

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST TURLOCK SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE EAST TURLOCK SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2:00 p.m., Thursday, January 28, 2021

Meeting materials and recording can be found at the following link:
<https://turlockgroundwater.org/events/wgfrm5lxf8nc26thleydndhdgnyd9>

IMPORTANT NOTICE: DUE TO THE ONGOING COVID-19 CRISIS AND PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20, THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA CONFERENCE CALL WITHOUT A PHYSICAL MEETING LOCATION. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISHED TO PROVIDE COMMENT OR OBSERVE THE MEETING WERE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN THE CONFERENCE CALL.

- 1) **WELCOME / MEETING PROCEDURES** – Herb Smart (Turlock Irrigation District) provided a brief presentation and explanation regarding conference call procedures.
- 2) **IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS** – Michael Cooke, WTS GSA TAC Chair, took a roll call of meeting participants to include members and the public.

WTS GSA TAC MEMBERS PRESENT	ETS GSA TAC MEMBERS PRESENT
Michael Cooke – WTS GSA TAC Chair Lacey McBride – WTS GSA TAC Vice Chair Michael Clipper – WTS GSA TAC Treasurer Karen Morgan – City of Ceres David Odom – Denair Community Services District Richard Lindo – Denair Community Services District Brody Patterson – Merced County Herb Smart – Turlock Irrigation District Debbie Montalbano – Turlock Irrigation District Phil Govea – Turlock Irrigation District Bill Penney – Turlock Irrigation District Brandon McMillan – Turlock Irrigation District Walt Ward – Stanislaus County Allison Martin – City Of Turlock Leandro Maldonado – Delhi County Water District Michelle Harris – Keyes Community Services District Mike Pitcock – City of Waterford Curtis Jorritsma – Hilmar County Water District	Kevin Kauffman – ETS GSA TAC Chair Brody Patterson – Merced County Dennis Yotsuya – Ballico-Cortez Water District Walt Ward – Stanislaus County

- 3) **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting of the WTS GSA TAC was called to order at 2:04 p.m. by Michael Cooke, WTS GSA TAC Chair. The meeting of the ETS GSA TAC was called to order at 2:04 p.m. by Kevin Kauffman, ETS GSA TAC Chair.

4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

WTS GSA TAC MOTION: Keyes Community Services District (M. Harris) moved, Denair Community Services District (D. Odom) seconded, that the minutes from the January 14, 2021 special meeting be approved. All voted in favor with none opposed. The Chair declared the motion carried.

ETS GSA TAC MOTION: Ballico-Cortez Water District (D. Yotsuya) moved, Stanislaus County (W. Ward) seconded, that the minutes from the January 14, 2021 special meeting be approved. All voted in favor with none opposed. The Chair declared the motion carried.

5) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Milt Treiweiler addressed the Technical Advisory Committees and requested that the following video entitled, "Climate Science Update" by Jeff Mirocha, PhD from San Jose State University be shared: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6w3eKp7lFeA&t=610s>.

6) BUDGET

Michael Clipper, WTS GSA TAC Treasurer, provided a brief report on the current bank account balance and pending invoices. No action was taken.

Kevin Kauffman, ETS GSA TAC Chair, provided a brief report on the current bank account balance and pending invoices. No action was taken.

7) STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS, FORM 700

Valerie Kincaid (General Counsel) discussed that members of the Technical Advisory Committees will be receiving a Form 700, Statement of Economic Interests, from the WTS GSA Secretary which will need to be completed and returned before April 1, 2021. The form will be kept on file and the purpose is to identify and prevent financial conflicts of interest.

8) STAKEHOLDER SURVEY UPDATE

Herb Smart (Turlock Irrigation District) provided the TACs with a report on the Turlock Subbasin Stakeholder Survey, which was developed in 2020 and consists of 13 questions. There is still time to participate in the Stakeholder Survey, which is available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/TurlockSGMA or www.surveymonkey.com/r/TurlockSGMASpanish.

9) SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT CRITERIA – PROPOSED FRAMEWORK – CHRONIC LOWERING OF WATER LEVELS

Phyllis Stanin discussed the proposed framework for the Chronic Lowering of Water Levels Sustainable Management Criteria. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act allows 20 years to avoid undesirable results and achieve sustainability, and water levels may fall below the Minimum Threshold (MT) in the initial implementation period, however those instances should be anticipated by using Interim Milestones as a measure for meeting MTs during the Implementation Period and Measurable Objectives as an operational target to avoid MT exceedances and undesirable results.

