

Consideration of Adoption of the August 2024 Revised Chowchilla Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

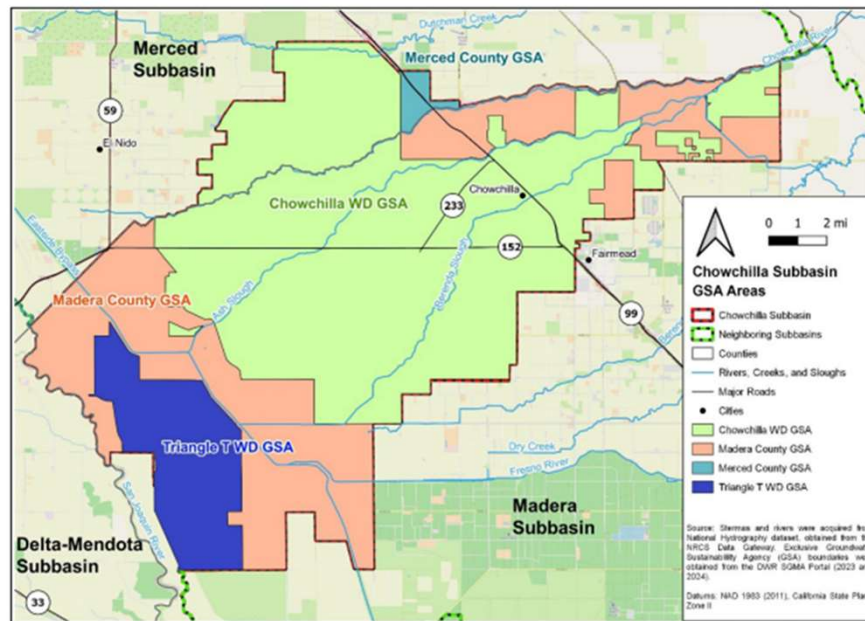
The Chowchilla Subbasin GSAs

Chowchilla Water District GSA

Madera County GSA

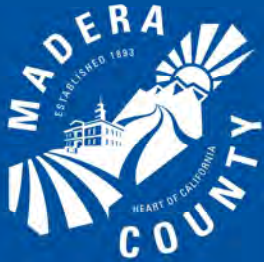
Merced County GSA

Triangle T Water District GSA



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Chowchilla Subbasin GSP Timeline

September 16, 2014

- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law.

December 17, 2019

- The Chowchilla Subbasin GSAs adopted a single GSP.

January 24, 2017

- County of Madera became the exclusive GSA for the unincorporated areas.

January 29, 2020

- The Chowchilla Subbasin GSP was submitted to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).



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January 28, 2022 – Incomplete Determination

DWR sent a letter to the Chowchilla Subbasin GSP Plan Manager stating that the GSP was determined to be “**incomplete**”.

Deficiencies listed from DWR:

1. Insufficient information to support the selection of chronic lowering of groundwater levels sustainable management criteria (SMCs).
2. Insufficient information to support the selection of land subsidence SMCs.
3. Insufficient information to support the determination that interconnected surface water or undesirable results related to depletions of interconnected surface water are not present and are not likely to occur in the Subbasin.



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March 02, 2023 – Inadequate Determination

July 26, 2022

Adoption of first amended Chowchilla Subbasin GSP.

July 27, 2022

The first amended Chowchilla GSP was submitted to DWR.

March 02, 2023
DWR released an **inadequate** determination.

Summary Response from DWR:

- Deficiency 1: The revised 2022 GSP does not provide sufficient information to support the selection of the SMCs for chronic lowering of groundwater levels.
- Deficiency 2: The revised 2022 GSP does not provide sufficient information to support the selection of the SMCs for land subsidence.
- Deficiency 3: At this time, DWR staff concluded that sufficient action has been taken on this deficiency and believe the GSAs can work with DWR to further efforts on interconnected surface water.



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Current GSP Status

- Due to the March 02, 2023, DWR final **inadequate** determination on the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), the Chowchilla Subbasin is now subject to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) intervention process.
- The primary jurisdiction shifted from DWR to the SWRCB, which could designate the basin probationary (Water Code § 10735.2(a)).
- On May 05, 2023, the GSAs transmitted a draft revised GSP to SWRCB staff.



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2024 Revised GSP Draft Schedule

Chowchilla Subbasin Revised GSP Draft Schedule:

- **August 2024** – Completed the final draft of the Revised GSP, opened it for public comment, including a public workshop webinar.
- **September 2024** – Finalize Revised GSP with consideration for adoption.
- **October 2024** – Submit Revised GSP to SWRCB.
- **The probationary hearing for Chowchilla Subbasin is tentatively scheduled for the **second quarter of 2025.****



SWRCB Staff Meetings

On June 29, 2023, July 11, 2023, and April 26, 2024, the GSAs have had several meetings with the SWRCB staff to discuss some comments and areas of concern.

➤ **Areas of concern:**

1. Domestic Well Mitigation
2. Groundwater Level Representative Monitoring Sites (RMS) Network
3. Groundwater Level SMCs
4. Project and Management Actions (PMAs)
5. Land Subsidence.



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1. Domestic Well Mitigation

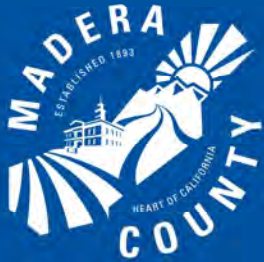
SWRCB Concerns and Comments with the GSAs Proposed Actions:

- 1. Funding cap per well replaced through the Domestic Well Mitigation Program (DWMP).**
 - GSAs will review on a case-by-case basis.
- 2. Funding sources being used to support the DWMP.**
 - The DWMP is being funded by the GSAs
- 3. Water quality concerns, separate from and in addition to the Chowchilla Nitrate Program.**
 - GSAs will provide mitigation services
- 4. Temporary mitigation services.**
 - If the well has a supply issue: tank service.
 - If the well has a quality issue: bottled water service.



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2. Groundwater Level: RMS Network

SWRCB Concerns and Comments with the GSAs Proposed Actions:

- 1. Data gaps regarding well construction information.**
 - The RMS network will be updated as part of the 2025 GSP update.
- 2. Data gaps with respect to well completion reports.**
 - Use of the best available information, including all available paper records to the extent possible, in the GSP.
 - Will work cooperatively with well owners to conduct video surveys of RMS wells.



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3. Groundwater Level: SMC

SWRCB Concerns and Comments with the GSAs Proposed Actions:

- 1. Undesirable Results (UR) “greater than 30% of the same RMS wells” drop below the Minimum Thresholds (MTs) for two consecutive fall measurements.**
Update GSP to “greater than 25% of RMS wells” drop below the MT for two consecutive fall measurements. The GSAs also propose to revise the language to ensure consistency.
- 2. Minimum Objectives (MOs) are not achievable by 2040 given the Interim Milestones (IMs).**
 - SMCs are being evaluated as part of the 5-year GSP update.
- 3. Trend in continued groundwater level decline during GSP implementation.**
 - Demand Management Program MOU with defined implementation triggers.
- 4. Potential domestic well impacts.**
 - Developing demand management programs to address groundwater level decline.
 - Groundwater model updates.



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4. Project and Management Actions

SWRCB Concerns and Comments with the GSAs Proposed Actions:

1. **GSP lacks details on demand management and an allocation framework with specific triggers throughout the Subbasin (i.e., outside of the Madera County GSA).**
 - Demand Management MOU with defined implementation triggers.



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5. Land Subsidence

SWRCB Concerns and Comments with the GSAs Proposed Actions:

- 1. Groundwater level SMC could have an effect on subsidence.**
 - The GSAs will develop and execute a Subsidence MOU and Demand Management Program MOU, which will outline specific actions and triggers.
- 2. Eastern Management Area.**
 - The GSAs plan to expand subsidence monitoring in the Eastern Management Area by surveying benchmarks on existing infrastructure.
 - Looking at opportunities to install new GPS sites.
- 3. Current threshold allowing up to 75% exceedance of MTs at RMS.**
 - As a part of the Revised GSP, the GSAs will revise the URs definition to be more restrictive.
- 4. Subsidence IMs to ramp down more quickly during the GSP implementation period.**
 - The GSAs will revise the IMs to reduce subsidence rates more quickly during the GSP implementation period.
- 5. Mitigation (i.e. financial compensation) for infrastructure impacted by subsidence in the Subbasin.**
 - Subsidence MOU and Demand Management Program MOU.



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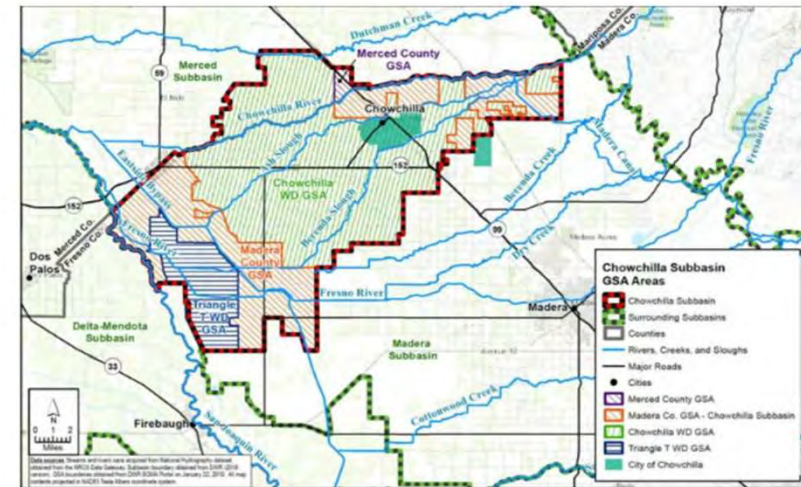




Link to the Chowchilla GSP and other supporting documents:

<https://www.maderacountywater.com/chowchilla-subbasin//>

Chowchilla Subbasin GSP



Click on image to enlarge

Chowchilla Subbasin GSP Annual Reports

Chowchilla GSP Annual Report WY 2023 April 2024

2023 May Revised Chowchilla GSP

Chowchilla Revised GSP – Clean