

Water Commission's Meetings

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY PROCEDURES FOR THE WATER COMMISSION MEETINGS

On March 17, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-29-20, relating to the convening of public meetings in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The County of Tulare hereby provides notice that it will continue to convene its regularly scheduled public meetings of the Water Commission in the BOS Conference Rooms A&B at 2800 W. Burrell Ave, Visalia, as provided in the publicly posted agenda notice, and until further notice.

Based on guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the California Governor's Office, to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus, members of the public are encouraged to participate in the Board meetings in the following ways:

1. REMOTE VIEWING: Listen to the live audio stream of the Water Commission meeting at

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://tularecounty-ca.zoom.us/j/97308676203?pwd=bm9tZURaa09kb2FNVnFUSDJOVXIUT09>

Meeting ID: 973 0867 6203

Passcode: 599334

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 973 0867 6203

Passcode: 599334

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: If you choose not to attend the Water Commission meeting but wish to comment on a specific agenda item we have the following options available:

- a. Submit written comments on an agenda item to the Clerk of the Water Commission at DEngland@tularecounty.ca.gov for distribution to the Water Commission before the meeting. If you would like to support, oppose, or otherwise comment on a Water Commission' agenda item, please consider sending in your comment rather than attending the meeting in person. All communication, whether it is a formal letter or a one-line informal email, is read by the Water Commission. Also, if you are part of a large group that would like to comment on an agenda item, please consider commenting in writing or sending one spokesperson to speak on behalf of the group.

Written comments may also be submitted by U.S. mail, at:

Tulare County Administrative Office

c/o Clerk of the Water Commission

2800 W. Burrell Ave.

Visalia, CA 93291

b. To participate during the Water Commission meeting, please call (559) 636-5000. Each caller will, one at a time, be connected to the Board room to address the Commission in the same manner as if the caller were there in person. The caller will be requested to state his or her name and address for the record, and the caller's statements will go through the PA system in order to be heard by everyone in the room. The statements will go out on the live audio stream. The three (3) minute limit will apply to all public comments.

c. Alternatively, you may participate during the Commission meeting by submitting an email as the item is being heard. Emails should include the sender's name and address for the record. Emails should include the agenda item number and sent to the Clerk of the Water Commission at DEngland@tularecounty.ca.gov. Every effort will be made to read your comment into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Comments received after an agenda item will be made part of the record if received before the end of the meeting.

d. If you attend the Water Commission meeting in person, all attendees will be requested to engage in social distancing measures by maintaining a 6-foot distance from other attendees. Exposed surfaces will be sanitized prior to the meeting and attendees are encouraged to avoid contact with surfaces such as microphones and door handles. Large groups wishing to comment on a common item are encouraged to submit comments in writing or to send one spokesperson to speak on behalf of the group.

Water Commission February 8, 2021 can be viewed live through Zoom. Click here to join the Water Commission Live Stream:

Join Zoom Meeting

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TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION
3:00 p.m. on Monday, September 13, 2021
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CONFERENCE ROOM A&B and ZOOM
2800 W. BURREL AVE.
VISALIA, CALIFORNIA 93291

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item not appearing on the agenda. Under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Water Commission at this time. For items appearing on the agenda, the public is invited to make comments at the time the item comes up for the Water Commission's consideration. Any person addressing the Water Commission will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes so that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak. At all times, please use the microphone and state your name and address for the record.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment Period
3. Approve May 10, 2021 and July 12, 2021 Minutes (Action Item)
4. Drought Update (Discussion, Possible Action)
 - a. Conditions
 - b. Funding
5. DAC Project Funding
 - a. ARPA
 - b. Federal Appropriations
6. Draft Groundwater Management Principles & Strategies to Monitor, Analyze, & Minimize Impacts to Drinking Water Wells (Discussion, Possible Action)
7. Subcommittee Reports
 - a. Legislation (Discussion, Possible Action)
 - i. SB 559
 - ii. SB 403
 - iii. SB 776
 - iv. AB 1250
8. Staff Reports (Discussion, Possible Action)
 - a. Tulare-Kern DACII Program
 - b. SGMA Implementation
9. Commissioners' Comments
10. Future Agenda Topics
11. Next meeting – Monday, October 11, 2021
12. Adjourn

Tulare County Water Commission Contact: Denise England, staff (559) 636-5000

Tulare County Water Commission website: <https://tularecounty.ca.gov/board/index.cfm/committees-commissions/water-commission>

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Clerk of the Board's Office at (559) 636-5000

TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION

3:00 p.m. on Monday, May 10, 2021

MEETING NOTES

Members Present:

Pete Vander Poel, Board Representative and Chairman
Martha Flores, TCAG Representative
Eric Quinley, District 2 Appointee
Dominic Fino, At-Large Appointee
Jessi Snyder, At-Large Appointee
Mike Lane, At-Large Appointee

Members Absent:

Dennis Townsend, Board Alternate
VACANT, District 1 Appointee
VACANT, District 3 Appointee
Chad Wegley, District 4 Appointee*Unable to join via phone due to technical difficulties
Steve Etchegaray, District 5 Appointee

Staff Present:

Denise England, Tulare County Administration Office
Aaron Zaheen, County Counsel
Matt Wang, Tulare County Counsel
Bob Irvine, TCiCT
Jessica Gocke, HHSA-Environmental Health
Ben Guiliani, Tulare County LAFCo

Members of the Public Present:

Pat Pinkham	Jeremy Barroll
Richard Garcia	Tricia Stever Blattler

1. Call to Order
Chairman Vander Poel called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.
2. Public Comment Period
There was no public comment.
3. Approve March 8, 2021 and April 12, 2021 minutes
On a motion made by Commissioner Flores and seconded by Commissioner Fino, the Commission approved the minutes with Commissioner Snyder abstaining.
4. Annual Re-organization of the Water Commission
 - a. Vice Chair
On a motion made by Commissioner Quinley and seconded by Commissioner Lane, the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Commissioner Lane as the Vice Chair.
 - b. Secretary
On a motion made by Commissioner Lane and seconded by Commissioner Flores, the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Commissioner Quinley as the Secretary.
5. Subcommittee Appointments
On a motion made by Commissioner Quinley and seconded by Commissioner Lane the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Commissioners Quinley, Lane, and Snyder to the Legislative Subcommittee.
6. State Water Resources Control Board Water Rights and Climate Change Report
Commissioner Lane requested this item be added to the agenda. He explained the Mid Kaweah GSA and Tulare Irrigation District submitted a letter outlining the organizations' concerns with the Report. The Report appears to suggest modifying water rights outside of existing water rights law, including opening up Fully Appropriated Stream Designations. The Commission recommended staff take a letter of concern to the Board of Supervisors for action.

7. Drought Response

Denise England, Tulare County Water Resources Director, provided an update on the County's drought response. She indicated the County declared a local emergency on April 27, 2021. She went on to say the Governor was holding a press conference during the Commission meeting to add Tulare County to his previous drought declaration. She reported that many of the programs were still in place from the last drought, such as household tanks, bottled water, and well assistance, but there was insufficient funding to expand those programs for a more widespread drought response. Commissioner Snyder shared that Tulare Irrigation District offered to use their equipment to assist with bottled water deliveries, as well as provide storage space to stage pallets of bottled water.

8. Subcommittee Reports

a. Legislation

There was no additional information regarding legislation.

9. Staff Reports

a. Tulare-Kern DACII Program

Denise England reported the Program is moving forward on schedule. She indicated there may be money available through the Program to augment the Needs Assessment Tool for drought response.

b. SGMA Implementation

There were no SGMA updates.

c. Form 700

Ms. England reminded the Commissioners, if not already filed, their Form 700s were due April 1, 2021.

d. AB 1234 Ethics Training

Ms. England reminded Commissioners to complete their AB 1234 Ethics training.

10. Commissioners Comments

There were no Commissioner comments.

11. Future Agenda Topics-

Commissioner Fino asked that the Commission consider coordinating water safety with canal safety.

12. Next meeting – Monday, June 14, 2021 3:00 PM

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 pm

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TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION

3:00 p.m. on Monday, July 12, 2021

MEETING NOTES

Members Present:

Pete Vander Poel, Board Representative and Chairman
Dennis Townsend, Board Alternate
Martha Flores, TCAG Representative
Eric Quinley, District 2 Appointee
Jessi Snyder, At-Large Appointee
Mike Lane, At-Large Appointee

Members Absent:

VACANT, District 1 Appointee
VACANT, District 3 Appointee
Chad Wegley, District 4 Appointee*Unable to join via phone due to technical difficulties
Steve Etchegaray, District 5 Appointee
Dominic Fino, At-Large Appointee

Staff Present:

Denise England, Tulare County Administration Office
Aaron Zaheen, County Counsel
Bob Irvine, TCiCT
Jessica Gocke, HHSA-Environmental Health

Members of the Public Present:

Pat Pinkham	John Lollis	Mike Camarena
Jeremy Barroll	Stephanie Baraza	Shane Smith
Tricia Stever Blattler	Staci Ann Silva	Carole Combs
Johnny Gailey	Mike Knight	Ms. Quintana
Rhett Anderson	Michael Prado	Donna
	Richard Garcia	

1. Call to Order
Chairman Vander Poel called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.
2. Public Comment Period
There was no public comment.
3. Approve May 10, 2021 minutes
Due to a lack of a quorum, the minutes were tabled.
4. Drought Update
Denise England, Tulare County Water Resources Director, provided an overview of the drought impacts in Tulare County. Dr. Jessica Gocke, Tulare County Environmental Health, provided an update on well permits. Commissioner Snider reported that the Self Help Enterprises Drought line is receiving 30-35 calls each day reporting dry wells. She went on to say that a new agricultural well was constructed last week 200 feet from their community's drinking water supply well. Dr. Gocke clarified that the County's well permit ordinance mirrors the State's setbacks. Michael Prado commented that Sultana had a similar issue, but a study indicated that the deeper agricultural well did not negatively impact the community's drinking water supply well.
5. Regional Conservation Investment Strategy
Aaron Gabbe provided an overview of the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy the East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency is piloting (PowerPoint attached). He announced there will be a public meeting for comment on the draft plan on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 5:00 PM at the International Agri Center
6. Subcommittee Reports
 - a. Legislation

Ms. England provided an update on AB 252- Multibenefit Land Repurposing. She indicated it was scheduled for hearing on July 13th in the Natural Resources and Water Committee.

7. Staff Reports

a. Tulare-Kern DACII Program

Denise England reported the Program is moving forward on schedule. She indicated the next Project Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, July 15, 2021 at 9:00 AM.

b. SGMA Implementation

There were no SGMA updates.

c. Form 700

Ms. England reminded the Commissioners, if not already filed, their Form 700s were due April 1, 2021.

d. AB 1234 Ethics Training

Ms. England reminded Commissioners to complete their AB 1234 Ethics training.

8. Commissioners Comments

There were no Commissioner comments.

9. Future Agenda Topics-

The Commission asked about the quorum challenge and existing vacancies. Ms. England responded that the seats for Districts 1 and 3 were still vacant.

