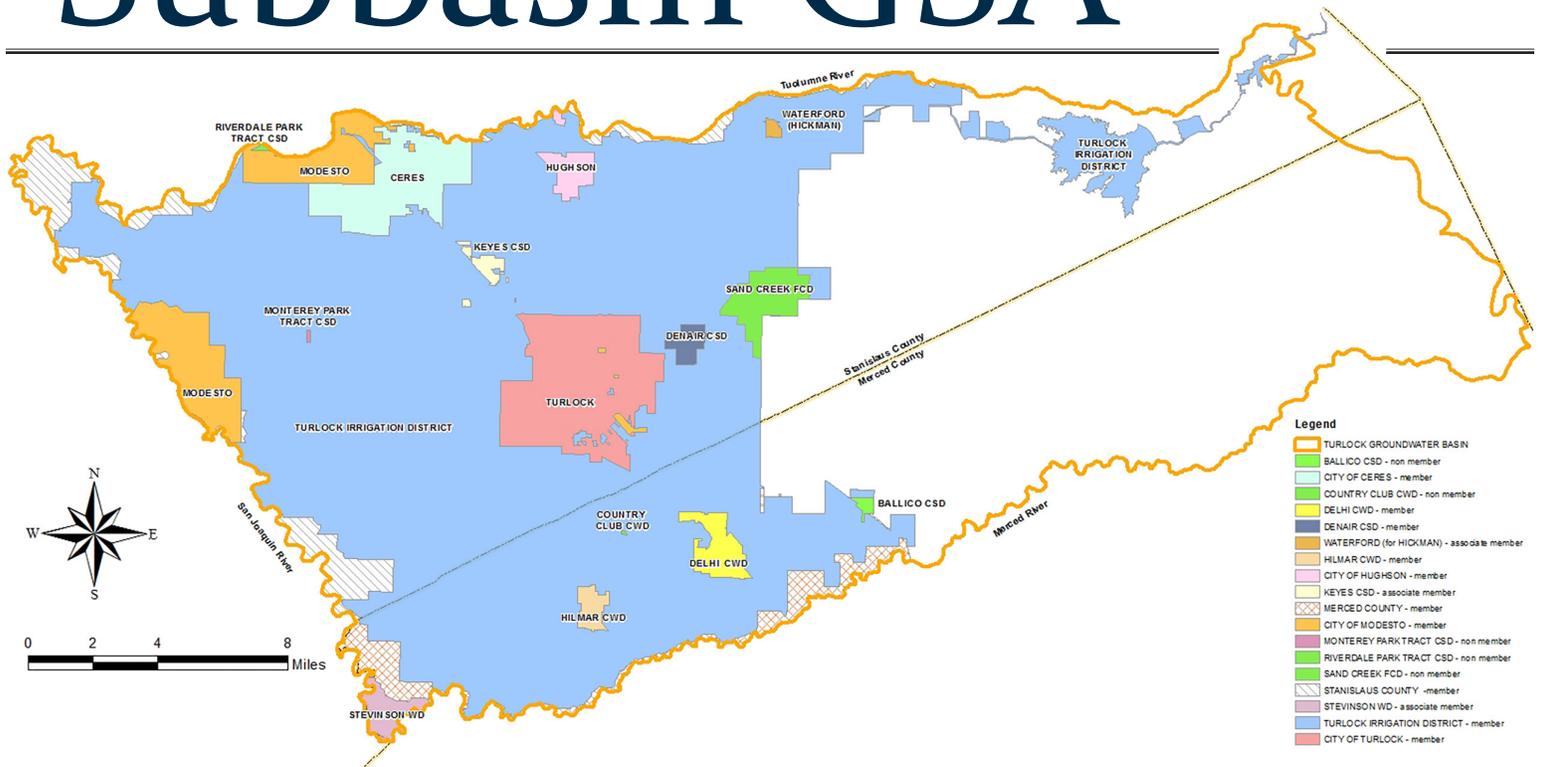


West Turlock Subbasin GSA



Turlock Subbasin Facts

- A mix of cities, counties, irrigation districts, community services districts, water districts, county water districts and private landowners pump groundwater from the Subbasin.
- The Subbasin underlies an area of approximately 347,000 acres, with irrigated crops (250,000 acres), non-irrigated areas (53,000 acres), and urban development (25,000 acres) as the predominant land uses.
- Groundwater from the Subbasin supplies municipal, industrial, rural and agricultural demands of the region. Surface water from the Tuolumne River and, to a lesser extent, the Merced River, supplies a large portion of agricultural irrigation demands within the Subbasin.
- Deep percolation of irrigation water, via flood irrigation, is the largest inflow to the Subbasin and plays an important role in maintaining groundwater storage.

