

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

MINUTES

February 1, 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, Richard Garcia, Jessi Snyder, Mike Lane, Soapy Mulholland, Lee Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Brassfield, Eric Correia

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

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Jordan Leal, Andrew Hart, Bryant Platt, Craig Moyle, Derrik Williams, Johnny Gailey, Lisa Walsh, Manny Gomes, Marlene Ferreira, Maryse Suppiger, Nick Martin, Peter Petrelis, Rhett Anderson, Rick McCombs, Dave Van Groningen

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**

Approval of January 2022 minutes will be deferred to a later meeting.

4. **STATUS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

a. **Appointment of Vice Chair**

Mike Lane nominated Soapy Mulholland for the Vice Chair position for the Mid-Kaweah GSA Advisory Committee. Jessi Snyder seconded the motion. No other nominations were forthcoming. The Committee unanimously approved of the nomination. However, Group II committee members terms were originally intended to end on December 31, 2021, which included Soapy Mulholland. Therefore, the MKGSA Board must also approve of the renewal of Mulholland's term for the Vice Chair appointment.

3 of the 4 members (all but Tom Brassfield) up for re-election indicated an interest to continue serving and there was one new application for the Committee received.

5. **KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES**

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

Fukuda announced the Kaweah Subbasin Management Committee will be February 2, 2022. The main objective is approving projects for the \$7.6M SGMA grant. The 3 GSA's

have successfully solicited over \$50M in projects, and the managers will decide the best way to allocate these grant funds.

b. Prop 68 Planning Grant

No updates.

c. Prop 68 Implementation Grant

No update.

d. RCIS Program

Fukuda provided the update. The EKGSA is managing the RCIS program. The EKGSA is open to an MOU between the 3 GSA's that protects the groundwater basin, and considering a request to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a termination clause. Currently, there is no clause to enable GSA's to terminate the agreement if locals no longer support the program or partnership.

e. Water Marketing Strategy

No update.

f. Kaweah Water Foundation (CV SALTS)

No updates.

g. DWR SGMA Grant 2022

Fukuda provided the update. The grant deadline extension has been granted by DWR to move the SGMA Grant spending plan from February 18 to February 28. The grant funding is \$7.6M total: \$2.2M for each of the 3 GSAs and \$1M total for planning purposes (modeling updates, comments to DWR determination letter, and 2025 GSP updates). The MKGSA proposes using funds to allow Cameron Creek to be used for linear recharge.

h. Department of Conservation Multi-benefit Block Grant

Vanden Heuvel provided the update. KDWCD will manage the grant and is currently seeking a grant writer. Provost & Pritchard may have a good grant writer the GSA's will reach out to.

6. MKGSA GSP

a. GSP Review – Update

1. DWR Determination and Evaluation

Fukuda provided the update. The Kaweah Subbasin received an incomplete determination letter on January 28th, 2022. The 3 GSAs have 180 days to identify and modify the GSP to correct the deficiencies DWR outlined in the letter. All modifications must be adopted into the GSP before the 180-day window (ending July 27, 2022). By the fall of 2022, DWR will decide whether these updates will receive an “approved” or “inadequate” determination (resulting in SWRCB/DWR consultation). Chair Wilbur asked if the DWR/SWRCB consultation will necessarily be deemed inadequate. Fukuda responded it is unclear.

The 3 deficiencies in outlined in DWR's determination letter are:

1. Sustainable management criteria for lower groundwater levels
 - a. The MKGSA needs to define the undesirable results and minimum thresholds by evaluating impacts on beneficial users, and how these minimum thresholds may affect other sustainability indicators.
2. Sustainable management criteria for land subsidence.
 - a. The MKGSA and GKGSA does not define metrics for undesirable results and minimum thresholds based on beneficial uses.

- b. DWR identified drastically different thresholds between the GKGSA and EKGSA, even though should be similar around the Friant Kern Canal, which is known to be sensitive to land subsidence.
- 3. The plan does not sufficiently and consistently characterize interconnected surface waters, nor define the sustainable management criteria for depletion thereof.
 - a. Plan identifies potential areas but does not address those areas.

b. GSP Implementation – Update

DWR evaluation to present the 3 deficiencies (outlined above) 180 days to address, followed by a public comment period, and a final decision is anticipated Fall 2022.

c. MKGSA Groundwater Allocation and Pumping Cap Proposal – Emergency Ordinance Review

There have been several changes to the MKGSA Emergency Ordinance document. Surface water users water rates for Tier 1 and Tier 2 is \$10/AF. Tier 1 can now be transferred, allowing both Tiers and native yield to be transferred for maximum flexibility for the first year.

There will be a 45-day window to inform the agency you will apply for Tier 1 and Tier 2 water, although there will be flexibility in the first year.

Vanden Heuvel asked if the cities (Visalia and Tulare) have cooperated with the prescriptive water restrictions to not exceed the current volume of water used, regardless of development and population growth. Trisha Whitfield agreed this language should be softened because the State of California already imposes indoor water use caps.

Vaden Heuvel also asked why there is a distance threshold for water transfers. Mulholland said The Fox Canyon water market found it was much more difficult to provide maximum flexibility and then add more restrictions. Its easier to start off more restrictive. Fukuda proposed a compromise of 5 miles, not measured from the centroid of the parcel.

Fukuda concluded the meeting discussing future meetings: Emergency Ordinance meetings in February, LandIQ meetings in March, and Water Dashboard meetings in April.

7. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS, UPDATES, OR OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Jessi Snyder submitted a sub-committee (3-5 committee members) for well mitigation. Vanden Heuvel, one Agricultural rep, one industrial rep, and one environmental rep may also join.

8. ADJOURN

Wilbur adjourned the meeting at 4:46 p.m. The next meeting date is TBD.

Attest: _____

GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair