

Stanislaus County
Water Advisory Committee

Minutes
May 27, 2026, 9:00a.m.
Stanislaus Farm Bureau

Members Present to Vote:

Daniel Bays	Christy McKinnon	Tim Sanders
Caitie Diemel	Jim Mortensen	Terry Withrow
David Wright	Tom Orvis	Trent Voss
Vince Dkyzeul	Sue Zwahlen	Navjot Athwal
	Edward Tobias	Janie Gatzman

Members Absent:

Rod Vilas	Cooper Rossiter	Larry Byrd
Louis Brichetto	Joseph P Day	Katie Staack

I. Call to Order at 9:03 a.m. (The entire meeting can be viewed at https://www.stancounty.com/er/groundwater/wac.shtm and by selecting the video option for the May 27, 2026, Water Advisory Committee meeting.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Comment

IV. Roll Call

I. A quorum of voting members was present.

V. Guest Introductions

VI. **Action Items (subject to formal vote)**:

I. Approval of March 25, 2026, Meeting Minutes- **Attachment 1** The meeting minutes were presented by the Chairperson. The members were asked to consider the minutes for approval.

Motion: Tim Sanders
Second: David Wright
Vote: Unanimous

VII. Informational Items (not subject to a formal vote)

I. Scott Rowe, NOAA/National Weather Service – Weather and Hydrologic Outlook - Presentation

Scott Rowe, Senior Service Hydrologist with the National Weather Service Sacramento, provided an overview of current water year conditions and the summer outlook. The 2025–2026 water year began wetter than normal during October–December, followed by significantly drier and warmer conditions from January–March. Overall precipitation totals for the region were near, to slightly above normal. Despite adequate precipitation, the Sierra Nevada experienced a severe snow drought due to unusually warm storms that produced rain instead of snow. Snowpack peaked approximately six weeks earlier than normal and rapidly melted during the exceptionally warm and dry March. Current drought conditions in portions of the Sierra Nevada are primarily attributed to below-normal snowpack rather than lack of precipitation. The Climate Prediction Center forecasts a high likelihood of El Niño conditions developing and persisting into next winter; however, El Niño alone is not a reliable predictor of wet or dry conditions for Central and Northern California. Summer precipitation is expected to remain near normal (minimal), while temperatures are forecast to be above normal during June through August. The National Weather Service reviewed its heat-related alert system, including Extreme Heat Watches, Warnings, and HeatRisk products used to communicate potential heat impacts. Discussion included the limitations of seasonal climate predictors, historical comparisons to previous El Niño years, and available National Weather Service resources for weather forecasts, emergency alerts, and decision-making support.

II. Perry Klassen - Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship– Distribution Uniformity & Return on Investment Tool – Presentation

Perry Klassen introduced a free irrigation management software tool developed through CDFA grant funding to help growers evaluate and improve the efficiency of pressurized irrigation systems. The tool uses Distribution Uniformity (DU) measurements to identify irrigation system issues and estimate potential savings in water, energy, and fertilizer costs. The software generates reports with recommended improvements and return-on-investment estimates. Discussion emphasized the importance of irrigation efficiency as growers face increasing energy costs and groundwater sustainability requirements, and several irrigation suppliers have been trained to provide DU evaluation services using the tool.

III. Christy McKinnon – Water Year Declaration – SGMA 2025 Annual Report Summary– Dry Well Reports – Presentation

Christy presented an overview of the current water year, the Water Year 2025 SGMA Annual Report, and dry well reporting activity within Stanislaus County’s four groundwater subbasins. Only one dry well was reported during the past water year in the Turlock Subbasin, with no additional reports received to date. Groundwater conditions in the Modesto, Delta-Mendota, and Eastern San Joaquin Subbasins generally met sustainable management criteria, with no undesirable results observed. Groundwater levels remained relatively stable in western portions of the Modesto and Turlock Subbasins, while continued declines were observed in eastern aquifers;

however, recent monitoring indicates some recovery trends are observed in the Turlock Subbasin. Discussed ongoing groundwater monitoring efforts, compliance with well metering and reporting requirements, and the implementation of projects and management actions intended to achieve long-term sustainability goals. Monitoring data also showed groundwater level improvements in portions of the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin, though the specific causes remain under evaluation. Additionally, annual state reports indicate no significant land subsidence has been documented within Stanislaus County's four subbasins, and staff will continue to provide updates on groundwater accounting frameworks, demand reduction programs, and sustainability projects.

