

## Subbasin Announcements

Work continues on the development of a single groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. The Subbasin received an “inadequate” determination from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for the six GSPs submitted to comply with the state’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Details about the Subbasin’s status and development of the single GSP can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

### Water Year 2023 Annual Report

GSA Representatives approved the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Water Year 2023 Annual Report. As a part of SGMA compliance, each subbasin is required to submit an annual report of activities summarizing efforts to implement GSPs and an analysis of implementation success. The Annual Reports must be submitted by April 1.

To date, the Subbasin has not received input on previous annual reports. DWR says that will change this year. Now that the Department has finished its review of GSPs statewide, it will begin to focus on the annual reports. In addition to reviewing and commenting on annual reports, DWR’s SGMA office says it will begin developing an annual report template that GSAs can use to streamline the annual reporting process. That template is expected to be available in time for the Water Year 2024 annual reports.

### Water Leader Institute

The first session of a Watershed Leadership Institute (WLI) was held in March. GSAs are working with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and the Rural Community Action Center (RCAC) to conduct WLI educational sessions in the Subbasin. Thirty-five community members from a variety of backgrounds attended the first session, which covered topics including an overview of the Subbasin’s make-up and diversity, and a broad overview of the history of water use in the Subbasin.

Three more sessions are scheduled in successive months – April, May, and June with graduation to follow the June session. More information can be found at: [www.edf.org/waterleadership](http://www.edf.org/waterleadership)

### Spring Water Level Monitoring

GSAs in the Subbasin are collecting spring groundwater level readings from designated monitoring wells. Data collection is required by SGMA. The data is used to guide management actions as necessary. Data must be collected by April 30, and reported to DWR by June 30.

### Newsletter Changes

The Subbasin is expanding this newsletter and increasing publishing frequency. Newsletters will be published monthly until a single GSP is approved by the Coordination Committee. A second page with in-depth articles on important topics has been added.

## Upcoming Meetings and Important Dates

Coordination Committee  
Second Monday  
1:00 PM SLDMWA Boardroom

Northern Management Committee  
First Wednesday  
2:00 PM Patterson City Hall

Central Management Committee  
Fourth Thursday  
10:00 AM SLDMWA Boardroom

Questions? Contact your local groundwater sustainability agency or send an email to [dmsgma@sldmwa.org](mailto:dmsgma@sldmwa.org)

Visit [deltamendota.org](http://deltamendota.org) for current and upcoming meeting information

# Groundwater Sustainability Agencies Pull Together to Create One Groundwater Sustainability Plan

The Delta Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) are working around the clock to meet state requirements and prepare a single subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The goal is to achieve groundwater sustainability by 2040. They also want to prevent the state from placing the subbasin in probationary status. The plan must prevent:

- Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage
- Degradation of water quality
- Unreasonable land subsidence
- Groundwater-related surface water depletions harming beneficial uses of surface water

## Become Involved

The GSAs want to hear from you. You can learn more about the GSP during an on-line briefing at noon, May 10, 2024. The briefing will cover the first 8 Chapters of the plan. You will also learn how to provide comments. Sign-up for the briefing at: <https://tinyurl.com/2s3u9ynr>

## Preventing Probation

Probation is the first step when the state intervenes. When the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) puts a subbasin on probation they work with GSAs to correct problems. They may also require many groundwater pumpers to report on their groundwater use. With some exceptions, pumpers that are required to report will also be required to pay fees.

## Why This is Happening

The 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) changed management of California's groundwater. Under SGMA subbasins had to form GSAs and prepare GSPs. GSPs must outline how subbasins will achieve groundwater sustainability now and into the future. SGMA also gave the state authority to take over management if subbasins did not comply.

To follow the law, the Delta Mendota subbasin's 23 GSAs sent six coordinated GSPs to the state in January of 2020. The state Department of Water Resources (DWR) found the GSPs "incomplete." The GSAs amended the GSPs to correct problems. On March 2, 2023, DWR found the plans to be "inadequate." DWR transmitted their findings to the Water Board for further action. The Water Board originally scheduled a probationary hearing for September 2024.

GSAs may update their plans before their probationary hearing. The goal is to avoid probation. To consider an updated GSP, the Water Board staff must receive updates in time for their review. This means the Delta Mendota GSAs must send an updated plan by July 2024.

## Maintaining Local Control

The GSAs are working with the Water Board and DWR to address concerns. They plan to set a clear path forward and maintain local control. The GSAs believe local groundwater management is essential.

Because the 23 GSAs must work together quickly and efficiently, they are preparing one subbasin GSP. EKI Environment and Water, Inc., (EKI) is working with them to prepare the GSP. The single GSP will include updated sustainable management criteria and one water budget and numerical model for the subbasin. The subbasin monitoring network will also be updated. Another task is for EKI to pull data from the six existing GSPs to create one coordinated and consistent GSP. The goal is for all the actions is to address DWR's concerns.

The GSAs realize hard work is ahead. The single GSP will require GSAs to arrest subsidence and stop unsustainable groundwater overdraft.

## What's Next

Besides the [May 10 briefing](#), the subbasin website ([www.deltamendota.org](http://www.deltamendota.org)) will provide more information as it becomes available. Newsletter updates let readers know when more GSP chapters become available. Future newsletters will provide more information on GSP details. One key topic will be the Project and Management Actions, including groundwater pumping reductions.