10. Next meeting – Monday, August 9, 2021 3:00 PM


11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM

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Kaweah Subbasin Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)

Presentation to the Tulare County Water Commission

Aaron Gabbe, PhD

July 12, 2021



Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Program

- **Assembly Bill 2087 Signed by CA Governor Sept. 22, 2016; effective Jan. 1, 2017**
- **Added to Section 1850-1861 of CA Fish and Game Code**
- **Voluntary, non-binding, non-regulatory program. An RCIS does not:**
 - Regulate land or water use
 - Establish land use designation
 - Affect, limit, or restrict the land use authority of any public agency
 - Should not be interpreted to conflict with controlling federal, state or local law
 - Participation is voluntary
- **Designed to:**
 - Streamline mitigation planning and implementation for infrastructure and other projects
 - Better position local entities to win grant funding
 - Promote science-based conservation planning and delivery
 - Unlock a new tool for creating advance mitigation: Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCA)



Regional Conservation Investment Strategy



- Prepared by any public agency (East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife approves a RCIS for up to 10 years
- Once approved, Mitigation Credit Agreements can be authorized
- Addresses species' needs and mitigation (focal species) within a comprehensive conservation strategy
- State tool, but could serve other regulatory needs
 - E.g., can be linked to other mitigation needs (water, air, carbon)



Mitigation Credit Agreement (MCA)

- **Voluntary tool to create “mitigation credits”**
- **Mitigation credits for focal species or conservation elements**
- **Credits used to offset impacts by infrastructure and other projects**
- **Credits can be sold to public agencies and private entities that need mitigation**
- **Opportunity to repurpose land**
- **The sponsor of an MCA develops the agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Hierarchy: Regional Conservation Investment Strategy and Mitigation Credit Agreements



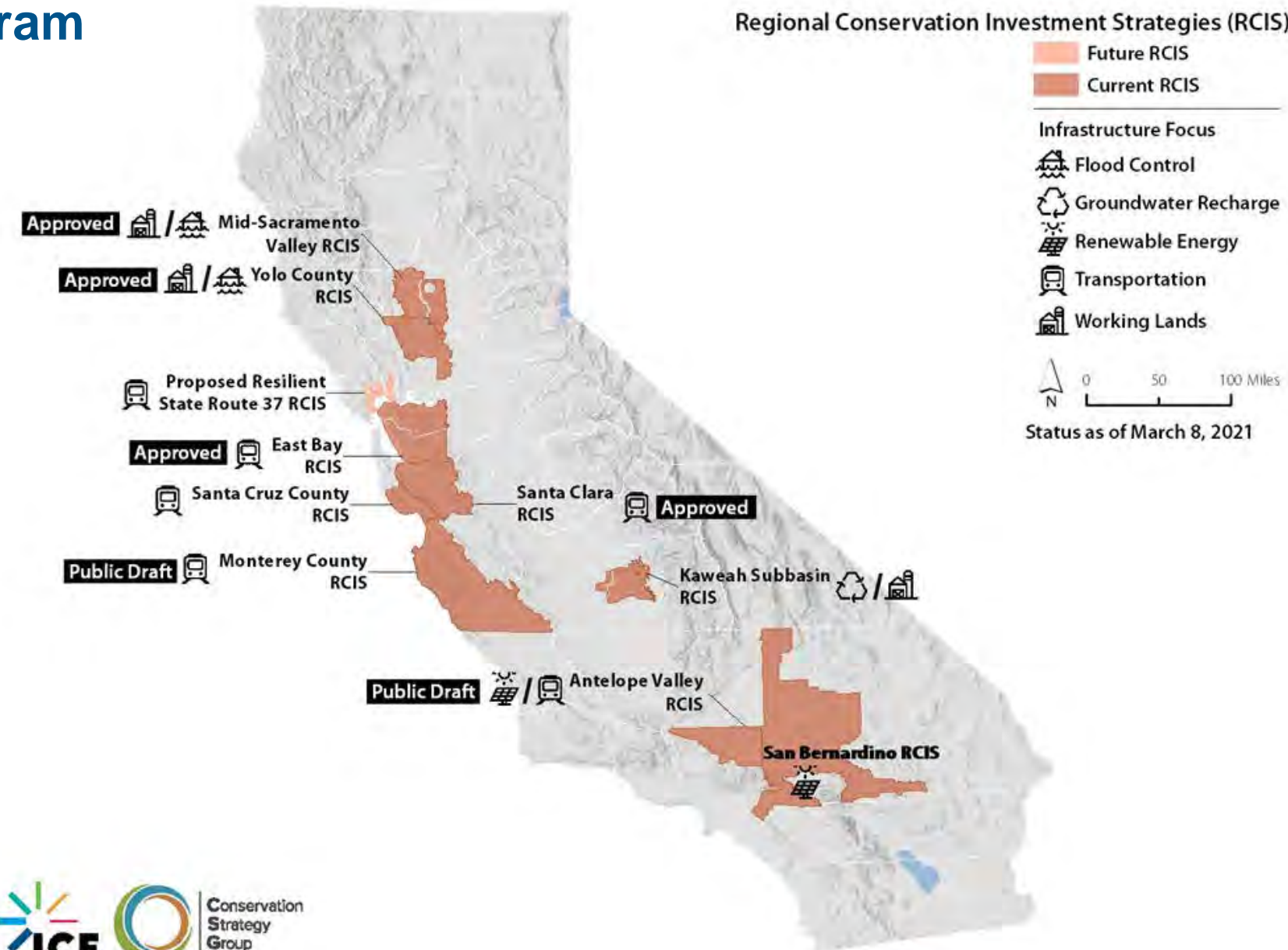
- **Scale:** Multi-county, county, or sub-county
- Conservation priorities for focal species
- Modest requirements for CDFW approval
- Voluntary
- **Required for Mitigation Credit Agreements**



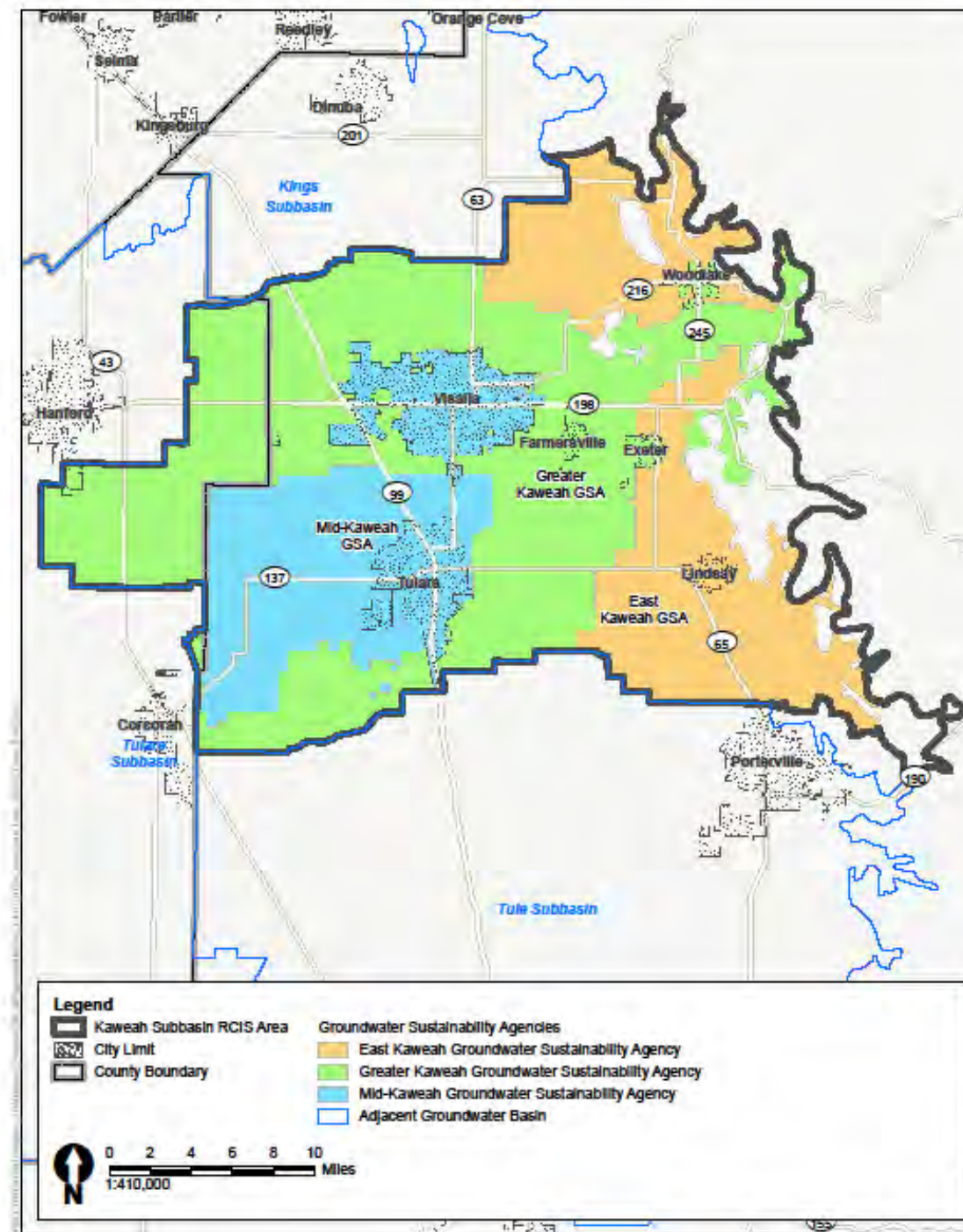
- **Scale:** watershed, multiple sites
- Enables advance mitigation
- Detailed requirements for CDFW approval
- Required to create mitigation credits
- Voluntary
- **Credits can be sold to public or private entities that need mitigation**



Statewide RCIS Program



Kaweah Subbasin RCIS Area





KAWEAH SUBBASIN CONTEXT

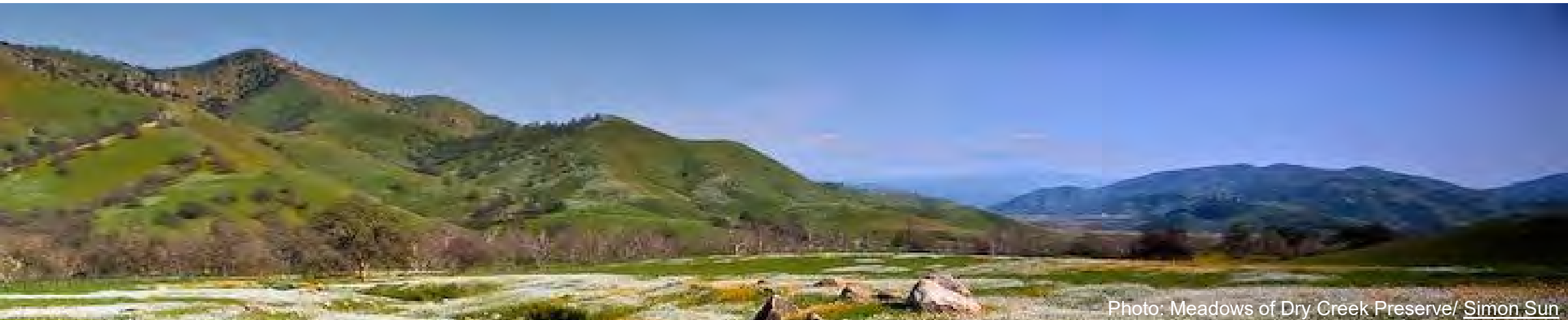
- **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is a new catalyst for sustainable groundwater use**
- **Land use changes are on the horizon**
- **The RCIS is focused on species and habitats, and generally prioritizes species that**
 1. Coexist on current or former agricultural lands
 2. Can be supported with low or no water use projects
 3. Have defined mitigation demand in the region
- **Conservation actions identified in the RCIS are voluntary and will support the objectives outlined in the GSPs (such as reducing groundwater demand and increasing groundwater recharge).**





RCIS AND GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLANS: HOW DO THEY RELATE?

