

## 4. OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

This section includes information pursuant to Article 5. Plan Contents, Subarticle 1. Administrative Information, §354.10 (Notice and Communication), as required by the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Emergency Regulations. Details related to the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP public noticing and outreach efforts during the GSP development process are included in this section. Documents used during these efforts are included in **Appendices B and C**. Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP outreach, as well as coordinated intra-basin and inter-basin outreach and communication efforts, are both described herein.

### 4.1 DESCRIPTION OF BENEFICIAL USES AND USERS IN PLAN AREA

As defined by California Water Code §13050(f), beneficial uses of the waters of the State include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Domestic, municipal, agricultural, and industrial supply;
- Power generation;
- Recreation;
- Aesthetic enjoyment;
- Navigation; and
- Preservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic resources and preserves.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) regulations require consideration of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater within the Subbasin during development of a GSP. As such, beneficial users in the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions were identified for consideration in the Plan Area. This list of beneficial use categories and stakeholder groups, presented in **Table 4-1**, was used to identify stakeholders and invite both stakeholders and the public to engage and consult during GSP development. The beneficial uses and user stakeholder groups listed in **Table 4-1** were identified according to the best available information at the time of GSP development. Efforts to further refine the list of beneficial uses and users stakeholder groups will be made prior to the first GSP update in 2025.

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Table 4-1. Beneficial Uses and User Stakeholder Groups

Beneficial Use	Stakeholder Groups	
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban water providers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ City of Modesto</li> <li>○ City of Patterson</li> <li>○ Grayson Community Services District</li> <li>○ Santa Nella County Water District</li> <li>○ Volta Community Services District</li> <li>○ Westley Community Services District</li> <li>○ Tranquillity Irrigation District</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Domestic Well Owners               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are many domestic wells overlying the Basin. Most of these well owners are <i>de minimis</i> users as defined by SGMA.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Federal and State Lands               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agencies                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ U.S. Bureau of Reclamation</li> <li>▪ U.S. Bureau of Land Management</li> <li>▪ California Department of Water Resources</li> <li>▪ California State Water Resources Control Board</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Facilities                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ San Luis Reservoir</li> <li>▪ California Aqueduct</li> <li>▪ Delta-Mendota Canal</li> <li>▪ West Stanislaus Irrigation District Conveyance Facilities</li> <li>▪ Patterson Irrigation District Conveyance Facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Users and Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Patterson Irrigation District</li> <li>○ Tranquillity Irrigation District</li> <li>○ Twin Oaks Irrigation District</li> <li>○ West Stanislaus Irrigation District</li> <li>○ Del Puerto Water District</li> <li>○ Eagle Field Water District</li> <li>○ Eastin Water District</li> <li>○ El Solyo Water District</li> <li>○ Whitelake Mutual Water Company</li> <li>○ Fresno Slough Water District</li> <li>○ Mercy Springs Water District</li> <li>○ Oak Flat Water District</li> <li>○ Oro Loma Water District</li> <li>○ Pacheco Water District</li> <li>○ Panoche Water District</li> <li>○ San Luis Water District</li> <li>○ Widren Water District</li> <li>○ Agricultural Council of California</li> <li>○ California Farm Bureau Federation</li> <li>○ California Farm Water Coalition</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Counties               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fresno County</li> <li>○ Merced County</li> <li>○ San Joaquin County</li> <li>○ San Benito County</li> <li>○ Stanislaus County; Stanislaus County Housing Authority</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Industrial Supply               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aggregate mining</li> <li>○ Food processing</li> <li>○ Manufacturing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Business Groups/Interests               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-Help Enterprises</li> <li>○ BizFed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tribes (None known)</li> </ul>
Power Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power Plants               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Almond 2 Power Plant</li> <li>○ Malaga Power Plant</li> <li>○ Midway Peaking Project</li> <li>○ Panoche Energy Center</li> <li>○ Walnut Energy Center</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydropower               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ O'Neil</li> <li>○ San Luis Bypass</li> <li>○ Wolfsen Bypass</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Army Corp of Engineers</li> <li>○ California Department of Parks and Recreation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Areas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ San Luis Reservoir Recreation Area</li> <li>○ Los Banos Creek State Recreation Area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Aesthetic Enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Recreation and Preservation sections</li> </ul>	
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Joaquin River</li> </ul>	

**Preservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic resources and preserves**

- Agencies
  - U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - California Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - California Department of Parks and Recreation
  - California State Water Resources Control Board
- Environmental Groups
  - The Nature Conservancy
  - The Audubon Society
- Ecosystem Uses
  - Creeks
    - Crow Creek
    - Del Puerto Creek
    - Ingram Creek
    - Hospital Creek
    - Garzas Creek
    - Little Panoche Creek
    - Los Banos Creek
    - Orestimba Creek
    - Panoche Creek
    - Quinto Creek
    - Salado Creek
    - Little Salado Creek
    - Salt Creek
  - Rivers
    - San Joaquin River
    - Kings River
    - Fresno Slough
  - Refuges
    - San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge
    - San Luis National Wildlife Refuge
  - Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

## 4.2 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### 4.2.1 Decision-making Process

As one of six GSPs being prepared for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP development required decision making at both the GSP- and subbasin-level. Decisions relating to critical GSP components, such as water balance methodology, sustainability indicators, and groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE) identification and impacts were coordinated through a multi-step process before being finalized first at the GSP-level and then at the subbasin-level. This process is outlined below where differences in the GSP and Subbasin decision-making processes are identified as necessary:

1. The project team develops the initial recommendation
2. The initial recommendation is presented to the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) via the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Technical Advisory Committee and Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regional Management Committees at the GSP-level, and to the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Communication and Technical Working Groups and Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee at the subbasin-level
3. Feedback from the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Technical Advisory Committee and Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regional Management Committees at the GSP-level, and Delta-Mendota Subbasin Working Groups and Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee at the subbasin-level are incorporated into the recommendation
4. Step 2 and 3 are repeated as needed
5. The agreed-upon recommendation is presented at a public workshop
6. Feedback from stakeholders is incorporated into the recommendation as appropriate
7. The recommendation is documented in the appropriate GSP section and Subbasin Common Chapter
8. Completed GSP or Common Chapter sections are circulated to the GSAs in the Plan Area or Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSP Working Groups and Coordination Committee for comment
9. Comments on the recommended approach/section are incorporated into the appropriate document(s)
10. The GSP or Common Chapter section is posted online for public review and comment
11. Public comments are collected and documented

As detailed above, the decision-making process includes multiple points for both internal (GSA members) and external (public) stakeholders to contribute to the GSP development. Participation in this process was encouraged through stakeholder outreach, communications, and public workshops conducted throughout GSP development.

### 4.2.2 Comments Received Regarding the Plan

During the GSP development phase, the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group posted draft chapters of its Plan to its website (website information provided in **Section 4.3.4**) for 30 days to allow for public review and comment. Upon the release of each chapter, notice was provided to the stakeholder list and an announcement was placed on the GSP website. Comments received on the Public Draft GSP chapters have been compiled and are included in **Appendix C** of this GSP.

## 4.3 OUTREACH

### 4.3.1 Noticing

In accordance with GSP Emergency Regulations §357.2(a), the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group submitted notice to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) stating the intent to develop a GSP. This notice was submitted to DWR on January 5, 2018, a copy of which is included in **Appendix G**.

Following the initial notice submitted to DWR, the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group has provided public notices related to major project junctions and milestones. The methods used to circulate these notices are detailed further in **Section 4.3.4** and additional details regarding the stakeholder distribution list is included in the next section.

Finally, upon completion of the GSP, notice was provided to the counties and cities within the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions regarding Plan adoption. This notice was distributed on September 9, 2019, a copy of which is included in **Appendix G**.

#### 4.3.1.1 GSP Stakeholder List

At the project outset, stakeholder interest was solicited and a contact list was developed to facilitate distribution of project information and notices. The initial stakeholder list included, but was not limited to, representatives from the following groups:

- Public agencies in the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions, other GSAs in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin and adjoining subbasins, including state agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Farm bureaus and agricultural groups in the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions, in other GSP Regions of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin and adjoining subbasins
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing environmental interests such as The Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy
- Private companies and citizens with prior engagement in related planning projects (such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Planning [IRWMP] process)

This stakeholder list was updated throughout the project lifecycle, with new interested parties signing up at public meetings, via email, or through the GSP website. The final stakeholder contact list includes over 500 parties and is included in **Appendix C**.

