

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

MINUTES

October 25, 2022 – 9:00 a.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: Geoff Vanden Heuvel, Richard Garcia, Jessi Snyder, Soapy Mulholland, Mike Lane, Eric Correia, Lee Johnson, Blake Wilbur

MEMBERS ABSENT: Max Storms

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

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Diana Zegarra, Andrew Hart, Rhett Anderson, Steve Jackson, Johnny Gailey, Rosalinda Alexander, Derrik Williams

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Wilbur called for public comments. None were forthcoming.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lee Johnson motioned to approve the August 2, 2022 meeting minutes. Richard Garcia seconded the motion, and the motion was carried by Chair Wilbur.

4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATE

Lee Johnson will be leaving his seat on the committee effective December 31, 2022. Aaron Oliver applied as a potential replacement. There are still 3 vacant seats in the advisory committee that staff will actively advertise: Agriculture, Cal. Water Service, and Disadvantaged Community. MKGSA staff will be actively advertising to fill these seats by Spring 2023.

5. MKGSA GSP

a. **GSP Review – Update**

i. First Amended GSP and Coordination Agreement - Update

Fukuda provided the report. There were 3 public comments on the first amended GSP and Coordination Agreement. Self-Help Enterprises was complementary, with suggestions to focus future work on the well mitigation program. Second letter was from several NGO's that suggested the subbasin should be sent straight to probation after referencing SWRCB comments. Third comment was from the Legal Animal Defense Fund, which reinforced comments in a similar letter submitted in the 2020 GSP, which were largely critical of the approach.

Tulare Lake Subbasin was deemed inadequate by DWR because it lacked a coordination agreement between distinct Groundwater Sustainability Plans. The individual GSP's are still under review, they will not stand before the SWRCB for hearings yet.

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

i. Water Dashboard Update

James Fisher provided the update. Roughly 2/3 of the irrigated parcels in the MKGSA are now registered on the Dashboard. Staff are now reaching

ii. 2023 Allocation Discussion

Fisher provided the update. There was 13% reduction in water consumption (as measured by ET) in the 2022 water year, which resulted in a 16,000 AF water savings in the first 4 months of the allocation (preliminary numbers). Fukuda recommended leaving the allocation as-is, because the time growers will have to use that water is lengthened from 5 months to 12 months.

6. WELL MITIGATION AD HOC COMMITTEE – UPDATE

MKGSA Staff reached out to well consultant probably could not assist with information meaningful to a well mitigation plan. Working toward getting an Ad-Hoc Committee together to discuss next steps. Committee Member Vanden Heuvel noted the Tule folks already drafted a first draft of their well mitigation program and suggested using that as a template would speed progress significantly. Fukuda agreed, and said he would speak with Eric Limas for more information.

7. KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES

a. Proposition 68 Planning Grant – Update

MKGSA purchased well monitoring equipment. Water Quality samples have been collected, and data analysis is ongoing.

b. Proposition 68 Implementation Grant – Update

Closed of escrow 60 days ago with the Fagundes family for the Okieville Recharge Basin. Construction to bid will begin in December.

c. SGM Round 1 Implementation Grant – Update

Diana Zegarra from the GKGSA is managing this 13-project, \$7.6M grant.

d. SGM Round 2 Implementation Grant – Update

\$230M available for award, and the award per subbasin is \$1M to \$20M, which is a much larger maximum award than Round 1 (\$7.6M cap). Because the Kaweah subbasin received money in the first round, subbasins that have not received funds from Round 1 (medium priority basins) will be preferentially awarded money provided the project scores similarly in the grant rubric.

e. Department of Conservation Multi Benefit Land Repurposing Grant – Update

Currently working on Dis-advantaged community (DACs) mapping, k-12 outreach, and engagement from DACs.

f. Kaweah Subbasin Water Marketing Strategy – Update

Mitigation of adverse impacts trading zones were discussed in the most recent water marketing strategy committee update. Chair Wilbur expressed concerns, particularly if a landowner owns property in multiple trading zones and GSA boundaries. The trading zone methodology is incongruent with the MKGSA Emergency Ordinance, which allows water transfers to common-ownership parcels within 5 miles (which may be in many zones).

8. EXECUTIVE ORDER N-7-22

a. **Well Permitting Process**

This process has increased coordination between the landowner, county, and the GSA. Of the 22 ag wells that applied, 4-5 wells were suggested for relocation. Relocations were suggested to reduce the vulnerability to drying the surrounding domestic wells within the cone of depression of a production well.

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

Committee Member Garcia requested to see water level maps within the GSA, and the subbasin. Fukuda said results from the Fall Survey will be available in December.

10. ADJOURN

Chair Wilber adjourned the meeting at 4:34 p.m. The next anticipated meeting will be held in December.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair

DRAFT