Groundwater Sustainability Plan regulations require that MTs be supported by the rate of groundwater elevation decline based on historical trends, water year type, projected water use in the basin, and potential effects on other sustainability indicators. The Department of Water Resources Best Management Practices consist of considering the depths and screen intervals of water supply wells, the adjacent basin's MTs for groundwater elevations, the potential impacts of changing groundwater elevations on groundwater dependent ecosystems in the Subbasin, and which principal aquifer is being evaluated.

2015 Groundwater Elevations show that the cone of depression in the eastern portion of the subbasin has expanded over time, that there is increasing subsurface flow from all directions to the low-point and increasing streamflow depletion is projected in the future baseline. The potential for additional adverse impacts resulting from low water levels during the recent drought were discussed. It is expected that water levels will continue to decline without projects and management actions.

The working definition for the Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels Undesirable Results is “Significant and unreasonable water level declines such that water supply wells are adversely impacted during multi-year droughts in a manner that cannot be readily managed or mitigated.” The framework for the Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels Minimum Threshold is, “Undesirable Results will be evidenced by an exceedance of minimum thresholds (minimum water levels yet to be determined) in xx% of GSP monitoring wells in # of consecutive semiannual monitoring events.” A wide range of potential approaches to establishing MTs were provided by TAC members. Concerns related to water quality and ways to avoid impacts to domestic wells or the rivers were discussed. It was also recognized that it is difficult to assign a MT without knowing the monitoring network or Sustainable Yield.

The TACs were reminded that a consensus on MT needs to be reached in the next 30 to 60 days. It was also recognized that the initial draft MT can be revised as we continue to develop the GSP and related analyses. However, an initial approach for the Sustainable Management Criteria including Undesirable Results, and Minimum Thresholds need to be established in order to move forward. As a result, a decision on the initial draft MT is needed sooner rather than later.

The current CASGEM Monitoring Network consists of 32 monitoring wells and could be a starting point for a monitoring network under SGMA. There are data gaps in the Western Lower Principal Aquifer and the Eastern Subbasin that will need to be supplemented. New monitoring wells will be coming online with the Technical Support Services DWR Grant and Sustainable Groundwater Management Planning Round 3 Grant funding.

There was discussion amongst the TACs regarding the selection of representative GSP monitoring wells, and where the Minimum Threshold for Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels should be set in order to meet compliance.

Next steps for the TACs include:

- Complete baseline modeling process:
 - Sustainable yield analysis
 - Climate change analysis
- Complete sustainable management criteria for all sustainability indicators
- Complete draft chapters of the GSP and release for public comment
- Continue to define parameters for GSP Projects and Management Actions; final GSP model runs

It was suggested that the TACs continue to meet twice a month in order to stay on schedule for GSP development and implementation. There was also a discussion regarding the potential benefit in establishing an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to help move the process forward.

10) SGMA RELATED UPDATES

This is an opportunity for TAC members to discuss and provide updates on issues related to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. A list of topics could include, but are not limited to the items below. No action will be taken.

- Herb Smart (Turlock Irrigation District) provided the TACs with a public outreach update:
 - Third Groundwater Lunch Hour will be held Friday, January 29, 2021.
 - Please encourage interested parties to sign up for emails at www.turlockgroundwater.gov.
 - Ad Hoc Committee continues to work on joint fact sheet with Modesto Subbasin.
 - If the member agencies plan to do bill inserts regarding SGMA, there is a template available for use on the www.turlockgroundwater.org website.
- The Round 3 Grant and GRAT update will be deferred to the February 11th meeting.

- The GSP schedule update will be deferred to the February 11th meeting.
- Lacey McBride (WTS GSA TAC Vice Chair) discussed lessons learned from critically over-drafted basins that have already completed a GSP. It was recommended that the WTS & ETS GSA TACs develop a future project list that can be implemented during the GSP process in a broad manner so that projects and funding are not limited once the GSP is in place.

10) NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2021.

11) ADJOURNMENT

WTS GSA MOTION: City of Ceres (K. Morgan) moved, Turlock Irrigation District (D. Montalbano) seconded, that the meeting be adjourned at 4:15 p.m. All voted in favor with none opposed. The Chair declared the motion carried.

ETS GSA MOTION: Ballico-Cortez Water District (D. Yotsuya) moved, that the meeting be adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The Chair declared the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted:



Tara Rodriguez

Acting Secretary, West Turlock Subbasin GSA TAC