### 4.3.2 Opportunities for Public Engagement

Throughout the GSP development process, stakeholders, and the public were encouraged to engage with the GSP development team. Through use of the stakeholder list and other noticing strategies (detailed in **Section 4.3.4**), the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group invited interested parties to join in deliberation, dialogue, and discussions related to the development of the GSP. The primary opportunity for engagement with the GSP team came during the subbasin-wide public workshops, but additional targeted meetings and events were held as well as direct communications via website-based communications links, email and letters. Public input gathered during the engagement events was documented for consideration during GSP development, with formal comments presented in Error! Reference source not found.. The following sections describe the opportunities for public engagement.

### 4.3.2.1 Public Workshops

The Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group, in coordination with the other five (5) GSP groups in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, organized and participated in a series of four sets of public workshops throughout the GSP development process. The sets of public workshops were held approximately once a quarter from the initial GSP development kickoff (May 2018) to final content development (May 2019) and were held at multiple locations around the Subbasin (typically with workshops held in the northern, central, and southern portions of the Subbasin). Recognizing the potential limits of the public's schedule, a minimum of three meetings per workshop set (e.g. three meetings were held in the May 2018 set) were organized to provide multiple opportunities for stakeholder engagement. A summary of the topics, dates, and locations of the sets of public workshops is included in **Table 4-2**. Methods used to notify the public of the workshops are discussed in **Section 4.3.4** and presentation materials and meeting sign in sheets from the public meetings are included in **Appendices B and C**.

**Table 4-2. Delta-Mendota Subbasin Public Workshops**

Meeting Date		Meeting Location	Topics
Spring 2018	May 14	Los Banos: <i>San Luis &amp; Delta-Mendota Water Authority Office</i>	SGMA overview, Opportunities to get involved and engage with the project team
	May 16	Patterson: <i>Hammon Senior Center</i>	
	May 17	Mendota: <i>Mendota Branch Library</i>	
Fall 2018	October 22	Firebaugh: <i>Firebaugh Middle School Multi-Purpose Room</i>	Data Collection, HCM, Groundwater Models
	October 24	Los Banos: <i>College Greens Building</i>	
	October 25	Patterson: <i>Hammon Senior Center</i>	
Winter 2019	February 19	Los Banos: <i>College Greens Building</i>	Current and Future Water Budgets, Sustainability Criteria, Projects and Management Action
	February 20	Patterson: <i>Patterson City Hall</i>	
Spring 2019	May 20	Patterson: <i>Patterson City Hall</i>	Projected Water Budget, Sustainable Yield, Monitoring Network, Projects and Management Actions
	May 21	Los Banos: <i>College Greens Building</i>	
	May 22	Santa Nella: <i>Romero Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room</i>	
	May 23	Mendota: <i>Mendota Branch Library</i>	

### 4.3.2.2 Special Environmental Considerations

Given the scope of the GSP and the requirements to consider all users of groundwater (including local ecosystems), the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group, along with other GSP Groups in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, sought consultation with NGOs representing environmental interests and natural resources-focused state agencies early in the GSP development process. As discussed in **Section 4.3.1.1**, representatives from organizations representing environmental interests and state agencies were included on the initial stakeholder list and received all project updates and notices, as well as invitations to attend and participate at the public workshops and regularly scheduled committee and workgroup meetings. In addition, representatives from environmental NGOs (from the Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy) and state agencies (from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) were invited to participate at GSP development meetings and special workshops.

In addition to the public workshops listed in **Section 4.3.2.1**, two special workshops were held with The Nature Conservancy to review groundwater dependent ecosystem identification and coverage and sustainable management criteria in the GSP. The first workshop (August 24, 2018) was held in conjunction with all GSP groups in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, while the second meeting (April 29, 2019) was planned and held by the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group for more targeted discussions. Materials from those special workshops are included in **Appendix C**.

#### 4.3.2.3 Other Opportunities for Public Engagement

In addition to the public workshops described previously, individual GSAs in the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group planned and held additional, targeted public engagement activities for their communities and stakeholders. Engagement activities conducted by the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions' GSAs started shortly after SGMA legislation was passed. The following is a list of the types of other outreach efforts undertaken by the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions GSAs:

- Presentations and discussions at local club meetings
- Presentations and discussions at local public agency events including, but not limited to, Board of Directors, City Council, Landowner, Grower, and Town Hall meetings
- Local SGMA workshops
- Combined outreach with IRWM outreach efforts
- Requests received via the [dmsgma@sldmwa.org](mailto:dmsgma@sldmwa.org) email address by interested parties to be added to meeting distribution lists, where interested parties who were not able to attend meetings in person were able to attend and participate via teleconference

In total, the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions' GSAs conducted over 200 additional outreach activities. A log of outreach activities conducted by the various GSA groups is included in **Appendix C**.

