

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

MINUTES

February 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, Soapy Mulholland, Mike Lane, Eric Correia, Blake Wilbur

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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 opened by Chair Blake Wilbur at 3:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. Geoff Vanden Heuvel gave an update on Dr. Henry who was a longtime member of the Advisory Committee

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. None to Approve

4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATE

- a. Aaron Fukuda gave an update on the Advisory Committee Membership. The revision of members must be residents in the Mid-Kaweah GSA boundary was discussed. Soapy Mullholland, fulfilling an environmental seat, expressed her concern for revision. Blake Wilbur expressed his agreement with the revision. Richard Garcia gave the recommendation that the revision should be members must be residents of the Kaweah Subbasin. The consensus of the discussion was that Aaron will take the comments back the Board of Directors and the priority of the members should be residents of the area.

5. MKGSA GSP

- a. GSP Review – Update
 - i. Aaron Fukuda gave an update that DWR hasn't said much on the status of the first amended Mid-Kaweah GSP, but that many of the accepted plans have been medium priority basins.
- b. MKGSA Groundwater Allocation and Pumping Cap Proposal – Emergency Order Review Update

- Invoicing – Update
 - James Fisher let the committee know that invoices were sent and should have hit inboxes. The invoice had two cover pages included in the envelop to explain the invoice parts. James also gave some quick statistics:
 - 72,000 assessed acres enrolled
 - 8% of the MKGSA area was defined a groundwater dependent.
 - 4.1% of water accounts went over water allocation (in 5 months)
 - 4 well appeals have been submitted
 - 65,000 AF of water will be rolled over as a groundwater credit
 - 13,300 acres in MKGSA have 2 sources of surface water (stock in a private ditch or water company or wastewater treatment plant water from Visalia or Tulare)
 - James Fisher spoke about the phone calls and issues arising from the invoices, and a discussion followed.
- Year-End Summary of ET by Crop Type
 - James Fisher gave an update for the end of the year evapotranspiration chart created using Land IQ ET data for 2022.
- 2023 Allocation Discussion Items
 - Efficiency Number for Private Recharge Basins
 - Seasonal Adjustments in Irrigation Efficiency
 - At the moment, any water that is being recharged in dedicated recharge basins or dormant fields are sinking 25% into the groundwater table and 75% is being added on the water dashboard. The issue with this method is the seasonal changes. James proposed that we take into account the special and temporal variability of recharge while retaining a weighted average of 75% irrigation efficiency (annual basin average). The committee agreed to proceed with finding out a method for trueing up the 25-75 for seasonal changes.
 - GKGSA Parcels Affected by Boundary Modification
 - The old boundary of the Mid-Kaweah GSA included a few parcels that were actually in Greater Kaweah GSA, so those parcels were sent invoices. The new boundary is in the process of being recognized by the Department of Water Resources. The recommendation is to waive the fees for the parcels that are truly in Greater Kaweah GSA.
 - Carryover Quantity Restrictions – Vintaging Water or Potential Maximum Quantity
 - The Emergency Ordinance is silent on carryover policy, so it is imperative that Mid-Kaweah GSA create one. The issues to think about with this policy would be an expiration date, credit tracking, excessive credit accumulation and a credit cap. The proposed solution is to have credits that will accumulate and never expire,

however there is a hard annual use cap. The proposed solution is supposed to continue to incentivize growers to use surface water and recharge in the winter and not create a panic to use the credits after a certain time period. The committee had a discussion of the details such as the cap number, but the carryover policy will be back in front of the committee as Mi-Kaweah GSA continues to brainstorm.

- There was a discussion brought up by Geoff Vanden Heuvel about the pilot program of moving surface water out of Tulare Irrigation District to parcels in Greater Kaweah GSA. Aaron Fukuda explained that the program details are being worked on and the program would only be during flood releases and surplus situations.
 - Inclusion of Golf Courses
 - At the moment, only agricultural parcels greater than 4 acres are included in the emergency ordinance allocation program, but golf courses could be considered. The committee agreed that golf courses should be included since they accrue inescapable acreage and evapotranspiration numbers (3.85 AF/Acre).
6. LandFlex Grant Application – Update
- a. Diana Zegarra explained the details of the LandFlex grant as a program where growers can apply to dryland farm or fallow (with a cover crop) fields around vulnerable domestic wells. The Mid-Kaweah GSA applied for the grant in February 2, 2023. The applicants would receive funds based on three buckets that are based on acreage, average crop ET, and crop being removed. There was discussion about one of the funding buckets (Sustainable Yield Acceleration bucket) details and the permanent verbiage in the grant.
7. Well Mitigation – Update
- a. Aaron Fukuda reported that the three GSA general managers have been talking about a subbasin wide well mitigation program.
8. KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES
- a. Proposition 68 Planning Grant – Update
 - James Fisher reported that the Mid-Kaweah GSA used surplus funds to install 5 double/ triple monitoring wells and perform water quality sampling for the wells.
 - b. Proposition 68 Implementation Grant – Update
 - Westberry construction was awarded the contract for \$400,000 less than the estimated project cost. Majority of the labor is in the canal which has caused a short delay since the canals are running water.
 - c. SGM Round 1 Implementation Grant – Update
 - Diana Zegarra reported that the 12 projects are in their beginning stages.
 - d. SGM Round 2 Implementation Grant – Update
 - Aaron Fukuda reported that the grant application was submitted. The grant application included two projects: The Catrin Recharge and Stormwater Runoff Basin and a well mitigation program.
 - e. Department of Conservation Multi Benefit Land Repurposing Grant – Update
 - Mark Larsen hired Reyn Akiona to help with the MLRP grant.
 - f. Kaweah Subbasin Water Marketing Strategy – Update
 - Many of the legal documents and guidelines have been created for water market version 1.0. The Kaweah Subbasin analysis zones are being set up to be trading

zones, and the transfer bucket concept is being evaluated. The KSWMS has recommended there be a third party, exchange administrator that does not include the GSA managers. The goal was to keep the water market simple for version 1.0 and have a pilot program running by summer 2023.

9. Tulare ID 2022 Fall Groundwater Survey

- a. Fukuda noted an 8 ft drop in water levels District-wide. This drop was better than expected. Water levels dropped around 15 ft/yr in the most recent 3 dry years.

10. Tulare ID Winter Flood Release and Irrigation Run

- a. 2023 Water Year Forecast – Fukuda provide the report. Runoff is anticipated to be significant this year. The dry forecast (90% exceedance probability) is anticipated to be 491 TAF (thousand acre-feet). For reference, Terminus Dam can only hold 185 TAF.

11. Committee Member Reports, Updates or Other Items of Interest

- a. Chair Wilbur asked if there were any other comments of note. None were forthcoming.

12. ADJOURN

Wilbur adjourned the meeting at 5:06 p.m. The next meeting date is March 7th at 3pm.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair