



Delta-Mendota Subbasin - June 2025 Newsletter

July 9, 2025 Interbasin Coordination Meeting

An on-line Interbasin Workshop with the Tracy Subbasin has been set for July 9, at 2:00-4:00 p.m.

The workshop agenda includes presentations on the highlights from each subbasin's Annual Report, and updates on the projects and management actions being planned and implemented. GSAs, growers and other interested parties are welcome to join the session. Registration [HERE](#). The workshop will also be recorded and posted on the Delta-Mendota SGMA website.

SGMA requires on-going coordination with neighboring subbasins. The goal is to identify issues where the actions of one subbasin may impact what occurs in an adjacent one. It also allows the basins to consider projects and management actions that can be leveraged to reduce costs and/or achieve greater benefits and share technical information. Another important benefit is that the subbasins often share the same growers or other interested parties and a close working relationship helps reduce confusion.

State Water Resources Control Board Update

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) received a positive report from their staff regarding the work done by the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The staff comments came during a presentation on the level of progress being made by all the subbasins under the Board's oversight. Grassland Water District's Ric Ortega provided comments on behalf of the subbasin's 23 GSAs during the session.

Background

The Delta-Mendota Subbasin was referred to the State Board for a potential placement into probation in March of 2023 by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). DWR had determined that the subbasin's Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) did not fully meet regulatory requirements. The subbasin GSAs were determined to avoid probation and in November 2024, all officially adopted a single Delta-Mendota GSP. Board staff have worked with the subbasin and are reviewing the new GSP now to assess its compliance and continue to meet

Comments to the State Board at their April 15 Meeting from Ric Ortega on Behalf of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin 23 GSAs

"Thank you, Chair Esquivel and members Maguire, and D'adamo for the opportunity to speak. As you are being briefed on the State Board's SGMA progress, the Delta-Mendota GSAs would like to express how proud we are, for how far we have come, in our efforts to develop and implement a single, coordinated GSP, consistent with the requirements of SGMA and that is designed to achieve sustainability in our complex and diverse basin.

Working together closely over the course of one year we have:

- Developed and adopted a comprehensive, single GSP covering the entire 750,000-acre subbasin that was submitted to the State Board in July 2024
- Conducted extensive outreach and engagement
- Committed to maintaining groundwater elevations at or above 2015 levels – the SGMA "gold standard"
- Continue to actively implement projects and management actions, including Pumping Reduction and Well Mitigation Plans, to achieve our sustainability goals.

The Delta-Mendota GSAs are committed to continued collaboration with the SWRCB to ensure continued management of the groundwater basin under local control, consistent with the key principles of SGMA.

We have enjoyed a productive working relationship with State Board staff and remain confident that through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, we will meet the sustainability goals outlined in our GSP.

We also remain committed to robust inter-basin and intra-basin coordination, recognizing that some challenges faced by this Subbasin can only be addressed through regional cooperation and coordination.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to further opportunities to discuss our GSP."

with subbasin representatives to seek acceptable resolution on a small number of specific items.

The earliest date for a probationary hearing is anticipated to be September. However, it is possible for a Subbasin to bypass a probationary hearing if it appears deficiencies have been addressed. In that case the GSP would be submitted to the Board for return of the Subbasin to DWR jurisdiction. The full GSP and appendices are available on the Delta-Mendota Subbasin website at:

<https://deltamendota.org/final-gsp-documents>.

Creating Sustained, Effective Engagement

Self Help Enterprises (SHE) will convene a July working session to explore how to create better, sustained, and effective engagement and water governance with underserved and underrepresented communities. Invited participants include water agencies, consultants and members of a community leadership program. One session goal is to begin crafting a checklist of steps agencies can take to achieve engagement goals.

Grassland's GSA on behalf of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs is working with DWR to provide translation services for the session and will be engaged in the effort. Provost & Pritchard is graciously hosting the meeting at their Clovis headquarters. For more information contact: Sue Ruiz at SHE (suer@selfhelpenterprises.org).

Groundwater Sustainability Projects Underway

With a \$7.6 million SGMA Round 1 Implementation grant from DWR the subbasin is making great progress on the 13 high-priority projects outlined in the GSP. Activities include GSP model updates, water quality studies, flood water capture and reuse, groundwater recharge, monitoring, and outreach. The projects contribute to groundwater sustainability by improving water management and groundwater recharge.

Although the grant was scheduled to expire in 2025; DWR, recognizing challenges including supply chain delays for goods and the need for GSAs to respond to local emergencies caused by storm damage in both 2023 and 2024, recently approved an extension of the grant agreement that allows GSAs to have until the Spring of 2026 to complete work. The following snapshots describe four projects underway.

Farmers Water District Water Bank

A new Farmers Water District (FWD) Water Bank will bolster groundwater supplies and help all the groundwater users in the district. By setting up the water bank, FWD will be able to improve access to groundwater during extended dry periods and mitigate undesirable results. Once completed, the water bank will provide an average **annual recharge of 2,300 to 3,700 acre-feet** to the Subbasin. The

project includes the design and installation of up to five monitoring wells and up to four recovery wells. This, along with permitting and documentation, will ensure successful implementation and monitoring of the water bank.

Subbasin Monitoring and Data Gap Closure

This initiative provides critical monitoring improvements, including the installation of nested monitoring wells that measure interconnected surface water (ISW) and subsidence. Also included are streamflow monitoring stations along the San Joaquin River and GPS monitoring systems. These **upgrades will provide essential data for coordinated management across multiple Groundwater Sustainability Plan regions**. This suite of projects will help deliver drought resiliency, ecological preservation, and sustainable groundwater management.

Flood Water Capture in Grasslands Water District

This project is a collaboration with the city of Los Banos and helps to improve storage and distribution of flood water in the federally designated Grassland Wildlife Management Area. Upgrades include the construction of regulation and recharge reservoirs, a pump station, water control structures, flow meters, and groundwater monitoring wells. These improvements will advance wetland and habitat sustainability by creating **temporary storage of up to 2,000 acre-feet of water across 160 acres**.

Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery

This project builds new structures south of Los Banos that will store flood and other surface water that can recharge the Upper Aquifer and help increase irrigation supplies. The new addition will add approximately **5,000 acre-feet of groundwater recharge annually** by using a recharge basin connected to the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC) and Los Banos Creek.

Jarrett Martin Fills Subbasin Plan Manager Role

SGMA requires the designation of a subbasin single point of contact (called the Plan Manager) for required submissions of GSPs and Annual Reports. With the recent retirement of the previous Plan Manager, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's **John Brodie**, a new manager was required. After looking at all the options, including hiring a consultant, the subbasin GSAs asked Jarrett Martin, General Manager at Central California Irrigation District to step into the role, at least on an interim basis. He will be supported by the Hallmark Group. Martin has been involved in the Delta-Mendota SGMA planning process from the beginning and has assumed an important role in interactions with the State Board.

The subbasin GSAs extend their thanks to John Brodie and offer their best wishes on his retirement.