MINUTES
OF THE COMBINED MEETING OF
RURAL COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
AND
STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE
Held July 27, 2026

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	Joe Cardoza
Paul Boyer	Colin Fernandez
Emmanuel (for Rudy Mendoza)	John Gailey
Jonathan Vaughn	Matt Hutcheson
	Blake Mauritson
	Zack Stuller
	Marty Toomey
	Brian Watte

MEMBERS ABSENT:

RURAL COMMUNITIES	STAKEHOLDER
Carol Fina	
Danny Holguin	
Deidre Root	James Silva
Bobby Lentz	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tantau called the meeting of the Combined Rural Communities Committee and Stakeholder Committee to order. The recording began at approximately 1:33 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken for the meeting and documented above. Emmanuel attended on behalf of Rudy Mendoza.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Tantau opened the floor for public comments on items not on the agenda. No public comments were received.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the February 23, 2026, meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

5. GREATER ADMINISTRATION

Staff reported that collection efforts for 2023 invoicing were nearing completion and that approximately 24 liens had been initiated. Staff discussed the remaining outstanding balances and noted that the lien process for 2025 invoices is expected to begin sooner than in prior years. The Committee also discussed the possibility of placing future unpaid charges on the county tax roll to improve collection timing.

The Committee then discussed potential changes to the tiered-water program. Staff presented a concept under which the GSA could purchase and retire verified surface-water credits from ditch companies or other eligible sources and make an equivalent pool of water available, upon request, to growers who need additional supply. The purpose would be to replace future overdraft allocations with water already accounted for in the basin, reduce outstanding carryover credits, and provide greater reliability to growers during the transition to sustainability.

Discussion included the quantity of water that may be needed, possible annual caps, pricing, service-area restrictions, accounting requirements, upper- and lower-aquifer impacts, and the need to avoid moving credits into areas experiencing subsidence. Members generally supported continued evaluation of the concept. Staff will meet with ditch companies and other water suppliers and return with additional information before the next allocation decision.

6. WATER CREDIT RETIREMENT NONPROFIT

Representatives of a newly formed 501(c)(3) nonprofit presented a proposal allowing landowners to voluntarily donate water credits for permanent retirement and potentially claim a charitable tax deduction based on an independent appraisal. The organization requested a partnership with the GSA, including access to the GSA accounting platform and financial support for administration on a per-acre-foot or limited seed-funding basis.

Members discussed verification that donated credits represent real water, potential audit and tax issues, whether the program should initially be limited to native yield or other clearly verified credits, fairness to all landowners, and the relationship between this proposal and other GSA credit-purchase programs. The Committee expressed interest in the proposal as an additional management tool and directed that it be brought back for further discussion after legal, accounting, and program details are further developed.

7. GREATER MITIGATION PLAN

Staff reported that the dry-well mitigation program continues in coordination with Self-Help Enterprises. Four wells have been drilled or are in the drilling process. Staff noted that each claim presents unique circumstances, including ownership changes and evidence of conditions predating 2015, which requires case-by-case evaluation. The program remains active and is progressing, although claim review can be time-consuming.

8. GREATER SUBSIDENCE, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Staff and consultant Tom Harder summarized a July 21 meeting with the Department of Water Resources regarding the amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan and subsidence. DWR focused on critical infrastructure, the use of critical head in evaluating subsidence, the response if minimum thresholds are exceeded, and the need for an adaptive management and mitigation plan. Staff emphasized that regional pumping and subsidence outside the Greater Kaweah area may affect local conditions and that regional coordination will be necessary.

Mr. Harder reviewed mapped subsidence conditions and identified critical infrastructure that may be affected by differential subsidence, including waterways, canals, pipelines, and transportation facilities. He reported that approximately 40 to 50 percent of the allowable subsidence identified in the GSP has occurred in portions of the subbasin, although subsidence rates have generally slowed since 2023. Members discussed flooding, residual subsidence, mitigation reserves, trigger points for management actions, and the need to develop a clear response before minimum thresholds are reached or exceeded.

Five pressure transducers are currently installed in existing wells: three in Priority Area 1 and two in Priority Area 2. Installation in deep production wells has been difficult because of well construction and access limitations. Five bids were received for a dedicated monitoring well at the Herbert Preserve, and staff is evaluating the bids. Additional potential well sites in Priority Area 1 are also being pursued.

The Committee continued its discussion of management areas as a means of focusing restrictions and corrective actions where subsidence or other undesirable results are occurring. Current concepts have shifted from small section-based areas toward larger regional areas with more unified performance criteria. Staff will coordinate with the technical advisory committee, neighboring GSAs, and DWR before presenting refined concepts for Committee and Board review.

9. SUBBASIN WELL REGISTRATION

Staff reported that approximately 2,000 wells had been registered as of the meeting date, compared with an estimated total of approximately 8,000 to 9,000 wells. The registration deadline was July 13, 2026. Staff is working with the dashboard developer to establish a noncompliance indicator and related restrictions. Landowners who do not register may be unable to purchase additional water, transfer water, or participate in GSA programs until compliance is achieved.

Discussion addressed data quality, the minimum information needed for compliance, use of county well records and completion reports, and the need for staff quality assurance. Staff stated that owner information and an accurate well location are the most important initial data points, while depth, perforation, and construction information may be supplemented from available records. The Committee also discussed county permit reporting and the distinction between domestic and agricultural well permit review.

10. SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLANS AND STATUS REPORT

No separate GSP status report was presented. The Committee discussed the GSA's water-transfer policy and the need to monitor transfers by zone, particularly where transferred credits may increase lower-aquifer pumping or subsidence. Staff noted that the Rules and Regulations allow the GSA to respond to localized problems and that future management areas may restrict transfers into subsiding zones.

Members also discussed the relationship between municipal pumping, treated wastewater use, recharge, injection or aquifer-storage concepts, and subsidence. The discussion emphasized that deep municipal pumping can affect regional conditions and that projects should be located and operated to reduce pumping impacts in subsidence-prone areas.

11. NEXT MEETING

The Committee will continue meeting as needed, with the next meeting anticipated in August 2026. Staff indicated that future agendas will continue to include focused, in-depth discussions of priority management issues.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. An adjournment time was not stated in the recording.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Larsen
Secretary, Combined RCC & SC