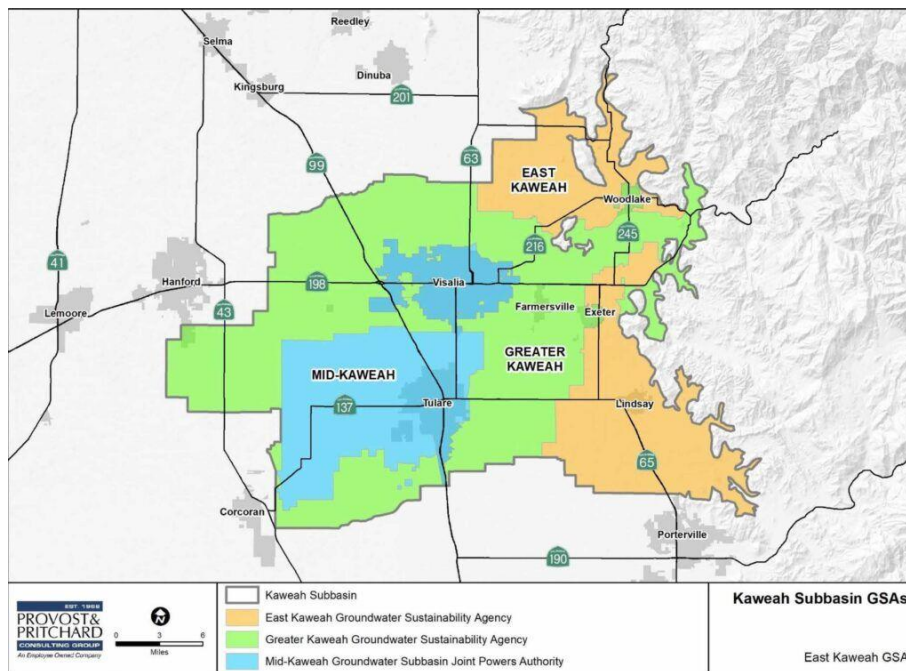


# SJV WATER

## A slew of workshops and presentations set to educate and hear from Tulare County residents about Kaweah groundwater challenges

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By: Lisa McEwen



Tulare County residents who want to express their opinions about possible state intervention in groundwater management to members of the State Water Board will have a chance to do so next week.

State water board staff will hold two public workshops June 24 (virtual) and June 27 (in person) in Visalia to explain its [draft report](#) recommending probation, what it means and how the state intervention in the Kaweah subbasin would work.

The draft report recommends probation for the region, which includes the cities of Woodlake and Porterville in the east, and Visalia, Tulare and a small portion of Hanford to the west. Subsidence, in which land irreversibly collapses due to groundwater overdraft, was one of the key reasons for the probation recommendation. That was also the case for the Tulare Lake subbasin and Tule subbasin, which border the Kaweah.

The state Water Board voted unanimously April 16 to put the Tulare Lake subbasin on probation. The Tule subbasin's probation hearing is set for Sept. 17.

Kaweah's hearing is Nov. 5. Probation is the first step toward state takeover of local pumping. Under probation, the state can require wells to be registered and metered and charge fees for every acre foot pumped. Farmers in the Tulare Lake subbasin, which covers most of Kings County, must start reporting extractions to state staff July 15.

Managers of the Kaweah subbasin's three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies have taken note of their neighbors' plight and after a [rocky start](#) are working on a new groundwater plan that is coordinated, a requirement of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Mid-Kaweah GSA interim manager Aaron Fukuda said one of the goals of next week's workshops is to educate landowners who might appear before the state water board.

"If they come to workshops, we project the fact that we are communicating, organized, and on the right track by doing the hard work of having a GSP," he said during a June 18 advisory committee meeting. "I think we have a decent opportunity to avoid probation if we can convey the message that we have done what we have been asked to do."

Rachel Glauser, executive director of Delta View Water Association, said growers reliant on groundwater for their operations are pleased with the new plan.

"At this stage in the game, we want to support the success of the entire subbasin and do what we can to maintain local control over groundwater management," she wrote in an email. "Thankfully, the Kaweah GSAs have been extremely well-coordinated and we're hopeful that an additional layer of grower fees by way of state intervention, will be avoided."

This coordinated effort will continue at the upcoming workshops in water managers' bid to avoid probation in November. East Kaweah GSA manager Mike Hagman said that the three GSA managers will provide an approximately 45-minute presentation at both workshops, where they will discuss their newly issued revised groundwater plan.

"This will be really helpful to us," he said.

The revised plan includes a new subbasin-wide [domestic well mitigation program](#) in partnership with Self-Help Enterprises, the first in the state.

The agencies are also holding a ["State of the Subbasin"](#) outreach event June 19 at the International Agri-Center and online June 20.

Written comments about the Kaweah subbasin draft staff report also will be accepted until noon on Monday, July 8.