

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

**MINUTES**

June 7, 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: Mike Lane, Blake Wilbur, Soapy Mulholland, Eric Correia, Jessi Snyder, Max Storms, Richard Garcia, Geoff Vanden Heuvel, Mike Lane

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Derrik Williams, David Cardoza, Diana Zegarra, Johnny Gailey, Paul Grenseman, Peter Petrelis, Rhett Anderson, Tim Leo, Kevin H., Tim Leo, 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

The motion for approval was motioned by Vice Chair Mulholland and seconded by Committee Member Snyder approving the May 2022 minutes.

4. KAWEAH SUBBASIN 2021 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

2021

Fukuda reviewed the Kaweah Subbasin Annual report that was just completed in 2022. As expected, groundwater storage declined significantly following the abrasive drought. In 2020 and 2021, 418,000 AF and 520,000 AF of net storage has been removed from the aquifer, respectively. In other words, aquifer storage declined nearly 1 million AF in two years, which is much greater than can be replenished in two consecutive wet years.

5. MKGSA GSP

a. **GSP Review**

i. *DWR Determination and Evaluation and Kaweah Subbasin GSP Technical Work Update*

Fukuda provided the update. Changes to the GSP prompted changes and additions to the coordination agreement as well. For instance, the updated coordination agreement is the inclusion of the well mitigation approach, schedule, and

recommendations, per the recommendations of the MKGSA well mitigation ad hoc committee.

**Groundwater monitoring levels.** The groundwater monitoring network will be protective of at least 90% of all wells. In cases where water levels protective of 90% of all wells was lower than the originally proposed MTs, the original MTs remained – prohibiting overdraft at a faster rate than proposed in the original 2020 GSP. Lastly, Measurable Objectives (MOs) will be set to handle a 5-year dry cycle above the updated MT.

**Subsidence** – The critical infrastructure the GSP modification committee identified were the Friant Kern Canal, local water delivery ad flood control waterways, and groundwater wells. Canals and waterways in the MKGSA are affected from differential subsidence (when sections of long linear structures subside at differential rates) and not necessarily total subsidence. The Committee identified the undesirable result as a 10% loss in capacity in the Friant Kern Canal, loss of capacity in waterways impacting water delivery, and collapse of wells due to subsidence. The minimum thresholds are difficult to set, as residual subsidence (subsidence unrelated to today’s water extraction rates) can be as high as 10 feet. There are two options to set the minimum thresholds, (1) based in 10% water conveyance loss in capacity or (2) based on residual subsidence beyond 2040 when water levels are at the minimum threshold.

**Interconnected Surface Water** – EKGSA and GKGSA may have interconnected surface waters. DWR indicated that if a GSA might have interconnected surface waters, then sustainable management criteria must be set. Therefore, the EKGSA and GKGSA are setting a workplan to identify if, and where, interconnected surface waters exist, and appropriate data to update sustainable management criteria.

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

Emergency Ordinance fliers mailed notifying all landowners that the water allocation began on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Early enrollment has already begun, as well as some internal testing and feedback from growers to make the program more intuitive.

- i. *Fallow field recommendation* Fisher provided the report. Fallow fields often evapotranspire (ET) an equal magnitude as annual precipitation, and in some cases more where antecedent soil moisture is high from the previous year or lateral underflow of groundwater that travels to the fallow field to evaporate. When fallow field ET signatures are high, low water use crops are a much more attractive option to balance water conservation and keeping production high. There were concerns with soil health and creating double standards for cover crops in a fallow field and in an orchard.
- ii. *Dairy operation approach* Fisher provided the report. LandIQ is not designed to measure ET from a dairy. Although a lot of water is pumped from a dairy, the amount of water consumed is fairly low. A model designed by 4 Creeks Engineering revealed an average net water usage of 0.5 AF/acre on the dairy footprint. The MKGSA intends to use this method for the first year while 4Creeks and the USDA commence a 5-year study where all the inputs and outputs to a dairy

will be measured, in order to update the model to represent site-specific conditions based on preliminary data as it's released.

6. WELL MITIGATION AD HOC COMMITTEE – UPDATED

The ad hoc committee met on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and developed a mitigation principle “The GSA should mitigate on behalf of the beneficial users for that which they cause and this is a Kaweah Subbasin goal”. The committee is currently working on defining who prepares the mitigation plan, what infrastructure qualifies for mitigation, and how the program is funded.

7. KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES

**a. Prop 68 Planning Grant**

*i. Kaweah Subbasin GSA Groundwater Metering Analysis Report – Fresno State California Water Institute*

Mr. Fukuda provided the report. Before GSAs determined to use ET data, the MKGSA teamed with Fresno State University to research what meters and telemetry vendors suited the needs of the GSA's specific criteria best. The report indicates, based on the Kaweah Subbasin's criteria, Bermad ranked the highest in all 3 categories: well meters report in a standard installation, telemetry, and well meters for non-standard installation.

**b. Prop 68 Implementation Grant**

Environmental review is complete. Currently investigating LOPAC gates adjacent to the Okieville property to finalize construction design plans. Fukuda and Chair Wilbur co-starred in a Weather Channel YouTube clip for the Okieville Recharge basin.

**c. SGMA Spending Plan Grant**

*i. Pilot Scale Study to Repurpose Dried Groundwater Wells for Managed Aquifer Recharge – USA, ARS, SAWS Unit Proposal*

Fukuda & Fisher had preliminary discussions with the USDA on a pilot scale study using domestic or ag wells as vadose zone injection wells. By using existing drip systems to clean the water for injection, and by sealing the bottom of the well to prevent direct injection to the groundwater table (required by the State), the MKGSA can leverage existing infrastructure for more cost-effective vadose zone injection wells. The USDA also discussed conducting groundwater quality monitoring and geophysics

**d. Department of Conservation Multi Benefit Land Repurposing Grant**

A multi-benefit land repurposing grant from the Department of Conservation was awarded to the Kaweah Subbasin. The Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (KDWCD) lead the effort to apply for the grant and was awarded \$10M.

**e. Kaweah Subbasin Water Marketing Strategy**

The Water Marketing Strategy Committee completed the guiding principles.

8. EXECUTIVE ORDER N-7-22

**a. Well permitting process**

MKGSA has been using an updated well permit form created in collaboration with Tulare County, that complies with the Governor's Executive Order N-7-22. MKGSA processed approximately 10 applications to date. The Board will be taking a position on bill AB2201, which intends to codify much of this permitting process into law. Fukuda recommended opposing this bill.

**b. SWRCB Emergency Regulations**

SWRCB passed emergency regulations on May 24, 2022. Among other water conservation measures, this bans irrigation for non-functional turf at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites

9. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS, UPDATES, OR OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST  
No updates.

10. ADJOURN  
Wilbur adjourned the meeting at 4:48 p.m. The next meeting date is August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3pm.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
GSA Board Secretary

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Advisory Committee Chair

DRAFT