

**MERCED AREA GROUNDWATER POOL INTERESTS**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
December 20, 2010

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

At 3:08 P.M., Chair Eltal welcomed those present and called the meeting to order.

The sign in sheet showed the following present:

<b>Position/Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chairman/Merced Irrigation District	Hicham Eltal
Stevinson Water District	Bob Kelley
	Clay Skinner
Merced County Farm Bureau	Amanda Carvajal
East Merced Resources Conservation District	Cindy Lashbrook
Le Grand-Athlone W. D.	Kole Upton
Merced County Environmental Health	Ron Rowe
City of Merced	Mike Wegley
Merced County Environmental Health	Bill Peeler
Chowchilla Water District	Mike Wolfshorndl
Merced Irrigation District	Tom Stephens
	Patti Dosetti
Shepherd's Crook	Teri Murrison
San Joaquin Raptor Rescue Center	Lydia Miller
San Joaquin Valley Conservancy	Bill Hatch
Merced Irrigation District	Paula Reinero
Merced County Public Works	Kellie Jacobs
San Joaquin et al.	Maureen McCorry
State of California, Department of Water Resources	Tom Lutterman
Joseph Gallo Farms	Roland R. Perez

Chair Eltal recognized that at this time there is a quorum.

**ROLL CALL**

See above.

**WRITTEN PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Lydia Miller stated that they will follow up on their email requesting a copy of the grant and materials presented during this meeting.

## **BOARD ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None

## **REPORTS**

- 1. Brief Updates on Ongoing Issues.** Mr. Eltal introduced Tom Stephens, liaison with the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

- a. Groundwater Quality Protection Strategy for Central Valley Region**

Mr. Stephens stated the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is considering the nexus between surface water quality and groundwater quality. He stated that any kind of groundwater protection needs to take a look at combining all information from existing monitoring programs already in existence such as the Department of Pesticide Regulation, Department of Public Health, Groundwater Ambient Monitoring, USGS along with a few other entities. Every community and every county has problem areas that are known which are being addressed. The approach could be consolidated information to determine emerging problems that need immediate focus, and a good starting point would be to combine all different programs from different agencies like local area groundwater agencies to get a picture of monitoring certain herbicides or pesticides.

Mr. Eltal stated that the genesis for the Groundwater Quality Protection Strategy stemmed from the regional board view of a groundwater contamination in the south valley that effected domestic wells. The issue is whether the RWQCB is duplicating other efforts or would the RWQCB fill in some gaps.

- b. Central Valley Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (Groundwater Regulatory Update)**

Mr. Stephens stated long-term irrigated lands program is a process occurring now and the regional board, the RWQCB and State board have all decided that groundwater monitoring is going to be a part of that process also. What the groundwater monitoring will look like is not known at this time. He stated consolidating data, determining problems, then implementing management practices or restricting release of specific pesticides or fertilizers is what the board is examining at this time. It is an ongoing process and growers looking at groundwater improvements should to be involved in the process. The final results or near final results are expected to be presented to the RWQCB in March.

- 2. Water Status Report:**

Mr. Eltal reviewed the water statistics for the MAGPI region. First, Mr. Eltal presented the groundwater pumping due to the witnessed 2010 wet spring, in fact MID has the lowest year in groundwater pumping since 1951.

Groundwater levels reflect absence in data from participating agencies. Winton groundwater level is coming up which is experienced in sandy areas.

Mr. Eltal stated the overall health of the groundwater has not changed as the groundwater basin is still showing resilience by bouncing back, but the concern is with any dry weather or increase in consumption the overall trend is still dropping water levels.

Cindy Lashbrook asked if there is more capability of recharging the groundwater basin (recharge). Mr. Eltal stated that MID has completed its pilot basin and is going to the full scale recharge basin.

### **3. Update on Merced Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Grant Application and discuss MAGPI Strategy Based on Department of Water Resources (DWR) Final Decision:**

Mr. Eltal extended the MAGPI meeting invitation to Patti Dossetti and Teri Murrison and thanked them for their efforts in the grant preparation and on the award of the grant. He stated that MAGPI is fortunate to be working with them. The grant was submitted in September of 2010 and was recommended by DWR for funding.

Mr. Eltal stated that he and Mrs. Dosetti were present in Sacramento to be involved in the comment section to make sure there were no surprises. Mr. Eltal feels that the request for proposals from consultants can theoretically begin, but would like to be certain the grant is finalized. Three or four regions did not get receive grant recommendations and are petitioning DWR, therefore the date for final recommendation for funding is undetermined at this time,

Mr. Eltal displayed the “Draft Planning Proposal Reviews and Funding Recommendations – Round 1” web page from the DWR website showing all grant applicants by organization name, their proposal title, application score and evaluation, and draft funding recommendation. He showed where MAGPI was in the standings vs. other agencies delineating how MAGPI is a relatively secure position should more agencies be awarded application grants.

