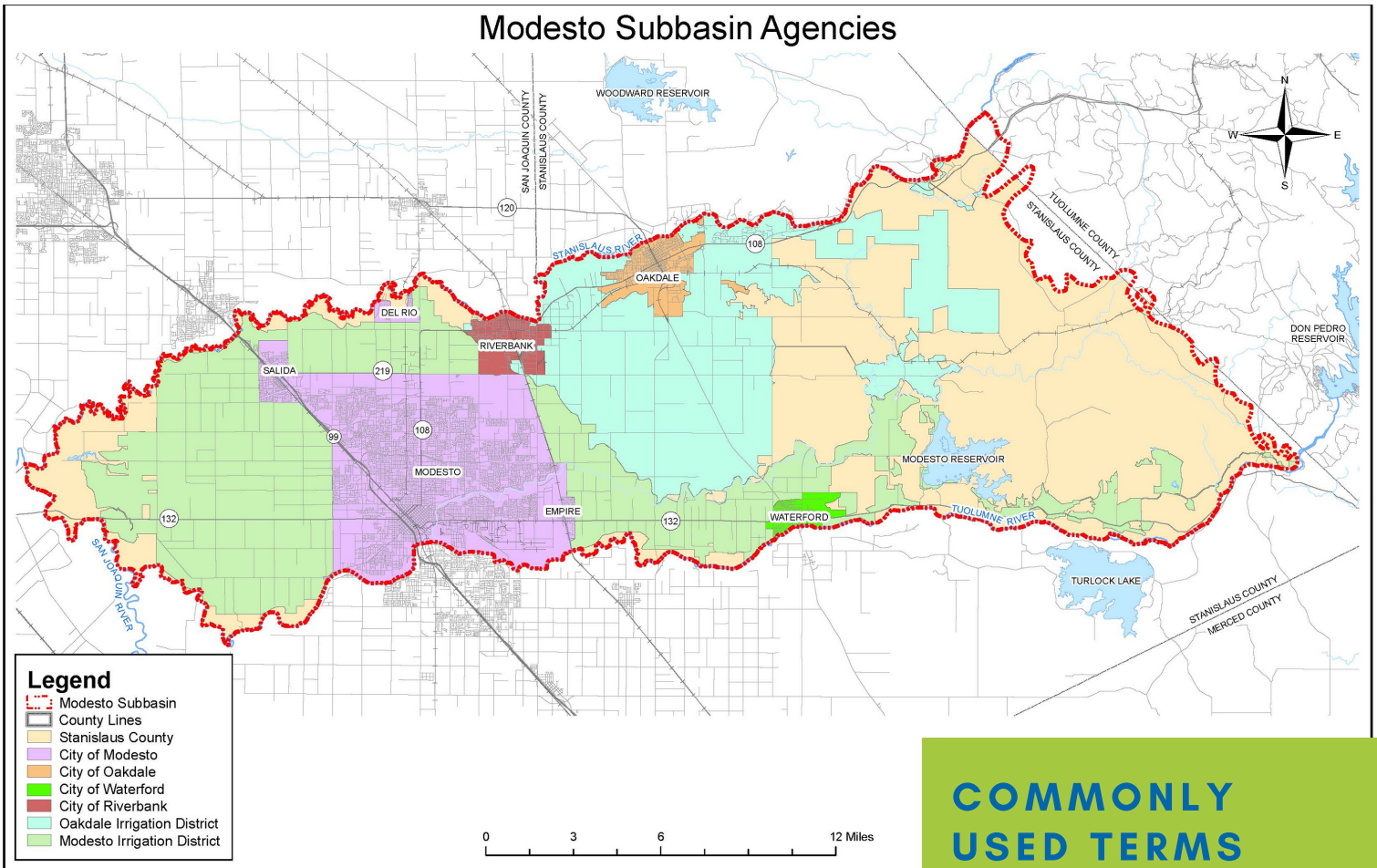




STANISLAUS AND TUOLUMNE RIVERS GROUNDWATER BASIN ASSOCIATION GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

MARCH 2020

Modesto Subbasin Agencies



COMMONLY USED TERMS

GSA - Groundwater
Sustainability Agency

GSP - Groundwater
Sustainability Plan

SGMA - Sustainable
Groundwater Management
Act

STRGBA - Stanislaus and
Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater
Basin Association

WHAT IS STRGBA, SGMA AND THE GSP?

