



# MEETING MINUTES

## MIUGSA Stakeholder Guidance Committee Meeting #1

<b>Date:</b>	8/10/2021
<b>Attendees:</b>	Olsson: Jim Schneider, Stacey Roach, Brian Dunnigan, Haley Engstrom, Mallory Morton MID: Hicham EITal, Phil McMurray SGC: Craig Arnold, Amy Hath, Tom Dinwoodie, Olivia Gomez, Greg Olzack, Maxwell Norton, Galen Miyamoto, Joe Sansoni, Joe Scoto, Ben Migliazzo, Mike Jensen, Todd May, Arlan Thomas, Stu Nakashima Online: Breanne Vandenberg, East Merced RCD (Jean Okuye), Lacy Carothers, Lisa Kayser-Grant, Susan Walsh
<b>Project #</b>	021-03426

## MIUGSA GSP IMPLEMENTATION – SGC MEETING #1

### 1. Welcome/Introductions

- a. Participants introduced in the room and online
- b. Stacey informed the group that the presentation would be sent out to participants and made available on the website.

### 2. Presentation/Discussion

- Project Background (Hicham/Jim)
  - Explained Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) background and how the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was drafted by the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA's) in the Subbasin: MIUGSA, Merced Subbasin GSA, and Turner Island Water District GSA-1
  - Discussed that Merced Irrigation-Urban Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MIUGSA) has a better chance of succeeding with surface water availability
  - The GSP is not yet approved by the state, but it was submitted in 2020. California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will make a determination by January 2022. The law states that GSAs are required to implement the draft plan even though it is not yet approved.
  - Hicham summarized immediate unique challenges facing the Subbasin. He explained (1) Multiple Cones of Depression located to the North and South outside of MIUGSA. (2) Subsidence at the southern end of the Subbasin, and (3) Saline water issues along San Joaquin River.
- Water Supply Evaluation (Jim)
  - These meetings are primarily focused on agricultural water use, as urban water will be addressed at a later meeting.
  - The four sources of water that make up the water supply were explained (precipitation, surface water from Merced Irrigation District (MID), native groundwater, developed groundwater).
  - The groundwater budget shows a net reduction in aquifer storage, which is the overall goal to be addressed by the GSP.
  - Water supply that will be discussed has been determined in part from METRIC consumptive use. Serves as the data source of water use estimates Jim will go through.



- Jim explained the MID deliveries as well as the fate of those deliveries.
- The difference between exclusive and supplemental pumping was explained and showed through a series of stacked bar charts.
- Comment from SGC member: almost all MID deliveries in 2015 were from groundwater pumping.
- On average, Supplemental users use about 1.1 acre-feet/acre (af/a) and exclusive users use 2.97 af/a. Problem that will be addressed is what allocation to set that satisfies supplemental and exclusive users.
- Comment from SGC member: why is there one plan but three implementation schemes [for each GSA]? Jim answered that there is a coordination committee, and we get to take into account the unique nature of MIUGSA's water sources.
- Comment from SGC member: What they [other GSAs] do upstream affects what we can do here. We must work with them collaboratively to achieve sustainability and they need to cooperate.
  - Hicham answered there is coordination happening to avoid undesirable results. MIUGSA is working on a framework internally. However, He pointed out that the state can exclude a certain GSA within a Subbasin from an imposed probation on a Subbasin, if the GSA demonstrates sound management practices. The goal is for MIUGSA's urban and agricultural users to avoid state intervention and maintain local control of the groundwater management.
- Comment from SGC member: Some areas (Chowchilla) are experiencing aquifer depletion that will change future operations.
- Comment from SGC member: These average pumping values are only for the MIUGSA, but we need to see what it might be across the entire Subbasin to reach sustainability. Concerned about a moving target due to influence of other GSA's on MIUGSA sustainability goals.
  
- Groundwater Management Examples (Jim)
- Jim explained that the examples provided are aimed at providing the SGC members with real-life (tried and true) examples where a specific management method succeeded in some areas and failed in others. MIUGSA needs to develop policies that best serve its needs.
  - Rosedale-Rio Bravo (RRB) – Jim explained the background of RRB and the four supplies of water they can use. Allocations are based on consumptive use (similar to map shown earlier). Any unused water gets re-allocated to users that used too much through the season. If a user exceeds even this, there is a fee of \$500 per acre-foot for their overuse.
    - Comment from SGC member: where do they find the water?
      - Response: Through water banking. Also people there follow their ground and sell the water. Water banked supplies are released from upstream storage.
    - Comment from SGC member: what are the surrounding GSAs thinking about this?
      - Response: Jim is not sure yet but there is one GSP for the subbasin.
    - Comment from SGC member: we are at a point where we need to get creative. Can we bank water anywhere in the areas that get excess recharge? Will the state allow that?
  - Upper Republican Natural Resources District (URNRD) – Jim explained the background of the URNRD and NRD system in Nebraska. Showed water decline maps that prove the

regulations have slowed declines. Explained the allocation history of the URNRD with well spacing, a moratorium, pooling, and transfers. Multi-year allocation periods. Most NRD's allow users to carry-over a portion of their allocation. All of the wells are metered and allocations are based on gross pumping.

- Comment from SGC member: There is no developed water?
  - Reponse: Correct.
- Comment from Hicham: we need to have a discussion on whether we need to base allocations off of consumptive use or gross pumping.
- Comment from SGC member: Seems to be a different type of farming in Nebraska vs. MIUGSA.
  - Response: Much larger farms in Nebraska.
- Comment from SGC member: pooling, multi-year, carry over would be beneficial to MIUGSA. We need to set the number.
- Jim: From here on, we are going to take this information and start narrowing down on what the rules should be and how they should be enforced. There will be a survey to get your thoughts on the information presented today. Please fill it out and send back to us through email or bring it next time.
  - Comment from SGC member: moratorium on new irrigation acres may be an action we should consider. Or moratorium on housing development wells.
    - Response: Hicham mentioned that MIUGSA does not have land planning power but it could be a recommendation to the governing body.
  - Comment from SGC member: Urban areas are also needing to cut back and expanded areas will be expected to offset their water use in some way.
    - Response: A presentation showing urban cut back as stated in GSP will be presented to the SGC at subsequent meeting.
- Question from Hicham: do you feel comfortable about the concepts we discussed today? Please return to us in the meeting or you can approach us individually and speak your mind.
  - Comment from SGC member: Do all acres in MIUGSA have access to surface water?
    - Hicham: Technically yes, but practically no. Historically, as large farms were subdivided, the smaller parcels [resulting from subdivision] further from a MID facility lost or have not maintained connection. MID does provide comments on minor subdivisions at the County to protect such rights, but the County is not obligated to make such demands as a condition on minor subdivisions.