

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

MINUTES

January 9, 2024 – 3:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Correia, Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel, Greg Collins, Aaron Oliver, Jordan Leal, Richard Garcia, Jessi Snyder, Joe Machado

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Saenz

GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT: Aaron Fukuda, James Fisher, Diana Zegarra

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Blake Wilbur, Georgina King, Johnny Gailey

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. Mr. Fisher announced Committee Member Collin’s press release of his book to be published soon entitled “Seven Generations: The Past, Present and Future of the Tulare Lake Basin”.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Chair Correia called for the approval for the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes. Committee Member Collins motioned to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Committee Member Leal

4. **MKGSA GSP**

a. **GSP Review – Sustainable Management Criteria Update**

Georgina King provided the report. The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team (hereafter, “Team”) evaluated the protective thresholds (defined as a water level 30 feet above the bottom of the well) for domestic wells.

King began by reminding the committee of the process thus far, and the goal is to find a balance between operational flexibility allowing water levels to drop but limits excessive declines before the costs to mitigate dried wells become too great.

King presented the 5x, 6x, 7x, 8x, 9x, and 10x scenarios, where each number represents the average annual decline in groundwater levels between 2014-2022. For example, 5x is the cumulative effect of 5 more years of average annual declines. The larger the number, the greater the operational flexibility, but the greater the costs of mitigation. Surprisingly, the costs scaled nearly perfectly linearly between 5x and 10x, so there was no obvious inflection in the curve where one option was superior to the rest. The 7x scenario was recommended as a starting point.

Committee Member VandenHeuvel disagreed with the methodology. He said most of the dry wells are where there will be 35 ft of allowable water levels to drop (7yr x 5ft annual decline), and very few dry wells where water levels are only given 7 ft drop (7yr x 1 ft annual decline). This methodology affords areas with the greatest water level declines with the greatest operational flexibility. VandenHeuvel also noted the minimum thresholds vary too much spatially and need to be more spatially consistent. VandenHeuvel and Gailey pointed out how pumping will likely be restricted in the lower aquifer. Therefore, growers will likely need operational flexibility in upper aquifer in the future that wouldn't be present in the 7x surface (based on historical data).

The 7x scenario was recommended, but several committee members recommended revisiting how to smooth out (and/or narrow the wide range) of minimum thresholds to provide a more uniform surface with operational flexibility.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS, UPDATES, OR OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST
Chair Correia motioned for any updates or reports. None were forthcoming.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Correia adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2024.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair