

**Delta-Mendota Subbasin
Technical Working Group Meeting
GDE Subgroup Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 19, 2018, 10:00 AM
842 6th Street, Los Banos, CA**

Meeting Minutes

Voluntary Technical Working Group Representatives in Attendance

Andrew Francis (LSCE)
Kait Palys (Provost & Pritchard)
Keasha Blew (Provost & Pritchard)
John Beam (Grassland WD)
Jarrett Martin (CCID/SJREC)
Chris Rogers (CCID)
Kyle Hill (CCID)
Rick Iger (Provost & Pritchard; by phone)
Ellen Wehr (Grassland WD; by phone)
Ric Ortega (Grassland WD)
Christina Guzman (Fresno County)

Authority Representatives Present

Andrew Garcia
Zachary Roy
Claire Howard

Others in Attendance

Leslie Dumas – Woodard & Curran

1. Introductions

Leslie Dumas/Woodard & Curran called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 AM.

2. Review of Meeting Goals – Completion of GDE Mapping in Delta-Mendota Subbasin

The following meeting goals were reiterated at the beginning of the meeting:

- Finish GDE mapping
- Identify group/time to do losing/gaining reach mapping
- Review TNC draft spreadsheet

3. Review of GDE Mapping to Date

Zachary Roy/SLDMWA gave a quick update as to the status of the GDE mapping and presented the most recent Grassland GDE map. It was noted that ponds in the Grassland GSP area are maintained by CVP supply and the upland areas are rooted into the groundwater table; therefore the wetland/pond areas are not GDEs because, without CVP supply, the GDEs would not be there though the fringe areas around the managed wetlands may still be there but different plant species would be present. For the refuges and duck clubs (wetland footprint), the goal is to maintain these areas. Aerial and geospatial data of habitat mapping has been used to monitor the periphery of these areas to determine if there have been changes. Representatives from the SJREC GSP region stated that they do not want to impact these wetland areas, but they do not want to be required to maintain them. Within the SJREC GSP region, groundwater is about 2 to 15 feet below ground surface when irrigation occurs, but 65 feet below ground surface away from the river.

After additional discussion, the working group decided on the following methodology for identification of GDEs: (1) screen out areas with water levels \geq 30 feet below ground surface; (2) screen out seasonal managed wetlands and ponded areas; and (3) screen out areas where land use change has resulted in loss of habitat. In response to the question regarding how the habitats were identified, Zachary Roy/SLDMWA responded that the PlanetImagery database from 2015 was used for this screening process. Grasslands GSP group felt that they needed more time to ground-truth the GDE mapping; and the group agreed that all GDE mapping could be completed by the end of October.

Leslie Dumas/Woodard & Curran then asked if any of the GSP groups are planning to use management areas for managing GDEs and/or interconnected surface water. Grassland has not identified management areas specific to GDEs. SJREC intends to keep existing management areas and set different triggers for GDEs. Fresno County and Farmers WD have yet to determine if management areas will be identified for GDEs. The Northern & Central DM Region considering a management area along the San Joaquin River.

In discussing the definition of undesirable results for this criterion, most agreed that undesirable results demonstrate that you are not impacting the San Joaquin River and that an undesirable results from a change in groundwater use that demonstrates a new impact.

A target date for January was agreed upon for initial discussions of minimum thresholds and measurable objectives for surface water-groundwater interactions.

4. Definition of GDEs relative to Gaining/Losing Streams

It was agreed by those present that an Ad Hoc work group would be formed for discussion of gaining and losing reaches of the San Joaquin River and Fresno Slough with the following members: Rick Iger/P&P, Will Halligan/LSCE, Bobby Pierce/West Stanislaus ID, a representative from Tranquillity ID, Jarrett Martin/CCID, and Keasha Blew/P&P. Further detail regarding meeting date and time will be set at a later date.

5. Discussion of TNC GDE Checklist

The TNC GDE Checklist document was discussed by the Technical Work Group members present. A question was asked whether there were other types of environmental benefits besides sustaining GDEs through such efforts. There is no historic surface water depletion data available for interconnected surface waters within the Delta-Mendota Subbasin and these data are not needed. Currently, there is no budget or data available for ecological

condition, ecological valuation, and species/habitat/protected lands inventory. There are also no criteria for describing such ecological evaluations. A question was asked if there are any public sources available for such data.

Water budget evaluations in the projected water budget includes groundwater elevation and groundwater quality, which will aid in identifying potential future impacts to GDEs. A date of January 1, 2015 has been set as a baseline for sustainability goals to assess pre-SGMA impacts and will also be used to assess impacts to GDEs. Groundwater uses, such as agricultural, urban, and environmental, will be used to assess measurable objectives relative to GDEs. Presence of interconnected surface water will be used to set minimum thresholds and describe GDEs and environmental uses of surface water. A comment was made that undesirable results related to biological data gaps and potential effects on GDEs, land uses, and property interests are not regulated by SGMA or described under the GSP regulations. In general, all agreed that all habitat is good habitat and that significant changes to the habitat would be a minimum threshold (e.g., shrinking, degraded, struggling habitat regardless of the quality or type of that habitat), but that it could be useful to develop a basin-wide high-level list of potential special-status species that could potentially exist in the Subbasin. Keasha Blew and Kait Palys/Provost & Pritchard agreed to talk to their in-house biologist about potentially developing such a list.

6. Next Steps

- Finish ground-truthing of GDE maps by end of October
- Map depth to groundwater \geq 30 ft below ground surface
- Overlay and finalize GDE mapping by Thanksgiving
- Discuss first-cut of measurable objectives and minimum thresholds relative to surface water-groundwater interaction in January 2019
- Determine time for Ad Hoc work ground on gaining and losing streams
- Provost & Pritchard biological staff to provide a list of special status species in Delta-Mendota Subbasin