

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

MINUTES

November 14, 2023 – 3:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Correia, Lee Johnson, Robert Saenz, Jordan Leal, Greg Collins, Richard Garcia, Joe Machado

MEMBERS ABSENT: Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel, Jessi Snyder, Aaron Oliver

GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT: James Fisher, Diana Zegarra

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Stephanie Ruiz, Trisha Whitfield, Johnny Gailey, Matthew Feinup, Georgina King, Adriana Bererra

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Correia called for public comments. None were forthcoming.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Chair Correia motioned for the approval of the October 3rd meeting minutes. By motion of Committee Member Leal, and seconded by Committee Member Saenz, the motion was carried.

4. MKGSA GSP

a. **MKGSA Water Market – Update**

Dr. Matthew Feinup provided the report. The MKGSA Water Market was approved in the November Board Meeting. The purpose of Dr. Feinup's presentation was to present the approved market to the Advisory Committee members that were onboarded in January 2023. The water market was developed in collaboration with a committee comprised of a committee representing a diverse range of beneficial uses and across the subbasin. The market was created so any of the three GSAs could adopt the market, but with the flexibility of additional GSA-specific policies to be added on. Dr. Feinup stressed the market is version 1.0 and will likely be different depending on market behavior, and that the market has been created to expire at the end of the year (i.e. each year the Board needs to re-approve of the water market, contingent on reaping the intended positive results). The Committee wanted additional clarification on how much could be traded and why there was a limit. Dr. Feinup explained 10 inches per acre is the maximum to sell (but more can be bought). Ten inches was set because every grower has at least 10 inches to trade, and this is a relatively small amount of water to prevent large-scale abuses if any are identified in the first year. Dr. Feinup concluded that the Market is expected to be up and running by February.

b. GSP Review – Sustainable Management Criteria Update

Georgina King provided the report. The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team evaluated the protective thresholds of domestic wells (30 ft from the bottom of the well). Ms. King reviewed 3 scenarios: 5x, 10x, and 15x water level declines. Each level represents the number of years multiplied by the average annual water level decline pre-SGMA. For instance, the 5x scenario means protective thresholds will be set at a level that the GSA would reach in 5 years assuming average declines in those years. As expected, the costs for mitigation increase as the depth of the protective thresholds increase. The Committee agreed that 15x was too expensive, and that 5x-10x is more reasonable, with preference toward the 10x as that allows for more flexibility. The Committee also had several questions on the ‘unknown’ wells, as that was adding considerable uncertainty to the cost analysis. Ms. King noted the GSAs in Kern did a similar study on the ‘Unknown’ wells (un/mis labeled wells on well completion reports). Kern’s findings were that only a small minority of wells of an ‘unknown’ classification were in fact domestic wells. The Committee suggested the GSA’s perform a further investigation to reduce the uncertainty of domestic well mitigation costs.

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

Chair Correia motioned for any updates or reports. Mr. Fisher provided an update on the SWRCB’s informational workshop on the Tulare Lake Subbasin inadequate report. SWRCB staff recommended all GSAs for probation in the Tulare Lake Subbasin, and recommended metering for all wells pumping more than 500 AF annually. The MKGSA will be writing a comment letter to seek clarification on several items, including: clear criteria to avoid probation before the hearing, not including additional deficiencies beyond those DWR provided, and providing some flexibility to temporarily address deficiencies outside of the GSP in some circumstances (for example, in technical memorandums and presentations to SWRCB staff that will later be included in a GSP update)

6. ADJOURN

Chair Correia adjourned the meeting at 4:48 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair