Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District
Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Communication & Engagement Plan

Tulare County, California
July 2018

Prepared for:

Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District Groundwater Sustainability Agency
14181 Avenue 24, Delano, California 93215

Prepared by:

Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group
130 N. Garden Street, Visalia, California 93291

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Report Prepared for:

Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District Groundwater Sustainability Agency

14181 Avenue 24

Delano, California 93215

Contact:

Dale Brogan, Special Projects Manager

Telephone: (661) 725-2526

Email: dbrogan@deid.org

Website: www.deid.org

Report Prepared by:

Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group

Trilby Barton, Public Outreach Coordinator

Contact:

Telephone: (559) 636-1166

Email: tbarton@ppeng.com

Note: This Communication & Engagement Plan is a living document and will be updated as necessary throughout the GSP development, public review, and implementation phases.

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Abbreviations

AB.....Assembly Bill
CASGEM.....California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring
CVP.....Central Valley Project
DAC.....Disadvantaged Community
DDW.....Division of Drinking Water
DEID.....Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District
DWR.....Department of Water Resources
EPUD.....Earlimart Public Utility District
FKC.....Friant-Kern Canal
GSA.....Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP.....Groundwater Sustainability Plan
ILRP.....Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program
MCL.....Maximum contaminant levels
MOU.....Memorandum of Understanding
PSA.....Public service announcement
SB.....Senate Bill
SDAC.....Severely Disadvantaged Community
SGMA.....Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SWRCB.....State Water Resources Control Board
USBR.....United States Bureau of Reclamation

Introduction

SGMA Overview

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (**SGMA**) is a combination of three bills signed by California Governor Jerry Brown in 2014: Assembly Bill (**AB**) 1739, Senate Bill (**SB**) 1168, and SB 1319. SGMA provides local agencies with the framework to manage groundwater basins in a sustainable manner. The legislation recognizes that groundwater is most effectively managed at the local level, and local agencies will need to achieve groundwater sustainability by 2040.

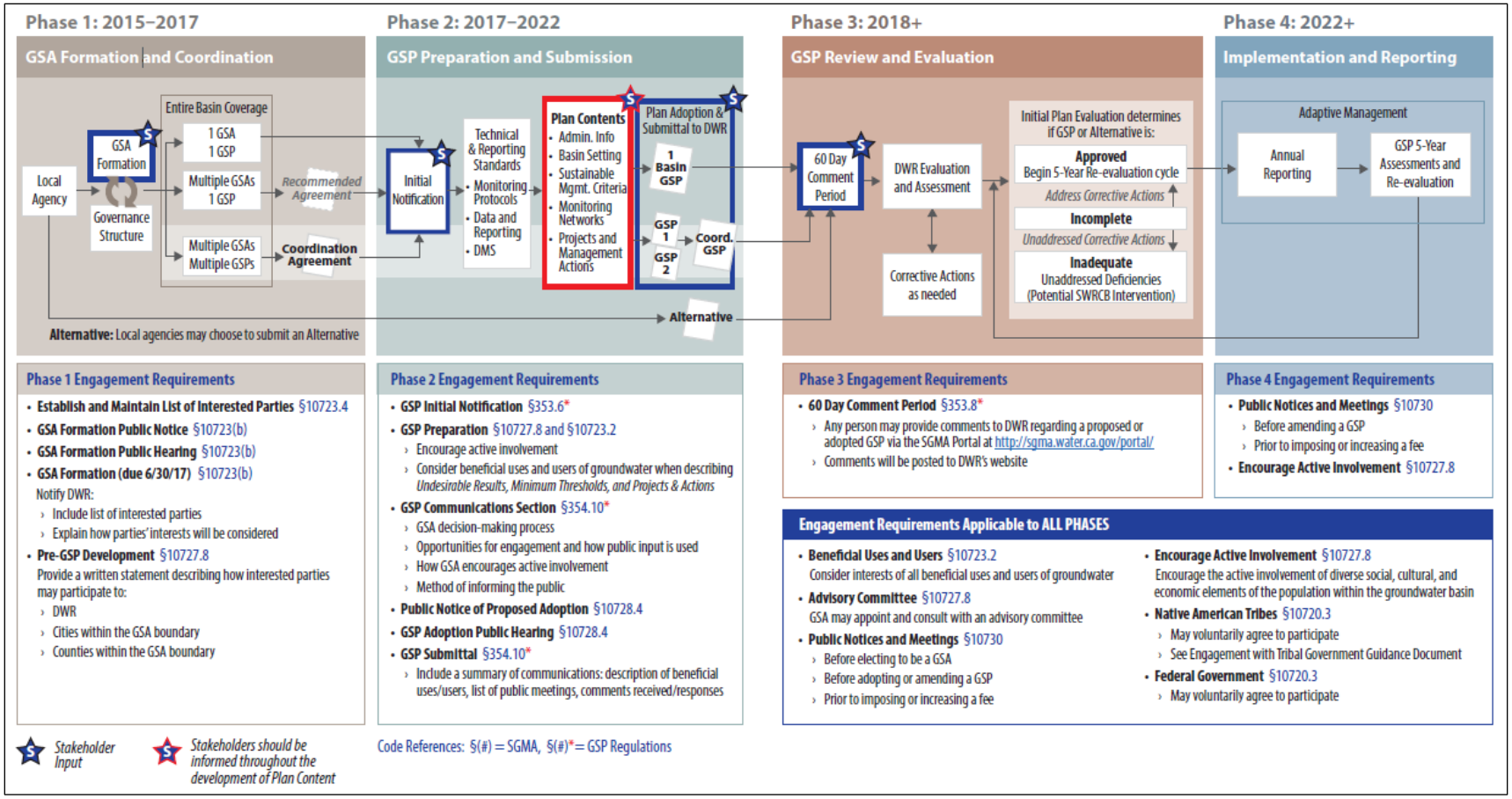
In SGMA, sustainable groundwater management is defined as management of groundwater supplies in a manner that can be maintained in planning and implementation phases without causing undesirable results. Undesirable results include significant and unreasonable chronic lowering of groundwater levels, reduction of groundwater storage, seawater intrusion, degraded water quality, land subsidence, and interconnected surface waters.

Implementation of SGMA and outreach requirements are broken down into four phases (**Figure 0-1**):

- **Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination –** Phase 1 ranged from 2015 to 2017, and during this phase, local agencies created groundwater sustainability agencies (**GSA**). The responsibility of a GSA is to develop and implement a groundwater sustainability plan (**GSP**) that will consider all beneficial uses and groundwater users within the basin. GSAs were required to be formed by June 30, 2017.
- **Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission –** The second phase of SGMA implementation ranges from 2017 to 2020. During this phase, GSAs must develop GSPs with measurable objectives and milestones that ensure basin sustainability. A basin may be managed by a single GSP or multiple-coordinated GSPs. The California Department of Water Resources (**DWR**) developed regulations for evaluating GSPs and alternatives to GSPs by June 1, 2016.
- **Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation –** Phase 3 will be held in 2019, and consists of the public review period, which will be held 90 days prior to the adoption of the GSP. Once the GSP has been submitted to the DWR by January 31, 2020, DWR will hold another 60-day review and comment period for stakeholders.
- **Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting –** Following the submission of the GSP, GSAs will immediately begin the implementation of efforts described in the GSP to reach sustainability within the basin. This will be an ongoing phase, as the required goal of SGMA is to reach sustainability by 2040.

Communication & Engagement Plan

As required by SGMA, GSAs must consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater and include them in the GSP development process. The Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District Groundwater Sustainability Agency's (**DEID GSA**) Communication & Engagement Plan addresses how stakeholders within the GSA's boundary are engaged through stakeholder education and opportunities for input and public review during the development and implementation of the GSP and will be updated throughout the phases. This plan provides an overview of the DEID GSA, its stakeholders, and decision-making process; identifies opportunities for public engagement and discussion of how public input and responses will be used; describes how the DEID GSA encourages the active involvement of diverse, social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the GSA boundary; and the methods the GSA will use to inform the public stakeholders about the progress of GSP development, public review and implementation.



Source: GSP Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Guidance Document, California Department of Water Resources, June 2017

Figure 0-1. Stakeholder Engagement Requirements by Phase

I. Goals and Desired Outcomes

This section of the Communication & Engagement Plan provides a description of the DEID GSA, defines the goals of how to address the challenges, regulatory requirements and opportunities, and how to reach the desired outcomes of communication efforts.

A. Description and Background of the DEID GSA

I.A.1 GSA Description & Boundary

SGMA required all high- and medium-priority groundwater basins, as designated by the DWR Bulletin 118, to be managed by a GSA or multiple GSAs. Part of the San Joaquin Valley Basin, the Tule Subbasin is a high-priority basin that is in critical groundwater overdraft and is split into seven GSAs (**Table I-1**), including the DEID GSA.

Table I-1. Tule Subbasin GSAs and GSA Member Entities

GSA	GSA Member Entities	
Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District GSA	Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District	Earlimart Public Utilities District
Alpaugh GSA	Alpaugh Irrigation District Atwell Island Water District	Alpaugh Community Services District
Eastern Tule GSA	County of Tulare City of Porterville Saucelito Irrigation District Tea Pot Dome Water District	Vandalia Water District Terra Bella Irrigation District Kern-Tulare Water District Porterville Irrigation District
Lower Tule River Irrigation District GSA	Lower Tule River Irrigation District	Poplar Community Services District
Pixley Irrigation District GSA	Pixley Irrigation District	Pixley Public Utility District
Tri-County Water Authority	Angiola Water District	Deer Creek Storm Water District
Tulare County GSA	Unmanaged white areas within the Tule subbasin	

Under SGMA, DEID GSA is responsible for submitting a GSP to the DWR by January 31, 2020. On August 25, 2016, a resolution was adopted by the DEID board of directors to become an official GSA for the portion of the Tule Subbasin designated in **Figure I-1**. Member entities listed in **Table I-2** encompass the DEID GSA.

On May 23, 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**) was put into place between DEID and Earlimart Public Utility District (**EPUD**) regarding GSA participation and GSP development and implementation. In addition, 7,000 acres of white area adjacent to DEID was annexed into the irrigation district solely for SGMA assistance and compliance.

DEID GSA submitted a basin boundary modification to DWR on January 29, 2016 with the purpose of including the Kern County portion of DEID into the Tule Subbasin. The modification was approved by DWR in July 2016.

The boundaries of the DEID and EPUD agencies overlap and overlie a portion of the Tule Subbasin (Basin Number 5.022.13, DWR Bulletin 118) of the San Joaquin Valley Basin, which create the boundary of the DEID GSA. The GSA boundary stretches along the southern Tulare County boundary and the very northern part of Kern County (**Figure I-1**), and primarily includes agricultural lands with some urban areas.

Table I-2. DEID GSA Member Entities

DEID GSA Member Entities	
Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District	Earlimart Public Utility District

Throughout the SGMA phases, the DEID GSA's Board of Directors and technical team will be responsible for collecting and organizing data, engaging and retaining experts and consultants, and soliciting feedback from beneficial users of groundwater and interested parties within the GSA boundary. The specific role of the Board of Directors is described in **Section II.A**.

A Subbasin Coordination Committee has been established, consisting of representatives from each of the Tule Subbasin GSAs to thoroughly collaborate efforts throughout the GSP development phase to meet the sustainability requirements for the entire Tule Subbasin.

I.A.2 Industries, DACs, Municipalities

I.A.2.1 Industries

I.A.2.1.1 Agriculture

The primary industry within the DEID GSA is agriculture, as Tulare and Kern counties are two of the top largest agricultural-producing counties in the United States. Primary crops grown within the GSA include grapes, almonds, citrus, and stone fruit. Grape production accounts for approximately 50 percent of the crops grown within the GSA, while almonds account for around 20 percent of crop production. As the primary industry, agriculture is the largest private employer both counties, with farm employment accounting for a quarter of all jobs, including production, processing, and manufacturing. According to the Tulare County Farm Bureau, six of the top 15 employers in Tulare County alone are fruit packing houses and dairy processing plants, and one in every five jobs in the San Joaquin Valley is directly related to agriculture.

With a substantial amount of the DEID GSA acreage in agriculture production, it is important agriculture industry stakeholders are involved and informed during the development and public review phases of the GSP, as implementation will have a significant direct impact on the industry, and ultimately the local, state and national economies.

I.A.2.2 DACs

Communication and educational outreach efforts with disadvantaged communities (**DAC**) and severely disadvantaged communities (**SDAC**) are essential for the development and implementation of GSPs within the San Joaquin Valley Basin, and residents are generally dedicated to bettering their communities, particularly when it comes to their water supplies. Important information that will be essential to communicate and engage DACs will include an explanation of SGMA, education on water conservation, and soliciting feedback from community members on water quantity challenges their communities may face. A composite listing of the DACs and SDACs and their populations within the GSA boundary are listed in **Table I-3** and laid out in **Figure I-2**. Specific issues and infrastructure projects are described in greater detail in **Section II.B**.

By including DACs and SDACs in communication efforts during the development, public review and implementation phases of the GSA, residents will be more likely to participate and provide feedback that

could be crucial to long-term solutions for groundwater sustainability within their communities. Any feedback received from DAC residents will be reviewed by the GSA's technical team, Stakeholder Committee, and Board of Directors to be taken into consideration during the GSP development phase.

Table I-3. Disadvantaged Communities within DEID GSA

Community	Population	Connections	No. of Wells	DAC/SDAC
Earlimart	8,300	1,568	6	SDAC
Rodriguez Labor Camp	110	35	1	SDAC

I.A.2.3 Public Agencies and Districts

The public agencies and districts within the DEID GSA are rural and district-related (**Figure I-3**). These agencies and districts will be engaged in outreach efforts throughout the GSP development, public review and implementation phases, as described in **Section II.C**. School districts will be an integral part of outreach efforts, particularly within DACs, and are outlined in **Figure I-4**.

I.A.2.3.1 Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District

Irrigation in the Delano and Earlimart regions began in the late 1800s with artesian wells, but by the 1930s diminished groundwater supplies threatened the area's continued economic viability. By 1947 the mean depth to groundwater was dangerously low. The Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District was formed in 1938 and signed its original water service contract for water delivery from the Friant Unit of the Central Valley Project with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) in 1951, after the average depth of groundwater had fallen every year since 1905. Since its inception, DEID has provided consistent and reliable surface water to its constituents, resulting in dramatic improvements to groundwater conditions.

Today, DEID encompasses approximately 63,500 acres which includes providing surface water to over 400 landowners on the original DEID service area of 56,500 acres of land, plus 7,000 acres of white area in southern Tulare and northern Kern counties annexed in 2016 strictly for SGMA compliance. Water is distributed through a completely piped system, allowing for virtually no losses and providing an efficient water delivery project that is the foundation for the DEID's overall water conservation and management program.

I.A.2.3.2 Earlimart Public Utility District

Earlimart is a rural unincorporated community in southern Tulare County, and is considered a SDAC. EPUD services 722 acres with a community of 8,300 residents with 1,568 connections and six active wells. Earlimart is predominately rural and the main industry is agriculture, with a number of vineyards, packing houses and cold storage facilities.

I.A.3 DEID GSA's Decision-Making Process

The DEID GSA's decision-making process is broken down by the roles of the Board of Directors, Stakeholder Committee, and through a Subbasin Coordination Committee. The roles of these DEID GSA entities and their responsibilities are outlined below and described in more detail in **Section II.A**.

- **Board of Directors –** Responsible for all final decisions relative to the development of the GSA, GSP adoption, implementation of the GSP, and other related matters
- **Stakeholder Committee –** Advises the Board of Directors on matters dealing with GSA and GSP development, GSP implementation, and other GSA/GSP matters; open to all interested stakeholders who wish to participate. Committee meetings are generally split by the three management areas: DEID, EPUD, and DEID White Area Annex

B. Goals/Desired Outcomes of GSP Development

The overall, main goal of the DEID GSA is to reach groundwater sustainability as required by SGMA, while protecting, enhancing and managing the water resources and related assets to benefit the growers, communities and other beneficial users within the boundary.

C. Communication Objectives to Support the GSP

The communication objectives during GSA formation/coordination, GSP development, public review, and implementation phases of the SGMA compliance is to encourage active involvement of diverse, social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the GSA boundary. The DEID GSA will give beneficial users and users of groundwater opportunities to engage in the GSP process by providing educational outreach opportunities for stakeholders while reaching out through specific communication avenues (**Section V**). As active stakeholders, members of the Board of Directors and the Stakeholder Committee are direct representatives of their communities and industries, and it is important for them to continually gather feedback/input, and concerns/needs of their constituents and report back to their respective meetings. Any stakeholder input received will be reviewed and taken into consideration during GSP development and public review phases.

I.C.1 Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination

Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination has been completed. This phase stretched from 2015 through 2018, and consisted of forming the DEID GSA, establishing and maintaining the List of Interested Parties (**Section II.D**), establishing the Stakeholder Committee, and creating the Communication & Engagement Plan to outline communication efforts for the GSP development, public review and implementation phases. Stakeholder input was utilized during the GSA formation phase, as beneficial users and stakeholders with interests in groundwater usage within the DEID GSA's boundary were notified via public meeting notices as soon as the process began.

I.C.2 Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission

Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission will span from 2018 through 2020. With the goal of having the draft GSP by the first quarter of 2019, 2018 will primarily be the technical development of the plan, while working with stakeholders (**Section II.A**) for feedback and input. During 2018, direct interaction with stakeholder groups (**Section II.B**) and other community organizations and entities (**Section II.C**) will be held with the purpose of educating and informing stakeholders about SGMA and the GSP process, while also soliciting feedback and input from these groups (**Section III.A**) to mitigate the negative impacts to beneficial users of groundwater as much as possible.

I.C.3 Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation

During 2019, Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation, will be the primary focus of communication and engagement efforts. Once the draft of the GSP is completed in the second quarter of 2019, the public review process will begin. A 90-day comment period will be held, with the GSP draft posted on the DEID GSA's website for stakeholders to conveniently download and review. Outreach meetings will be held during this phase at locations throughout the GSA boundary (potential venues are listed in **Table V-1**). These meetings will focus on an overview of the GSP content, while giving stakeholders a public forum to provide their feedback and comments.

Once the public review period is completed, public comments will be taken into consideration and incorporated into the final version of the DEID GSA's GSP before submitting to the DWR by January 31, 2020. Following submittal, stakeholders will be given a second 60-day comment period through the DWR's SGMA portal at http://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/. Comments will be posted to the DWR's website prior to the state agency's evaluation, assessment and approval.

I.C.4 Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting

Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting will begin once the plan is submitted in January 2020. Even while the DWR is reviewing the GSP, implementation at the GSA-level must begin. During the implementation phase, communication and engagement efforts will be shifted to educational and informational awareness of the requirements and processes of reaching groundwater sustainability. Active involvement of all stakeholders is encouraged during this phase, and public notices are required prior to imposing, and later increasing, any fees.

D. Overriding Concerns, Major Concerns or Challenges

Through preliminary discussions with stakeholders within the DEID GSA Boundary, overriding concerns, major concerns or challenges are centralized around economic impacts to the agricultural industry, which will also have a direct impact on DACs. Economic impacts could include loss of jobs and loss of tax revenue due to the decreased land values of fallowed ground. Many residents within DACs are employed by the agricultural industry, and many infrastructure improvement projects within these communities are facilitated by the counties of Kern and Tulare and funded through state and federal funding secured with the assistance of technical providers. The agricultural industry and DACs will be the main target audiences for direct outreach methods, including public meetings, because of the significant impact SGMA implementation will have on these two beneficial users of groundwater.

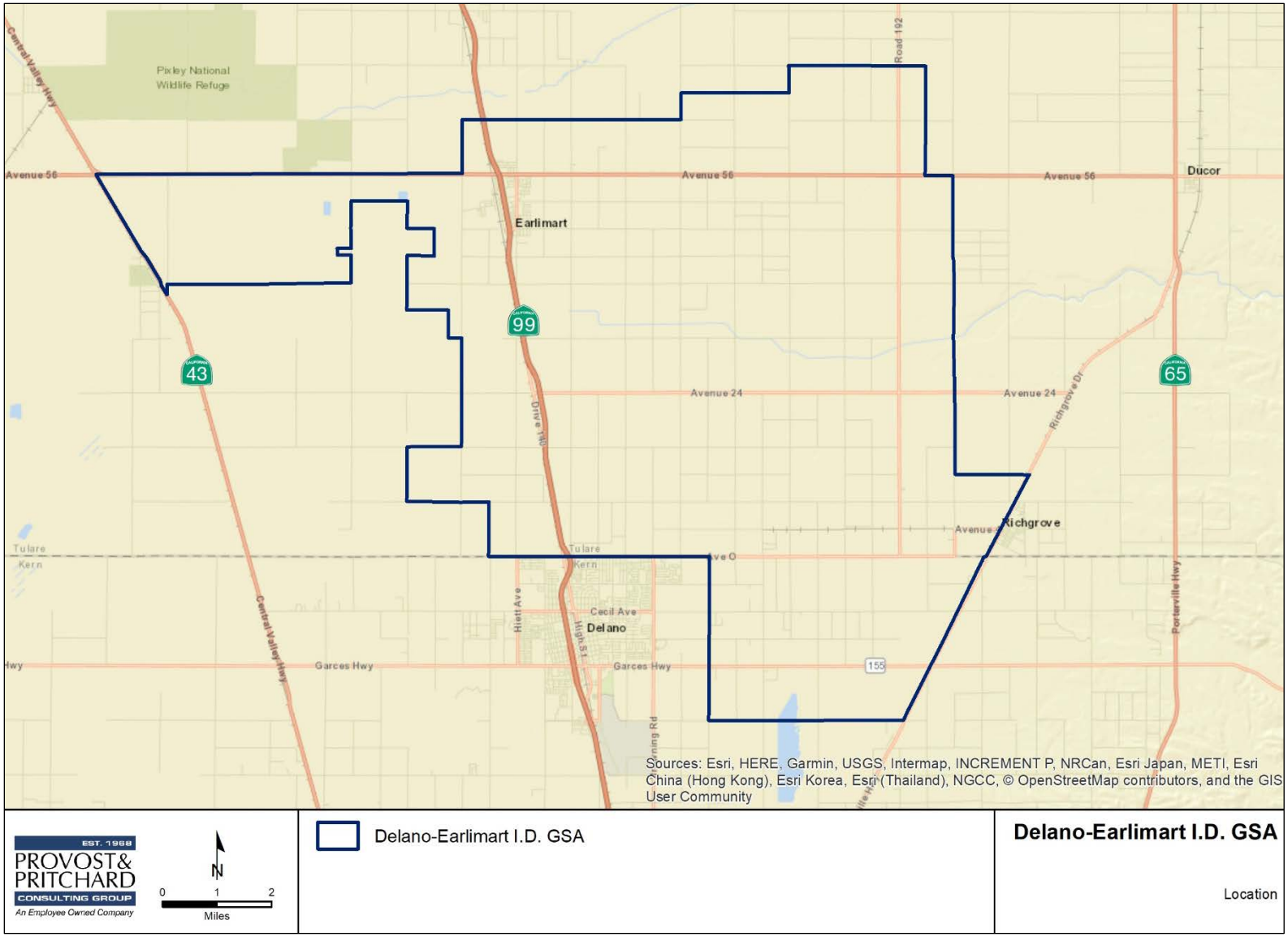


Figure I-1. Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District GSA Boundary

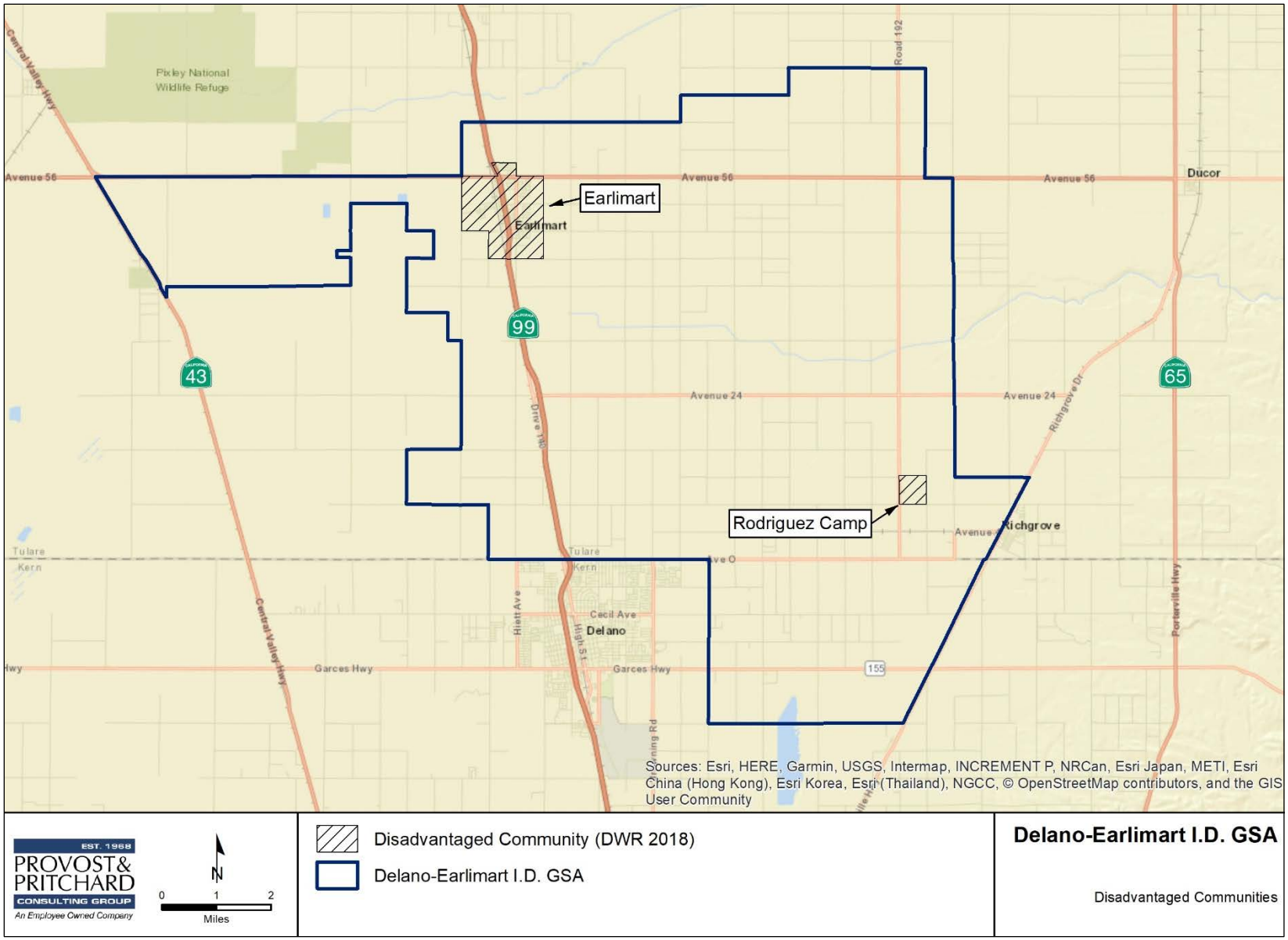


Figure I-2. Disadvantaged Communities within Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District GSA

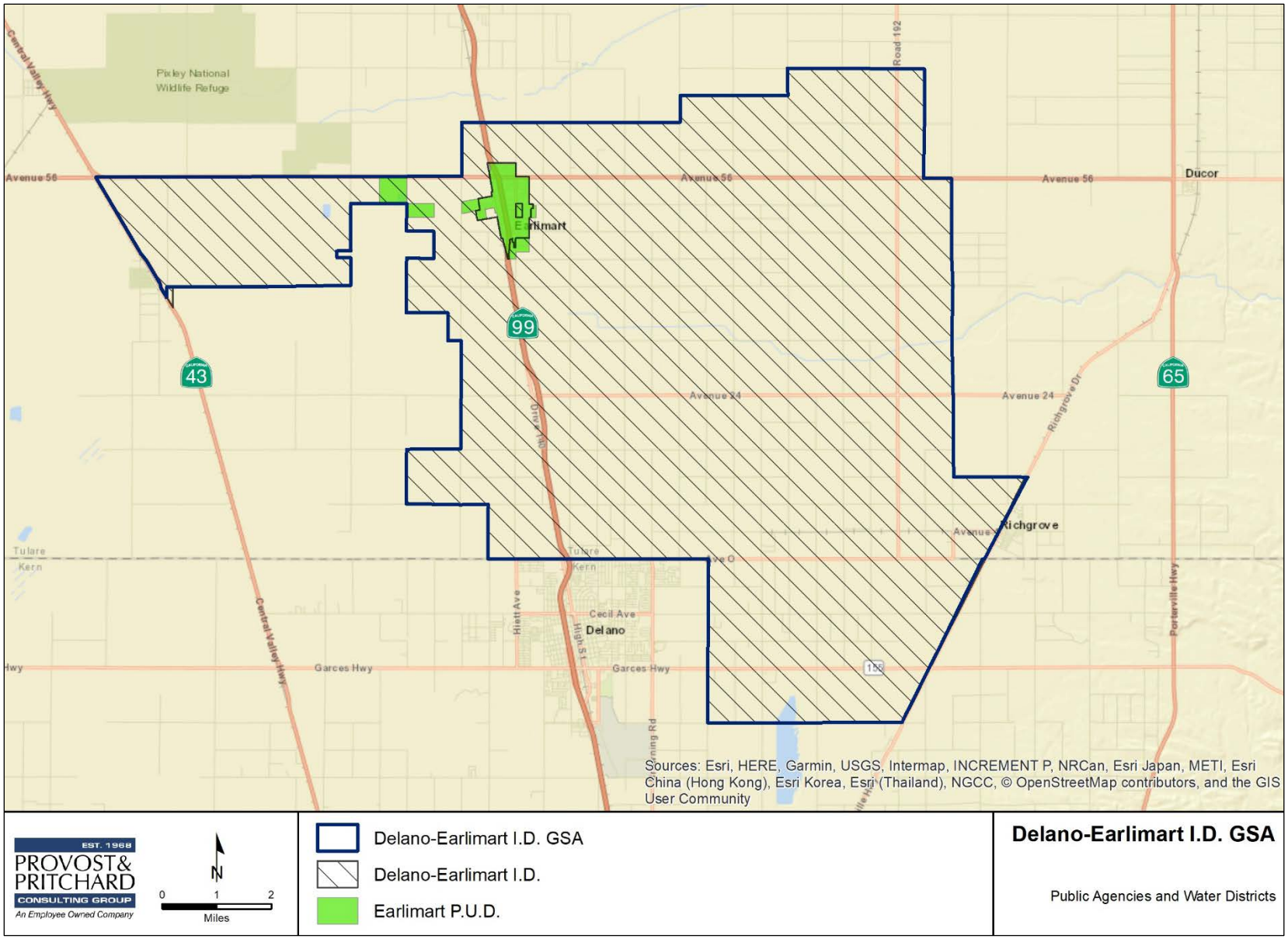


Figure I-3. Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District GSA Public Agencies and Water/Irrigation Districts

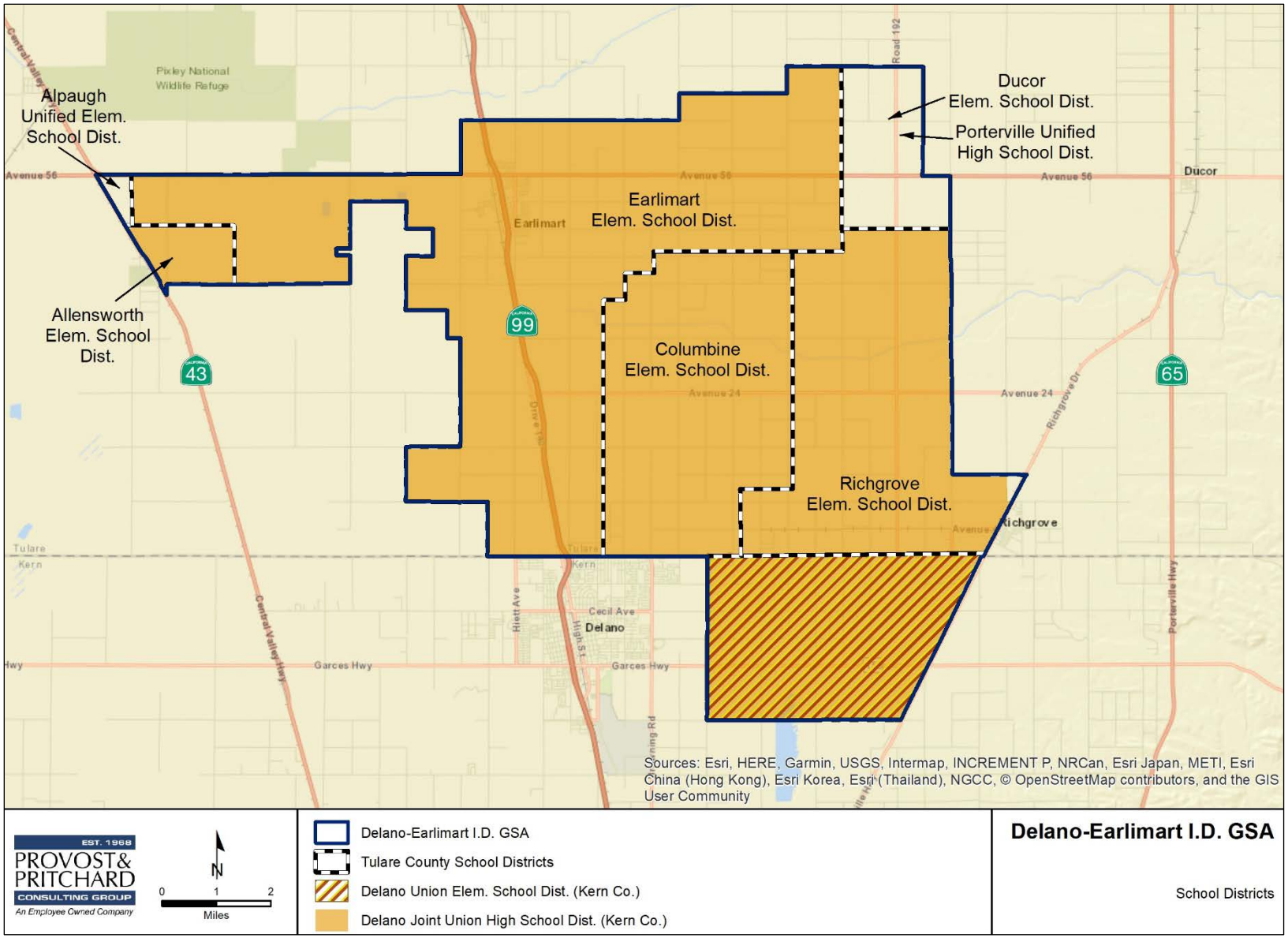


Figure I-4. School Districts within Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District GSA

II. Audience Identification

A. Active Stakeholder Groups

The active stakeholder groups of the DEID GSA are members of the Board of Directors and Stakeholder Committee. Their specific roles in the communication and engagement process are discussed in this section.

II.A.1 Role of Board of Directors

The DEID GSA Board of Directors is responsible for all final decisions related to the DEID GSA, development and adoption of the GSP, and implementation of the GSP, and other related matters, fully considering recommendations of the Stakeholder Committee and input from GSA stakeholders.

The DEID GSA Board of Directors meetings are held periodically as necessary, usually preceding the DEID Board of Directors meeting held at 4 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at the DEID office, located at 14181 Avenue 24 in Delano, California. These meetings are open to public.

II.A.2 Role of Stakeholder Committee

In Section 10727.8 "Public Notification and Participation; Advisory Committee" of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, GSAs may appoint and consult with an advisory committee for the purpose of developing and implementing a GSP. Through this advisory committee, the GSA is able to encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin prior to and during the development and implementation of the GSP.

A Stakeholder Committee has been established by DEID for advising the DEID GSA Board of Directors on matters dealing with the DEID GSA and GSP development and implementation, and other GSA/GSP matters. EPUD is responsible for communicating and coordinating stakeholder input for its management area. Additional participation has been sought from other interested parties and beneficial users of groundwater within the GSA boundary. Committee participants have direct interests in groundwater within the GSA, and are stakeholders as detailed in **Section I.B**.

The DEID GSA's Stakeholder Committee meetings are open to all stakeholders, interested parties and the public, and are held periodically at the DEID office, located at 14181 Avenue 24 in Delano, California.

B. GSA Stakeholders

Stakeholder groups have been identified by the DEID GSA, based on those listed in SGMA, Section 10723.2 "Consideration of All Interests of All Beneficial Uses and Users of Groundwater" (**Table II-1**).

Table II-1. Consideration of All Interests of All Beneficial Uses and Users of Groundwater

SGMA, Section 10723.2. Consideration of All Interests of All Beneficial Uses and Users of Groundwater		
Agricultural Users	Domestic Well Owners	Municipal Well Operators
Public Water Systems	Local Land Use Planning Agencies	Environmental Users of Groundwater
Surface Water Users	Federal Government	California Native American Tribes
Disadvantaged Communities	Entities monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or part of a groundwater basin	

Beneficial users of groundwater to be targeted for communication and engagement during the GSP development, public review and implementation phases have been narrowed to those with financial, political, business or personal stakes in the management and sustainability of groundwater within the jurisdiction of the DEID GSA. These stakeholders are listed in **Table II-2** as beneficial users of groundwater within the GSA.

