

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act *Public Comment Review*

Chowchilla Subbasin

GSP Advisory Committee

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., November 20, 2019

Chowchilla Water District

Chowchilla, CA

Outline

- GSP Background
- Comments Received
- Response to Public Comments
- Subject Areas with Multiple Comments
- Next Steps

GSP Background

- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) must adopt and submit a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 31, 2020
- “Sustainable groundwater management” must be occurring by 2040 for the entire subbasin
 - Today through 2039 – implementation of projects and management actions
 - 2040 and beyond – must be sustainable, with no “undesirable results”

SGMA Requirements (cont.)

- “*Sustainable groundwater management*” means the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained...without causing undesirable results. [CWC §10721(v)]

SGMA Requirements (cont.)

- “*Undesirable Results*” means one or more of the following effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin [CWC §10721(x)]:

- (1) Chronic lowering of groundwater levels
- (2) Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage
- (3) Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion
- (4) Significant and unreasonable degraded water quality
- (5) Significant and unreasonable land subsidence
- (6) Depletions of interconnected surface water



Lowering
GW Levels



Reduction
of Storage



Seawater
Intrusion



Degraded
Quality

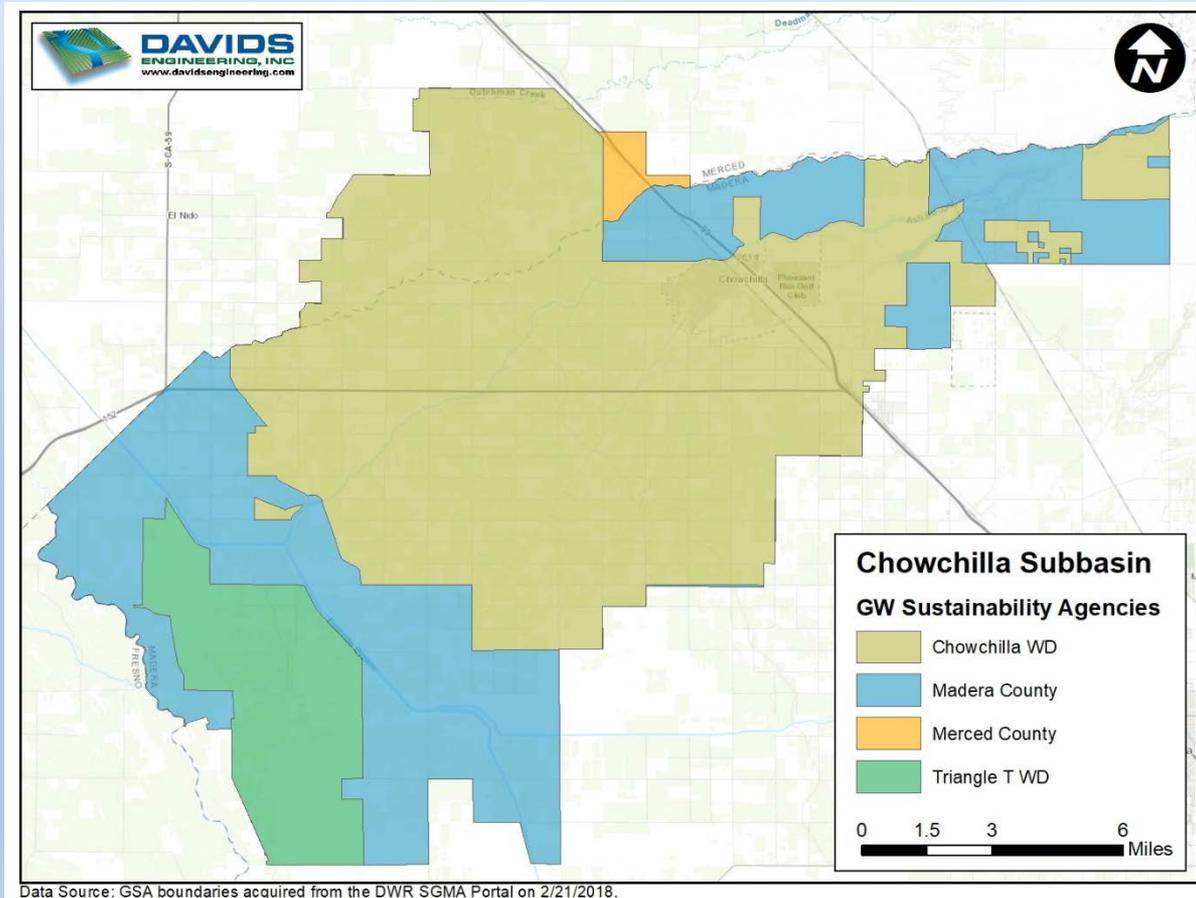


Land
Subsidence



Surface Water
Depletion

Chowchilla Subbasin: 4 GSAs preparing 1 GSP

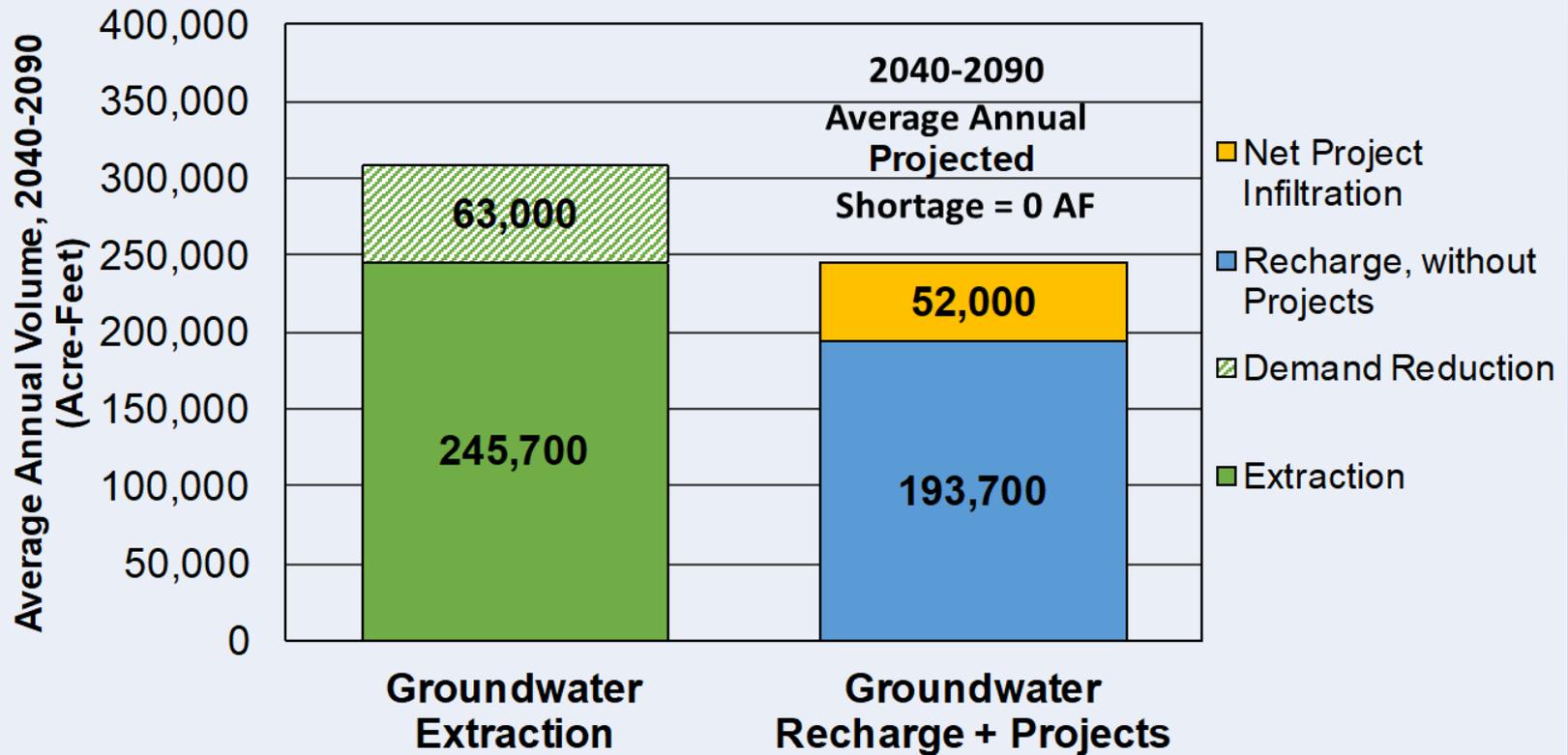


Total Subbasin

~ 146,000 ac total
~ 123,000 ac irrigated
(2015)

See GSP Chapter 1 for
GSA Descriptions

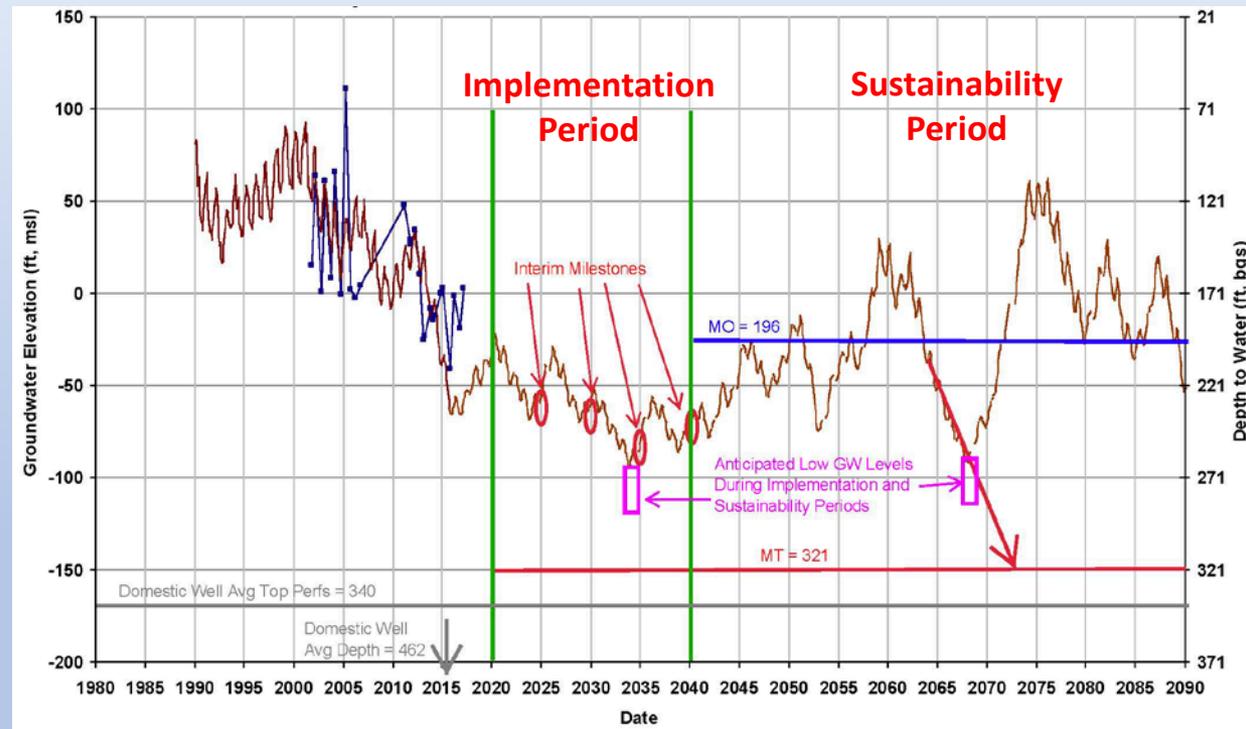
GSP details solutions to solve the projected shortage by 2040



Crop Water Use Reduction Program: Madera County East 11,300 AF, Madera County West 16,250 AF, TTWD 1,700 AF. Remaining crop water use reduction due to permanent recharge basins replacing irrigated area and increased use of surface water in lieu of groundwater.

Potential near-term groundwater impacts

- GSAs need time to transition and complete projects and actions – as a result, groundwater levels will lower somewhat during implementation
- Planned mitigation for impacts can address concerns of lowered groundwater levels during implementation



Groundwater impacts would be much greater without the GSP projects and management actions

- Modeling estimated that groundwater levels would continue to drop absent the projects and management actions contemplated by the GSP
 - Without the GSP: groundwater levels would drop another 100 to 150 feet by 2090
 - With the GSP: groundwater levels may temporarily drop between 2020 and 2040, but are expected to stabilize by 2040 and into the future

GSA's are considering a mitigation program for impacted drinking water wells

- **2020/2021:** Details will be developed with stakeholder input
- **Possible mitigation actions**
 - Replace or lower existing well
 - Connect to community water system
- **Possible types of support**
 - Low interest loans
 - Grants
- **Likely will require well owners to sign up for program in advance**