- The Kaweah RCIS is a voluntary conservation plan aimed at providing landowners with financially-beneficial options as GSPs are implemented.
- The RCIS creates the opportunity to attract and direct mitigation and grant funding into the basin for multi-benefit projects.
- The RCIS includes projects like wildlife friendly groundwater recharge, which can help augment supply.
- The RCIS is *one of many* strategies that can be used to support the local community and economy and can be used *in addition to* other mechanisms (water trading, water supply augmentation projects, etc.) aimed at sustainably managing groundwater basins.





LOCAL LEADERSHIP & PERSPECTIVE

RCIS effort is guided by a local Steering Committee that represents

- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
- Growers and Landowner Representatives
- Disadvantaged Community Advocates
- Local Governments/Counties
- Local conservation groups
- State Wildlife and Infrastructure Agencies

Steering Committee members

- Provide local perspective and expertise
- Contribute knowledge of GSPs and existing regional conservation needs
- Identify priority conservation actions
- Communicate anticipated infrastructure needs in the region
- Review draft documents





Kaweah Subbasin RCIS Steering Committee

Steering Committee

- EKGSA
- MKGSA
- GKGSA
- Counties of Tulare and Kings
- Cities of Lindsay, Woodlake, Visalia
- Growers and Landowners
- Self Help Enterprises
- Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust (one rep.)
- Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership
- Sierra Club
- Caltrans

Steering Committee (non-voting)

- Environmental Defense Fund
- Environmental Incentives
- New Current Water and Land
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Regional Conservation Investment Strategy Elements

- **Focal species, conservation elements (e.g., working lands, natural communities, groundwater sustainability, landscape linkages)**
- **Pressures and stressors on focal species and conservation elements**
- **Conservation goals and measurable objectives**
- **Priority conservation actions and habitat enhancement actions**
- **Climate adaptation opportunities**
- **Best available science**
- **Existing and future infrastructure and development**

Focal Species

- Crotch bumble bee
- Vernal pool fairy shrimp
- California tiger salamander
- Western spadefoot
- Blunt-nosed leopard lizard
- Swainson's hawk
- Burrowing owl
- Tricolored blackbird
- Buena Vista Lake ornate shrew
- Pallid bat
- Tipton kangaroo rat
- San Joaquin kit fox
- Kaweah brodiaea
- Striped adobe-lily
- Valley oak



Robert E. Preston, Ph.D.



Potential Conservation Actions and Habitat Enhancement Actions

- Land acquisition and protection with easement
- Habitat restoration
- Installation of wildlife crossings
- Habitat management (e.g., grazing)
- Protect and enhance wildlife movement corridors between habitat patches



RCIS Document Outline

■ Chapter 1: Introduction

- Background
- Purpose and need
- Strategy area

■ Chapter 2: Environmental and Land Use Setting

- Groundwater Sustainability Plans and existing conservation strategies
- Natural communities and focal species
- Existing and future infrastructure and development
- Working lands
- Landscape connectivity
- Pressures and stressors
- Protected areas

■ Chapter 3: Conservation Strategy

- Conservation gap analysis
- Conservation goals and objectives
- Voluntary conservation actions, habitat enhancement actions, and priorities

