

**MID-KINGS RIVER GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021**

This meeting was held by conference call due to local Covid-19 requirements. Chair McCutcheon called the regular meeting to order at approximately 1 p.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Steven P. Dias (phone); Barry McCutcheon, Chair; Dianne Sharp

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Michael Murray, Vice-Chair

OTHERS PRESENT: Dennis Mills, GM and Board Secretary
Ray Carlson, Legal Counsel (phone)
Karen Ornsby, Kings Co Grand Jury (phone)
Bill Tos, Tos Farms (phone)
Lita Spencer, Westchester Group (phone)
Shawn Corley, Lakeside IWD (phone)
Geoff VandenHuevel, Milk Producers Council (phone)
Johnny Gailey, Delta View WA (phone)
Bryant Platt, DWR Subbasin POC (phone)
Sebastian Silviera, Griswold LaSalle (phone)
John Doyel, City of Hanford, (phone)

ESTABLISH QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present at the meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 MEETING

Chair McCutcheon asked if there was a motion regarding the draft September 14, 2021 meeting minutes. It was noted that Attorney Carlson had provided a few minor corrections to the draft minutes. Director Sharp made a motion to approve the September 14, 2021 meeting minutes with the noted corrections. Director Dias seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved the meeting minutes of September 14, 2021 meetings with the noted corrections. The vote for all of the Directors was as follows:

AYES: Steven P. Dias, Barry McCutcheon, Diane Sharp

NOES: None

ABSTAINED:None

ABSENT: Michael Murray

COMMUNICATIONS

Manager Mills reported that a few communications would be reported on in other portions of the meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Fall 2021 SGM Implementation Grant

Manager Mills reported that there was a draft grant Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) from DWR for implementation efforts publically available for review and comment. Some of the details of the grant opportunity were discussed. Manager Mills relayed that DWR staff had communicated that key matters for project funding appeared to be the use of floodwater for groundwater recharge or habitat development. Manager Mills reported that the Griswold Basin effort and the Railsback Basin Phase 2 effort appeared to continue to be projects that matched with the funding priorities of DWR through the PSP. Other fundable efforts like flow meters on wells, subbasin studies, and groundwater modeling were discussed. Manager Mills recommended that the GSA's grant effort selection priorities first be projects that can use floodwater for groundwater recharge or habitat development and then planning/studies/modeling efforts. The Board discussed these issues and agreed with the recommendation. Director Sharp noted that the City of Hanford would be interested in whether the City had potential projects that could be included for consideration.

Review /Update Current Project List

Manager Mills reviewed the Kings CWD Project list with the GSA Board and discussed the listed priority of projects. Given what is known about the draft PSP from DWR it did not appear necessary to adjust the priority of projects in the GSA area. It was noted that the top priority effort had been under construction this last year and a few others had been part of a grant application in the spring that had scored well, but was just outside of the group selected for funding.

Report on WY 2021 Water Budget Components

Manager Mills reported that Kings CWD had recently received evapotranspiration (Et) estimates from Land IQ for the month of September. The estimated Et for the MKR GSA area was 244,821 acre-feet between January and September 2021. Manager Mills also reported on continuing efforts to compare the Land IQ monthly Et estimates to local grower applied water. The comparisons to date have been encouraging, but the effort is ongoing.

Manager Mills also briefly reported on preliminary 2021 Fall groundwater monitoring levels in the area. He relayed that generally there appeared to be an increase of somewhere from 10-20 feet in depth to groundwater. Also, his review of local County well permit applications seemed to indicate that the number of dry wells was not significantly increasing over previous years to date.

Water Management Strategies from other GSAs

Manager Mills reported to the GSA Board a number of groundwater pumping “caps” that are being considered or implemented in the adjacent Kaweah Subbasin.

