

**MID-KINGS RIVER
GROUNDWATER
SUSTAINABILITY
AGENCY**

RE: *INITIAL PRIVATE GROUNDWATER RECHARGE POLICY*

(revised May 13, 2025)

County of Kings

City of Hanford

A MKR GSA POLICY TO ALLOW PRIVATE GROUNDWATER RECHARGE FOR FUTURE RECOVERY BEYOND FUTURE GROUNDWATER

ALLOCATIONS. The policy hereby contains as follows:

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Doug Verboon
Chair

Joe Neves

Richard Valle

Rusty Robinson

Robert Thayer

Kimber Regan

I. The Mid-Kings River GSA (MKR GSA) is committed to sustainably managing groundwater in its jurisdictional area, consistent with views of significant and unreasonable undesirable results as set out in the Mid-Kings River GSA's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (MKR GSP).

II. The MKR GSA plans to develop initial groundwater pumping allocations and a projected allocation ramp-down as part of SGMA compliance efforts.

III. Landowners within the MKR GSA have expressed interest in pursuing private groundwater recharge efforts using floodwater to increase their allowable groundwater pumping in future dry years.

IV. The MKR GSA places the following limitations/restrictions on the use of diverted floodwater for recharge:

- Any barn, ponds, or lands to which manure or waste from an animal facility that generates waste from the feeding and housing of animals for more than 45 days per year in a confined area that is not vegetated are applied;
- Any agricultural field where pesticide or fertilizer application has occurred in the prior 30 days or in the period prohibited by applicable law, whichever is longer; and
- Any area that could cause damage to critical levees, infrastructure, wastewater and drinking water systems, drinking water wells or drinking water supplies, or exacerbate the threat of flood and other health and safety concerns.

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V. The MKR GSA wishes to support the efforts to responsibly increase local recharge while acknowledging that there is much work to be done before a robust GSA policy on the matter is developed. MKR GSA intends to adopt this initial policy, putting in place several guidelines that will avoid negative impacts from the efforts.

VI. This is an initial policy and no assurance is given that this policy will not be modified or altered as additional information and experience occurs.

VII. Giving landowners recharge credit that can be used to justify future pumping will bring a significant administrative and monitoring burden on the MKR GSA. Landowners should expect that fees will be applied to the recharge amounts in the future when the administrative burden is better understood.

VIII. Finally, for the reasons set forth above, the MKR GSA Board of Directors finds that the adoption of this Policy will aid and promote the sustainable management of groundwater.

DEFINITIONS

aquifer — A body of rock or sediment that is sufficiently porous and permeable to store, transmit, and yield significant quantities of groundwater to wells and springs.

groundwater — Water that occurs beneath the land surface and fills the pore spaces of the alluvium, soil, or rock formation in which it is situated.

groundwater recharge — The managed infiltration or injection of water into a groundwater aquifer.

groundwater recharge facility — A structure that serves to conduct surface water into the ground for the purpose of replenishing groundwater. The facility may consist of dug or constructed spreading basins, pits, ditches, furrows, streambed modifications, or injection wells.

Infiltration rate — The quantity of water that can enter the soil in a specified time interval.

natural recharge — Replenishment of an aquifer generally from snowmelt and runoff, through seepage from the surface. Recharge of an aquifer that occurs without human interference

percolation — The process in which water moves through a porous material, usually surface water migrating through soil toward a groundwater aquifer.

precipitation — The amount of water that falls to the earth as rain, snow, hail, or is formed on the earth as dew, and frost.

INITIAL PRIVATE GROUNDWATER RECHARGE POLICY

A. REGISTRATION

Parties within the MKR GSA that wish to pursue private groundwater recharge efforts to justify future groundwater pumping must register the fields or facilities where recharge would occur with the GSA prior to the effort beginning. Information like County APN, canal turnout locations, groundwater well location, groundwater well completion reports and other relevant items will need to be provided.

B. MONITORING

If landowners want to use recharge to justify future pumping, they must agree to allow GSA to access their property for monitoring with appropriate prior notice.

C. CREDIT AGAINST FUTURE PUMPING

- 1) The surface water must be applied directly into a specific groundwater recharge facility that meets MKR requirements. MKR will provide the landowners with documentation that confirms the acreage and location of the facility and that it meets the requirements of this policy.
- 2) All cost of establishing and construction of the dedicated groundwater recharge facility are the responsibility of the landowner.
- 3) All surface water diverted to the landowner is required to be metered or use another standard measuring method approved by MKR.
- 4) Surface water diverted into dedicated recharge facilities will be credited to the landowner at 90% of the surface water diverted. The remaining 10% credit will remain with MKR for the benefit of all landowners.
- 5) Groundwater credits will only be generated for different aquifers as follows unless the landowner provides additional supporting data:
 - i. Both A- and B- aquifers as identified in the MKR GSP from surface recharge
 - ii. C-aquifer as identified in the MKR GSP if the recharge specially occurs in that aquifer
- 6) The groundwater credits issued to landowners can be carried over to subsequent years for a maximum of 5 years. The groundwater recharge credits can be transferred to other landowners within MKR based upon the requirements of the forthcoming Groundwater Extraction Allocation Policy.
- 7) These provisions will also apply for recharge on fallow ground that will not be farmed in that year but that has not been designated as a groundwater recharge facility. Those deliveries will be eligible for 75% credit of the measured water

applied minus any ET values for the ground.

- 8) These provisions will also apply to surface water applied to land currently in agricultural production, commonly referred to as Flood-MAR. Those deliveries will be eligible for 75% credit of the measured water applied minus any ET values. Recharge is not permitted on any agricultural land where pesticide or fertilizer application has occurred in the prior 30 days or in the period prohibited by applicable law, whichever is longer. In addition, the land must comply with requirements of CV-Salts Program.
- 9) Recharge on open fields will use the surface water diversion flow meter readings minus the ET readings for the fields in the month recharge occurred.
- 10) Treated wastewater from industrial processing, dairies, or municipal sources may be used for recharge if it will not impact nor degrade water quality. Landowners wishing to use this water should contact the GSA prior to application.
- 11) Recharge credits will be credited to the landowner account in the water year that they occur, and any unused credits will carryover on a 5-year basis. At the start of year 6, the oldest credits will expire ensuring that only the most recent five years of credits are available for use. The recharge credits will be in accordance with the forthcoming Groundwater Allocation Policy.

D. GROUNDWATER RECHARGE FACILITIES

Appropriate information must be provided by the facility owner to quantify the volume of water being recharged in percolation ponds/basins. Water account and project specific information provided by the water user shall remain confidential. The amount of groundwater credit received will be allocated based on the supporting documentation and subject to staff's review. All recharge facilities must be approved by MKR to receive credit. The following checklist is required for approval:

- Land selected for this activity must be favorable for passive recharge.
- A geotechnical investigation report stamped by a professional geologist or engineer must be provided to MKR for review and approval.
- Installation of a dedicated water meter or another standard measuring method to measure the amount of water delivered to the recharge project.
- The facility needs to be isolated from the landowner's irrigation system or have separate meters for any discharge.
- Documentation of source of water, place of diversion and amount of diversion

E. OVER-APPLICATION OF FLOODWATER

During a flood event, MKR will provide credit to landowners that have floodwaters on parcels above irrigation demand (as measured by ET). Appropriate information must be provided by the Landowner

to quantify the volume of water being recharged on fields. The amount of groundwater credit received will be allocated based on the supporting documentation and subject to MKR review.

ENFORCEMENT - VIOLATION

If parties do not follow the requirements of this initial policy, the effort will not be allowed for use to justify future pumping.

SEVERABILITY

If any section, sub-section, sentence, clause or phrase of this Policy is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Policy. The MKR GSA Board of Directors hereby declares that it would have passed this Policy, and each section, sub-section, sentence, clause, and phrase hereof, irrespective of the fact that one or more sections, sub-sections, sentences, clauses and phrases be declared invalid.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The Policy shall retroactively take effect as of May 1, 2023 and shall be published by title and summary on the MKR GSA's website together with the names of members of the MKR GSA Board of Directors voting for and against the same.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,



Chuck Kinney, General Manager

Vote of all Directors at the regular May 13, 2025 meeting:

AYES: Joe Neves, Richard Valle, Doug Verboon, Rusty Robinson, Kimber Regan

NOES:

ABSTAINED:

ABSENT: Robert Thayer