#### 4.3.3 Outreach to Diverse Social, Cultural, and Economic Areas of the Population

The Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions include a diversity of community types, including many non-native non-English (predominantly Spanish) speakers and disadvantaged communities. In order to reach as much of the population as possible, the following best practices were implemented to increase project visibility and opportunities for engagement:

- All outreach materials (including meeting flyers, fact sheets, frequently asked questions [FAQs], and videos) were translated and made available in Spanish
- Spanish-speaking interpreters were available at public meetings
- Public meetings were held in disadvantaged communities to provide easier access to the GSP process
- Meetings were held both in the late afternoon and the evening to avoid conflicts with work schedules and provide the greatest flexibility for attendance

Further, the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group coordinated with other community development and planning efforts in the region to reach a greater audience. These efforts include:

- Self-Help Enterprises (SHE), a local community development organization focused on working with low-income families and communities, helped the GSP Group reach a greater number of members of the disadvantaged communities identified within the Plan area.



- SGMA information and materials were incorporated into efforts related to the IRWM Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program (DACIP) and into applicable IRWM documents (including the East Stanislaus, Merced, and Westside-San Joaquin IRWM Regions)

#### 4.3.4 Methods for Disseminating Information

The Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group utilized a variety of communication methods to inform the public and its stakeholders about progress in developing the GSP and information regarding opportunities to engage in the process. The primary methods of communication are discussed below.

##### 4.3.4.1 Informational Documents

As part of the public outreach campaign, the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota Region GSP Group developed a series of informational flyers, brochures, FAQ sheets, and other handouts to educate the public about SGMA and the GSP development process. These documents were made available at public meetings and other events and posted on the GSP website. Copies of the informational documents are included in **Appendix C**.

##### 4.3.4.2 Website

Following the submittal of the notice of the intent to develop a GSP, the Northern & Central Delta-Mendota GSP Group developed a website to serve as a primary means of posting and archiving GSP activities for public access and notice. The GSP website (<http://deltamendota.org/learn-more/northern-central-delta-mendota-gsp/>) was developed in conjunction with the website for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin as a whole (<http://deltamendota.org/>).

This website includes five key components. First, the website hosts a variety of SGMA informational material for stakeholders interested in learning more about SGMA and the GSP, including links to DWR informational websites as well as FAQs about the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions, and GSAs. Second, the GSP website was used to post information about upcoming public workshops and to house materials from previous public events. Third, the website hosts monthly newsletters documenting progress on the GSP effort. Fourth, the website included a link to sign up for the stakeholder distribution list. Finally, the website was used to share agenda and meeting minutes from various committee meetings held during GSP development and to post public drafts of GSP chapters and to solicit feedback.

##### 4.3.4.3 Email List

As discussed in **Section 4.3.1.1**, a stakeholder list was developed and updated throughout GSP development. The email list was used to provide announcements related to GSP events and actions, such as upcoming public workshops or the posting of new public draft GSP chapters for comment. The final stakeholder contact list is included in **Appendix C**.

##### 4.3.4.4 Newsletters

Monthly newsletters were prepared to provide stakeholders with a brief update regarding recent GSP development actions and upcoming milestones. The newsletters were developed in collaboration with the five (5) other GSP groups in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. The newsletters were posted to GSP group websites as well as sent via email to the stakeholder list.

##### 4.3.4.5 Public Workshops

Public workshops served as the primary method for disseminating information and directly involving the public in the GSP development process. The four sets of public workshops (listed in **Table 4-2**) provided stakeholders with a chance to engage with the GSP project team and other stakeholders. Stakeholders were provided with an overview

of SGMA and GSP milestones and the status of the GSP development while being given an opportunity to provide feedback on the work being presented.

#### **4.3.4.6 Other Outreach Efforts**

In addition to the use of the GSP website, emails, newsletters, and public workshops, the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions' GSAs planned additional, targeted public information campaigns. The following is a list of the types of other outreach efforts undertaken by the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions' GSAs:

- Inclusion of SGMA materials with IRWM outreach efforts
- GSA newsletter
- Flyer posting in public utility and government buildings
- Inclusion of flyers in utility bills
- Meetings with farmers in irrigation districts

A log of outreach activities conducted by the various GSAs is included in **Appendix C**.