In September 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA). SGMA sets the framework for statewide sustainable groundwater management by local agencies. SGMA requires, among other things, the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) and the preparation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP).

In 2017, member agencies of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association (STRGBA) - City of Modesto, Modesto Irrigation District, City of Oakdale, Oakdale Irrigation District, City of Riverbank, City of Waterford and Stanislaus County - formed as a GSA. STRGBA GSA has the authority and responsibility to manage the majority of the Modesto groundwater basin. The Tuolumne County GSA is

WHAT IS STRGBA, SGMA AND THE GSP? (CONT.)

responsible for the small section of the Modesto Subbasin that falls within Tuolumne County. Many groundwater basins in the San Joaquin Valley have experienced heavy groundwater pumping - especially during the recent 2012-2016 drought. Several are now in a condition of critical overdraft. The Modesto basin isn't considered to be critically overdrafted, but since most of the cities within our basin rely solely on groundwater, we're considered a high-priority basin. Due to that designation, SGMA requires that we adopt and begin implementation of a GSP by January 31, 2022.

STRGBA GSA obtained a \$1 million grant from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and hired Todd Groundwater, Inc. to prepare a GSP for the basin. The GSP will help to identify areas within the basin that need better groundwater monitoring and provide a path to preventing undesirable results over the next 50 years.

Just recently, DWR approved STRGBA GSA's application for Facilitation Support Services (FSS). These services will be provided by Stantec Consulting Services and will include (1) an agency and stakeholder assessment, (2) communication and engagement plan preparation and (3) meeting facilitation and information materials. The FSS is offered by DWR at no cost to the STRGBA GSA and these activities have already begun.

The STRGBA GSA meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Modesto Irrigation District's downtown office - 1231 11th Street, Modesto. The meetings usually begin at 1:30 p.m. and the public is always invited and encouraged to participate. There's also a call-in option for the meetings (dial 877-873-8018 and use the access code - 5439182).

TO COMPLY WITH SGMA, AGENCIES IN THE MODESTO SUBBASIN MUST:

- ☒ **Form a GSA by 2017**
- ☐ **Develop, adopt and submit a GSP to the state by January 31, 2022**
- ☐ **Achieve subbasin-wide sustainability by 2042**

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TIMELINE



The STRGBA GSA began preparation of the Modesto Subbasin GSP in September 2018. The GSP project started with a compilation of available hydrogeologic data along with key technical and planning documents. This data was organized into a GSP database to support the scientific analysis required for the GSP. Using these documents and data, STRGBA GSA prepared initial sections of the GSP describing the Administrative Information (Section 1) - introduction of the document and organization of the GSA - and the Plan Area (Section 2). These initial draft sections are complete and are available to view at www.strgba.org.

A numerical groundwater model is now being developed to analyze our current groundwater conditions and water budgets (surface water and groundwater). A hydrogeologic conceptual model is also being developed, along with an analysis of past and current groundwater conditions. These technical tasks are underway and scheduled to be completed by Summer 2020.

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TIMELINE(CONT.)

Discussions of the sustainable management criteria are also taking place and will continue as results of the technical evaluations and modeling are being developed. Draft sustainable management criteria will be established upon completion of the numerical model and water budgets. These criteria will then be used to guide the development of projects and management actions for the GSP. That process is scheduled to begin in Fall 2020.

