MINUTES
OF THE COMBINED MEETING OF RURAL COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE AND STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE
Held August 25, 2025

GKGSA Rural Community Committee Chair Tantau called to order a meeting of the Combined Rural Communities and Stakeholder committees.

MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Rural Communities	Stakeholder
Chris Tantau	Marty Toomey
Bobby Lentz	Joe Cardoza
Emmanual Llamas	Zack Stuller
Paul Boyer	James Silva
	Jonathan Vaughn
	Blake Mauritson
	Marty Toomey
	Cornell Kasbergen

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rural Communities	Stakeholder
Carol Fina	Collin Fernandes
	Matt Hutcheson
	Soapy Mulholland

i. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tantau called the meeting of the Combined Rural Communities Committee and Stakeholder Committee to order at 1:30 PM.

ii. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken for the meeting and documented above.

iii. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comments were received.

iv. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the July 28, 2025, meeting. One correction was noted to update the twice written name of *Marty Toomey*. Following the correction, a motion was made by Cornell Kasbergen and seconded by Blake Mauritson to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

v. GSA ADMINISTRATION:

Stephanie Ruiz provided an update on administrative activities. She announced that GKGSA's new website is live and encouraged members to report any issues or content errors so they can be promptly corrected. Stephanie noted that the site was designed to be more user-friendly and adaptable for staff updates. Several members, including Ashley and Mark, commented positively on the new format, acknowledging that although it is more complex to manage than the prior site, it offers much greater functionality and transparency.

She then reported on 2023 invoicing, noting that audits remain underway as payments continue to arrive. Approximately $465,000 remains outstanding, representing about 85 accounts. The balance has declined over the past month as more payments have been received. Stephanie also informed the Committee that the Board approved initiating the Proposition 218 lien process, with a public hearing scheduled for early October to address unpaid accounts.

Regarding the 2024 invoicing cycle, Stephanie stated that carryover purchases have been minimal, with only a few payments being received periodically. While the formal carryover period is closed, staff continue to work with landowners who wish to make payments. Surface water imports are ongoing and being accounted for within the tracking system.

Discussion Ensued

iv. GREATER RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Chair Tantau opened discussion on potential modifications to the Agency's transfer policy under the Rules and Regulations. He noted that as the GKGSA approaches the 2026 water year, allocation tiers have been reduced sharply—from 170,000 acre-feet two years ago to approximately 87,000 acre-feet—creating new challenges for groundwater-dependent landowners.

Chair Tantau explained that the current transfer policy limits both the distance and amount of water that can be transferred between zones, with increasing percentage losses for longer-distance transfers. The Committee discussed options for providing more flexibility, such as extending allowable transfer distances and reducing associated losses. Mark Larsen presented a conceptual adjustment to allow transfers up to four zones away with lower percentage losses, thereby creating a more robust marketplace without overcomplicating the process.

Members debated whether transfers should be limited strictly to sustainable yield water rather than allowing tiered water to be traded. Some felt that restricting tiered water transfers would simplify accounting and encourage growers to make the most of their allocations. Others expressed concern that some landowners had anticipated purchasing tiered water for future trading and that the change should therefore take effect prospectively.

Public Comment from Geoff Vandenhueval cautioned that completely removing tiered water from transfer eligibility could cause hardship for growers in groundwater-only areas, especially in drier years. He emphasized the need to maintain a balance between flexibility and sustainability, suggesting that the Committee consider a pilot approach to gauge market response before full implementation.

Several members also discussed the potential for unrestricted transfers**.** Jared DeGroot and Cornell Kasbergen suggested that allowing transfers without zone-based restrictions could stimulate more trading activity, benefiting both buyers and sellers. Others noted that the Agency must continue monitoring to prevent localized over-pumping or subsidence, particularly in high-risk areas.

Public Comment received from Kelsey Leyendekker regarding being a buyer of water and her opinion on allowing more flexibility in transfers.

Following a lengthy discussion, consensus emerged around a motion to allow sustainable yield transfers anywhere within the GKGSA boundary**,** while prohibiting transfers of tiered water beginning with the 2026 water year**,** pending Board approval.