Table II-2. All Beneficial Uses and Users of Groundwater with Interests in the DEID GSA

All Beneficial Uses and Users of Groundwater with Interests in the DEID GSA		
Agricultural Users	Domestic Well Owners	Public Water Systems
Local Land Use Planning Agencies	Federal Government	Disadvantaged Communities
Entities monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or part of a groundwater basin		

- **Agricultural Users –** With the exception of the lands served by the EPUD, almost all lands are composed of agricultural users and are DEID customers. DEID has pre-existing relationships with these users.
- **Domestic Well Owners –** These are farmsteads located throughout the DEID GSA that are served by small domestic wells. In most cases they are also agricultural users and are considered by the DEID GSA through pre-existing relationships.
- **Public Water Systems –** There is one public water system within the DEID GSA, which is EPUD. EPUD became part of the DEID GSA through an executed MOU with DEID. EPUD operates wells within the GSA and has been fully considered as a cooperating entity.
- **Local Land Use Planning Agencies –** The DEID GSA includes lands within both the County of Tulare and County of Kern. The DEID GSA will work with both county governments on land use planning issues and concerns.
- **Federal Government –** DEID holds a water contract for surface waters from the Central Valley Project (**CVP**) with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (**USBR**). DEID interacts routinely with USBR personnel, and will continue to do so, as needed, through the development and implementation of the GSP.
- **Entities Monitoring and Reporting Groundwater Elevations –** DEID has monitored groundwater elevations since the 1950s as part of its water service contracts with the USBR. Additionally, DEID participates in regional reporting of groundwater elevations as a part of the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (**CASGEM**) program.

Stakeholder groups will be engaged through direct communication, district correspondence, email blasts with newsletters and other pertinent GSA/GSP information, and one-on-one and public outreach meetings held during Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission, Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation, and Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting.

C. Community Organizations, Public Agencies and Other Entities

There are many community organizations, public agencies and other entities throughout the DEID GSA boundary that will be utilized to reach out to stakeholders. These resources identified as avenues for outreach opportunities are listed in **Table II-3**. Additional community organizations, public agencies and entities may be added to the list as GSP development and implementation phases move forward, and additional connections are made between the DEID GSA and the communities within its boundary.

DEID GSA will communicate with these resources and request opportunities to give presentations at their respective meetings or distribute informational materials such as public meeting notices and newsletters to their membership/contact lists. If a Board of Director or Stakeholder Committee member is currently involved with, or has contacts within a community organization, public agency or other entity, they may want to present on behalf of the DEID GSA to streamline outreach efforts. Presentations and/or one-on-one discussions may include an overview on SGMA and why it is important to stakeholders, explanation and updates of the GSP development process including an awareness of the public review period, and education of GSP requirements during the implementation phase.

Table II-3. Community Organizations and Public Agencies

Community Organizations & Public Agencies	Stakeholder Group(s)	Website
Agriculture/Industry Organizations		
Almond Board of California	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	1150 Ninth Street, Suite 1500, Modesto, CA 95354 Telephone: (209) 549-8262 Email: staff@almondboard.com Website: http://www.almonds.com/
California Citrus Mutual	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	512 N. Kaweah Avenue, Exeter, CA 93221 Telephone: (559) 592-3790 Email: alyssa@cacitrusmutual.com; casey@cacitrusmutual.com Website: https://www.cacitrusmutual.com/
California Fresh Fruit Association *(formerly California Grape & Tree Fruit League)*	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	7647 N. Fresno Street, Suite 103, Fresno, CA 93720 Telephone: (559) 226-6330 Email: gradanovich@cafreshfruit.com; ilemay@cafreshfruit.com Website: https://www.cafreshfruit.org/
Kern County Farm Bureau	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	801 S. Mount Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93307 Telephone: (661) 397-9635 Email: kcfb@kerncfb.com Website: https://kerncfb.com
California Pistachio Research Board	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	4938 E. Yale Avenue, Suite 102, Fresno, CA 93727 Telephone: (559) 255-6480 Email: admin@acpistachios.org; bobk@acpistachios.org Website: https://calpistachioresearch.org/

Community Organizations & Public Agencies	Stakeholder Group(s)	Website
Tulare County Farm Bureau	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	Post Office 748, Visalia, CA 93279 Telephone: (559) 732-8301 Email: tcfb@tulcofb.org Website: http://www.tulcofb.org/
University of California Cooperative Extension	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners	4437-B S. Laspina Street, Tulare, CA 93274 Telephone: (559) 684-3311 Email: krday@ucanr.edu Website: http://cetulare.ucanr.edu/
Note: Other agriculture and industry groundwater users within the GSA boundary are currently customers of DEID and are already included in any communications between the GSA and stakeholders.		
Environmental Justice Organizations		
Self-Help Enterprises	DACs	Post Office Box 6520, Visalia, CA 93290 Telephone: (559) 802-1676 Email: mariah@selfhelpenterprises.org Website: https://www.selfhelpenterprises.org/
Irrigation Districts/Water Districts/Water Agencies & Commissions		
Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners, Entities monitoring/reporting groundwater elevations	14181 Avenue 24, Delano, CA 93215 Telephone: (661) 725-2526 Website: www.deid.org
Earlimart Public Utility District	Agricultural Users, Public Water Systems, DACs	396 N. Church Road #6, Earlimart, CA 93219 Telephone: (661) 849-2663
Tulare County Water Commission	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners, Public Water Systems, DACs	2500 W. Burrel Avenue, Visalia, CA 93291 Telephone: (559) 636-5005 Email: dengland@co.tulare.ca.us Website: http://tularecounty.ca.gov/cao/index.cfm/water-commission/
Municipal Agencies		
County of Tulare – Board of Supervisors and County Management	Domestic Well Owners, DACs, Public Water Systems, Local Land Use Agencies	2800 W. Burrel Avenue, Visalia, CA 93291 Telephone: (559) 636-5000 Email: pvanderpoel@co.tulare.ca.us Website: http://tularecounty.ca.gov/county/
County of Kern – Board of Supervisors and County Management	Domestic Well Owners, DACs, Public Water Systems, Local Land Use Agencies	1115 Truxtun Avenue 5th Floor, Bakersfield, CA 93301 Telephone: (661) 868-3601 Email: board@kerncounty.com Website: https://www.kerncounty.com/bos/
Earlimart Town Council	Domestic Well Owners, DACs, Public Water Systems	Contact information not immediately available. Town Council meetings are held the first Thursday of each month.

Community Organizations & Public Agencies	Stakeholder Group(s)	Website
Tulare County Economic Development (Earlimart)	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners, Public Water Systems, DACs	5961 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, CA 93277 Telephone: (559) 624-7000 Email: Economicdevelopment@co.tulare.ca.us; Website: http://tularecountyeconomicdevelopment.org/economicdevelopment/
School Districts		
Columbine School District	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners, Public Water Systems, DACs	2240 Road 160, Delano, CA 93215 Telephone: (661) 725-8501 Email: tcolschool@aol.com Website: http://www.tcoe.org/Districts/Columbine.shtm
Earlimart School District	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners, Public Water Systems, DACs	785 E. Center Avenue, Earlimart, CA 93219 Telephone: (661) 849-3386 Website: https://www.earlimart.org/
Service Clubs		
Earlimart Rotary Club	Agricultural Users, Domestic Well Owners, Public Water Systems, DACs	Email: earlimartrotaryclub@yahoo.com Website: http://www.rye5230.com/EarlimartRotary

D. Interested Persons List

SGMA Section 10723.4 "Maintenance of Interested Persons List" states: *"The groundwater sustainability agency shall establish and maintain a list of persons interested in receiving notices regarding plan preparation, meeting announcements, and availability of draft plans, maps, and other relevant documents. Any person may request, in writing, to be placed on the list of interested persons."* In compliance with the SGMA requirement, DEID GSA maintains a list of interested persons, and routinely distributes meeting notices and relevant information to the stakeholders who have requested to be included. As of June 2018, over 500 interested parties are included, and DEID GSA will continue to grow this contact list through the process discussed in **Section V.A.4**.

III. Audience Survey and Mapping

Through ongoing communications and public education and outreach efforts described in **Section V**, stakeholders will have the opportunity to have a voice in the GSP development process. This section discusses in detail the preliminary discussion with stakeholders, and the process for surveying stakeholders, which will be a valuable source in collecting feedback from the beneficial users who have vested interests in how the implementation of the GSP will affect their interests. Because the DEID GSA is a smaller GSA with efficient avenues of direct communication with stakeholders, a traditional stakeholder survey will not be conducted. Feedback and concerns will be solicited through direct correspondence and facilitated meeting discussions with stakeholders.

A. Stakeholder Survey

III.A.1 Identification of Stakeholder Issues, Interests and Challenges

Stakeholder issues, interests and anticipated challenges are routinely discussed in Board of Directors and Stakeholder Committee meetings, and through direct discussions with stakeholders within the GSA. Board of Directors and Stakeholder Committee members represent the interests of the stakeholders identified for the DEID GSA (**Table II-2**). The focus of these discussions has consisted of identifying the common groundwater uses within the GSA boundary, top concerning issues affecting groundwater, top concerning effects of SGMA on stakeholder interests within the GSA, current practices that could be curtailed to accomplish SGMA goals, and possible mitigation solutions. Results from these discussions will be taken into consideration during the development of the GSP and will be utilized as a basis for any printed communications and public meeting presentations held for DACs and other stakeholder groups.

