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**DRAFT**

**MODESTO SUBBASIN  
GROUNDWATER  
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN  
(GSP)**

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**STANISLAUS AND TUOLUMNE  
RIVERS GROUNDWATER BASIN  
ASSOCIATION GROUNDWATER  
SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY  
(STRGBA GSA) and  
TUOLUMNE GSA**

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**November 11, 2021**



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## Acronyms

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Brown Act	Ralph M. Brown Act
Committee	STRGBA GSA representatives and/or alternates tasked with overseeing activities to achieve the objectives of SGMA as applicable within the Modesto Subbasin
DWR	Department of Water Resources, State of California
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
MHI	Median Household Income
MID	Modesto Irrigation District
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OID	Oakdale Irrigation District
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
STRGBA	Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee

## **4. NOTICE AND COMMUNICATION**

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The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) in the Modesto Subbasin conducted a number of activities to engage beneficial users of groundwater, interested parties, and the general public in the development of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association Groundwater Sustainability Agency (STRGBA GSA) and Tuolumne County GSA were responsible for conducting outreach and engagement related to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) for the portions of the Subbasin located with their respective service areas.

### **4.1. DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

As described in Chapter 1 of this GSP, the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association (STRGBA) agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to form the STRGBA GSA in February 2017. The STRGBA GSA is governed by a committee tasked with overseeing activities to achieve the objectives of SGMA applicable within the Modesto Subbasin (Committee). Each member agency designates one staff person and one or more alternates to serve on the Committee. Stanislaus County participates in the Committee on behalf of the Tuolumne GSA.

Each calendar year, the Committee elects a chair and vice chair from its members. The chair is responsible for presiding over and notifying members of Committee meetings. Except for actions for which a different approval standard is set forth in the MOU, all actions of the Committee are approved by a majority vote carried by of the members present.

To provide a venue for discussion of technical topics related to the development of the GSP, the STRGBA GSA also formed a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). TAC membership is not defined in the MOU, but it generally includes one participating representative from each of the STRGBA GSA member agencies. Stanislaus County, a STRGBA GSA member agency, represented both itself as well as the Tuolumne County GSA in these TAC meetings.

Both Committee and TAC meetings are open to the public and held in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code section 5490 et sq.). These meetings are further described in Section 3.4.1.

### **4.2. GROUNDWATER BENEFICIAL USES AND USERS**

Beneficial users and uses of groundwater were identified and engaged by the GSAs based on the place- and interest-based categories described in SGMA and codified in Water Code Section 10723.2:

(a) Holders of overlying groundwater rights, including:

(1) Agricultural users, including farmers, ranchers, and dairy professionals

(2) Domestic well owners

(b) Municipal well owners

(c) Public water systems

(d) Local land use planning agencies

(e) Environmental users of groundwater

(f) Surface water users, if there is a hydrologic connection between surface and groundwater bodies

(g) The federal government, including, but not limited to, the military and managers of federal lands

(h) California Native American tribes

(i) Disadvantaged communities, including, but not limited to, those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems

(j) Entities listed in Section 10927 that are monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or a part of a groundwater basin managed by the groundwater sustainability agency

Beneficial users and uses representing these categories and nature of consultation with these users are further described below and identified in **Table 4-1**.

**Table 4-1. Nature of Consultation with Beneficial Users**

Beneficial User Category	Beneficial Users	Nature of Consultation				
		Participation in Stakeholder Assessment	Membership on STRGBA GSA and/or Technical Advisory Committee or Tuolumne County GSA	Interested Parties Database	Public Meetings, Workshops, and Subbasin Office Hours	Targeted Outreach to Representatives of Beneficial Users
Agricultural Users	Agricultural water providers - MID, OID	X	X	X	X	X
	Individual agricultural water users, including dairies, farmers, and ranchers	X		X	X	X
Domestic Well Owners	Domestic well owners	X		X	X	X
Municipal and Industrial Well Owners	City of Modesto	X	X	X	X	X
	City of Oakdale	X	X	X	X	X
	City of Riverbank	X	X	X	X	X
	City of Waterford	X	X	X	X	X
	Municipal supply wells owners	X	X	X	X	X
	MID	X	X	X	X	X
	OID	X	X	X	X	X
Public Water Systems	[See Section 2, Table 2-1 for the list of public water systems in the Subbasin]			X	X	
Local Land Use Planning Agencies	City of Modesto Planning Commission		X		X	
	City of Oakdale Planning Commission		X		X	
	City of Riverbank Planning Commission		X		X	
	City of Waterford Planning Commission		X		X	
	Stanislaus County Local Agency Formation Commission			X	X	
	Stanislaus County Planning Commission		X	X	X	
	Tuolumne County Local Agency Formation Commission				X	
	Tuolumne County Local Planning Commission		X	X	X	
Environmental Users of Groundwater	California Department of Fish and Wildlife			X	X	
	Tuolumne River Trust	X		X	X	
	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service			X	X	
Surface Water Users	Individual landowners			X	X	
	MID	X	X	X	X	
	OID	X	X	X	X	
	Tuolumne River Trust	X		X	X	
Federal Government	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service			X		
California Native American Tribes	[There are no tribal lands are documented in the DWR Water Management Planning Tool or are known to exist in the Modesto Subbasin.]					
Disadvantaged Communities (Census Designated Tracts)	Airport				X	X
	City of Oakdale	X	X	X	X	X
	City of Waterford	X	X	X	X	X
	Empire			X	X	X
	Rouse				X	X
	West Modesto				X	X
Groundwater Monitoring and Reporting Entities	STRGBA	X	X	X	X	X

KEY: GSA = Groundwater Sustainability Agency, MID = Modesto Irrigation District, OID = Oakdale Irrigation District, STRGBA = Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association



#### **4.2.1. Agricultural Users (§10723.2(a)(1))**

The Modesto Subbasin is largely agricultural. In 2017, approximately 64 percent of the Subbasin was defined as irrigated agriculture (Stanislaus Land Use dataset, 2017). Irrigated agriculture covers about 157,911 acres. Approximately 23 percent of the Subbasin (about 56,777 acres) consists of non-agriculture, non-irrigated agriculture (e.g., rangeland), undeveloped land, and surface water.

Agricultural groundwater users include growers, ranchers, and dairies. Water for agricultural purposes is primarily provided through groundwater extracted from the Subbasin, as well as surface water supplies provided by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) and Oakdale Irrigation District (OID). MID and OID each operate groundwater wells to supplement surface water deliveries and manage the water table.

Agricultural interests are represented on the Committee by MID and OID; in addition, the elected boards and councils of the STRGBA GSA member agencies provide broad agricultural representation. Individuals representing agricultural water users were also part of the initial stakeholder assessment conducted to develop the Communication and Engagement Plan; and actively participated in monthly Committee and TAC meetings, public workshops, and GSP chapter public comment processes.

During development of the GSP, MID and OID conducted outreach on groundwater management practice and SGMA to their agricultural customers. Information was provided at MID and OID grower meetings, in newsletters, and during presentations to the MID and OID Boards of Directors. Agricultural groundwater users also participated in the Subbasin stakeholder assessment, which is described in the Communication and Engagement Plan.

#### **4.2.2. Domestic Well Owners (§10723.2(a)(2))**

Domestic wells are present throughout the Subbasin, but the highest density occurs in the central region of the Subbasin, along the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers, and west of the City of Modesto. OID also provides domestic water from District-owned wells for its rural water system and serves as the trustee of six improvement districts. A density of domestic wells is illustrated on Figure 2-14 in Chapter 2.

Domestic well owners are represented on the Committee by OID and Stanislaus County and had the opportunity to consult in development of the GSP through monthly public meetings, workshops, and GSP public comment processes. An informational postcard was distributed to over 350 landowners in the eastern part of the Subbasin with a high density of domestic wells to inform them about development of the GSP. The STRGBA GSA also engaged the Municipal Advisory Councils for the communities of Airport, West Modesto, and Empire, located in unincorporated Stanislaus County, to inform them about development of the GSP and solicit input on locations for new groundwater monitoring wells.

#### **4.2.3. Municipal & Industrial Well Owners (§10723.2(b))**

There are approximately 150 municipal supply wells in the Subbasin, as shown in Chapter 2, Figure 2-13. The highest concentration of municipal supply wells is located within the City of Modesto. There are also public supply wells located in the Cities of Oakdale, Riverbank, and Waterford; and unincorporated areas of Stanislaus County. The Cities of Modesto, Oakdale, Riverbank, and Waterford pump groundwater for municipal and industrial water supply. MID and OID also operate groundwater wells to supplement surface water supplies and manage the water table.

All four cities, Stanislaus County, MID, and OID are member agencies of the STRGBA GSA and represent municipal and industrial well owners. Member agency staff provided periodic updates to their respective governing bodies informing them about progress developing the GSP and consulting on key groundwater management decisions. STRGBA GSA staff also provided presentations on SGMA and the GSP at meetings of the Manufacturer's Council of Central Valley. In addition, municipal and industrial well owners participated in the stakeholder assessment.

#### **4.2.4. Public Water Systems (§10723.2(c))**

Public water systems in the Subbasin include the Cities of Modesto, Oakdale, Riverbank, and Waterford, as well as small community water supply systems operated by the respective community and regulated by Stanislaus County. There are approximately 77 water systems in the Subbasin that are not municipal or irrigation districts. A majority of these systems are very small. A summary of these non-municipal and non-irrigation systems is provided in Chapter 2, Table 2-1 of the GSP.

The Cities of Modesto, Oakdale, Riverbank, and Waterford are all represented on the STRGBA Committee. Small community water systems were represented in development of the GSP by Stanislaus County.

#### **4.2.5. Local Land Use Planning Agencies**

Local land use planning agencies in the Modesto Subbasin include the planning commissions of the City of Modesto, City of Oakdale, City of Riverbank, City of Waterford, Stanislaus County, and Tuolumne County, as well as the Stanislaus County and Tuolumne County Local Agency Formation Commissions. These agencies are represented on the Committee by their respective STRGBA GSA representative.

#### **4.2.6. Environmental Users of Groundwater**

The GSAs used the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Natural Communities Commonly Associated with Groundwater as a starting point to identify groundwater dependent ecosystems within the Modesto Subbasin. The mapping shows wetlands and vegetation along the three major rivers (Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and San Joaquin Rivers),

along Dry Creek and areas between Dry Creek and the Tuolumne River, and within the San Joaquin River Natural Wildlife Refuge.

Environmental users of groundwater were invited to participate in monthly Committee and TAC meetings as well as public workshops. A representative from the Tuolumne River Trust also participated in the stakeholder assessment.

#### **4.2.7. Surface Water Users (§10723.2(f))**

The Tuolumne and Stanislaus Rivers provide the primary sources of water in the Modesto Subbasin. Surface water is used for agricultural, municipal, industrial, and environmental purposes. MID delivers surface water from the Tuolumne River for agricultural irrigation. MID also treats and delivers surface water from the Tuolumne River to the City of Modesto for municipal and industrial use. OID diverts water from the Stanislaus River to municipal and agricultural customers. Other surface water users include individual landowners with riparian water rights.

Surface water users are represented on the Committee and TAC by MID and OID. The STRGBA GSA also coordinated with GSAs in the Turlock Subbasin regarding management of flows in the Tuolumne River.

#### **4.2.8. Federal Government (§10723.2(g))**

Federal government agencies in the Modesto Subbasin include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which runs the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. The Local Redevelopment Authority oversees the transfers, reuse, and redevelopment of the former Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant, which was previously owned by the U.S. Army. Federal agencies were invited to participate in monthly Committee and TAC meetings and public workshops.

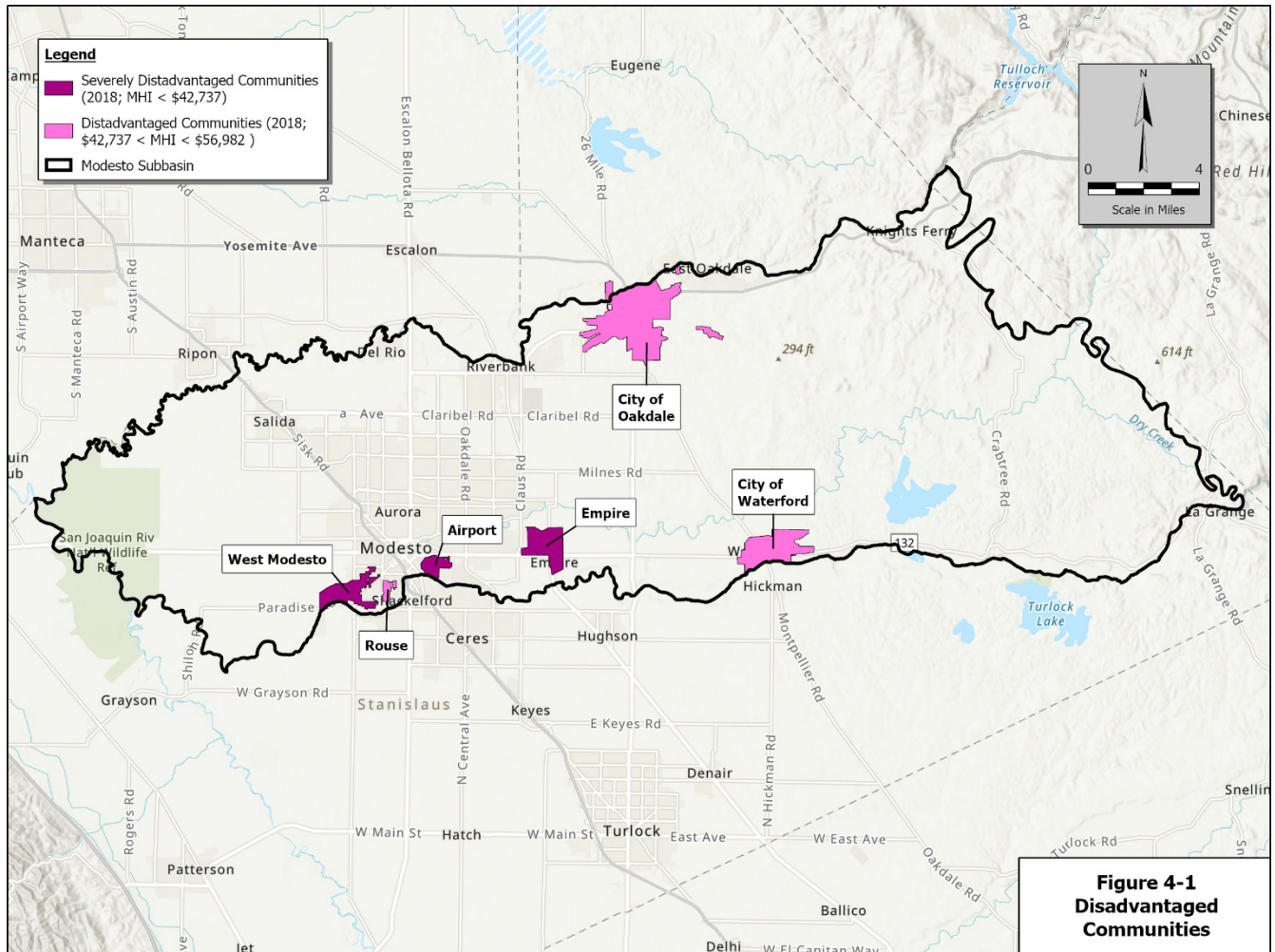
#### **4.2.9. California Native American Tribes (§10723.2(h))**

No tribal lands are documented in the DWR Water Management Planning Tool or are known to exist in the Modesto Subbasin.

#### **4.2.10. Disadvantaged Communities (§10723.2(i))**

Data published by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2018 show six Census Designated Places within the Modesto Subbasin that meet the annual Median Household Income (MHI) criteria to be considered a disadvantaged community or severely disadvantaged community by the State: Airport, Empire, Oakdale, Rouse, Waterford, and West Modesto. These communities are identified in **Figure 4-1**. The MHI for each is identified in **Table 4-2** below.

**Figure 4-1. Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities**



**Table 4-2. Census-Designated Places Designated as Disadvantaged**

Census-Designated Place	Median Household Income <sup>1</sup>
Airport	\$28,352
City of Oakdale	\$54,443
City of Waterford	\$54,886
Empire	\$36,774
Rouse	\$46,300
West Modesto	\$33,920

Notes;

<sup>1</sup> Median Household Income is based on 2014–2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

These communities are represented on the Committee and TAC by the City of Modesto, City of Oakdale, City of Waterford, and Stanislaus County. Water users in these communities were notified about development of the GSP through bilingual (English-Spanish) water bill inserts; notices and information distributed through the GSA member agencies' existing communication platforms (e.g. websites, social media accounts, newsletters); and presentations provided at community advisory councils and other organizations.

The STRGBA GSA distributed a bilingual electronic survey in Spring and Summer 2019 to assess stakeholders' understanding and perspectives on key SGMA topics and gather input on preferred outreach strategies. The survey was promoted via utility bill inserts, postings on the STRGBA GSA and GSA member agencies' websites and social media pages, and a notice in the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau's Farm News. The survey went out to all water service customers, which included the communities of West Modesto, Rouse, Airport, Empire, and the City of Modesto. The survey results were posted on the STRGBA GSA website and used to develop the Modesto Subbasin Communication and Engagement Plan.

City of Modesto staff, on behalf of the STRGBA GSA, also attended various community meetings to discuss proposed locations for new groundwater monitoring wells and inform community members about development of the GSP. This included presentations at the Airport Neighborhood Collaborative, West Modesto Community Collaborative, and Empire Municipal Advisory Council in August and September 2019. In addition, informational materials were distributed through Stanislaus County Municipal Advisory Councils. Groundwater users in communities designated as disadvantaged also had the opportunity to participate in development of the GSP through monthly Committee and TAC meetings and public workshops.

#### **4.2.11. Groundwater Elevation Monitoring and Reporting Entities (§10723.2(j))**

STRGBA serves as the CASGEM Monitoring Entity for the Modesto Subbasin. Each municipality also monitors groundwater quality for its supply wells in compliance with state requirements.

### **4.3. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The GSAs utilized a variety of tools and activities to encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the Modesto Subbasin. These activities were guided by the Modesto Subbasin Communication and Engagement Plan, which is provided in **Appendix D**. The activities identified in the Communication and Engagement Plan were adapted in accordance with state and local social distancing requirements resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support execution of the activities identified in the plan and ensure a collaborative and inclusive GSP development process, the GSAs utilized DWR's Facilitation Support Services. Facilitation and outreach support was provided by Stantec Consulting Services Inc (Stantec).

#### 4.3.1. Outreach Tools

The GSAs used several tools to support communication and engagement activities with stakeholders in the Modesto Subbasin. These tools include the following:

- **Project Website:** The STRGBA GSA member agencies have updated the STRGBA website ([www.strgba.org](http://www.strgba.org)) to provide information about SGMA and house GSA meeting and outreach materials. The Tuolumne County GSA has added a SGMA-related page (<https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1292/Sustainable-Groundwater-Management-Act-S>) to the Tuolumne County website.
- **Interested Parties Database:** Pursuant to the requirements of SGMA, the GSAs developed and maintain an Interested Party Database. The Database is used to notify stakeholders of pending meetings and workshops, opportunities for public comment, and notices of other GSA outreach actions.
- **Newsletter:** The STRGBA GSA distributes a semi-annualelectronic newsletter to keep interested parties informed about progress in developing the GSP, opportunities for public engagement, and groundwater management issues or news of regional importance. Newsletters were distributed to the Interested Parties Database in Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021. Copies of the newsletter were also posted on the Subbasin website.
- **Informational Materials:** The Modesto Subbasin GSA developed a suite of materials to inform beneficial users and interested parties about SGMA and topics pertaining to the GSP. This included fact sheets, frequently asked questions, presentation slides, and utility bill inserts. Many of these materials were translated into Spanish. To ensure consistent messaging across the basin, the GSAs also developed template presentation slides at different stages of GSP development to support presentations to member agency briefings and presentations to local industry and community groups.
- **Postcard:** The STRGBA GSA distributed an informational postcard to over 350 landowners in the non-districted area of the eastern portion of the Subbasin in September 2020 informing them about development of the GSP and inviting them to participate in the plan development process.

#### 4.3.2. Outreach Activities

The GSAs conducted a variety of outreach activities to provide opportunities for beneficial users and other interested parties to stay informed and engaged in the development of the GSP. These activities were informed by the results of an electronic survey distributed by the STRGBA GSA and stakeholder assessment conducted by Stantec staff in Spring 2019. Outreach activities included public STRGBA GSA and TAC meetings, GSP development

workshops and office hours, member agency briefings, and presentations to organizations representing beneficial users of groundwater. Each of these activities is described in the Modesto Subbasin Communication and Engagement Plan, provided in **Appendix D**.

The GSAs utilized partnerships with trusted messengers in the Modesto Subbasin to broaden the dissemination of SGMA information and connect with hard-to-reach stakeholder groups. This included disseminating information through the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, Manufacturers Council of the Central Valley, Empire Municipal Advisory Council, and local neighborhood collaboratives and community organizations. In addition, the STRGBA GSA conducted extensive public outreach to the communities of West Modesto, Rouse, Empire, Airport, and the City of Modesto regarding the locations and installation of new groundwater monitoring wells.

#### **4.4. LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS**

To consult beneficial users in development of the GSP and make decisions in a transparent and inclusive setting, the GSAs coordinated monthly public meetings, annual public workshops, and regular GSP office hours. In addition, the GSA representatives provided presentations on the GSP at public meetings of their governing bodies and parties representing beneficial users. **Table 4-3** provides a list of the public meetings where the GSP was discussed or considered by the GSAs. A description of the committee meetings and public workshops is provided below.

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Table 4-3. List of Public Meetings at Which the Groundwater Sustainability Plan Was Discussed

Type of Meeting	Format	Date(s)	
Community Presentations	Manufacturer’s Council of Central Valley Meeting	04/18/2018	
	Airport Neighborhood Collaborative Meeting	09/09/2019	
	West Modesto Community Collaborative Meeting	09/11/2019	
	Empire Municipal Advisory Council Meeting	08/28/2019	
	Manufacturer’s Council of Central Valley Meeting	07/15/2020	
	Modesto Chamber of Commerce, Government Relations Committee Meeting	11/20/2020	
	Modesto Rotary	08/04/2021	
	Soroptimist International of Modesto	09/23/2021	
	Modesto Chamber of Commerce, Government Relations Committee Meeting	10/15/2021	
Public Workshop/ Groundwater Sustainability Plan Office Hours	Virtual	06/01/2020	
		03/25/2021	
		05/28/2021	
		08/25/2021	
Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association Groundwater Sustainability Agency Committee Meeting	In-Person and Virtual	01/18/2018	01/08/2020
		02/14/2018	02/12/2020
		05/09/2018	03/11/2020
		06/13/2018	04/08/2020
		07/11/2018	05/13/2020
		08/08/2018	06/10/2020



Table 4-3. List of Public Meetings at Which the Groundwater Sustainability Plan Was Discussed (contd.)

Type of Meeting	Format	Date(s)	
Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association Groundwater Sustainability Agency Committee Meeting (contd.)	In-Person and Virtual (contd.)	09/12/2018	07/08/2020
		10/10/2018	08/12/2020
		01/09/2019	09/09/2020
		02/13/2019	10/14/2020
		03/13/2019	12/09/2020
		04/10/2019	03/10/2021
		05/08/2019	04/14/2021
		06/12/2019	05/12/2021
		07/10/2019	06/09/2021
		08/14/2019	07/14/2021
		09/11/2019	08/11/2021
		10/09/2019	09/08/2021
		11/13/2019	10/13/2021
12/11/2019			
Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association Groundwater Sustainability Agency Technical Advisory Committee Meeting	In-Person and Virtual	04/10/2019	02/10/2021
		07/10/2019	06/23/2021
		08/14/2019	07/28/2021
		11/13/2019	08/11/2021
		12/11/2019	09/08/2021
		05/13/2020	09/22/2021
		08/12/2020	10/13/2021

#### **4.4.1. STRGBA Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Meetings**

Monthly STRGBA GSA Committee and TAC meetings served as key opportunities for beneficial users and interested parties to track the process and consult in development of the GSP. Both meetings are held and noticed in accordance with the Brown Act and are open for members of the public to listen and provide comments. Comments on items on the agenda may be provided after GSA discussion on the item. There is also time set aside for members of the public to provide comment on items not on the agenda. Public comments are recorded in the meeting minutes, which are posted on the STRGBA GSA website. Comments were recorded and considered by the planning team when developing and revising the GSP chapters.

The meetings were initially held in-person at MID's office at 1231 11th Street, Modesto, CA 95354 and by teleconferencing. In April 2020, the meetings were shifted to a virtual platform due to social distancing requirements and temporary changes in Brown Act requirements resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the public were able to provide comment at the meetings via calling into the meeting or submitting comments in the virtual meeting platforms.

The GSAs noticed the meetings via a posting on the STRGBA GSA website and email distributed to the Interested Parties Database. A notice was also posted at the MID office for in-person meetings. Meeting agendas and materials were distributed to the Interested Parties Database and posted on the STRGBA GSA website prior to each meeting.

