



North Kings GSA May 28, 2020

By Don A. Wright

The North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency held its Thursday, May 28, 2020 board meeting by teleconference. The rhythm of ag water has been disturbed as surely as the force in Star Wars one. The heavy lifting of getting Groundwater Sustainability Plans completed by the January 2020 deadline left some tired folks who got a chance to recharge, not water so much as mental energy. Folks were getting ready to tackle the tasks needed to true up the GSPs and get positioned for moving things forward when the coronavirus struck. So now we're meeting remotely.

Chairman **Jerry Prieto** called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm on GoToMeeting. We had a remote flag salute and Executive Director **Kassy Chauhan** went over the rules to keep the meeting on the rails for the folks listening in and those participating. She took roll call and there was a quorum present. There was some talk about deciding the fourth quarter meeting during the third quarter meeting.



There was one public comment sent in earlier today. Chauhan read it into the record saying Dr. **David Cehrs** sent a table of precipitation showing the flows of the Kings River are increasing during wet times and decreasing during dry times impacting groundwater recharge. That sounds inane when I write it out but if you go to the **NKGS** website and take a look at the documentation Cehrs provided it is revelatory. City of Fresno Director of Public Works and NKGS representative **Michael Carbajal** moved to accept the meeting minutes and they passed.

Next consulting engineer **Ron Samuelian** from Provost & Pritchard gave an update of what is happening in the Kings River Sub Basin. I guess California Fish & Wildlife's GSP comments hit everyone throughout the sub basin. There have been many, cooperative meetings between the GSAs and Fresno County dealing with boundary flows, contours and policy matters. Each GSA gets a share of the \$500,000 Department of Water Resources grant, that's \$70,000 each. The grant money will pay for five monitoring wells through out the sub basin and that will be very helpful as the GSAs want to fill in the data gaps and start projects. Chauhan said there has been a question of who takes control of these new wells. Samuelian said he believes the GSA the well sits in own the well even though DWR money (taxpayer) paid for it.

Meeting Reports

Fresno Irrigation Districts engineer Adam Claes gave a water supply update saying FID's water rights are based on low flow of the Kings River. Most years peak flows occur in mid-June but the higher temperatures earlier this year caused all but the snow at highest elevation to melt. FID has started deliveries and is planning on running through July. On the San Joaquin River the US Bureau of Reclamation has declared a 60 percent allocation. The Friant Kern Canal will be shut down from November through January for repairs.

Scott Redelfs, Chair of the Advisory Committee and Public Works Director for the City of Clovis said the May advisory committee was well attended. Redelfs said his committee recommends getting Chauhan some much needed help. A way to do this is utilizing FID staff members already familiar with the NKGSA to bill the GSA for work. A fiscal agent, **DeAnn Hailey** FID controller for instance and a recording secretary, **Lynn Rowe** for example? That sounded very doable. And follows an existing agreement. The request includes a \$3,200 annual fee for engineering help, that's like five hours a month. The board approved this recommendation to allow FID staff to do work and bill the GSA.

Hailey gave her report updating who's paid their dues and what needs to be paid. She said all the bills are in budget and usual and customary. The board approved and was asked to consider a revision to the budget for fiscal year 2019/2020 – better do it quick cause the new year starts next week. **Lisa Cohen** is in charge of these matters bring a career of guiding the City of Clovis' fiscal health to the task. She reported legal fees and staff cost have gone up and engineering when down. There were other matter at play to cause this presented and the board approved the budget revision.

The next item was the proposed budget for the 2020/2021 FY. Cohen explained most of the budget is very similar to this year's. An overall income estimated at \$747,000 was being used. A fund needs to be established, a savings account to prepare for some possible legal wrangling over boundary flows. The other items were pretty much the same as last year with the same categories and amounts did vary a little bit. The board approved the new budget.

The NKGSA has a policy that needs to be revised. Issuing checks was covered in old policy but as the agency's structure has changed since it was first organized the board approved changing who can issue checks. I guess this means Chauhan can now write a check on that account. Good for her.

Chauhan gave her XO report saying the Kings River Conservation District is helping with external affairs and is looking at updating the NKGSA website. She was sensitive the amount of work that has gone into developing the site and this is just an update and not changing direction. The GSP development phase has changed and matured to where it is today. Another consideration on the GSA's outreach is the change of meetings and the public's ability to participate and KRDC is working on how to use email blasts and social media to reach the public. KRCD has been a leader in public outreach and the participation of the folks there is welcomed.

Glenn Allen with Fresno County has been very helpful and cooperative in getting a needed information flow between the county and the GSA up and running. There are land use changes that will impact the GSP and to have to research every well being drilled would be a laborious process without the County's help. There is a computer process called "Amanda" that follows what is happening with individual wells. The county is making Amanda available to NKGSA and I believe the other GSAs in Fresno County. The county is redacting personal information from Amanda releases to prevent its use for evil or even just mischief.

Chauhan reported a letter campaign was launched to increase the well monitoring network. Owners of the existing wells serving as monitors are being contacted to get them to help with data gathering. P&P will go out with a small diameter video camera to get construction information and

Meeting Reports

pumps don't have to be pulled to access the well. For the wells that must have their pumps pulled an access portal will be installed so that pump pulling procedure won't have to be repeated.

Next Chauhan reported there were eight comments on the GSP from NGOs, government agencies and bunch of PhD students at UC Davis. She said they pretty much followed the comments received from the draft release. She said the GSA won't get caught in the for/next loop of commenting on comments unless there is a case of obvious misunderstandings. Also, the NKGSA GSP comments were very similar to what other GSPs in the area received.

Lastly Chauhan said the COVID-19 personal interaction limitations have slowed down the progress on resolving some of the issues between GSAs in the sub basin and other interactions. She also sent out an email about the PPIC webinar on GSPs in San Joaquin Valley. I've reported on this a bit lately and one take away was there may not be as much water available for recharge as is being included in the GSPs. Another point Samuelian brought up was the PPIC map showing where wells are going dry looked like a solid mass and that was mostly likely way over reality. Prieto asked if the well depths were taken into consideration and that wasn't pulled out from the webinar Q&A. Chauhan said there are collaborative opportunities to work with PPIC.

Under Directors Reports it was revealed this is his 70th birthday. Good for him and happy birthday Jerry. That was that.

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SGMA The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 calls for the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Areas within Basins and Sub-basins to develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

MEMBERS: Bakman Water Company, Cities of Kerman, Fresno and Clovis, Fresno County, Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, Garfield Water District and Fresno ID
Chairman – Jerry Prieto, Executive Director – Kassy Chauhan
DWR Listing: Basin San Joaquin, Sub Basin Kings 5-022.08