Table III-1. Stakeholder Issues, Interests & Challenges

Stakeholder Issues, Interests & Challenges	
Top Concerning Issues of Groundwater Usage and SGMA:	• Subsidence caused from continued groundwater overdraft within the subbasin and its impact on the Friant-Kern Canal capacity • Potential local impacts of transferring groundwater credits across the subbasin • Economic impacts (loss of jobs, loss of tax revenue due to decrease in land values of fallowed ground) • New government regulations (i.e. SGMA and ILRP) and the impacts on investments and livelihoods • Water quantity (overdraft, recharge, overpumping) • Legal rights to groundwater • Water usage (surface water vs. groundwater) • Growing population and resulting increase demand for water (future water infrastructure improvements) • Decreased quality of food for California and the United States as a whole • Concerns that the agriculture industry will have to pay for SGMA implementation for all of the beneficial users of groundwater

B. "Lay of the Land" Overview

The purpose of a "Lay of the Land" overview is to map stakeholders' known issues, interests, challenges, strategies, and roles for engagement. Since DEID GSA is using a direct approach with engaging stakeholders, questions, input and feedback from the identified beneficial users will be used as a basis for the development of educational materials and key messages and talking points (**Section IV**). For specific groundwater-related topics where stakeholder feedback is needed, received input will be summarized in written format and presented to the technical team and Board of Directors as a "stakeholder consensus." This process has been utilized early in the GSP development phase for discussions regarding transitional pumping and groundwater credits and will continue to be followed for the duration of the development and public review phases.

III.B.1 Types of Stakeholders

Types of stakeholders with the greatest interests in the DEID GSA's GSP development and resulting implementation efforts to reach groundwater sustainability include agricultural users, domestic well owners, public water systems, local land use planning agencies, federal government, disadvantaged communities, and entities monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or part of the groundwater basin (**Table II-2**). One-on-one conversations and collaborative discussions, and other outreach efforts will be scheduled with these stakeholder groups for comprehensive input through the GSP development and public review phases.

III.B.2 Stakeholder Key Interests Related to Groundwater

The key interests of stakeholders related to groundwater within the DEID GSA boundary include:

- Subsidence
- Localized impacts associated with transfer of groundwater credits
- Drinking water
- Domestic, everyday usage
- Agriculture – Farming
- Industrial – Packing houses, cold storage facilities

III.B.3 Key Documented Issues

Several key documented water resources issues have affected, or have the potential to affect, the key interests of stakeholders within the DEID GSA boundary. As key documented issues arise throughout GSP development, public review and implementation phases, they will be added to this section.

- **Well Depth to Groundwater Concerns within the Region –** During the recent drought, well depth to groundwater concerns became a forefront issue for agricultural users and domestic well owners and users, and users of public water systems in rural areas (including disadvantaged communities). Many agricultural users, domestic well owners, and small water systems serving low-income residents either developed new wells or had existing wells drilled to deeper depths.
- **Friant-Kern Canal Subsidence Issues –** In areas of Tulare and Kern counties, land subsidence along the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) has increased within the past five years. The Visalia Times Delta published an article on August 18, 2017, "Sinking Friant-Kern Canal has $500M problem." According to the article, the canal has sunk two to three feet, mostly along a 25-mile stretch, and has already reduced the capacity of the key irrigation artery by 50 to 60 percent in some locations.

IV. Messages and Talking Points

Key messages and talking points will be broken down by phases and stakeholder groups, as different factors and issues will affect different groundwater interests. These messages and talking points are also prone to evolve as the GSP is developed, leaving this section open to being amended and finetuned as communication and engagement efforts move forward.

Monthly newsletters and fact sheets reflecting key messages will be developed and tailored for the specific GSP development, public review and implementation phases, and made available for public education efforts described in **Section V.A.3.2**.

IV.A.1 Key Messages & Talking Points

IV.A.1.1 Universal Key Messages

Universal key messages will be a consistent part of fact sheets and talking points throughout all phases of GSP development, public review and implementation.

- What is SGMA
- Common Uses of Groundwater
- What is the Role of a GSA
- DEID GSA's Goal – "To develop and implement a GSP that protects the ability to deliver surface water as needed and scheduled and continues the historic practice of implementing a comprehensive approach to maintain groundwater sustainability within the different management areas of the DEID GSA."

IV.A.1.2 Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination

The Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination has been completed. During this phase, key messages centered around official formation of the GSA and soliciting input from individuals who represent the interests of all beneficial usages and users of groundwater within the DEID GSA boundary.

IV.A.1.3 Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission

The key messages for the GSP development and submission phase will include:

- Universal key messages
- Timeline of the GSP process
- Upcoming public outreach opportunities
- Summaries of discussion topics held with stakeholders (i.e. Transitional Pumping)
- "What's Next"
- Direction on providing input/voicing concerns (outreach meetings, stakeholder input process)

IV.A.1.4 Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation

Once the draft of the DEID GSA's GSP is completed, key messages will be updated to focus on:

- Universal key messages

- Timeline of the GSP process
- Main points/overview of the GSP
- Process for public review of GSP draft and providing comments to the GSA
- "What's Next"
- Additional key messages may be added for this phase.

IV.A.1.5 Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting

Once the DEID GSA's GSP has been submitted to the DWR, the implementation phase will begin, and key messages will be developed to focus on implementation efforts that will affect the stakeholder groups, which will likely result in more than one fact sheet. As with the previous phases, universal key messages will be included.

IV.A.2 Likely Questions or Issues and Responses

The "Likely Questions or Issues" list in **Table IV-1** will evolve through the GSP development, public review and implementation phases. This table will be updated with additional questions, and responses will be updated as the DEID GSA's GSP is developed and answers are more clearly defined.

Table IV-1. Likely Questions or Issues

Likely Question or Issue	Response	Phase
"How will subsidence be addressed in the subbasin?"	This is expected to be discussed at the subbasin level to develop a coordinated response.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"How will the impacts of transitional pumping on the FKC capacity be addressed?"	This is expected to be discussed at the subbasin level to develop a coordinated response.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"Will the transfer of groundwater credits across the subbasin be allowed if it exacerbates current local groundwater conditions?"	This is expected to be discussed at the subbasin level to develop a coordinated response.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"Will DEID GSA receive any credit for prior years' direct and in-lieu groundwater recharge contributions?"	That information has not been determined yet, as we are in the preliminary stages of GSP development.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"Will I have to fallow any of my land?"	That information has not been determined yet, as we are in the preliminary stages of GSP development.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"How can I voice my concerns about how SGMA is going to affect me?"	The public is invited to attend Stakeholder Committee and Board of Director meetings to be informed about the progress of GSA and GSP development. Public outreach meetings will be held in 2018 and 2019 for SGMA educational purposes and public review periods. Stakeholders may also contact the GSA directly to provide input and voice concerns regarding the development of the GSP.	Phase 2 & 3
"How much water are we going to be able to pump?"	That information has not been determined yet, as we are in the preliminary stages of GSP development.	Phase 1, 2 & 3

Likely Question or Issue	Response	Phase
"Are our ag pumps going to be metered? If so, who is going to pay for it?"	That information has not been determined yet, as we are in the preliminary stages of GSP development.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"What types of management actions and/or projects can help improve groundwater conditions?"	That information has not been determined yet, as we are in the preliminary stages of GSP development.	Phase 1, 2 & 3
"Can groundwater management activities improve water challenges in DACs?"	That information has not been determined yet, as we are in the preliminary stages of GSP development.	Phase 1, 2 & 3

V. Venues for Engaging

There are a variety of opportunities, venues and methods for the DEID GSA to connect with and engage stakeholders throughout GSA formation, GSP development, GSP review, and GSP implementation phases. Stakeholders identified in **Section II** will be engaged in communication efforts as detailed below.

A. Direct Stakeholder Outreach

V.A.1 Collaboration Meetings with Active Stakeholders

As detailed in **Section II.A**, regular meetings with active stakeholder groups will be held during their regularly scheduled times. Members of the public and partners from other local agencies are encouraged to attend Board of Directors and Stakeholder Committee meetings to voice their thoughts and concerns throughout the GSP development, public review and implementation phases. Meeting notices and agendas are routinely distributed to the Interested Parties List and, once established on the DEID GSA's website.

Active stakeholder meetings are held:

- **Board of Directors Meetings –** Held periodically, as necessary, usually preceding the DEID Board of Directors meeting at 4 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at the DEID office, located at 14181 Avenue 24 in Delano, California
- **Stakeholder Committee Meetings –** Held periodically at the DEID office, located at 14181 Avenue 24 in Delano, California; open to all stakeholders, interested parties and the public
- **Subbasin Coordination Committee Meetings –** Public meeting notices are distributed to the Interested Parties List when scheduled

V.A.2 Educational/Outreach Public Meetings

V.A.2.1 General Stakeholders

Educational/outreach public meetings will be scheduled for Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission, Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation, and Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting (see **Section VI** for the previous and proposed meeting schedule). These meetings will be important as the GSP will affect all groundwater users within the DEID GSA jurisdiction, and the impact of the SGMA implementation is significant. Stakeholders are already inquiring about the impacts of implementation, while many stakeholders are unaware of the SGMA. Spanish translation services will be available at educational/outreach public meetings.

