

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Special Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

February 28, 2019

Meetings Minutes

Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center, 4689 CA-166, New Cuyama, CA 93254

PRESENT:

Jaffe, Roberta – Chair
Kelly, Brenton – Vice Chair
DeBranch, Brad
Draucker, Louise
Furstenfeld, Jake
Haslett, Joe
Post, Mike (*telephonic*)
Valenzuela, Hilda Leticia
Beck, Jim – Executive Director
Hughes, Joe – Legal Counsel (*telephonic*)

ABSENT:

Alvarado, Claudia

1. Call to Order

Chair Roberta Jaffe called the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Hallmark Group Project Coordinator Taylor Blakslee called roll of the Committee (shown above).

Woodard & Curran (W&C) Senior Water Resources Engineer Lyndel Melton, Catalyst Group Principal Strategist Charles Gardiner, Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Board Director Derek Yurosek, and legal counsel Joe Hughes participated telephonically and CBGSA Board Director Jane Wooster was in the room.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Jaffe.

4. Approval of Minutes

Chair Jaffe presented the January 31, 2019 SAC minutes.

MOTION

Committee Member Mike Post made a motion to adopt the January 31, 2019 CBGSA SAC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Brenton Kelly, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: Committee Members Draucker, Jaffe, Kelly, Post and Valenzuela
 NOES: None
 ABSTAIN: Committee Member DeBranch and Furstenfeld
 ABSENT: Committee Members Alvarado and Haslett

Chair Jaffe commented that during item No. 4 the Committee had discussed the need for Santa Barbara County's input on the Groundwater Conditions chapter and asked that be reflected in the minutes.

Chair Jaffe also commented that on page 8 of the minutes there is a minor editorial change regarding the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Natural Communities title. Hallmark Group Project Coordinator Taylor Blakslee said he would make the correction.

5. Groundwater Sustainability Plan

a. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update

W&C's Senior Water Resource Engineer Brian Van Lienden provided an update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) activities, which is included in the SAC packet. He commented that the chapter placeholder document will become available on March 22, 2019, and comments on that document will be due a week later on March 29, 2019.

Chair Jaffe asked for clarification regarding the 2040 sustainability requirement. Mr. Van Lienden said, per SGMA, the only requirement is that the CBGSA is at or above set thresholds, however the CBGSA can adjust threshold levels as appropriate. Vice Chair Kelly asked how DWR will perceive those potential changes. CBGSA Executive Director Jim Beck said DWR will look at the rationale for any potential changes and these changes must not cause undesirable results.

Chair Jaffe suggested adding a note that climate change would be modeled on the GSP approach and terminology slide. Mr. Van Lienden said he will include this.

b. Technical Forum Update

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the February 22, 2019 technical forum call. A summary of the issues discussed is provided in the SAC packet, which include an update on the numerical model and sustainability thresholds.

Committee Member Haslett arrived at 2:15 pm

Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center's Executive Director Lynn Carlisle commented that she had read DWR's climate change guidance document and wanted to know how we can look at the water budget without climate change incorporated. Mr. Van Lienden said W&C will be doing a 50-year scenario for a water budget with and without climate change, which will be included in the GSP draft.

c. Discussion on Water Budgets

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the Water Budget chapter. Mr. Van Lienden said W&C plans on estimating the sustainable yield with just pumping reductions, then with pumping reductions and projects, and then with a separate climate change analysis.

Committee Member Haslett asked if the oil industries have been taken into account from a land use standpoint and water consumption that they may have in Cuyama. Mr. Van Lienden said his understanding is they do not have a net consumption of water.

Chair Jaffe commented that there is not enough data to make accurate projections on the model for the Western Region.

University of California, Santa Barbara Professor Casey Walsh asked why the average annual groundwater level change does not show a significant drawdown in the North Western Region. Mr. Van Lienden said that there is some drawdown, but it is not very steep.

Committee Member Haslett asked what the irrigated acres are in the south portion of the western region. Mr. Van Lienden said he will look into the land use for this area and report back. Committee Member Haslett recommended looking into this.

Ms. Wooster said there is not a well in the area north of the vineyard and does not see how there can be drawdown there.

Mr. Van Lienden discussed the pumping reductions only scenario assumptions and Mr. Beck pointed out that these are just for the model run and should not be confused with glide path discussions that we will have later.

Vice Chair Kelly said his understanding is that idle lands will likely be kept free and not converted to native vegetation.

Mr. Beck commented that the model is a good model, but it is based on the data we have. He said model outputs must be taken with a grain of salt.

Vice Chair Kelly asked why the water budget chapter text mentions "overdraft" only twice on page 5 and not throughout the rest of the chapter and asked if there is a semantics issue with the term. Mr. Van Lienden said he is using "change in storage" to mean the same thing as "overdraft".

d. Discussion on Sustainability Thresholds

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the Sustainability Thresholds chapter.

Ms. Carlisle asked when the interim milestones will be included. Mr. Van Lienden said they need to determine what project and actions to implement because these will drive the interim milestone schedule. Ms. Carlisle said she would make a recommendation to discuss interim milestones when discussions are held on the glide path.

Mr. Van Lienden said on the first things to do in the implementation phase is to set up the monitoring network.

Mr. Van Lienden discussed the threshold rationale for the Eastern Region. He reminded the SAC that when W&C applied the Board-approved threshold rationales in the Eastern Region they did not work since 20% below 2015 levels, or ten feet above of the nearest shallow well, whichever is more restrictive, resulted in minimum thresholds significantly above current levels. Mr. Van Lienden presented W&C's recommendation to reset minimum thresholds to 2017 levels minus 20% and install additional representative well(s) going forward.

Committee Member Haslett said Mr. Van Lienden's approach made sense. Chair Jaffe asked why these are the only wells being used/monitored. Mr. Van Lienden said they only used the data that was provided to them.

Mr. Van Lienden said W&C will double check landowner Jim Wegis' data since he said the data he provided Mr. Van Lienden was tested as recently as 2017.

Vice Chair Kelly asked Mr. Wegis if he feels the four current representative wells represent the Ventucopa area. Mr. Wegis said the representative wells are fairly shallow and there has not been water at 830 feet. Mr. Wegis said that if you set levels at 130 feet you would likely impact a number of production wells.

Chair Jaffe asked what "install" a well in Ventucopa means. Mr. Van Lienden said it does not necessarily mean installing a new well; but could mean facilitating or assisting in adding additional monitoring wells in the Eastern Region.

MOTION

Committee Member Haslett made a motion to adopt W&C's recommendation to reset minimum thresholds in the Eastern Region to 20% below 2017 levels and consider adding additional representative wells and review minimum thresholds and measurable objectives as part of the 2025 GSP update. The motion was seconded by Committee Member DeBranch, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES:	Committee Members Post, Haslett, Debranch, Draucker, Kelly, Furstenfeld, Valenzuela, and Jaffe
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	Committee Member Alvarado

e. Direction on Management Areas

Mr. Van Lienden reported they are looking for feedback from the Board regarding the need for Management Areas in the Cuyama Basin.

Legal Counsel Joe Hughes said when you have a management area one important issue to consider is how it is managed. He said management areas in the Kern County basin were designed in a bottom-up structure where the individual water districts develop their chapters and would implement those chapters in a form of local control. If you have management areas in Cuyama, you may want to delegate authority to the Cuyama Basin Water District (CBWD), the Cunites, or some other group to manage within a particular management area.

Mr. Beck said these discussions get more into the policy side of discussions. He said staff's recommendation is to use management areas and thinks they are a helpful tool that DWR created but wanted feedback from the SAC.

Chair Jaffe asked for clarification if the CBWD would be the manager of the overdraft areas, but the CBGSA would still set minimum thresholds and measurable objectives. Mr. Hughes commented that local control means that the GSA monitors the guidelines of the GSP that is agreed upon.

Chair Jaffe asked what would be the effect of not having management areas. Mr. Beck said it could make things more complex, for example, with project funding where you do not have a good mechanism for allocating costs below a basin level. Also, if you are going to manage pumping reduction, how do you delineate reductions without management areas.

Ms. Carlisle asked if you can have management areas managed by the CBGSA. Mr. Hughes said you could. He said when setting this up, it is a good idea to make the draft as flexible as possible.

Vice Chair Kelly said he can see a big problem with determining the boundary for the management areas defined by overdraft conditions.

Committee Member DeBranch asked if the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement would need to be amended to delegate authority for another entity to manage management areas. Mr. Hughes said yes, either that, or a side agreement may be the way to go.

Mr. Beck said management areas allow the stakeholders impacted to have more input and the stakeholders not involved are protected from assessments or reductions that may not be appropriate for their areas.

Vice Chair Kelly asked the financial impact of managements areas. Mr. Beck said there will likely be an incremental cost depending on how managements areas are administered.

Ms. Wooster asked if the future conditions average annual groundwater level change will be modified as the model is refined. Mr. Beck said yes, but at some point, he expects the boundaries of the management areas to be solidified.

Committee Member DeBranch asked how often the model will be run and the potential boundary shift causing landowners to be in or out. Mr. Beck said it is really a budget call and you might want to do an update every two or three years, but this is something you would want to address in the implementation plan. Triangle E Farm's Owner Jim Wegis said there is an incentive for landowners to not cause an overdraft situation and have to pay for projects.

MOTION

Committee Member Post made a motion to accept the staff recommendation to set two preliminary management areas in the Central Basin and Ventucopa area where modeled overdraft conditions are greater than two feet per year and subject for future review no later than five years. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Draucker, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

- AYES: Committee Members Post, Haslett, DeBranch, Draucker, Kelly, Furstenfeld, Valenzuela, Jaffe
- NOES: None
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: Committee Member Alvarado

f. Projects and Management Actions

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the status of projects and management actions and reported that they will be presenting an analysis for each project.

i. Direction on ProjectsPrecipitation Enhancement Modeling Analysis

Cost: \$20-30 per acre foot (based on total potential benefit of 4,200 acre-feet)

Change in storage: 1,500 acre-feet per year

Grapevine Capital's Ray Shady noted that it appears to him that the greatest beneficiaries of the cloud seeding would be in the Southeastern and Eastern Regions. Mr. Van Lienden said that is correct and the benefit is diffused across the basin and some cost sharing agreement would need to be decided on among beneficiaries if this project is implemented.

Stormwater Capture Modeling Analysis

Cost: \$600-800 per acre foot

Average Volume Captured: 2,500 acre-feet per year

Change in storage: 1,900 acre-feet per year

Mr. Van Lienden reported you would need to consider the effects on downstream users.

Forest/Rangeland Management Modeling Analysis

Cost: \$500-600 per acre foot

Assumption: 4% decrease in native vegetation evapotranspiration

Boundary flow: 2,300 acre-feet

Change in storage: 1,500 acre-feet per year

Mr. Wegis commented that the Santa Barbara Canyon drainage would flow into the Central Basin, but it is not included. Mr. Van Lienden said this may be looked at in future model studies.

Committee Member Post said he cannot think of a faster way to litigation.

Mr. Gliessman commented that in the Sierra Nevada's they usually perform controlled burns, and this is an effective way to decrease evapotranspiration and increase the outflow of water. With a burn in the Cuyama area rangeland, it is an all or nothing event and can potentially create devastating conditions.

Committee Member Draucker asked what the financial benefit would be of doing these programs. Mr. Van Lienden said it would be fleshed out in an economic analysis.

Mr. Beck said you could also do an analysis to determine the benefits.

Chair Jaffe said it would be helpful to have a summary chart of the three projects.

Committee Member Draucker said there is a concern that the small farmers are going to be driven out of the Basin.

