



Madera County GSAs

**SUMMARY OF RULES
2024**

January 2024



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DISCLAIMER

The following is a summary of rules pertaining to the Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). It is essential to note that this summary is intended for informational purposes only. The information provided here is a consolidation of existing resolutions and guidelines, compiled into a single accessible resource for the convenience of the readers. The information in this booklet is current as of January 2024.

No Introduction of New Policies

This summary is not intended to create or establish any new policies, regulations, or rules for the Madera County GSAs. All the rules and guidelines mentioned in this summary are already in effect as per the relevant resolutions.

Always Refer to Official Resolutions

The details mentioned here should be verified with the official resolutions of the Madera County GSAs. The complete resolutions can be found at maderacountywater.com.



GLOSSARY

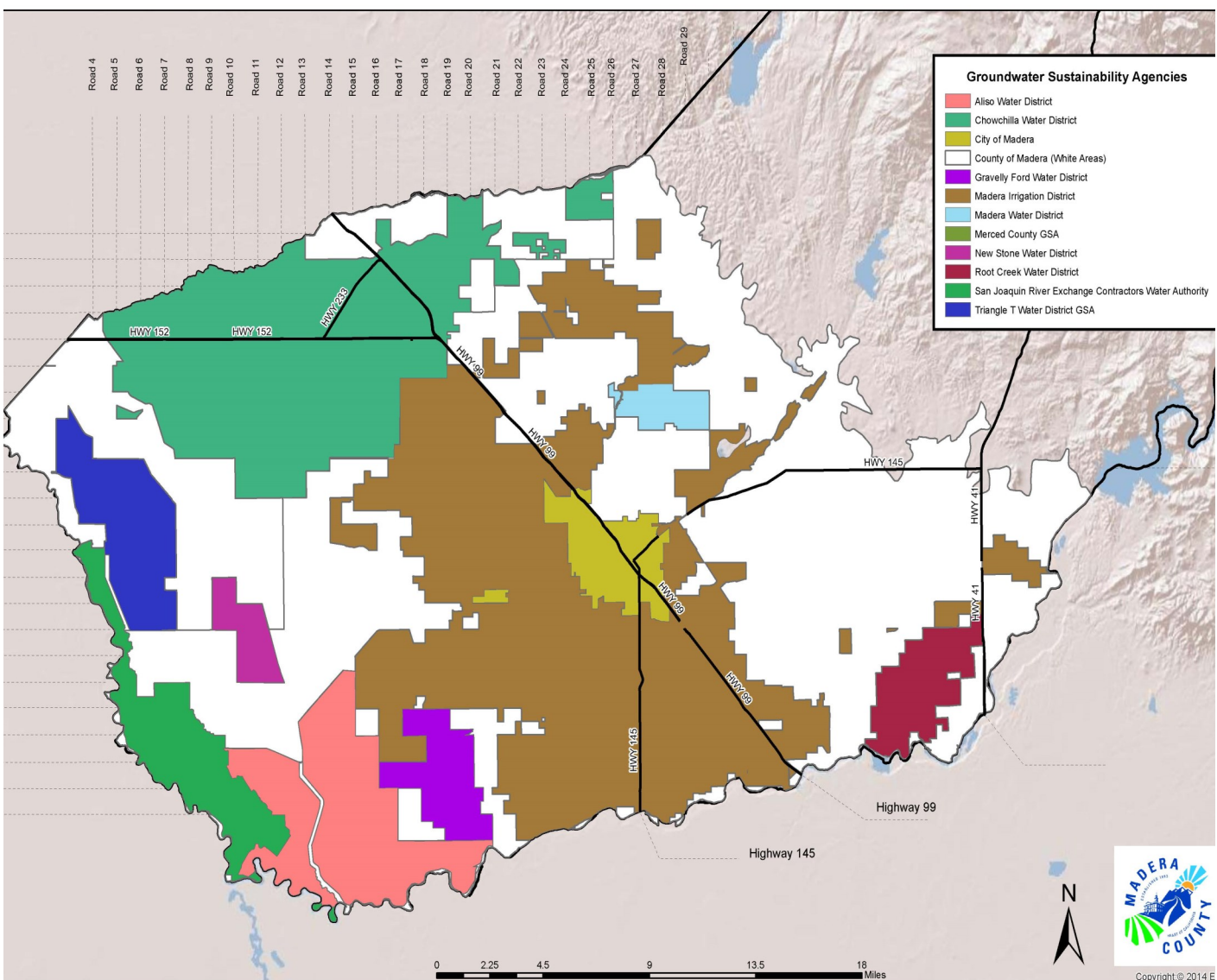
TERM	DEFINITION
Allocation	A water budget made available to agricultural water users within the Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). Over time, the allocated water budget will decrease to sustainable levels
Applied Water	The volume of water delivered through an irrigation system, which can be utilized for various purposes, including irrigation and evapotranspiration, deep percolation, and runoff, depending on the efficiency of the irrigation process. The measurement of applied water is done using meters that track the quantity of water used during irrigation
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	A unique identifier assigned to a particular piece of land, helping to track and manage property ownership, tax assessments, and other property-related information
Consumptive Water Use	The amount of water that is utilized by plants through evaporation and transpiration (commonly known as evapotranspiration). This water is not pumped but rather naturally taken up and used by the plants during their growth and metabolic processes
Evapotranspiration (ET)	The sum of evaporation and transpiration
Evapotranspiration of Applied Water (ETAW)	The volume of applied water that is transpired by plants and evaporated from the soil, which is also known as consumptive use. It is calculated by subtracting the consumption of rainfall from the total evapotranspiration. This value is typically less than the total applied water, as it represents the portion of water that is utilized by plants and lost through evaporation from the soil
Farm Unit	A set of linked parcels owned or managed by the same entity within the same farm unit zone.
GSA Fee	A fee for administration and planning services to manage the Madera County GSAs and keep it in compliance
GSP Fee	A fee for projects including land repurposing, recharge, and water purchases
IrriWatch	A satellite based measurement program
Land IQ	A satellite based measurement program
Land Repurposing	Using water in ways that save water and provide other benefits
Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)	An agency that was made responsible for the "white areas" or undistricted areas in Madera County under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
Penalty	A charge for water use that is above the allocation
Preliminary Injunction	A legal order issued by a court that temporarily restrains a party from taking certain actions until a full trial or legal proceeding can take place
Satellite Data	Satellite imagery and earth observation data of the earth's surface and its atmosphere
Sustainable Yield (SY)	The amount of natural groundwater present in the subbasins through seepage and percolation
Transitional Water (TW)	Excess groundwater being pumped from the subbasins; decreases over time



What are the Madera County GSAs?

The Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) are located in the Madera, Chowchilla, and Delta-Mendota Subbasins. These agencies were formed under the requirements of the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The areas that fell under County responsibility during GSA formation are the lands that were not within existing irrigation or water districts that chose to form their own GSAs.

Under the California SGMA, the GSAs have the authority to limit extractions from groundwater wells, establish groundwater allocations and adopt rules and regulations with the Madera County Board of Supervisors acting as the Board of Directors for the Madera County GSAs.



For more information, please visit <https://www.maderacountywater.com/county-gsas/>



How were allocations determined?

The Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have implemented resolutions that define the rules governing groundwater allocations. These resolutions serve as official rules and provide clarity on the allocation process. They outline the procedures, approaches, and criteria for determining the amount of groundwater that will be allocated to irrigated acres. By adopting these resolutions, the Madera County GSAs aim to establish a transparent and consistent framework for managing groundwater allocations for the Madera County GSAs.

Resolution 2020-166 Adopted December 15, 2020

Adopts a groundwater allocation approach

An allocation is a water budget that decreases over time and it divides the available groundwater into two categories:

Sustainable yield — amount of natural groundwater present in the subbasins through rainfall seepage and percolation

Transitional water — excess groundwater being pumped from the subbasins; decreases over time

Allows growers to pump a designated amount of Transitional Water and/ or Sustainable Yield each year

The allocation approach allows allocations to be managed within farm units of land owned or managed by the same entity

Resolution 2021-069 Adopted June 8, 2021

Establishes groundwater allocation amounts for 2021-2025

To qualify for a groundwater allocation for a specific farm unit, the landowner must provide evidence to the County GSAs that they have an established ownership or management connection to the parcels included in that farm unit.