The motion carried unanimously.

vi. <u>GREATER WY 2025 FALLOWING PROGRAM:</u>

The Committee reviewed updates to the Land Fallowing Program, which will continue as a pilot in 2025. Chris Tantau explained that in prior years, the program functioned as a reverse auction, but this year the Board approved a fixed payment rate of $400 per acre, with up to $1 million allocated to the program.

The Committee discussed the potential for the program to become oversubscribed. Several members suggested implementing a secondary price tier if total applications exceed the available budget, thereby maintaining fairness and program sustainability. There was also discussion about whether participants with outstanding balances could participate, and Stephanie noted that the Agency remains willing to work with landowners on flexible payment plans.

Discussion Ensued.

Committee members reflected on the economics of fallowing as allocations decline. While acknowledging that it remains an expensive program, members agreed it continues to be an effective means of reducing groundwater use and that maintaining it as a pilot provides needed flexibility moving forward.

Chair Tantau noted that there will be a workshop held this coming Thursday August 28,2025 to discuss any changes and allow landowners to ask questions regarding the upcoming application.

vii. <u>MITIGATION PROGRAM:</u>

General Manager Larsen provided an update on coordination with Self-Help Enterprises regarding the Well Mitigation Program. Out of 24 wells reported as dry, five have been reported, and two additional wells are under evaluation with 4Creeks. Self-Help will begin submitting monthly progress reports detailing project status and outcomes.

He also shared that the Kaweah Subbasin GSAs are collaborating with Self Help on a Technical Advisory Group to improve communication and streamline procedures related to well mitigation. Committee members supported this collaborative approach and emphasized the need for consistent project management and cost controls across the participating agencies.

viii. <u>WY 2026 ALLOCATION:</u>

Don Tucker provided an overview of the 2026 allocation calculations, confirming that the sustainable yield and precipitation data remain consistent with prior drafts. He noted that the native sustainable yield remains 0.62

acre-feet per acre, with Tier 1 water at 0.31 AF/acre and Tier 2 water at 0.23 AF/acre**,** totaling 1.16 AF/acre plus precipitation**.** (25-year rolling average)

The Committee discussed the possibility of modifying Greater Kaweah's accounting method to align more closely with the East Kaweah and Mid-Kaweah GSAs**,** which include a portion of precipitation as part of native sustainable yield. Members generally supported exploring this change, noting it could simplify coordination across the subbasin and create a more uniform framework for cross-boundary management.

Discussion Ensued

A motion to update the policy made by John Gailey, seconded by Cornell Kasbergen to recommend that the Board evaluate policy revisions to align sustainable yield and rainfall accounting across the GSAs. The motion carried, with one opposition by Blake Mauritson noted. Don Tucker will prepare a comparative analysis and present it at the next Board meeting.

ix. SUBSIDENCE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT:

General Manager Larsen provided an update on subsurface monitoring and management activities. He described five areas of priority monitoring based on observed subsidence and groundwater trends:

1. The southwestern portion of the basin is near Tulare.
2. The Lakeside area of Kings County.
3. The eastern boundary between Greater Kaweah and East Kaweah GSAs.
4. The Delta Bluffs region; and
5. Northern transitional zones.

He noted that staff is working with Harder & Co identify locations for nested monitoring wells to observe both shallow and deep aquifers. Efforts are also underway to install sensors in existing wells to better understand seasonal fluctuations.

Committee member Gailey suggested that we work with different agencies to try to get extensometers or funding for this type of monitoring that would help us reach our goals in providing data to the landowners.

Discussion Ensued

Chair Tantau asked that we provide an update that is not on the agenda on well registration.

General Manager Larsen provided an update on the ongoing Well Registration Program, which will be integrated into the Agency's Data Management System (DMS). Staff are conducting field verification of well sites and piloting the registration platform to ensure accuracy. The Committee discussed the importance of well registration for monitoring and enforcement as the Agency advances toward SGMA compliance. The voluntary phase will continue through 2025, with registration expected to become mandatory in 2026.

x. KAWEAH SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLANS:

General Manager Larsen provided an update stating that staff met with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to confirm progress on groundwater quality (GWQ) sampling and resampling efforts. The SWRCB asked several questions to ensure the Agency is on the right track and sought clarification on sampling methods, response procedures for exceedances, and the notification process for landowners. They also discussed strategies for ensuring program success. The Agency expects to receive the deadline for submitting recommendations to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) within the next few weeks.