Manager Mills reported that he understood the East Kaweah GSA area to have experienced significant groundwater level declines and that they are concerned they are rapidly approaching their GSPs minimum thresholds (MTs). For this reason they had issued an emergency groundwater allocation policy for Water Year 2022. The circulated policy flier noted a native/base amount of 0.85 AF/acre, a planned overdraft amount of 0.30 AF/acre and a temporary overdraft amount of 0.5 AF/acre for a total of 1.65 AF/acre. Manager Mills noted that some landowners in the area had received these mailers and were very concerned that this strategy might be pursued in this area. It was noted that there are very few crops that can be grown with only 1.65 AF/acre of water.

Manager Mills reported that he understood the Mid-Kaweah GSA area to have experienced groundwater level declines and around the cities of Visalia and Tulare, and that some of their shallow monitor wells had gone dry. They are pursuing a groundwater pumping cap policy for Water Year 2022 that would be between 1.5 and 2.5 AF/acre. The GSAs presentations relay that there is an average surface water delivery of 1.5 AF/acre in the Tulare ID area, which combined would develop roughly 3.7 AF/acre. The draft information also appears to consider letting parties pump as much as 1 AF beyond the cap before significant penalties are levied.

Manager Mills reported that he understood the eastern part of the Greater Kaweah GSA area had experienced greater than normal groundwater level declines. They are pursuing a groundwater pumping cap policy for Water Year 2023 that currently is 2.5 AF/acre. The policy flier noted a native/base amount of 0.83 AF/acre, a planned overdraft amount of 0.83 AF/acre and a temporary overdraft amount of 0.83 AF/acre for a total of 2.5 AF/acre. The current groundwater usage amounts are based on ET from crops, as flow meters on groundwater wells are not available in all areas. This means that pumping for pre-irrigations and things like winter frost control on citrus likely won't initially be counted against the cap amounts. There would be charges for the planned overdraft pumping tier of \$100/AF and \$200/AF for the temporary pumping tier.

For each of these GSA areas, the management strategy appears to be to significantly limit the maximum amount of groundwater pumping initially, and from there, taper allowed maximum groundwater pumping amount down over time in areas with limited to no access to surface water. Eventually those areas would be limited to the native/base amounts or roughly 0.83 AF/acre. It was noted that many crops grown in the area use much more than 2.5 AF/acre of water. For reference, the average annual ET of cropped areas in Kings CWD appear to be using between 3.0-3.5 AF/acre. There is significant concern from many growers that implementation of the initial pumping cap amount may not be possible if the coming year is dry.

UPDATE ON ONGOING EFFORTS

Report on Round 3 Planning Grant

Manager Mills reported that DWR had again sent a reimbursement check to Kings CWD, rather than the MKR GSA. The check was sent back to DWR and they were in the process of reissuing and sending it to the MKR GSA. Also, there was a brief discussion on the plans to finish efforts the Round 3 planning grant scope of work given the difficulty in accessing private groundwater wells during an extended drought period.

Coordination with Other GSAs

Manager Mills reported that he had received a draft version of the planned SkyTEM flight lines from DWR staff for the area. These had been discussed by the subbasin GSA managers, but no significant comments had developed. The GSA managers were also discussing the 2021 Annual Report development and data collection had begun. Lastly, Manager Mills noted that TLS GSA managers had been discussing DWR's draft grant PSP for Implementation Efforts and that a DWR webinar was planned for later in the month to provide more information about the opportunity.

GSP Consultant List

Manager Mills reported this effort was still under development.

Future DWR Comments on 2020 Tulare Lake GSP

Manager Mills reported that he continued to hear that comments from DWR on the GSP submitted in January 2020 would be coming to the GSAs shortly, and likely in December.

Prop 218 Funding Plans

Manager Mills reported this effort was still under development.

Memo Addressing State Board Letter on Tulare Lake GSP

Manager Mills reported this effort was still under development.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

None

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

The regular December Board of Directors meeting was tentatively set for December 14, 2021 at 1 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Mills
MKR MIN 211109