#### **4.4.2. Public Workshops and GSP Office Hours**

The GSAs held a public workshop and several Office Hours to inform beneficial users and interested parties about the GSP development process and collect input on topics central to the development of the GSP and groundwater management practices. The GSAs hosted a public workshop in June 2020 focused on SGMA and GSP development process.

The GSAs also hosted three Office Hours in March 2021, May 2021, and August 2021. The workshop topics included the draft sustainable management criteria, groundwater monitoring network, and management areas. The Office Hours are less formal than regular workshops and provide members of the public an opportunity to have a dialogue with STRGBA GSA representatives outside of the monthly meetings.

All workshops and Office Hours scheduled after April 2020 were held virtually due to local and state social distancing requirements resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions and comments submitted by members of the public was recorded by the planning and outreach staff. A summary of feedback provided by workshop participants was provided at GSP Coordination Committee and Technical Committee meetings and recorded in the workshop summaries, provided in **Appendix D**. Recordings of the May and August 2021 Office Hours were also made available on the STRGBA GSA website.

The GSAs noticed the workshops and GSP Office Hours via a bilingual (English-Spanish) flyer which was posted on the STRGBA GSA and member agencies' websites and member agencies' social media sites and was distributed to the Interested Parties Database.

#### **4.4.3. Other Public Meetings**

In addition to monthly public meetings and annual workshops, the STRGBA GSA member agency representatives also discussed the GSP at public meetings of the respective governing bodies and local community and civic organizations. **Table 4-3** provides a list of other public meetings during which the GSP was discussed or considered.

### **4.5. GSP COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

This section describes the process the GSAs used to solicit and respond to comments on the draft GSP. The draft GSP chapters were released for public review and comment as they were developed. Public comments were collected via email. In addition, interested parties could provide verbal comments during monthly Committee and TAC meetings and public workshops. Comments that raised substantive technical or policy issues resulted in revisions to the Draft GSP and are reflected in the draft plan.

#### **4.5.1. Public Comment Process**

The GSAs used a serial public comment process to provide beneficial users and members of the public multiple opportunities to review and provide comment on the draft GSP. Draft GSP chapters were released for public review and comment as they were completed. Members of the public were notified of the public comment period through an email distributed to the Interested Parties Database.

Comments were collected via an email to the STRGBA GSA and verbally during monthly Committee and TAC meetings. Comments provided at public meetings and workshops were recorded in the meeting minutes or workshop summary and reviewed by GSA member agency staff. Copies of comments received on the draft GSP chapters were posted on the STRGBA GSA website.

At the close of each GSP chapter public comment period, comments received were reviewed by the GSA member agency staff and summarized and discussed at monthly Committee and TAC meetings. Comments that raised credible technical or policy issues resulted in revisions to the draft GSP.

Pursuant to the requirements of California Water Code Section 10728.4, the GSAs also distributed a notice of intent to adopt the GSP to cities and counties within the GSP area. The notice was jointly distributed on August 10, 2021. A copy of the notice is provided in **Appendix D**.

#### **4.6. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DURING GSP IMPLEMENTATION**

The GSAs will keep members of the public and interested parties informed about progress implementing the GSP through emails to the Interested Parties Database, regularly scheduled public meetings, and annual workshops. The GSAs will continue to maintain the website and Interested Parties Database. Emails will be distributed to the Interested Parties Database on a regular basis to inform interested parties about upcoming meetings and public workshops, GSP implementation milestones, and the status of projects and management actions. The website will be updated on an as-needed basis to include information on and announcements pertaining to GSP implementation. The website will also serve as a repository for copies of the Modesto Subbasin Annual Reports and other materials developed during GSP implementation.

It is anticipated that the STRGBA GSA will continue to meet on a monthly basis. Committee meetings will be noticed on the STRGBA GSA website and via an email to the Interested Parties Database. The GSAs will also hold public workshops as needed to keep members of the public and interested parties informed about progress implementing the GSP. The GSAs will notice the workshops via posting on the website, e-blast, and targeted outreach to organizations and agencies representing beneficial users in the Subbasin. The GSAs and GSA member agencies will also continue to conduct presentations to key stakeholder organizations on an as-needed basis to inform the about implementation of the GSP and groundwater conditions.

Additional public outreach activities may be conducted to support planning, design, and construction activities related to the groundwater management projects. Such activities will be noticed on the website and via an e-blast to the Interested Parties Database.