Tom Lutterman of DWR was asked to discuss why Madera not being recommended. Tom Lutterman stated that the comments are there for review.

Mr. Eltal was asked as to what was the plan for improving networking and improving the networking of the existing monitoring program. Mr. Eltal stated the application assigned the largest spending for coordination and outreach. He added, Merced Irrigation District is the lead agency and the grant soliciting effort was carried on Merced County, City of Merced and the Merced Irrigation District. Once the funding is received, it will be an effort of all members of MAGPI to fulfill the grant. He stated efforts to obtain a plan coordinator will be expected to be completed over the next few months. Mr. Eltal expressed his belief that the continuity and sense of cooperation that MAGPI has illustrated over the years had a positive impact on the plan proposal and the decision.

Mr. Eltal stated that the IRWM works under the existing established water rights and does not impact their nature. He added, however land use could be impacted and planning staff from the County and or cities are expected to join. Mr. Eltal stated implementation funds are expected by January of 2012 and MAGPI must be present at this otherwise funding will not be available.

Mr. Eltal asked for additional comments from Tom Lutterman who congratulated MAGPI on its accomplishment. Mr. Lutterman stated the next regional acceptance process may be in the spring, sometime in April and it will be less intense.

Mr. Eltal stated that MID will be part of Mariposa County IRWM because of the stake in the process. Mr. Lutterman stated that second round of funding will be in January 2012.

Mr. Eltal displayed the “Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Grant Awards – Round 1 – Draft 12/01/2010” from the DWR web site to show competing areas and funding their status.

Mr. Eltal displayed the “Proposal Evaluation” for the IRWM Grant Program – Planning Grant, Round 1, FY 2010-2011 from the DWR web site. This evaluation provided the scoring summary and the explanation for the score.

Mr. Eltal asked for comments or questions. Ron Rowe thanked Patti Dosetti, and Hicham Eltal and Mike Wegley for the effort in the grant. Mr. Eltal provided background experience for Ron Rowe and gave appreciation for his assistance.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **1. Notify DWR of MAGPI’s Intent to Joining California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program (CASGEM):**

Mr. Eltal stated that SBx7-6 was passed in 2009 mandating statewide groundwater elevation monitoring program to track trends in groundwater elevations.

Mr. Eltal explained with the CASGEM Program is the mechanism constructed to implement SBx 7-6. The program sets standards for data collection, reporting of data, and other related information concerning the monitored wells.

Mr. Eltal stated municipal wells cannot be used due to security issues and the only agency that currently provides groundwater elevations that are not urban is MID. Coordination with other agencies will need to be made to identify monitoring or production wells or any other sources that can be used in order acquire groundwater basin data.

Mr. Eltal displayed the CASGEM Procedures for Monitoring Entity Reporting from the DWR web site and reviewed the CASGEM Schedule and stated that by next MAGPI Board meeting, a monitoring plan will need to be developed and that plan submitted by July of 2011.

Mr. Eltal discussed the role and responsibility of monitoring agencies and displayed Figure 1 “Illustration of possible Monitoring Entity scenarios for a monitored basin.” from the Roles and Responsibilities of Monitoring Entities from the CASGEM Procedures for Monitoring Entity Reporting from the DWR web site, and explained Scenarios A, B, and C. He recommended Scenario C which is described as “One basin, one Monitoring Entity coordinating and submitting data collected by several agencies” which is the closest description to the function of MAGPI. Mr. Eltal stated that MAGPI is qualified to become an eligible monitoring entity under item number 7 of the summary list of eligible entities which describes the entity as “A voluntary cooperative groundwater monitoring association...”. Once qualified, MAGPI will complete the process of completing the notification requirements and the efforts of CASGEM will be coordinated with the IRWM.

Mr. Eltal stated that the DWR links to both the IRWM Grant information and CASGEM References will be on the MAGPI web site. He recommended that the group review the Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Guidelines to learn what is expected from a monitoring perspective from DWR.

Mr. Eltal displayed the DWR Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Guidelines document from the DWR web site and briefly mentioned the selection and the criteria process, to be discussed further in the next meeting. He showed Figure 1 contour maps, Figure 2 Groundwater Hydrographs demonstrating frequency, and Figure 3 Common Environmental factors that influence choice of frequency.

Mr. Eltal briefly reviewed sampling protocol and what is expected from DWR including the forms. He stated to the group to read the remaining guidelines and become familiar with the details.

Mr. Eltal displayed the CASGEM Online Submittal System and reviewed the items needed to be entered to register. This registration must be completed by January 1, 2010.

Mr. Kelly motioned to notify DWR of MAGPI’s Intent to Joining California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program (CASGEM) according to SBx7-6.

Mr. Upton seconded the said motion, motion was unanimously approved.

## **BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD**

None

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next MAGPI meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2011 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

## **ADJOURN**

At 4:33 P.M., Mr. Bob Kelley motioned to adjourn, Mr. Ron Rowe seconded said motion, and motion was unanimously approved.