Public Comment Period

- Informal comment period beginning when the draft of the first chapter of the GSP was released in late spring 2019
- Formal 90 day public comment period
 - Available for public review: Aug. 9, 2019
 - Public comment period ended: Nov. 5, 2019
- Special GSP Advisory Committee meeting on October 23, 2019 to solicit written comments

Comments Received

- AgIS Property Management (10/21/19)
- Clayton Water District (submitted 11/5/19)
- Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group (submitted 11/1/19)
- Hancock Farmland Services (submitted 11/5/19)
- Joint letter from various organizations (11/5/19)
- Madera Agricultural Water Association (MAWA) (submitted 11/9/19)
- Mark Hutson (11/2/19)
- Sierra Vista Mutual Water Company (SVMWC) (10/23/19)
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (SJREC) (11/4/19)
- The Nature Conservancy (11/4/19)
- Verbal comments transcribed at the Chowchilla GSP Advisory Meeting Listening Session (10/23/19)

Response to Public Comments

- **Comments received were reviewed by:**
 - GSP Consultant Team
 - GSA Technical Experts
 - GSP Plan Manager
 - GSA Advisory Committee Members
 - GSA Elected Representatives
 - GSP Grant Manager
- **Comments put in a spreadsheet**
- **Comments organized into subject areas with multiple comments for efficient response**
- **Comments outside of subject areas responded to in spreadsheet**
- **Responses developed by consultant team with input and review by all comment reviewers**

Documentation of Response to Public Comments

- Included in GSP as Appendix 2.C.e
 - List of Comments Received
 - Multiple Comment Subject Area Responses
 - Table Summarizing all Comments and Responses
 - Complete Text of all Comments Received

Subject Areas with Multiple Comments

- Demand Management Reduction Program
- Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs)
- Surface Water - Groundwater Interactions
- Outreach (Including DACs/SDACs)
- Subsurface Inflows

Demand Management Reduction Program

- **Comment Summary**
 - Program lacks details
 - Should initiate stakeholder process
- **Response**
 - Details are being worked on by Madera County GSA with input from:
 - Madera County GSA's Advisory Committee,
 - Madera County GSA meetings,
 - Chowchilla GSP Advisory Committee meetings,
 - Discussions with Madera County Farm Bureau, and
 - The Madera Ag Water Association

Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

- **Comment Summary**
 - Clarify methods used to identify GDEs,
 - Analyze potential impacts to GDEs, and
 - Consider GDEs in setting:
 - Sustainability goals,
 - Measurable objectives (MOs) and
 - Minimum thresholds (MTs)
 - Appreciation for the comprehensive evaluation of GDEs in the subbasin and the appropriate use of tools and guidance recommended by The Nature Conservancy
- **Response**
 - Clarified methods and analysis and how GDEs were considered in setting sustainability goals, MOs and MTs

Surface Water - Groundwater Interactions

- **Comment Summary**
 - Insufficient characterization of surface water – groundwater interactions,
 - Insufficient description of data gaps and how they will be filled, and
 - Disagreement with the conclusion that surface water and groundwater are disconnected in the subbasin
- **Response**
 - Clarified methods and analysis and data availability for the analysis



Outreach (Including DACs/SDACs)

- **Comment Summary**
 - Provide more information about beneficial users, and
 - Describe how they were engaged
- **Response**
 - More detail was added to section 2.1.5.3 about how engagement efforts encouraged the active involvement of beneficial users

Subsurface Inflows

- **Comment Summary**

- Concerned that subsurface inflows are calculated using an uncalibrated numerical model, and
- Concerned for historical and ongoing subsurface inflow from Delta Mendota Subbasin

- **Response**

- Calibration of the numerical groundwater model is described in detail in Appendix 6.D
- Subsurface lateral inflows from Delta Mendota Subbasin will be significantly reduced as a result of implementation of the projects and management actions

Next Steps

- **GSA Advisory Committee recommends to GSAs that GSP be adopted**
- **GSA public hearings adopting the GSP**
 - **Chowchilla WD** **December 11, 2019**
 - **Madera County** **December 17, 2019**
 - **Merced County** **December 10, 2019**
 - **Triangle T WD** **December 12, 2019**
- **Submit adopted GSP to Department of Water Resources**