IV. Christy McKinnon - Other Updates:

NDE Action Plan Update – Well Mitigation Support – Attachment 3

Update was provided on the Non-District Easts Action Plan, noting that the Request for Proposals (RFP) process is expected to be completed by June 3, with efforts underway to have a consultant under contract by the end of June or early July. Four proposals were received in response to the RFP. Staff are also coordinating with economic consulting firms to evaluate potential funding options. Public workshops are tentatively planned for September and October 2026 to present funding and implementation options to stakeholders. The completed Action Plan is anticipated to be presented to the STRGBA GSA by November 1, with implementation scheduled to begin by January 31. Upcoming Water Advisory Committee meetings are scheduled for September 30 and January 27, where project updates and information will be presented for review and comment. Staff also anticipates convening the next Non-District Easts Ad Hoc Work Group meeting in July and expects the work group to meet biweekly, or more frequently as needed, to ensure project milestones and deadlines are met.

Also provided an update on the County's first well mitigation request received under the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) well mitigation program. Review of groundwater monitoring data indicated that groundwater levels in the area remained above the established minimum thresholds, and although the well had reportedly gone dry in 2022, the failure was not attributed to GSA management activities. The discussion noted that the well was relatively shallow and may no longer be functional due to its construction depth rather than declining groundwater levels. Explained the well mitigation process, including eligibility criteria, available assistance programs, and the role of partner organizations in conducting well assessments and providing emergency water supply services. The GSAs will continue to evaluate future requests on a case-by-case basis, using technical reviews to determine whether well failures are related to groundwater management activities and whether mitigation is warranted under the adopted policies.

Delta-Mendota Subbasin Exits State Board Intervention, returns to DWR oversight – Attachment 4

Announced an upcoming Domestic Well Mitigation Workshop hosted by the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, providing an opportunity for stakeholders to learn more about well mitigation programs and groundwater management efforts. Also reported that the Delta-

Mendota Subbasin has successfully exited State Water Resources Control Board intervention and returned to oversight by the Department of Water Resources. State officials recognized the collaboration among participating agencies and cited unified groundwater management, enhanced drinking water monitoring and protection programs, implementation of pumping reduction measures, and commitments to improving water quality monitoring as key factors supporting the transition. The achievement was highlighted as a significant milestone toward long-term groundwater sustainability within the subbasin.

Tule Subbasin Updates – Attachment 5

It was reported that the State Water Resources Control Board has assumed oversight of the Tule Subbasin and is requiring groundwater pumpers to begin reporting groundwater extraction data effective May 1. The Board approved approximately $12 million in fees to support oversight activities within the basin and denied requests for broader fee exemptions. However, a minimal-impact exemption was approved for pumpers extracting less than 20 acre-feet of groundwater annually and located more than two miles from the Friant-Kern Canal. The adopted fee structure includes a well registration filing fee and a volumetric fee based on groundwater pumping, with the pumping fee reduced from the originally proposed amount following stakeholder input. This update was provided as an example of the potential consequences of state intervention and ongoing groundwater management requirements.

V. Roundtable Discussion

Meeting Adjourned: 10:27 am

VI. Scheduling of Next Regular Meeting –

Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
Meeting location: Stanislaus Farm Bureau, 1201 L St. Modesto, CA.

PREPARED BY:

Christy McKinnon, Groundwater Resources Manager

Maria Razo, Administrative Secretary

*Underlined items are Action Items subject to vote as described in the committee by-laws