- **Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission –** Public outreach meetings held during Phase 2 will give stakeholders and opportunity to be involved in the GSP development and share their thoughts and concerns. Presentations and discussions will be geared towards an overview of SGMA, overview of the process of GSP development, public review and implementation (what stakeholders can expect), and question/answer sessions. Potential venues within the DEID GSA are listed in **Table V-1**.
- **Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation –** During Phase 3, the draft of the DEID GSA GSP will be distributed for public review. During the public review period, public meetings will be held at the same venues as during Phase 2 (**Table V-1**). The presentations and discussions will include an

overview of the GSP and will give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the draft in a public forum.

- **Phase 4: Implementation & Reporting –** Public meetings will be crucial during Phase 4 and will likely be ongoing to educate stakeholders on implementation requirements and guide them through the steps to compliance and groundwater sustainability.

V.A.2.2 Community Organizations & Others

Community organizations, public agencies and other entities are listed in **Table II-3**, and will be contacted to schedule opportunities to present or facilitate discussions with their members throughout the GSP development phase. Presentations and discussions will include an overview on SGMA and why it is important to them, an explanation of the GSP development process, including an awareness of the public review period. In addition, the DEID GSA will work with these organizations and agencies to distribute newsletters, public outreach meeting notices, and other educational information via email distribution, social media posts, and printed materials.

V.A.2.3 Meeting Notification Process

Stakeholders will be invited to public meetings through direct mail and email blasts by obtaining mailing and email addresses of property owners within the DEID GSA boundary through the DEID and EPUD customer lists. For direct mailings, postcards are most cost effective for mailing and can later be used to expedite meeting check-in and track attendance, if required during the implementation phases. Local community organizations, such as the Tulare County Farm Bureau and Kern County Farm Bureau, will be asked to distribute meeting notices via email blasts to their membership/contact lists.

V.A.2.4 Ideal Venues

Venue locations will need to have a capacity to hold large audiences. The location list in **Table V-1** will be updated with additional information and other venue possibilities as meetings are scheduled, and venue availability and rental price is confirmed. DEID GSA will work with disadvantaged communities and potentially community organizations to hold outreach meetings at convenient times and locations within the DACs.

Table V-1. Potential Public Meeting Venues & Locations

Venue	Location	Contact Information
Alila School Cafeteria	Earlimart	850 W. Washington Avenue, Earlimart, CA 93291 Telephone: (661) 849-4202 Website: http://www.earlimart.org/o/alila-school
Columbine School Cafeteria	Earlimart	2240 Road 160, Delano, CA 93215 Telephone: (661) 725-8501 Website: http://www.tcoe.org/Districts/Columbine.shtm
Earlimart Elementary Cafeteria	Earlimart	192 S. Church Road, Earlimart, CA 93219 Telephone: (661) 849-2651 Website: http://www.earlimart.org/o/elementary-school
Earlimart Memorial Building	Earlimart	712 E. Washington, Earlimart, CA 93219
Earlimart Middle School Gym or Cafeteria	Earlimart	599 E. Sutter Avenue, Earlimart, CA 93219 Telephone: (661) 849-2611 Website: http://www.earlimart.org/o/middle-school

V.A.3 Printed Communication

V.A.3.1 Branding

Branding is defined as the process of creating distinctive and durable perceptions in the minds of a target audience. A brand is a specific look – a persistent, consistent, unique identity for an organization, making it easy for an audience to identify an organization through its consistent and frequent use of branding. The DEID GSA will incorporate a DEID GSA brand on all forms of communication and engagement with the public, which includes consistent usage of the official logo, fonts and colors.

V.A.3.2 Printed Materials

Printed materials will incorporate the visual imagery established through branding efforts and will be tailored for specific means of communication throughout the phases of GSP development, public review and implementation. All printed materials will be translated into Spanish.

- **Newsletter –** Monthly or bi-monthly newsletters will be created during the GSP development, public review, and implementations phase to inform stakeholders of compliance requirements and groundwater sustainability updates, opportunities and programs within the DEID GSA and Tule Subbasin. The newsletter will be distributed to those on the Interested Parties List and made available in public locations such as the school sites within the Columbine and Earlimart school districts and EPUD and DEID offices.
- **Fact Sheets, Fliers, Post Cards –** Fact sheets, fliers or post cards will be developed, as needed. Information may include meeting notices to mail and post within the Delano and Earlimart communities, or general SGMA information updated with the key messages for each of the GSP phases. These materials will be available for download on the DEID GSA's website, distributed at public meetings and community organizations/entities meetings, distributed door-to-door if necessary, and emailed to the Interested Parties List and other organizations' email distribution lists.
- **Letter Correspondence –** When letter correspondence is necessary, particularly during the public review and implementation phases, letters will be distributed via email or direct mail. Letters will include pertinent facts and explanations that need to be communicated to stakeholders.
- **Presentation Materials –** Power Point presentations will be utilized at educational/outreach public meetings. If a Power Point isn't possible to display for a meeting, display boards printed at 24-inch x 36-inch or larger in size will be used and set up on easels. Handouts of presentations and smaller versions of display boards can be distributed to stakeholders in attendance and can also be emailed to the Interested Parties list and posted on DEID GSA's website for access by stakeholders as a recap of the meeting.
- **Other Printed Materials –** Other printed materials may be needed to be developed during the GSP development, public review and implementation phases.

V.A.4 Digital Communication

Digital communication outlets will be a significant mode of communication through the GSP development, public review and implementation phases.

- **Website –** Public meeting notices and agendas of the Board of Directors meetings are posted on the DEID GSA's website. This website will serve as an integral resource for stakeholders within the DEID GSA boundary. Electronic files of newsletters, presentations, fact sheets/fliers/postcards, and other educational resources will be accessible via the website in both English and Spanish translations. This will serve as a way for stakeholders to easily educate themselves on the GSP process and phases.

- **Email Distribution –** As required by SGMA 10723.4 "Maintenance of Interested Persons List," DEID GSA maintains a contact list and regularly distribute emails to those who have expressed interest in the GSA's progress. These email blasts consist of meeting notices and other documents that are pertinent to the DEID GSA and stakeholder communication efforts. This process will continue.

  Email blasts with newsletter links, meeting notices, public review notices, and other crucial information will be coordinated with community organizations and stakeholder groups by utilizing their distribution lists. Examples of these organizations are DEID, EPUD, and school districts within the DEID GSA boundary. A complete working list of organizations that will be contacted are listed in **Table II-3**.

V.A.5 Media Coverage

There is a lack of specific news sources representing the communities and stakeholders within the DEID GSA boundary, but the GSA will be responsive to any requests received from media outlets regarding GSP development and SGMA implementation.

VI. Implementation Timeline

The timeline for implementing the DEID GSA's Communication & Engagement Plan will be broken down by phase:

- Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination – 2015 through 2017 (**Figure VI-1**)
- Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission – 2017 through 2019 (**Figure VI-2**)
- Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation – 2019 through 2020 (**Figure VI-2**)
- Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting – 2020 and ongoing

The timeline is tentative and subject to change with the progression of the GSP development, public review and implementation phases. The public review phase will be in accordance with SGMA's public review standards and the implementation timeline will reflect that timeframe once a definitive timeline has been established with the completion of the GSP draft.

September 2014: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) signed into law.

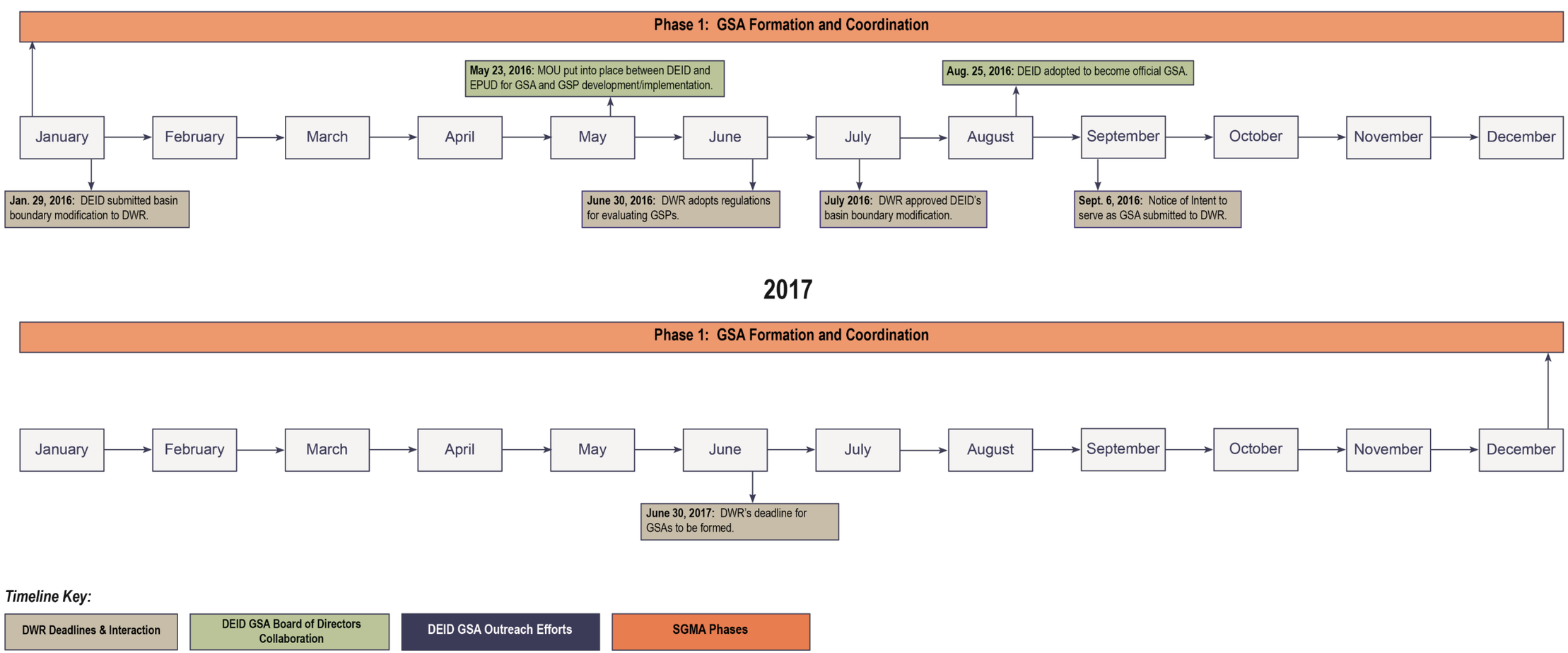


Figure VI-1. DEID GSA Communication & Engagement Timeline – Phase 1: GSA Formation and Coordination

