

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

In 2014, the State of California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which is comprised of regulatory requirements set forth in a three-bill legislative package consisting of Assembly Bill (AB) 1739 (Dickinson), Senate Bill (SB) 1168 (Pavley), and SB 1319 (Pavley). SGMA defines sustainable groundwater management as “management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results” (SGMA Regulations § 10721(v)) which are defined by SGMA as any of the following effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin (SGMA Regulations § 10721(x)):

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply
- Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage
- Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion
- Significant and unreasonable degraded water quality
- Significant and unreasonable land subsidence
- Depletions of interconnected surface water that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water

The Delta-Mendota Groundwater Subbasin (Delta-Mendota Subbasin or Subbasin) has been identified by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as being in a state of critical overdraft. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Subbasin are therefore tasked with developing and submitting one or more Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs or Plans) to DWR by no later than January 31, 2020. Six (6) coordinated GSPs have been prepared for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin; the Plan area for this GSP, prepared by the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group, is show in **Figure 1-1** along with the Plan areas of the other five (5) Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSP Groups. All six GSPs have been prepared in a coordinated manner under the oversight of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee (Coordination Committee) and in accordance with the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Agreement (Coordination Agreement) for the Subbasin. A Common Chapter, included in **Appendix B**, has been prepared as means of integrating key parts of the six GSPs to meet subbasin-level requirements per the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the Emergency GSP regulations (DWR, 2016).

This GSP has been developed by the GSAs of the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions and meets SGMA regulatory requirements while reflecting local needs and preserving local control over water resources. The Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP provides a path to achieve and document sustainable groundwater management within twenty years following Plan adoption, promoting the long-term sustainability of locally-managed groundwater resources now and into the future.

While the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP offers a new and significant framework for groundwater resource protection and management, it was developed within an existing framework of comprehensive planning efforts. Throughout the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, several separate yet related planning efforts are concurrently proceeding, including Integrated Regional Water Management program, Urban Water Management requirements, Agricultural Water Management requirements, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, and California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program. This GSP has been developed to coordinate with these other planning efforts, building on existing local management and basin characterization. A description of existing planning efforts can be found in **Chapter 2 Plan Area** of this GSP.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE DELTA-MENDOTA SUBBASIN

The Delta-Mendota Subbasin is identified by DWR in Bulletin 118 as Subbasin No. 5-022.07 (DWR, 2016). The Subbasin is one of nine subbasins in the greater San Joaquin Valley Basin in the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region of California. The Subbasin encompasses an area of approximately 765,000 acres, of which approximately 316,000 acres are located in the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions. The Subbasin boundaries, as currently defined by DWR, are located in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, and San Benito Counties.

As previously noted, six (6) GSPs have been prepared in a coordinated fashion to cover the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. For this Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP, eight GSAs worked together to develop the organizational structure and means by which they will jointly manage the underlying portions of the Subbasin. **Chapter 3 Governance** describes how these entities have coordinated both within the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions and with GSAs in the other five (5) GSP Groups in the Subbasin. **Figure 1-1** shows the location of the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP and Plan area within the Delta-Mendota Subbasin.

1.3 GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN ORGANIZATION

This GSP has been organized to generally follow the GSP Emergency Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 23. Waters, Division 2. Department of Water Resources, Chapter 1.5. Groundwater Management. Subchapter 2. Groundwater Sustainability Plans) as released by DWR in 2016. The Preparation Checklist for GSP Submittal in DWR formatting can be found in **Appendix C DWR Preparation Checklist** (DWR, December 2016).

As this GSP is one of six (6) being submitted for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, it is linked to and coordinated with the other five GSPs through the separate *Common Chapter for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin*.

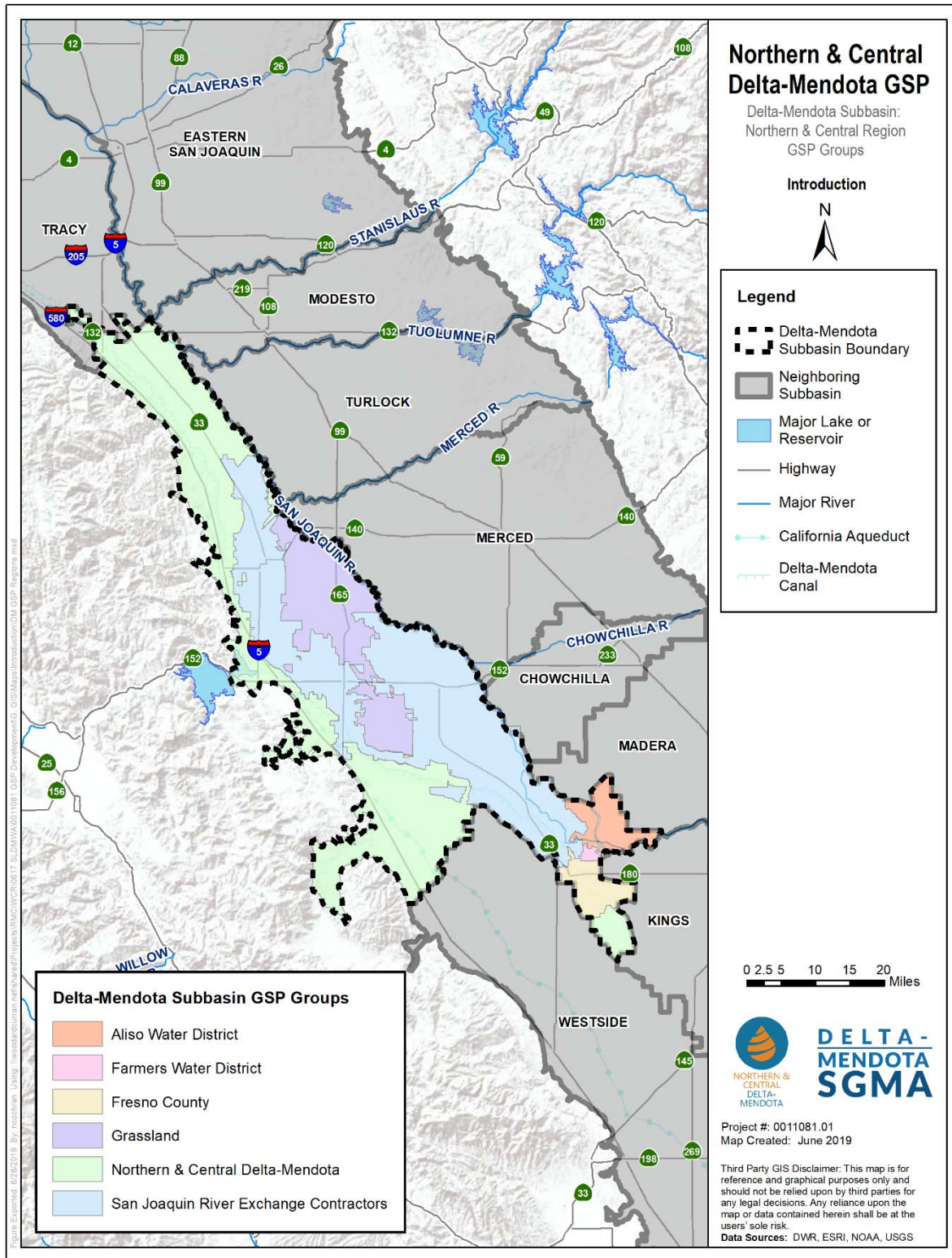


Figure 1-1. Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Groups

1.4 REFERENCES

California Department of Water Resources (DWR). 2016. 2016 Bulletin 118 Basin Boundary Descriptions: 5-022.07 San Joaquin Valley – Delta-Mendota. https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Bulletin-118/Files/B118-Basin-Boundary-Descriptions-2016/B118-Basin-Boundary-Description-2016---5_022_07.pdf. Accessed on July 1, 2019.

California Department of Water Resources (DWR). December 2016. *Guidance Document for the Sustainable Management of Groundwater: Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Annotated Outline*. https://water.ca.gov/LegacyFiles/groundwater/sgm/pdfs/GD_GSP_Outline_Final_2016-12-23.pdf. Accessed on July 1, 2019.