

MADERA

ESTABLISHED 1893



HEART OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY



Outline

1. Status of the groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs)
2. Status of the fees expected on fall/spring property tax bills
3. 2022 Verification Project
4. Land Repurposing Program



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Status of Plans

- Chowchilla Subbasin GSP – resubmitted on 7/27/2022
 - Response from DWR by end of calendar year
- Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSPs – resubmitted on 7/19/2022
 - Response from DWR by end of calendar year
- Madera Subbasin GSPs – Comment letter from DWR
 - Coordination
 - Subsidence
 - Groundwater levels
 - Interconnected surface water



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Status of GSP Project Fees

- Fees
 - Madera Subbasin, County GSA fee of \$246/enrolled acre appeared on fall property tax bills (50%) and spring (50%)
 - Chowchilla Subbasin – will self-collect for projects; needs by-laws and MOU with County by end of the year
 - Delta Mendota Subbasin, County GSA fee of \$138/enrolled acre appeared on fall property tax bills (50%) and spring (50%)
- Penalties for 2023
 - \$100/acre-foot over an allocation for a farm unit
 - \$1000/annual fee if over an allocation in Chowchilla Subbasin if they don't fund the projects



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2022 Verification Project

- 17 growers/entities participating
 - 8 different crops
 - Over 12,000 acres
 - 90 flowmeters being analyzed
- Weekly site visits being completed
- Significant data is being collected
- Cooperative effort with growers
- Importance of reviewing ETAW data on an annual timestep
- Final results ahead of 2023 irrigation season
- Irriwatch adjusting bare soil ETAW back to 1/1/2022



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Land Repurposing Program

- Hybrid workshop on September 20, 2022 from 3 - 4:30pm on Zoom and at the Farm Bureau with about 70 participants
 - Presentation from ERA and staff and opportunities for feedback out loud and in writing (in a survey)
 - Feedback shared on slides that follow
 - Next workshop October 26 from 3-5 p.m.
 - Summary of the last workshop
 - Reverse auction simulation
 - Other remaining issues for feedback



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Contract Length Feedback

- Feedback given out loud in workshop and in survey differed quite a bit:
 - Landowners preferred a medium-term of contract, between 3-5 years. This would balance flexibility and the cost of administering longer program contracts.
 - Other options included shorter and longer duration annual contracts.
 - Some landowners expressed interest in permanent contracts because this would be viewed as a more permanent water supply for the GSA.



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Fixed Price v. Reverse Auction Feedback

- Landowners preferred a bid approach because it would allow them to make individual decisions about costs that they would incur to enter the voluntary program, which would be reflected in their bid.
- Other landowners expressed an interest in a flat offering from the GSA because it would be perceived as more fair.



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Land Management Feedback

- Stakeholders agreed that lands would need to be managed, and landowners would incur costs to do so.
- Stakeholders expressed an interest in simple management requirements to keep costs low, which could include having other land management requirements that are fully separate from the program.



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Other Comments

- There is substantial interest in the level of incentive payments to encourage voluntary participation in the program.
- Stakeholders and the GSA team discussed factors that affect an individual's decision to participate in the program. The goal of the program is to encourage interested parties to participate, which may include growers that are looking to step away from farming or other operations that may have marginal land for enrollment.
- The program will be set up with flexibility in mind to accommodate changing conditions, costs, and GSP implementation over time.



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