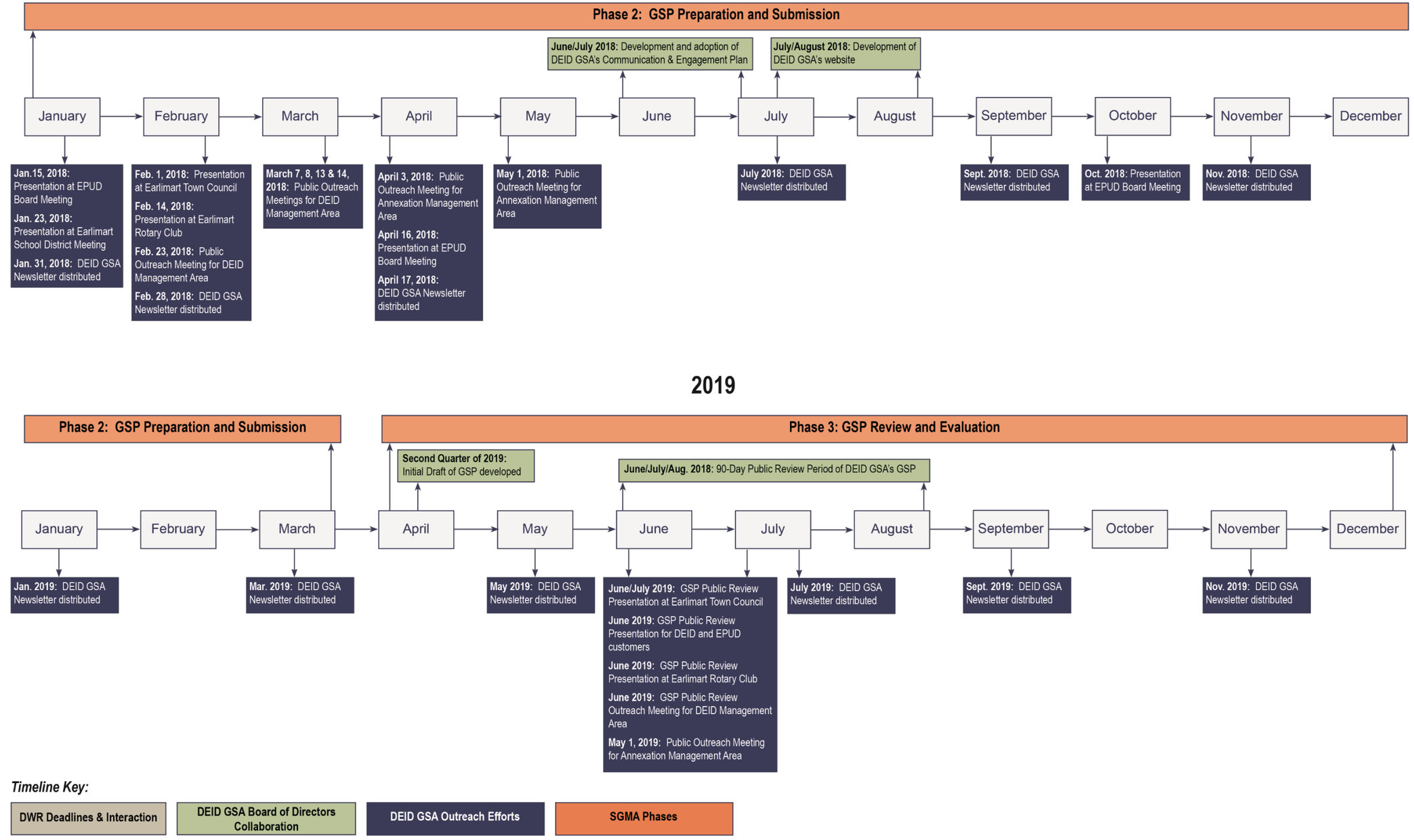


Figure VI-2. DEID Communication & Engagement Timeline – Phase 2: GSP Preparation and Submission, and Phase 3: GSP Review and Evaluation

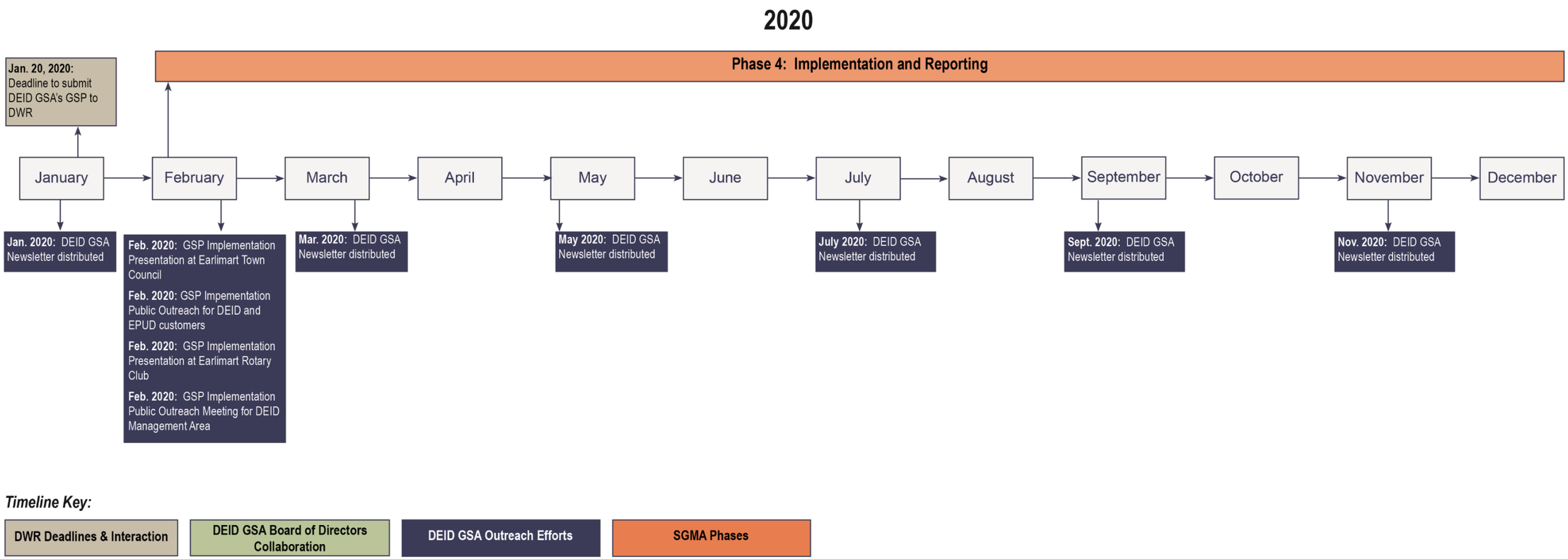


Figure VI-3. DEID Communication & Engagement Timeline – Phase 4: Implementation and Reporting

VII. Evaluation and Assessment

A. Evaluation and Assessment Process

Having an established "checks and balances" process is essential in keeping public outreach goals on target. SGMA and the resulting GSP will affect everyone within the subbasin, and outreach efforts must be all-encompassing. To evaluate and assess how outreach efforts are performing as compared to the goals and objectives detailed in the Communication & Engagement Plan, the DEID GSA has established a process:

VII.A.1 Outreach Reports

GSA management will provide periodic updates to the Board of Directors. These updates will include, but will not be limited to:

- Status of upcoming outreach events, and recaps of past outreach events
- Milestone updates/revisions
- Review/input and approval of printed materials (fliers, fact sheets, talking points, etc.)
- Results and status updates of stakeholder discussions

VII.A.2 Milestone Review

Once per quarter or as determined, the GSA management will facilitate a more in-depth discussion with the Board of Directors for feedback regarding communication and engagement efforts for the stakeholder groups they specifically represent. These discussions will cover:

- What has worked well?
- What hasn't worked as planned or could be finetuned for more effective results?
- Lessons learned
- Outreach needs that should be added to the implementation timeline
- Next steps

VIII. DEID GSA Completed Outreach Tracking

The spreadsheet on the following pages provides a detailed list of public outreach efforts completed by the DEID GSA. The spreadsheet includes:

- Stakeholder Meetings – Date, number in attendance, and target audience
- Public Presentations – Date, number in attendance, and organization
- Monthly Newsletter Distribution