drought because most wells are still active and could cause damage to active wells. The Kaweah Subbasin decided these funds would be better spent on improved monitoring equipment. Therefore, the Kaweah Subbasin is adjusting the scope of work to include those projects.

c. Prop 68 Implementation Grant

Okieville recharge basin land purchase agreement is underway and should be finalized before March 2022. The CEQA permitting process will begin the public review in the state clearinghouse by the end of the month and up for Board approval in early March.

d. RCIS Program

The RCIS is in public review right now.

e. Water Marketing Strategy

The Water Marketing Strategy Committee hosted several jam board sessions, and listed all of the ideas and categorized them and distilled them into guiding principles.

f. Kaweah Water Foundation

No update.

g. DWR SGMA Grant 2022

Each critically over-drafted subbasin is allocated \$7.6M but must put together a \$10M spending plan. This grant is non-competitive round to give GSA's maximum flexibility on how to spend that money. The Kaweah Subbasin plans to submit the Spending Plan on February 18th, 2022.

h. Department of Conservation Multi-benefit Block Grant

There is \$50M available for multi-benefit block grants, allocated in \$10M blocks. The Mid-Kaweah GSA and Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) are pursuing a partnership to collaborate on conservation projects.

6. MKGSA GSP

a. GSP Review – Update

Fukuda provided the update. Evaluations will be delivered by January 31, 2022 at the latest. DWR already indicated the Kaweah Subbasin will receive an incomplete, indicating the GSA has 180-days to address any deficiencies in the GSP. Committee Member Snyder suggested a sub-committee should be set up for a well mitigation program. Chair Wilbur agreed this sub-committee should be an agenda item on the next meeting.

b. GSP Implementation – Update

Fukuda provided the update. The Okieville Recharge Basin Project construction begins fall 2022. The GSA's are actively seeking funding for McKay Point, Seaborne, Catron Basin,

and Basin No. 3. The Cameron Creek Linear Recharge Basin will likely be placed on the SGMA \$7.6M spending plan this February for non-competitive grant funding.

c. LandIQ ET Tracking – Update

James Fisher provided the update. TID is currently digitizing in-house crop surveys to release the ET by crop type within Tulare Irrigation District, a memo that will be sent out to growers and posted on the MKGSA webpage in Mid-January. Next steps for ET include linking canal turnouts to fields and acquiring datasets from LandIQ that show the age of permanent crops.

Chair Wilbur asked how LandIQ compared to OpenET. Fisher responded OpenET tends to overestimate, especially in the winter months relative to LandIQ. Fukuda added that LandIQ is subject to significant ground-truthing, OpenET is not. Therefore, more confidence should be given to LandIQ datasets.

d. MKGSA Groundwater Allocation and Pumping Cap Proposal – Emergency Order Review

Fukuda presented a draft of the Emergency Ordinance. Tier 1 and Tier 2 for surface water users will have a cost associated with the current cost to purchase water to fill the deficit created from excessive pumping.

Committee Member Vanden Heuvel said the immobility of Tier 1 water within a farm unit (ranch, parcels of a common owner) is unreasonable. The immobility does not encourage efficient use and is unnecessarily restrictive. Chair Wilbur and Committee member Correia agreed.

Committee Member Correia asked about lag time between pumping and ET. For instance, after the last cut of alfalfa, the field continues to consumptively use water. Is it reasonable water leaving the vadose zone should affect the groundwater allocation designed to restrict groundwater pumping in the aquifer? Fukuda said he will work with growers on case-specific scenarios throughout the year.

e. Tulare Irrigation District – Seaborn Project Review and Consideration

TID and Consolidated Peoples Ditch Companies are looking to develop the Seaborn Property, a 260-acre gravel mine, excavated and prepared for a reservoir. This is a \$22M project (with habitat on the west side), and staff just submitted a \$15M grant. Fukuda requested the committee to consider the project for consideration and inclusion into the GSP. Committee Member Garcia motioned to approve the project, Committee Member Vanden Heuvel seconded the motion. The committee unanimously voted to include these projects into the GSP.

7. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS, UPDATES, OR OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST
No comments.

8. ADJOURN
Wilbur adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting date is February 1st, 2022.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair

DRAFT