The **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)** enables local agencies to manage groundwater on a local level so long as specific actions are taken and timelines met. SGMA requires “local agencies” form a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) or multiple GSAs, covering the entire Turlock Subbasin. GSAs are then required to develop and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) or plans to achieve sustainability and prevent “undesirable results.” Under SGMA, failure to comply with any of these requirements may lead to state intervention. In that instance, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), which provides the SGMA enforcement backstop, will require reporting, charge fees and may create interim management plans until such time that local agencies are able to take over.

The local agencies that are eligible to form a GSA have been working together to develop a process for complying with SGMA. As a result, there are two GSAs forming within the subbasin: the West Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (WTS GSA) and the East Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (ETS GSA). The boundary separating the two GSAs is generally the Turlock Irrigation District’s eastern irrigation service area boundary. Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs) have been formed by the local agencies within each proposed GSA area. To officially become the GSA, each JPA must hold a public hearing, take action to elect to be the GSA for their respective areas, and submit the necessary documentation to the state by June 30, 2017.

As the GSAs are forming, the local agencies are continuing to work together through the existing Turlock Groundwater Basin Association (TGBA) to develop a process by which the GSAs can develop a single GSP to cover the entire Turlock basin. Information will be shared with the GSAs and interested parties as the process unfolds.

The three basic steps of SGMA for local agencies in the Turlock Subbasin

Step

1

Form GSAs

Local agencies to form GSAs by 6/30/17 or state may intervene

Step

2

Develop GSPs

GSAs submit GSP(s) by 1/31/22 or state may intervene

Step

3

Get results

No "undesirable results", meet goals, or state may intervene

How to be involved going forward...

Local water agencies, through the TGBA, are working on outlining a process and timeline by which the GSAs can work together to develop a GSP for the subbasin, including outreach to educate property owners and other stakeholders to enable them to engage in the process. As of right now, the public may attend WTS GSA Board meetings as well as TGBA meetings. TGBA meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Turlock Irrigation District at 2:00pm. In addition, a stakeholder list is beginning to be developed. To be a part of the process, or to receive additional information, be sure to include your name on the sign-in sheets at any of the aforementioned public meetings or online at the TGBA website, www.TurlockGBA.org.

The West Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency is in the final phase of **Step 1**, forming the **WTS GSA**.

What is the WTS GSA?...

The WTS GSA is being formed by 11 water agencies and two counties on the western side of the Turlock Subbasin. Other agencies within the boundaries have declined to become official "members" but will work with the GSA on SGMA efforts. After holding a public hearing, the JPA (described on the previous page) may choose to become the GSA for the WTS GSA service area and direct that the necessary paperwork be submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to obtain state approval as the exclusive GSA for its service area.

What is the role of a GSA?...

The WTS GSA will be tasked over the next five years with developing and receiving approval from DWR on a GSP designed to achieve sustainability by 2042. Although GSP approval is a key milestone toward SGMA compliance, GSAs have an ongoing responsibility to manage local groundwater resources to achieve sustainability. GSAs must submit annual progress reports to DWR and update the GSP every five years.

GSAs are provided tools and authorities through SGMA to develop and implement GSPs to achieve sustainability. For example, GSAs can require registration of wells, require reporting, assess fees to fund SGMA efforts, measure and manage extractions, and develop programs and facilities for groundwater recharge. All of which could help manage groundwater and comply with SGMA.

To accomplish its responsibilities, the governing Board of the WTS GSA will meet at least quarterly. Unless otherwise determined, meetings will be held at the Turlock Irrigation District. Members of the public are welcomed and encouraged to attend these meetings. As the GSP development process begins, a variety of avenues for public participation will be developed.

Moving into Step 2...

The Turlock Subbasin must be covered by a DWR-approved GSP by January 2022. The GSAs forming within the Subbasin are planning on adopting a single GSP covering the entire Turlock basin. The TGBA is currently developing a plan to accomplish this.

GSPs require a significant amount of information and analysis to determine the best approach for achieving sustainability and avoiding "undesireable results". GSPs also require significant education and outreach. To keep informed and get involved in the process, see "How to be involved going forward" (above).