

JOINT MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

County of Merced Administration Building, Room 310

2222 M Street, Merced, California

February 6, 2020

Special Meeting

9:00AM

AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTIONS

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Public opportunity to speak on any matter of public interest within the Agency's jurisdiction including items on the Agency's agenda. Testimony limited to three minutes per person.

3. MEETING MINUTES

October 10, 2019

4. MONITORING NETWORK IN MERCED SUBBASIN GSA

5. INITIATING DEMAND REDUCTION

Early implementation concept discussion

6. NEXT MEETING

7. ADJOURNMENT

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**MERCED SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY JOINT MEETING OF
THE TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

MINUTES FOR MEETING OF OCTOBER 03, 2019- SPECIAL MEETING

The special meeting of the Technical and Advisory Committee for the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on October 03, 2019, at the Merced County Administration Building located at 2222 "M" Street, room 310, Third Floor, Merced, California.

I. INTRODUCTIONS

All attendees did roundtable introductions.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Blake Nervino asked if there is current definition for what is considered groundwater recharge. Ms. Lacey Kiriakou commented that the State has their definition of groundwater recharge. Mr. Eric Swenson stated that to be considered groundwater recharge, the water has to migrate into the vadose zone and into the water table. Mr. Greg Young suggested that it might be important to define whether recharge is purposeful or not purposeful and if it has a benefit or not, in order for the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to determine implementation.

III. MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for June 27, 2019, were presented to the committee. Mr. Swenson suggested a change on page 4, 3rd paragraph to correctly read as "Mr. Swenson suggested that market trading should not be based on radius, but on a basis from an upgradient *source* to be able to yield to downgradient and a certain amount of cross gradient *use*."

IV. FIRST FIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Ms. Lacey Kiriakou presented the First Five Implementation Strategy as a draft for discussion and informed that this plan was an outline of the first five years of demand reduction, and meant to be discussed among the members for any changes or additions.

Mr. Greg Young went over the plan and informed that this plan pertained to the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). He discussed subsidence and how minimum thresholds and management objectives were included to help prevent subsidence from occurring. Mr. Young discussed categories of timelines, financing, revenue, studies, projects, programs, demand reduction and the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Mr. Swenson suggested adding another category of data gaps.

It was suggested that the month of April might be a good milestone period to state actions that need to be taken from now until April, and what will need to take place after that period. Under financing and revenue, Mr. Young informed that Proposition 218 Landowner Fee was approved by the GSA Board in July and this fee should be coming

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out on current tax rolls. Ms. Kiriakou discussed grant applications for Prop 68 and the Technical Support Services Funding which will be submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) under one joint application along with other GSAs in the basin.

Mr. Swenson stated that he thinks it will take at least two years to refine the groundwater model to the point where a basis for extraction can be obtained.

Mr. Einsminger proposed that grants received be used for capital expenses and not salaried or consultant positions to avoid having to lay people off once the funds run out.

Mr. Young presented on the subject of studies and projects and stated that the current data for inventory of domestic wells is not as good as it can be. Mr. Swenson commented that if the satellite-based approach for the use of groundwater were to be implemented, there might not be a need for the data. Mr. Swenson also stated that having a good surface water metering system would be a systematic approach to gain surface water utilization data, especially if people were to receive a credit from it. Discussion was had by the group about various studies and recharge opportunities and whether other consultants who had knowledge of this type of work in the past would be brought in to help.

Mr. Nervino deliberated on the ability to capture excess water on wet years and the creation of water storage facilities. He also suggested an alternative of providing excess water to farmers to flood their lands and get water to percolate. Mr. Nervino also suggested there be a list to identify entities that export surface water out of basin and the list to inform the quantity, price, profit and cost of the exportation of water as it pertains to the basin.

Ms. Kirikou talked about the subject of pursuing water rights and that the GSA will need to decide whether they want a joint water right application with other GSAs to target creeks, basins, and FloodMAR, or pursue this individually. Mr. Young went over FloodMAR and explained what its use is intended for. Mr. Swenson suggested a pilot testing program to identify land for recharge.

Mr. Brasil suggested conversations with Merced Irrigation District (MID) about renting canals in the winter.

Ms. Kiriakou discussed Sustainability Zones and the idea that the zones would be identified and defined at the GSA level and not GSP level.

Discussion was had on projects and testing, and it was stated that groups and/or entities would need to be defined as to who would help set up the testing, studies and funding requests.

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Mr. George Park commented that regarding recharge project feasibility, farmers would be the ones to get the job done quicker and cheaper. Mr. Young added that helping farmers understand the benefit they might get from this process, would be beneficial in them understanding if this would be valuable for them or not. Mr. Young informed how other communities are using agreements to reimburse for costs and revenue loss during flooding.

Ms. Kiriakou informed that the next Merced Subbasin GSA Board meeting will be on October 10, 2020 and the First Five Implementation Strategy will be presented to them during that time. She encouraged members of the Technical and Advisory Committee to submit any comments before the meeting to be presented to the board.

V. GSP DEVELOPMENT & ADOPTION NEXT STEPS

Ms. Kiriakou informed that the GSP is out and the comment period has since closed. There were 22 comment letters received on the GSP and consultants at Woodard and Curran are working together with the Coordination Committee on responses to the comments received. GSP adoption is set to go to the GSA board meeting and public hearing between November or December of this year.

Ms. Kiriakou also informed that the purpose of the Technical and Advisory Committee (TAC) up to this point, has been the overview of GSP development and now that the GSP is completed, the TAC's purpose will likely change to provide feedback on other GSA topics.

Mr. Swenson suggested a sub group may be needed in order to look at monitoring wells and other well data sourcing and how these may affect the groundwater model. He also proposed a protocol be established for submittal of specific technical questions and the ability to receive an answer for these. Mr. Swenson commented that Lone Tree Mutual Water Company has submitted applications for well installation permits and only one has been approved. He asked if the TAC could provide additional encouragement for Merced County's Environmental Health to approve permits for the projects. Ms. Kiriakou responded that there is a program in place for that and that these particular wells have not been approved because they are not a like-for-like replacement, so there is not an exemption in place in the ordinance that would allow the wells to be installed. The County would therefore need to do a cumulative analysis to see

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the impact of additional pumping in the upper aquifer and take the analysis information to the County to approve them under a general rule.

Mr. Swenson stated that he would like to see a description of the proposed operation for the El Nido recharge basin and how many acre feet a year MID proposes to add into the basin in different hydrologic cycles.

VI. NEXT MEETING

TBD

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.