Land that has been irrigated prior to June 8, 2021 (Resolution 2021-069), receives both Sustainable Yield and Transitional Water. Land that comes into production after June 8, 2021, receives only Sustainable Yield.

Resolution 2021-113 Adopted August 17, 2021

Establishes groundwater allocation refinements

Introduces an opt-in process for accessing Sustainable Yield (SY) and Transitional Water (TW)

Defines specific acreage amounts for allocations, considers the resting and retiring of land, allows for carrying over unused allocation from one year to the next, and outlines changes to farm units

Introduces a credit system for recharge

Establishes credit for imported water

Establishes a procedure for appealing Evapotranspiration of Applied Water (ETAW) determinations



What's my allocation?

Currently, there are allocations for irrigated acres within the Madera County GSAs. The tables show the allocations for the County GSAs within the Madera, Chowchilla and Delta-Mendota Subbasins. Land that has been irrigated prior to June 8, 2021 (Resolution 2021-069), receives both Sustainable Yield and Transitional Water. Land that comes into production after June 8, 2021, receives only Sustainable Yield.

Madera County GSA: Madera Subbasin	Inches of ETAW			
	Year	Sustainable Yield *	Transitional Water	Total
	2021	12.7	15.6	28.3
	2022	12.7	15.3	28
	2023	12.7	15	27.7
	2024	12.7	14.7	27.4
	2025	12.7	14.4	27.1

* Often rounded to 13

Madera County GSA: Chowchilla Subbasin	Inches of ETAW			
	Year	Sustainable Yield	Transitional Water	Total
	2021	7.1	19.6	26.7
	2022	7.1	19.2	26.3
	2023	7.1	18.8	25.9
	2024	7.1	18.4	25.5
	2025	7.1	18	25.1

Madera County GSA: Delta-Mendota Subbasin	Inches of ETAW			
	Year	Sustainable Yield	Transitional Water	Total
	2021	8.6	11.2	19.8
	2022	8.6	11	19.6
	2023	8.6	10.7	19.3
	2024	8.6	10.5	19.1
	2025	8.6	10.3	18.9

Tables can be found in Exhibit A of Resolution 2020-166.



What are the GSA Fees (Admin Fees)?

The GSA Fee, also known as the Admin Fee, covers the essential administrative tasks carried out by the County GSAs. This fee supports activities like planning and managing the allocation process. It helps fund initiatives related to grants for recharge and repurposing of land. Additionally, it facilitates the coordination of annual reports, revisions to the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), and provides assistance to growers by addressing their questions and concerns. Essentially, the GSA Fee ensures that the County GSAs can effectively oversee and support various important aspects of groundwater management.

Currently, the GSA fee is approximately \$26/irrigated acre. The fee increases based on the previous year's Consumer Price Index (CPI) and appears on your property tax bill as "GSA Fee".

What are the GSP Fees (Project Fees)?

The second fee for the County GSAs covers the costs of implementing groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs). This fee is allowed in Water Code section 10730.2 and went through Proposition 218, which is a state constitutional amendment that lets voters approve local fees for services like water and sewer rates.

The costs associated with GSPs include recharging groundwater, purchasing water for recharging and agricultural use, applying for water rights and permits, setting up a fund to address dry well issues, repurposing land, and other activities needed to implement the GSPs. The purpose of this fee is to help ensure that the subbasins achieve sustainable outcomes during the period of implementing the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) until 2040.

GSP Fees in the Madera Subbasin

Preliminary
Injunction

GSP Fees in the Chowchilla Subbasin

No fees; no projects

GSP Fees in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin

Preliminary
Injunction

Refer to Resolution 2019-172 County GSA (Admin) Fee
Resolution 2022-086 Madera GSP Fee,
Resolution 2022-087 Delta-Mendota GSP Fee



What are the Penalties?

Currently, there are penalties in place for going over an allocation for the calendar year. The penalties are capped out after year 2027. The penalties appears on property tax bills.

Madera County GSA Penalties: Madera Subbasin (Resolution 2022-145)

Year	Penalty
2023	\$100/AF over the farm unit allocation
2024	\$200/AF over the farm unit allocation
2025	\$300/AF over the farm unit allocation
2026	\$400/AF over the farm unit allocation
2027	\$500/AF over the farm unit allocation

Madera County GSA Penalties: Chowchilla Subbasin (Resolution 2022-144)

Year	Penalty	Additional Penalty*
2023	\$100/AF over the farm unit allocation	\$1,000/ Farm Unit
2024	\$200/AF over the farm unit allocation	\$1,000/ Farm Unit
2025	\$300/AF over the farm unit allocation	\$1,000/ Farm Unit
2026	\$400/AF over the farm unit allocation	\$1,000/ Farm Unit
2027	\$500/AF over the farm unit allocation	\$1,000/ Farm Unit

* The Board of Directors may remove the \$1,000 civil penalty per farm unit when the Chowchilla Subbasin Growers (CSG) sufficiently funds an escrow account or supports the projects mentioned in the Chowchilla Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

Madera County GSA Penalties: Delta-Mendota Subbasin (Resolution 2022-143)


Year	Penalty
2023	\$100/AF over the farm unit allocation
2024	\$200/AF over the farm unit allocation
2025	\$300/AF over the farm unit allocation
2026	\$400/AF over the farm unit allocation
2027	\$500/AF over the farm unit allocation

To review the complete Resolutions, please visit <https://www.maderacountywater.com/allocations/>.



Interested In Land Repurposing?

Currently, the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program is the only active Madera County land repurposing program. Other recent programs include the Madera County GSAs Voluntary Land Repurposing Program (VLRP) and the Department of Water Resources Targeted Land Repurposing Program (also known as LandFlex). See the table below for more information on the various land repurposing programs in Madera County, including the current status.

	Land Repurposing Programs in Madera County		
	Madera County GSA's Voluntary Land Repurposing On Hold	Department of Water Resources LandFlex (Targeted Land Repurposing) Closed	Department of Conservation's Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Future
Primary Focus?	Expedite the reduction of consumptive use of groundwater	Expedite the reduction of consumptive use of groundwater	Facilitate conversion to an alternative productive land use function as less groundwater is available
Who is eligible?	County GSA Growers only	County GSA Growers in Madera Subbasin only	All GSA Growers throughout Madera County
Who funds?	County GSA Growers with GSP Fee	Department of Water Resources Plus County GSA Growers with GSA Admin Fee	Department of Conservation Plus County GSA Growers with GSA Admin Fee
What is the timeline?	Under a preliminary injunction	Enrollment in 2023 (completed)	Enrollment in 2024 and 2025 for 2025 and beyond
What are the requirements?	Grower sells "sustainable yield" and "transitional water" for a set period of time	Grower sells "sustainable yield" and "transitional water" for year one and "transitional water" in years until 2040	TBD Plan and process under development during 2023
What is the contract length?	2-5 years	Through 2040	Minimum 10 years
What is landowner compensation?	Varies, equal to the applicant's accepted bid price times acres.	Fixed -Fallow: \$350/AF (\$808/acre) -Retire TW: \$1000/AF (\$1250/acre) -Land Use Transition: \$250-2800/acre	TBD Plan and process under development during 2023

Refer to Resolutions 2022-193, 2022-194, 2023-056

To stay updated on Land Repurposing programs, join our interested party list on our website at <https://www.maderacountywater.com/land-repurposing-interest-form/>

For more information, please <https://www.maderacountywater.com/land-repurposing/>.
To review the complete Resolutions, please visit <https://www.maderacountywater.com/>



How Is My Water Use Measured?

The County GSAs measure water used by irrigated agriculture within the County GSAs. Beginning of 2023, the County GSAs began to offer three methods for growers to choose from for measurement:

1. **IrriWatch** with daily access to its website.
2. **Land IQ** with paper reports available 45-60 days after the end of each month.
3. **Private meters** (with pre-inspection both for installation and for flow calibration and a map of meters depicting what each well irrigates, along with monthly meter reads uploaded to our portal). Meter readings are due to the portal by the 10th of each month. Failure to submit meter readings will result in defaulting to Land IQ.

What You Need To Know About Your Measurement Choices

Growers have the option to change their measurement method at the end of each year. If you change your method you have to stick with that choice for the year.

If a landowner does not specify a preferred measurement method to the County GSAs, Land IQ will be automatically assigned as the default method.

If a landowner chooses to use private groundwater flow meters for measurement, but fails to meet the standards outlined in the resolutions, Land IQ will be assigned instead.

To learn more about IrriWatch, Land IQ, or private meters, please visit <https://www.maderacountywater.com/measurement/>.

December 21, 2022

Re: Measurement Choice for 2023 - Form deadline January 20, 2023

In compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and our groundwater management plans (GSPs), irrigated farmlands in the County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) will have their water use measured for allocations. By January 20, 2023, you must choose one type of measurement method (and only one type) to measure your water usage. You will keep this measurement method for the full year.

The three available options are:

- Irriwatch with live access online and maps
- Land IQ with a monthly paper report 4-6 weeks after the month end
- Private meters with required pre-inspections for installation and flow with paper reports at years end

Each method has different benefits and requirements. For more information, please review the presentation here: [maderacountywater.com/measurement](https://www.maderacountywater.com/measurement) - at the bottom of the page titled "Methods of Measurements."

Note: If a choice is not made, the default measurement method assigned to you will be Land IQ.

Landowner Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

APNS (write on the back if necessary): _____

Check the box for your measurement choice (only check one box):

Irriwatch

Land IQ

Private Meters (please attach paperwork for pre-inspection and flow)

Signature: _____

Return your form via email to etmeasurement@maderacounty.com

Or via mail to Madera County, Water & Natural Resources, Re: Measurement Choice for 2023
200 West 4th Street, Suite 3100, Madera, CA 93637

Water and Natural Resources
200 West Fourth Street • Madera, CA 93637 • 559.662.8015 • [maderacountywater.com](https://www.maderacountywater.com) • [maderacounty.com](https://www.maderacounty.com)

Measurement choice form sample. A similar form will be sent out at the end of each year.

Refer to Resolution 2022-192

If you have questions on your measurement methods, contact us at (559) 662-8015 or ETmeasurement@maderacounty.com
<https://www.maderacountywater.com/measurement/>.



What Are The Requirements For Using Private Meters?



If you wish to use your meters as the primary method for measuring your water usage, you have the option to get your meters approved for the next calendar year. Here are the requirements for meter approval:

1. Provide a map showing the precise location of your groundwater well(s) and the corresponding parcel(s) and field(s) that are served by those well(s).
2. Submit photographs and a meter installation report for the well(s) that supply water to the parcel(s).
3. Ensure that the meter(s) comply with calibration standards by providing a calibration report from an approved vendor certified by the County GSA every two years.*
4. Confirm that the designated well(s) exclusively serve the identified parcel(s) or field(s)*.
5. Provide a attestation verifying that all the information submitted accurately represents the current conditions for the well(s)*.

*For a full list of County GSA approved vendors, attestation forms, and checklists, please visit <https://www.maderacountywater.com/measurement/>.

Refer to Resolutions 2022-143, 2022-144, 2022-145

Using A Meter To Appeal Satellite Data

If you wish to dispute the satellite data used for measurement, you have the option to submit your own data for review by a third party at the end of the calendar year. The decision made by the third party will be final. Guidelines for using meters for the appeals process follows the same approval process as using meters for your measurement method.

For a complete guideline of how to appeal satellite data, please refer to **Resolution 2023-150** found on <https://www.maderacountywater.com/resolutions/>



What Is A Farm Unit?

To allow for both flexibility and to mimic real-world farming conditions in which resources are shared among commonly owned lands, the County GSAs' per-acre, parcel-based allocations will be allowed to be shared within designated "farm units."

For the purpose of sharing water allocations, more than one parcel can be grouped together to form a farm unit.

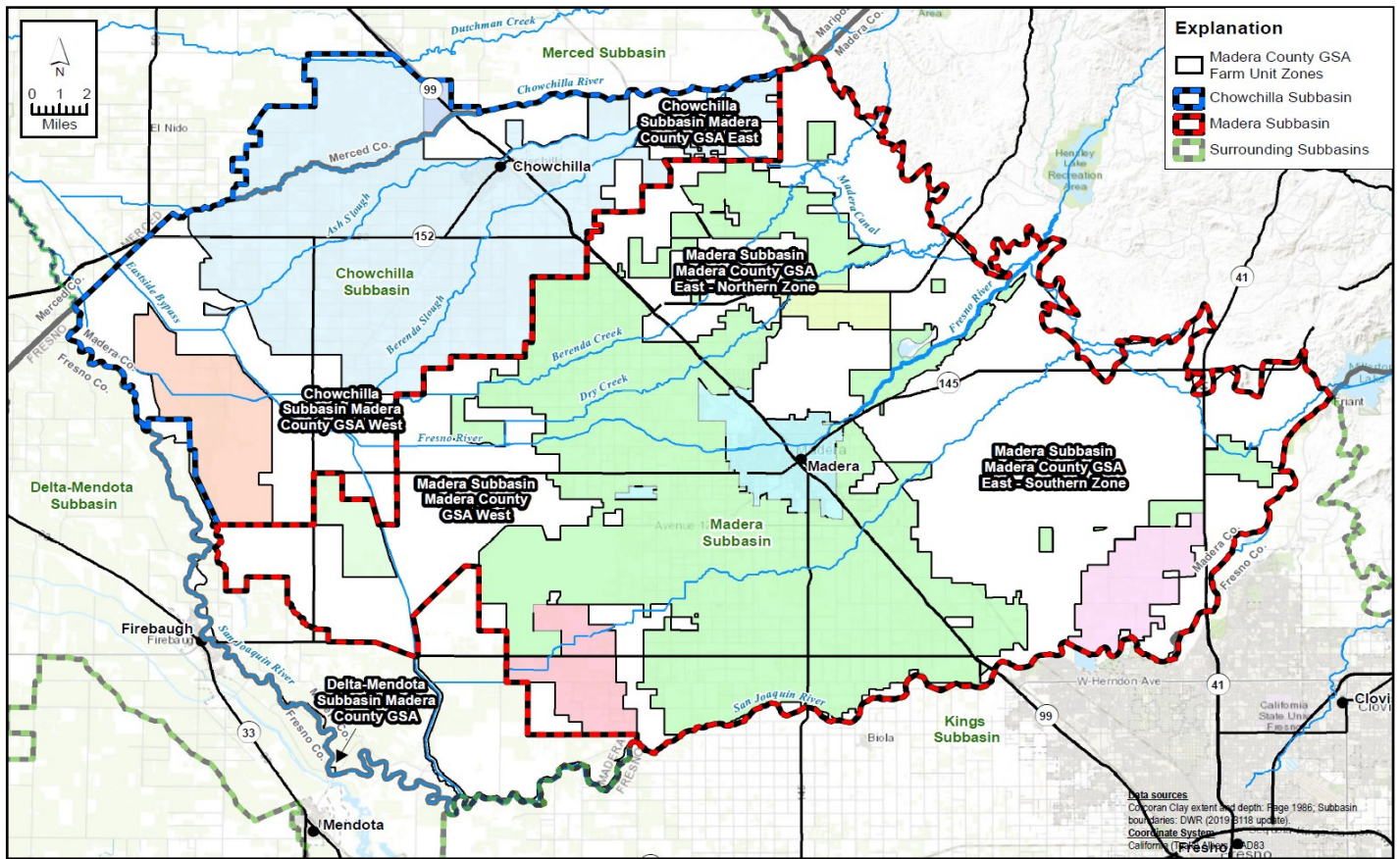
In order for the grouping to exist, the parcels would need to be owned by the same family, company, or organizations.