■ Chapter 4: Implementation

- RCIS updates and amendments
- Assessing progress

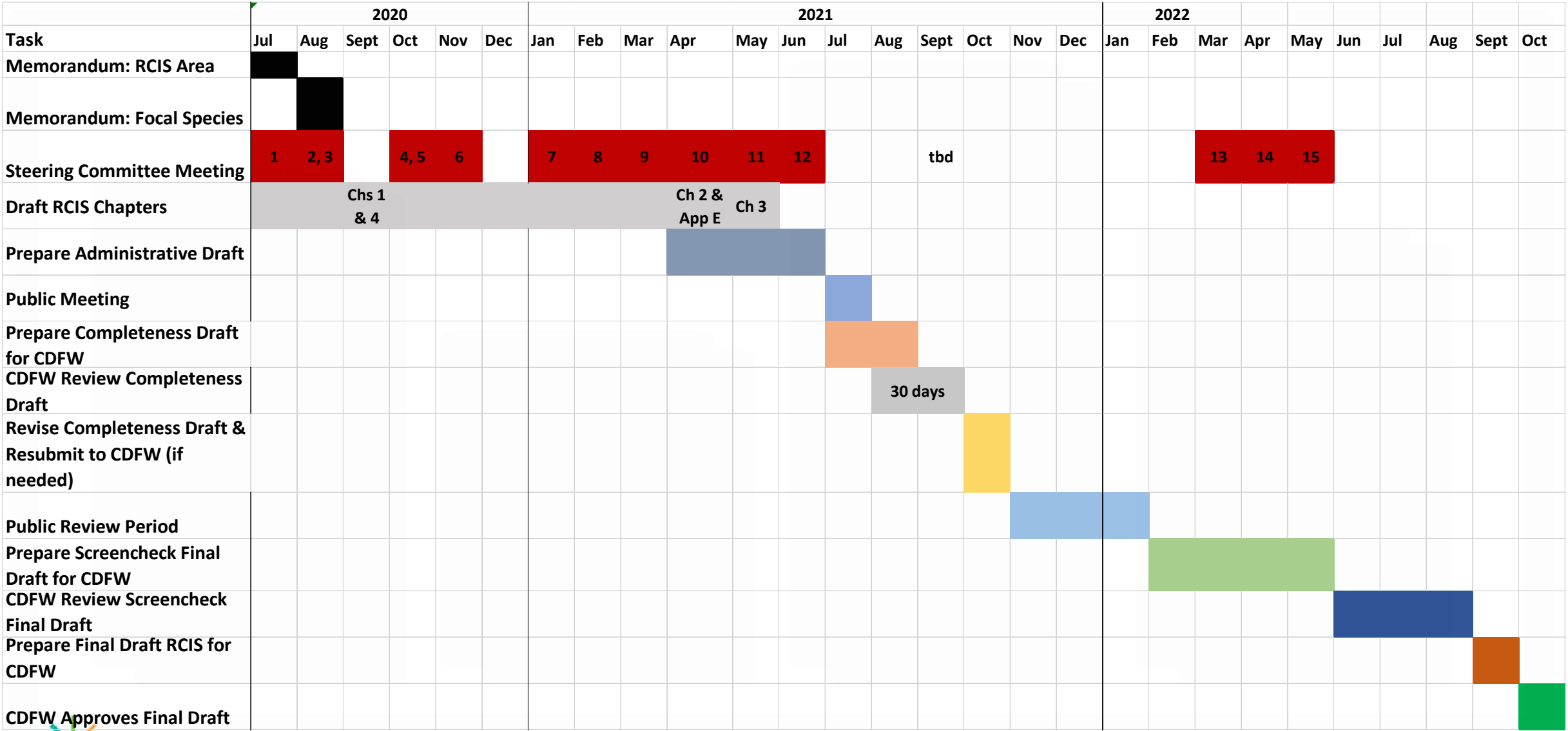
■ Chapter 5: References

■ Appendices:

- Glossary
- Focal species profiles
- Others as needed



Timeline





Questions?

For more information, contact aaron.gabbe@icf.com





Mitigation Credit Agreement (MCA)



Describes:

- Conservation and habitat enhancement actions
- Connection to RCIS conservation goals and objectives
- Service area
- Credit ledger and release schedule

Includes:

- Conservation easement
- Long-term management funding
- Adaptive management and monitoring strategy
- Performance standards and metrics



Kaweah Subbasin RCIS Planning Team

Planning Team

- EKGSA
- Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)
- Environmental Incentives (EI)
- New Current Water and Land
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership

DRAFT GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES & STRATEGIES TO MONITOR, ANALYZE & MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO DRINKING WATER WELLS:

A Framework for State Action to Support Drought Resilient Communities

PREAMBLE

As California's climate conditions continue to intensify and drought periods become more frequent and severe, the State acknowledges that less snowpack, precipitation, and surface water are leading to an increased reliance on groundwater. However, our groundwater resources in some areas of California have been overdrafted for decades, where many users, including agriculture, business, people, and the natural environment, rely on groundwater. Rural communities that are highly dependent on groundwater for drinking water typically rely on wells located in the shallow portions of groundwater aquifers, increasing exposure to potential impacts from intensifying changes in climate and groundwater use. Such circumstances can leave too many Californians with dry wells and few options for identifying alternative water sources. These principles and strategies provide a framework to guide State action, including immediate and long-term drought-related groundwater management actions by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board). Taking these actions can improve the water supply reliability of many Californians and communities who use groundwater wells for drinking water and household purposes now and into the future.

The State has experienced several drought cycles in the last decade. As documented in the most up-to-date statewide groundwater report – **California's Groundwater (Bulletin 118)** published by DWR and the recent Drinking Water Needs Assessment authored by the Water Board, the following conditions provide a clear need for developing these drinking water well principles and strategies:

- Droughts are extreme and climate change is exacerbating drought conditions to be more frequent and severe.
- Groundwater acts as a drought buffer and helps lessen the water supply impacts of our changing climate – groundwater provided **nearly 60 percent of the State's** total water supply in 2015 during the peak of the 2012 to 2016 drought.
- Approximately 82 percent of Californians – 33 million people – rely on groundwater for some portion of their drinking water or other household uses and nearly six million Californians are entirely dependent on groundwater for drinking water supplies.
- Nearly 1.5 million Californians rely on domestic wells and one-third of community water systems rely on only one well for drinking water and other potable uses.

- Approximately 53 percent of domestic wells are found in non-basin (fractured rock) areas, outside of the alluvial groundwater basins.
- The drinking water needs of some communities have historically not been prioritized, in part because members of these communities have sometimes been excluded from decision-making roles or other forms of participation on the basis of land tenure, property size, race, language, or other factors.
- Some communities where drought threatens drinking water have also historically experienced higher environmental burdens and now are among the most vulnerable to pollution and climate impacts.
- An estimated 3,500 domestic wells in the San Joaquin Valley, and hundreds more in the rest of the state, went dry leaving households and communities without water during the 2012 to 2016 drought. Based on climate projections and continued groundwater overdraft and unmanaged groundwater extractions, more wells are anticipated to go dry in certain areas.
- It is the policy of the State of California that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes. Safe and reliable water is critical to human health.

For the purposes of this document drinking water well users are identified as *domestic well owners or individuals, tribal governments, or water systems that use wells for drinking water needs.*

BACKGROUND

On April 21, 2021, Governor Newsom signed an Emergency Proclamation and declared a State of Emergency for certain parts of California where record drought conditions continued to worsen after two consecutive dry years. The Emergency Proclamation ordered various State actions, including Action 11:

To ensure the potential impacts of drought on communities are anticipated and proactively addressed, the Department of Water Resources, in coordination with the Water Board, shall develop groundwater management principles and strategies to monitor, analyze, and minimize impacts to drinking water wells.

