

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

MINUTES

May 2, 2023 – 3:00 pm

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, Trisha Whitfield

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Reyn Akiona, Matthew Fienup, Marlene Ferreira, Georgina King, Derrick Williams, Andrew Hart, Nataly Garcia, Johnny Gailey, Rob Steiner, Larry Castro

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Wilbur now serves on the Board of Public Utilities, and now has a seat at the MKGSA Board. Wilbur announced that he must step down to serve his new role. Vice Chair Soapy Mulholland will now serve as Chair of the MKGSA Advisory Committee.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MKGSA ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPLICATIONS

Aaron Fukuda presented. The MKGSA solicited for applications to the Advisory Committee for 60 days (March – April). Staff received 7 applications to serve on the committee to fill the 5 vacancies (including Blake Wilbur’s departure) – 3 Ag, 1 DAC, 1 Environmental, 1 Visalia, and 1 Cal-Water application. Committee Members Vanden Heuvel and Mulholland both disagreed with the policy that required a home address in the GSA boundary as the committee is advisory in nature. Vanden Heuvel also disagreed with term limits, staff should have the flexibility to permit committee members to serve longer if desired to preserve institutional knowledge. Vanden Heuvel recommended having those criteria be “guidelines” instead of “policies”. Fukuda will take comments and discuss to the MKGSA Management Committee.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Committee Member Correia motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for both March 7th, 2023. Committee Member Correia seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. KAWEAH WATER MARKETING STRATEGY UPDATE

Dr. Matthew Fienup provided a summary of the Kaweah Subbasin Water Marketing Strategy (KSWMS) progress to date. After developing the guiding principles, the committee is taking a more nuanced approach on trading zones, price matching and price discovery, and a proposed platform to host the water market. Many questions from the committee pertained to price matching and discovery. Dr. Fienup stated a draft strategy will be ready June 2023.

6. MKGSA GSP

a. GSP Review – Update

The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team (Team) is comprised of each of the GSA managers, technical staff, and each of their technical consultants (M&A, INTERA, Provost & Pritchard, Thomas Harder, and 4 Creeks). The team meets bi-weekly to address DWR’s comments in the inadequate determination letter as discussions continue with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The Team met with the SWRCB twice since the determination letter.

- i. *Well Mitigation Approach* - The Kaweah Subbasin has agreed to implement an interim well mitigation plan (implemented December 2022) and a full well mitigation plan by June 30th. The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team discussed a basin-wide framework, and each GSA can develop a mitigation plan covering individualized logistics and policies. Self-Help Enterprises is training staff to administer well mitigation plans.

b. Allocation Discussion Items

- i. Pseudo-APN Splits – There are 143 APNs larger than 150 acres in the MKGSA. In some cases, these large APNs are managed by multiple renters. Therefore, Staff is proposing a method of billing to ‘pseudo-APNs’, at the sub-APN level. Staff will be responsible for informing both land users that when the land is sold or rented elsewhere, the credits default to the landowner (unless written agreement with landowner states otherwise).
- ii. Dedicated Basin & Wintertime Water Credit Adjustment – Acknowledging there is more evaporative losses in the summer than in the winter, and more infiltration in a dedicated basin than an irrigated crop, Fisher proposed 4 different percentages for water credits. Summer Irrigation: 75%. Winter Irrigation: 90%. Summer Basin: 90%. Winter Basin: 100%. These percentages align with the water accounting framework (no double-counting of water credits). Percentages were proposed to be retroactive through October 2022.
- iii. Groundwater Credit Durability – no update.
- iv. Emergency Ordinance Exemption Definition – Fisher presented a sensitivity analysis, and proposed an additional criteria of “more than 2 irrigated acres” in the Emergency Ordinance definition, precluding small vegetable gardens or small decorative fruit trees from billing.

7. KAWEAH SUBBASIN ACTIVITIES

- a. Proposition 68 Implementation Grant – Update
 - i. No update
- b. SGM Round 1 Implementation Grant – Update
 - i. No update
- c. SGM Round 2 Implementation Grant – Update
 - i. No update
- d. Department of Conservation Multi Benefit Land Repurposing Grant – Update
 - i. No update

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

Fukuda provided updates. MKGSA staff will be monitoring CDFA as they release block grant proposals. Diana Zegarra will be applying for a Healthy Soils grant. TID will be submitting for 5 pumps to increase recharge as part of a fully funded program by DWR to prevent water from continue filling Tulare Lake, increasing TID infiltration capacity by 30 cfs. KDWCD are also receiving pumps for a combined infiltration of 60-100 cfs of additional recharge due to pumps. Reyn Akiona also introduced himself to the committee and stated he would present an update on the MLRP in June.

9. ADJOURN

Chair Mulholland adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting date is June 6th at 3pm.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair

DRAFT