Overall, groundwater modeling suggested that the farm units should be permitted only within a specified zone. The zones take into account groundwater conditions, potential adverse effects on groundwater inflows from adjacent basins, land uses, aquifer characteristics and other considerations such as locations of concentrations of domestic wells.

Refer to Resolution 2021-069 listed on <https://www.maderacountywater.com/resolutions/>

What are restrictions for Farm Units?

1. Farm units must be managed or owned by the same entity;
2. Farm units must be within the same farm unit zones; and
3. Farm units must stay the same for the calendar year.



X:\2017\17-113 Madera Subbasin GSP Development\GISMap Files\tbl_working_FarmUnit.mxd

Data sources: Cooperan Clay extent and depth: Page 1986; Subbasin boundaries: DWR (2019 B118 updated); Coordinate System: California State Plane North (NAD83) (ESRI)



FIGURE 1

Madera County GSAs Farm Unit Zones

Madera Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan



What's Going On With Recharge?



As of January 2024, the Madera County GSAs have draft recharge credit policies open for public review: one policy for recharge with surface water that is purchased and one policy for recharge with water taken under the Executive Order. Both policies have a “floor” of a 75% recharge credit and a “ceiling” of 90% recharge credit depending on data specific to the land on which the recharge occurred.

Please look for opportunities to give additional feedback and eventually a board meeting with a policy for adoption with retroactive credit to January 2023.



Resolutions

Allocations

Resolution 2020-166 — Adopts a groundwater allocation approach

Resolution 2021-069 — Establishes groundwater allocation amounts for 2021-2025 and farm unit documentation

Resolution 2021-113 — Establishes groundwater allocation refinements

Appeals

Resolution 2023-150 — Revises rules for appealing Satellite Data

Farm Unit

Resolution 2021-069 — Establishes groundwater allocation amounts for 2021-2025 and farm unit documentation

Fees

Resolution 2019-172 — Approves a GSA Administrative fee for the Madera, Chowchilla, and Delta-Mendota Subbasins

Resolution 2022-086 — Adopts a GSP fee for the Madera Subbasin

Resolution 2022-087 — Adopts a GSP fee for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin

Land Repurposing

Resolution 2022-193 — Adopts the Voluntary Land Repurposing Program and program rules for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin

Resolution 2022-194 — Adopts the Voluntary Land Repurposing Program and program rules for the Madera Subbasin

Resolution 2023-056 — Adopts State rules for the Targeted Land Repurposing Program (LandFlex)

Measurement

Resolution 2022-192 — Adopts measurement methods for the Madera, Chowchilla, and Delta-Mendota Subbasins

Resolution 2022-143 — See paragraph 2 explaining the private meter pre-approval process

Resolution 2022-144 — See paragraph 2 explaining the private meter pre-approval process

Resolution 2022-145 — See paragraph 2 explaining the private meter pre-approval process

Penalties

Resolution 2022-144 — Establishes penalties in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin

Resolution 2022-145 — Establishes penalties in the Madera Subbasin

Resolution 2022-143 — Establishes penalties in the Chowchilla Subbasin



**200 W. 4th Street, Suite 3100
Madera, CA 93637
Phone: (559) 662-8015
maderacountywater.com
WNR@maderacounty.com**

If you would like to stay updated on what is happening with the Madera County GSAs, please join our interested parties list at <https://www.maderacountywater.com/join-list/>

If you would like to learn more about previous meetings, webinars, or trainings, please explore the Madera County Water Website (maderacountywater.com) for links to video recordings or PDFs of previous presentations.

If you would like to meet with our team or assigned Water Resources Specialists for any County GSA related questions, give us a call or schedule an appointment at <https://www.maderacountywater.com/appointments/>