The DWR¹ and Water Board² stand strongly committed to the Human Right to Water – that all Californians have a right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water, including those who rely on groundwater for drinking water and household purposes.

The following principles and strategies **were developed in response to the Governor's directive and build upon the State's drought response**, as well as long-term water management efforts, to deliver solutions to support groundwater-dependent communities to ensure that the potential impacts of drought are anticipated and proactively addressed. Existing programs that complement this framework and are integrated in the strategies include:

- The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
- The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Program
- Water Conservation and Drought Planning (AB 1668 and SB 606, 2018)
- Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)
- Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS)

While these State programs provide DWR and the Water Board authorities to support local water management improvements, there are some challenges that cannot be solved by existing State regulatory and funding programs. For example, counties have authority over well permitting and local land use and groundwater sustainability agencies and water systems monitor conditions and manage water resources locally. Further aligning State programs, improving local agency coordination, and addressing data gaps are included in the strategies presented below to help anticipate and proactively address drought impacts on communities.

The following principles and strategies provide a framework for State actions to continue anticipating impacts and enhancing drought management efforts. Additional Executive action, legislation, funding, and guidance may be required to fully implement these strategies.

¹ DWR formally adopted a Human Right to Water (HRTW) Policy in its Department Administrative Manual, which outlines how the HRTW should be included in DWR decision-making, program activities, and public engagement.

² The Water Board adopted a HRTW Resolution, recognizing HRTW as a core value and directing its implementation across programs and activities. The Water Board is also currently drafting a Racial Equity Resolution.

PRINCIPLES & STRATEGIES

1. Achieve Drinking Water Resilience: Implement ongoing drought planning and responses and other groundwater management programs to effectuate necessary changes with the goal to achieve drought resilience for drinking water well users.
 - 1.1 Formalize and regularly convene an inter-agency drinking water well work team among state agencies, including DWR, the Water Board and other appropriate state agencies, to provide drought assistance.
 - 1.2 Coordinate available assistance from federal agencies and work with the **Governor's** Office of Emergency Services and the local Offices of Emergency Services within county jurisdictions to provide drinking water well protections and relief through emergency funding, loans, grants, and other assistance programs.
 - 1.3 Engage with counties and water systems to complete drought assessments and water shortage contingency plans in alignment with the 2018 Water Conservation and Drought Planning legislation, analyzing drought risks for drinking water well users, and encourage alignment with other local hazard mitigation plans (LHMP) and Emergency Operations Plans.
 - 1.4 Engage with local agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to spotlight best practices of drought management efforts that support drinking water well users.
 - 1.5 Continue long-term groundwater sustainability planning and implementation to minimize the impacts of future droughts, through the implementation of SGMA.
 - 1.6 Continue providing assistance, support, and oversight through state drinking water and water quality programs and continue considering, where feasible and appropriate, consolidation and water partnerships to develop technical, managerial, and financial capacity of water systems and communities.
2. Integrate Equity: Recognize equity needs to be integrated in drought-related planning processes to inform outcomes; Ensure there is equitable access to available drought assistance where barriers may exist for drinking water well users.
 - 2.1 Broadly distribute educational materials and comprehensive information on management and well maintenance responsibilities, potential drought risks associated with drinking water wells, and funding and assistance for drinking water well users to be able to make informed decisions regarding well infrastructure.
 - 2.2 Develop programs to support and protect the reliability of wells or facilitation of interties, when feasible and appropriate.

- 2.3 Create flexibility for groundwater trading to occur within basins with appropriate safeguards for drinking water well users to support a safe and reliable water supply.
- 2.4 Work with relevant state agencies to develop guidance for counties to avoid the indiscriminate or retaliatory red tagging of homes based on prior water shortages, dry wells, or water quality contamination, without first considering the impacts to drinking water well users.
- 2.5 Provide guidance to local agencies on how to engage community members in local groundwater decision-making and solution-development and track improvements over time.
- 2.6 Use common or preferred platforms for public meetings at preferred times, when feasible, to improve communication on available State, federal and local planning and assistance to drinking water well users.
- 2.7 Continue to provide translation services, as appropriate, to empower communities to engage in their spoken language during local decision-making processes.
- 2.8 **Apply the “polluter pays” principle**, so that the costs of solutions that benefit drinking water well users **don’t fall on those** users but fall on the parties that have responsibility for the vulnerabilities, to the degree possible or appropriate.
- 2.9 Align the use of different state funding programs and local fee authorities to maximize support for drinking water well users.
- 3. Address Underlying Challenges: Deliver targeted drought assistance by addressing the underlying challenges drinking water well users face to provide near-term relief, resolve fundamental issues, and anticipate and mitigate future drought impacts.
 - 3.1 Improve Procurement: Improve contracting and procurement processes to assist with supply chain challenges to repair or rehabilitate dry wells, ensuring pumps, tanks, and drilling contractors are available in times of emergency response.
 - 3.2 Efficient Water Use: Encourage counties to establish ordinances and requirements in areas not served by a water system to further address water use restriction needs and define appropriate water use during droughts; coordinate with local agencies to identify and enforce where there are inappropriate uses of groundwater.
 - 3.3 Coordinated Land Use Planning: Engage with the Office of Planning and Research, counties, groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs), and water agencies to align land use planning in general plans and groundwater sustainability planning efforts to ensure a reliable water supply for drinking water well users as land use changes occur.