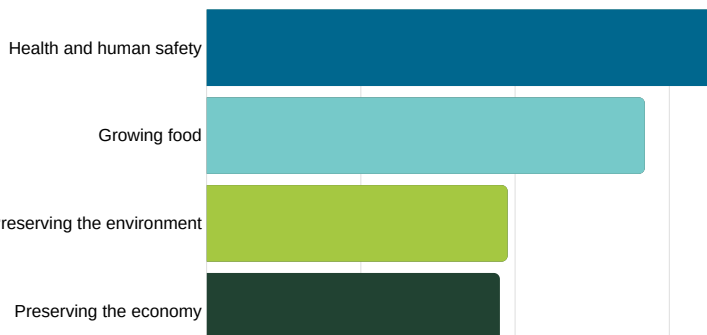
Development of monitoring networks will be conducted concurrently with project development to ensure the monitoring of appropriate sustainable management criteria and GSP project performance. Draft sections of the GSP will be prepared as we develop the modeling tools and collect data. All draft sections of the GSP will be posted to the STRGBA GSA website for ongoing review and comment. The sections will be assembled into a Review Draft GSP in late Summer 2021. By the end of 2021, STRGBA GSA will finalize and adopt the GSP for submittal to DWR on or before January 31, 2022. A data management system of the GSP data and information will also be submitted at this time.

Throughout this process, STRGBA welcomes involvement and input from all subbasin stakeholders – groundwater users, business representatives, environmental groups and other interested members of the public including disadvantaged communities in the subbasin.

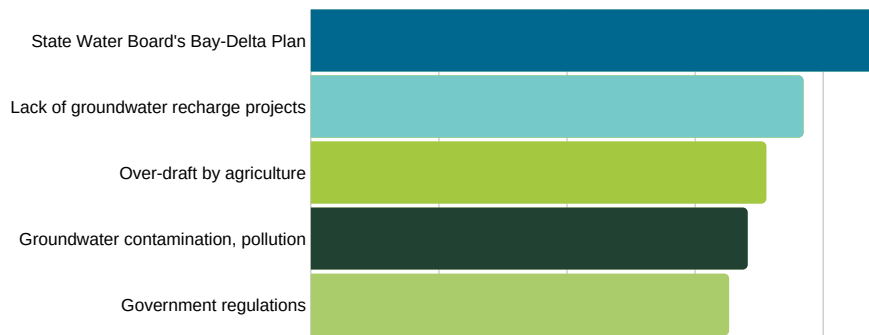
STRGBA GSA GROUNDWATER STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Last summer, STRGBA GSA launched a groundwater stakeholder survey to learn more about local water users' groundwater issues and/or concerns as well as collect general water user information and opinions. Input from the survey will serve as a valuable tool as we develop the GSP. The most up-to-date survey results are posted online at www.strgba.org. Here are some examples of the survey results.

We asked survey participants to **rank in priority what they see as the best use of water in our area**. Health and human safety (safe drinking water) ranked first, followed by growing food, preserving the environment and preserving the economy.



Survey respondents said that the **top water supply challenges facing our region** are the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay-Delta Plan, lack of groundwater recharge projects, over-draft by agriculture, groundwater contamination and government regulation.



The survey is still open and participation from any water user is welcome and encouraged. All individual responses will remain anonymous. Take the Groundwater Stakeholder Survey at www.strgba.org.

GRANT APPLICATION FOR MONITORING WELLS

In November 2019, the City of Modesto – on behalf of the STRGBA GSA – applied for a \$1 million grant from the Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program through DWR. This funding would go towards the design and construction of up to 18 new groundwater monitoring wells within the Modesto Subbasin. Following a public review period, DWR approved and awarded the full \$1 million on March 13, 2020. This grant will come without any extra conditions or cost-sharing requirements.

STRGBA GSA agencies currently track seasonal and long-term groundwater elevation trends in the Modesto Subbasin using existing groundwater wells. These wells, however, are not ideal for monitoring since they are also used for groundwater extraction. The grant funding from DWR will enable STRGBA GSA to better manage groundwater elevations by installing dedicated monitoring wells throughout the subbasin – particularly in areas with little or no coverage.