North Fork Kings
Groundwater Sustainability Agency

FALL 2026

Newsletter

Latest Groundwater Updates in Your Area

Rules and Regulations for Allocation Program Finalized with Growers' Input

At its September 16 Special Board meeting, the North Fork Kings GSA Board of Directors approved the final Rules and Regulations, which includes the framework for how the groundwater allocation program will work.

The approval marks another step toward a GSA-wide allocation during the 2027 irrigation season.

DEVELOPED WITH LANDOWNER INPUT

Since 2024, the GSA has developed and refined the Rules and Regulations, through direct landowner discussions and with the guidance of the Grower Advisory, Technical, and Policy committees and Board at their monthly meetings.

The approved rules establish how groundwater allocations, groundwater credits, transfers, and marketing will work within the GSA.

Throughout this process, North Fork has focused on transparency and collaboration, working with landowners to develop a clear, practical program that supports informed decisions about their water supply and farming operations.

TIME TO PLAN AND ADJUST

The rules give landowners time to plan and gradually adjust their operations to a groundwater allocation. Through the Transitional Pumping Program, eligible irrigated parcels will receive a temporary allowance to use groundwater above their Native Sustainable Yield allocation, the amount available for sustainable use. This temporary allowance, called Tier 1, will begin with an initial period covering Water Years 2027–2029, followed by reduced allowances in two five-year periods: 2030–2034 and 2035–2039. This phased subsequent approach gives landowners time to plan and adjust their operations before the temporary allowance ends. Annual allocation amounts may vary, but the schedule provides a framework for planning ahead.

A FIRST YEAR FOCUSED ON LEARNING

The first year, during the 2027 irrigation season, will be a learning period with no allocation-related fees. Landowners will have an opportunity to practice managing their water use under an allocation, understand how it fits their operations, and identify adjustments for future years. The GSA's goal is to walk alongside landowners as they prepare, providing information, tools, and opportunities to ask questions and provide input. Upcoming outreach will help landowners understand the approved rules and plan for the irrigation season, including guidance on using Watermark and Land IQ data to track water use and manage their allocations.

New Monitoring Wells Take Shape

Construction is moving forward on North Fork Kings GSA's new groundwater monitoring locations, with three nearing completion and a fourth underway. As shared in our summer newsletter, these dedicated wells will fill gaps in groundwater information and help the GSA better understand conditions at different depths.

While it was understood that these wells would be collecting valuable groundwater data, the construction process is already revealing more about the complex geology within the North Fork Kings. Drilling and electronic logging help the project team identify water-bearing zones and the clay layers that separate them, like the Corcoran Clay. The wells are designed to monitor groundwater levels across four major aquifer zones, including shallow groundwater and deeper groundwater below the Corcoran Clay.

The photos show key construction steps, from drilling and electronic logging to installing well casings.

Each step helps the team understand underground conditions and build wells that monitor groundwater at different depths. After installation, crews will install data loggers as the final touch, in order to record groundwater levels and turn the completed wells into ongoing sources of information.

Together, the geological information gathered during construction and the groundwater measurements to follow will help North Fork Kings GSA understand how different aquifer zones respond to pumping, recharge, and seasonal changes, supporting informed and effective groundwater management decisions.

DRILLING: Crews drill into the aquifer to create space for the monitoring wells.

ELECTRONIC LOGGING: Measurements collected inside the drilled hole help identify underground layers and finalize the well design.

WELL CASING INSTALLATION: Crews install casings that allow groundwater levels to be monitored at different depths.

Upcoming Workshop: A Grower's Guide to Groundwater Allocation Structure

Understanding the Rules & Regulations

NOVEMBER 17 AT 8:00 AM

RIVERDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARDROOM
3160 W MT WHITNEY AVE, RIVERDALE, CA 93656

LANDOWNERS WHO ATTEND WILL:

1. Understand how the approved allocation rules apply to your operation, including options for carrying over and transferring water.
2. Learn what to expect in 2027 and how the phased reduction in temporary groundwater allowances gives you time to plan.
3. Get answers to your questions and identify steps you can take now to prepare your operation.

PLANNING TO JOIN US?

Please RSVP to help us prepare and bring your GSA landowner resource binder if you have one.

Key Terms Corner

Transitional Water (Tier 1): A temporary groundwater allowance above the Native Sustainable Yield allocation for eligible irrigated land.

Carryover: Unused allocation that can be saved for use in a future year. The Rules and Regulations set time limits based on the type of allocation.

Transfer: Moving all or part of an allocation from one landowner or farm unit to another.

Join us at the upcoming November workshop to explore what they mean for you.

PROJECTED TIMELINE TO AN ALLOCATION

February 2025
Kings Subbasin Begins Water Accounting Framework Coordination

2025 Irrigation Season
Allocation Pilot with Reed Ditch Company

September 2026
Finalize Rules and Regulations

What Comes Next:

2027 Irrigation Season*
Allocation implementation begins **without fees and penalties**

Water Year 2028
Continue allocation implementation with fee enforcement

*The allocation program will begin with the 2027 irrigation season for the first year only.
Going forward, allocations will be based on the full water year, October 1 through September 30.