Core teams continue to work through various elements of the plan. Stephanie Ruiz noted that a recent meeting on interconnected surface waters (ISW) was held with the Tulare County Resource Conservation District, where the Harder Group participated to coordinate data and analysis efforts.

xi. GREATER KAWEAH & SUBBASIN STATUS REPORT:

MLRP will stop accepting applications on August 30th please contact SELF Help with any questions regarding applications and process.

xii. NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting scheduled will be held on Monday, September 22, 2025.

xiii. ADJOURNMENT:

Stephanie announced that the next Stakeholder and Rural Communities Committee meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2025, and that the Board of Directors will meet on September 8, 2025, where today's recommendations will be presented for consideration.

Chair Tantau concluded by thanking the Committee for a productive discussion while General Manager Larsen welcomed Sierra Rodriguez as the newest member of the GKGSA administrative team.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

____
Mark Larsen, Combined RCC & SC Secretary

Agenda Item 14 a

GREATER KAWEAH GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Mark Larsen

DATE: October 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Board Notes

CC:

Committee Business:
The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.
No public comments were received.
Minutes from the prior meeting were reviewed and approved.
An announcement was made regarding the upcoming State of the Subbasin Gathering scheduled for October 21, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the World Ag Expo grounds.

Administration & Invoicing:
Staff reported continued progress on collections related to Water Year (WY) 2023 invoicing.
Approximately $465,000 in outstanding balances remain; several landowners have made recent payments.
The Board held a public hearing and approved Resolution 25-06, authorizing staff to record Proposition 218 lien certificates against remaining delinquent properties.
Once paid, liens will be released through the Tulare County Recorder's Office.
WY 2024 invoicing collections are underway; some landowners have not yet paid.
Staff emphasized flexibility and opportunities for landowners to cure past-due accounts prior to lien filing.

Financials & Budget:
Review of FY 2025-26 budget projections indicated a total GSP implementation cost of approximately $7 million.
Major categories include:
Land Fallowing Program: $1.5 million
Well Mitigation Program: $3.0 million
Other anticipated costs:
Subbasin coordination: $100,000
Groundwater quality monitoring: $100,000 (after cost-sharing)
Subsidence studies: $200,000
Administrative and insurance expenses remain stable; professional services total approximately $265,000.

Rules & Regulations – Water Transfers:
The Board held an extensive discussion on proposed revisions to water transfer policy, continuing from prior committee meetings.
Considerations included:
Allowing native sustainable yield transfers basin-wide while maintaining zone tracking via time-stamped credits.
Restricting Tiered (Transitional) water transfers to protect groundwater sustainability.
Clarifying monitoring requirements to detect potential overdraft or localized impacts.

Board members emphasized the need for measured flexibility, avoiding creation of an unrestricted water marketplace.
The policy revisions will maintain data accountability in the water dashboard and establish clearer time limits for credit use.
Final redlined policy language will be refined for Board action at a future meeting.

Land IQ & Data Management:
Staff reported on Land IQ data processing and grower feedback.
Discussion included options for faster delivery of monthly evapotranspiration (ET) updates and potential daily ET reporting capabilities.
Board members agreed to gather additional feedback from Mid-Kaweah GSA's pilot experience before adopting new tools.

Well Mitigation & Community Programs:
Self-Help Enterprises provided updates on the Well Mitigation Program:
Approximately 30 contracts are in process (totaling ~$1.6 million in commitments).
Several small community wells are receiving interim water supplies through temporary connections coordinated with the City of Farmersville.
Long-term infrastructure plans are under design for permanent replacement systems.
Collaboration continues among GSA partners to improve application processing and community outreach.

Kaweah Subbasin Coordination & GSP Update:
Staff reported that the State Water Resources Control Board is expected to issue a positive staff report recommending that the Kaweah Subbasin be returned to DWR oversight—not probation.
The final determination is anticipated at the December 2, 2025 State Board meeting.
Subbasin work continues on:
Groundwater quality sampling (72 wells currently being tested).
Interconnected surface water monitoring, including installation of new transducers.
Subsidence model refinements in coordination with neighboring GSAs.
Staff noted the importance of upcoming management area formation and potential adjustments for lower aquifer management.

Other Business:
Workshop Planned: A public Workshop will be scheduled in November to review composition and accounting of "native yield" within the allocation system.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for November 10, 2025.