- 3.4 Informed Well Permitting: Engage with relevant land use and county environmental health divisions, and groundwater sustainability agencies to develop guidance for how local agencies can avoid water supply or water quality issues when permitting new wells or new housing development.
- 3.5 State Program Alignment: Provide guidance to drinking water well users that recognizes the unique parallels between state drinking water and groundwater regulatory and funding programs and further align state efforts to ensure water supply and water quality impacts on drinking water well users are addressed.
- 3.6 Energy Incentives: Work with state energy agencies and other entities to further understand how groundwater management and pumping practices may impact drinking water well users in shallow aquifers that rely on groundwater and provide incentives for operating industrial or agricultural wells in ways that do not interfere with drinking water wells, regardless of energy demand management practices.
- 3.7 Sustainable Land Use Practices: Work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture to identify guidance on crop conversion, and farming and land use practices that may impact groundwater conditions and drinking water well users.
- 3.8 Economic Development: Provide assistance in partnership with other state agencies where there may be potential economic impacts to neighboring communities and drinking water well users.
- 4. Lead with Best Available Data: Prioritize the alignment, centralization, and accessibility of available well data and information to clearly identify emerging and existing groundwater and drinking water issues for improved drought management.
 - 4.1 Improve data acquisition to monitor groundwater level and water quality conditions year-round to track current drought impacts and identify hot spot drought areas to help direct funding to local entities or non-governmental organizations to minimize drought impacts.
 - 4.2 Promote the metering of wells or use of evapotranspiration data to more accurately capture the use of groundwater to improve long-term groundwater management and to safeguard drinking water well users by tracking real-time water use.
 - 4.3 Develop a pilot program to work with local entities to publicly disclose well and water quality information when land or property is transferred.
 - 4.4 Develop an information management system that builds off of existing platforms to inventory and centralize a statewide census of active well information.
 - 4.5 Increase access to and provide user-friendly guidance on data platforms and datasets that are most relevant for drinking water well users to ensure access to

available information, including data on well infrastructure, water levels, water quality, and areas of exceedances of drinking water standards, including the high risk aquifer maps and needs assessment developed under the SAFER Program.

- 4.6 Encourage the increased frequency of groundwater level monitoring within existing wells and provide additional guidance and support to groundwater sustainability agencies to enhance the density of groundwater monitoring networks to benefit drinking water well users.
- 4.7 Encourage groundwater sustainability agencies and counties to work with drinking water well users to use existing wells as part of monitoring networks to collect relevant data.
5. Build Trusted Relationships: Emphasize that prioritizing and building trusted relationships with drinking water well users create opportunities for effective coordination, communication, and decision-making.
 - 5.1 Recognize community members as experts about their own community and encourage opportunities for drinking water well users to meaningfully engage in the development of solutions.
 - 5.2 Partner with tribal governments, non-governmental organizations, and local agencies to identify operational skill gaps, build capacity, and provide relevant training and technical assistance to support drinking water well users in both alluvial basin and fractured rock, non-basin areas.
 - 5.3 Encourage opportunities for drinking water well users to participate in mutual aid organizations, such as California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CALWARN), to have access to technical assistance and emergency water operators, in particular for tribal governments and small water systems that may have limited managerial resources.
 - 5.4 Provide opportunities to engage government to government with tribes and with the federal Indian Health Services in drought preparedness, management, and emergency response efforts to address underlying challenges.
 - 5.5 Employ and promote best practices for public engagement when working with communities and drinking water well users.
 - 5.6 Engage with drinking water well users on training efforts to understand how to measure water levels and test water quality.
6. Implement Lasting Solutions: Recognize that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to address drinking water well challenges and that solutions need to be specific, effective, and lasting with clear commitments to engage, empower, and support drinking water well users.

- 6.1 Deploy funding incentives to local agencies and counties to coordinate with tribal governments, underrepresented communities, and other non-governmental organizations to mitigate known violations of drinking water standards, further degradation of water quality, or dewatering of drinking water wells.
- 6.2 Develop guidance for local agencies in partnership with NGOs to collaborate on mitigation strategies to offset impacts of groundwater pumping and management on drinking water well users.
- 6.3 Report on progress being made to manage groundwater sustainably through existing state regulatory programs, including SAFER, SGMA, CV-SALTS, IRLP, and other pollution prevention efforts, including programs under the federal Clean Water Act and the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.
- 6.4 Encourage regionalization and consolidation of drinking water systems as a potential solution to avoid future impacts and improve economies of scale to provide a more resilient water supply for drinking water well users.
- 6.5 Promote tools that identify communities and drinking water well users in need of solutions to help prioritize funding, such as the Drinking Water Needs Assessment under the SAFER Program.
- 6.6 Pilot alternative water supply projects, such as regional recycled water projects, for small communities reliant on wells for drinking water.
- 6.7 Work with county representatives to ensure consistency and improve the identification, reporting, and proper decommissioning of abandoned drinking water wells to prevent the potential spread of pollution and water quality contamination.
- 6.8 Promote the availability of drinking water and water rights data to assess the feasibility of recharge projects near shallow aquifers to benefit drinking water well users.
- 6.9 Incentivize recharge projects designed to improve conditions or protect drinking water well users where there are emerging or existing hot spots where drinking water wells are impacted by drought through streamlined permitting processes or other appropriate measures.

GLOSSARY

Drinking water well users – for the purposes of this document drinking water well users are identified as domestic well owners or individuals, tribal governments, or water systems that use wells for drinking water needs

Community water systems – means a public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by yearlong residents or regularly serves at least 25 yearlong residents of the area served by the system, as defined in Health and Safety Code 116275(i)

Public water systems – means a system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year (Health and Safety Code 116275(h))

Small community water system – means a community water system that serves no more than 3,300 service connections or a yearlong population of no more than 10,000 persons (Health and Safety Code 116275(z))

Tribal governments – includes California Native American tribe or State Indian tribes defined in Water Code §79712(a) as Indigenous Communities of California, which are on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission, including those that are federally non-recognized and federally recognized, and those with allotment lands, regardless of whether they own those lands



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