Committee Member DeBranch asked if there is a value in including the projects in the GSP to demonstrate to DWR that the CBGSA is evaluating all project options. Mr. Beck said that is a good point and it would be helpful to show DWR our process for exploring implementation plan projects. Committee member Furstenfeld said he does not think they should take any of the project and management actions off because even if it is a small

benefit it is better than nothing.

CBGSA Board Alternate John Coates said the concept of having two wells in the Cuyama Community Services District (CCSD) is that there is a backup well if the main well fails for any reason, and if one well starts underperforming, an additional well would augment supplies.

MOTION

Vice Chair Kelly made a motion to accept the staff recommendation to include the following project(s) in the GSP Water Budget chapter and use for additional analysis in the GSP implementation plan:

Flood/stormwater capture, forest/rangelands management, and precipitation enhancement, and support for development of well infrastructure in the Cuyama, New Cuyama and Ventucopa areas.

The motion was seconded by Committee Member Furstenfeld, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES:	Committee Members Post, Haslett, DeBranch, Draucker, Kelly, Furstenfeld, Valenzuela, Jaffe
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	Committee Member Alvarado

ii. Direction on Pumping Allocation Approach

Mr. Beck described the example glide path as a representation of a basin-wide groundwater use decline.

Chair Jaffe expressed concern that a glide path could be adopted that is very lax and then threshold levels are readjusted near 2040. Committee Member DeBranch said he does not see this option occurring since you have to demonstrate you are making progress to DWR in the interim updates.

Mr. Beck said there will be administrative fees to keep the GSA going, which will deal with the administration of monitoring programs, and project and management action implementation.

Mr. Wegis asked what about the funding for non-district areas. Mr. Beck said the Counties have indicated that they are not contributing funds post-2020, but they will allow their jurisdiction to be used by the GSA to implement funding activities.

Committee Member DeBranch asked if the GSA can assess individual landowners or just members. Mr. Beck said this would be a question for legal counsel.

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of allocation methods that was discussed at last month's meeting.

Mr. Wegis asked Mr. Beck in regard to water marketing, could a landowner sell their groundwater or pump their groundwater and sell that. Mr. Beck said under the

recommended allocation strategy sale of groundwater would not be allowed, but the CBGSA could allow sale of groundwater that has pumped. He commented that staff has not recommended that. Mr. Beck said the Board will need to formulate a policy on water transfers in the near future.

MOTION

Vice Chair Kelly made a motion that the allocation approach should be decided by the entity managing the management area. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Draucker, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES:	Committee Members Post, Haslett, DeBranch, Draucker, Kelly, Furstenfeld, Valenzuela, Jaffe
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	Alvarado

g. Direction on Implementation Plan

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the components in the implementation plan.

Vice Chair Kelly mentioned that the allocation program does not start until 2030 on the implementation timeline and Mr. Van Lienden said it should be implemented sooner than that and will revise the schedule to reflect that.

Chair Jaffe asked if we can have an allocation plan developed in 2020. Mr. Beck suggested moving the "Allocation program begins and phase-in" to the 2020-2025 section on slide 118 and reword to "Allocation program development and phase-in."

Mr. Van Lienden discussed the funding areas and mechanisms.

Committee Member Haslett suggested adding an asterisk to the items in the implementation timeline that are specific to management areas.

There was consensus from the SAC to accept the implementation timeline pending the changes discussed above.

h. Stakeholder Engagement Update

GSP Outreach the Catalyst Group's Mary Currie provided an update on stakeholder engagement activity.

6. Groundwater Sustainability Agency

a. Report of the Executive Director

Nothing to report.

b. Board of Directors Agenda Review

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the March 6, 2019 Joint Meeting of CBGSA Special Board of Directors and SAC agenda.

c. Report of the General Counsel

This was covered under Item No. 5e.

Mr. Blakslee provided an update on the Grant Admin Agreement. He reported that the agreement has been signed and approved, and W&C and Hallmark Group are currently pulling together documents for the first invoice. He reported that they have had the kick-off meeting with DWR and we can expect payment from DWR in 3-4 months due to their internal review process.

7. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Vice Chair Kelly asked where the place will be to discuss groundwater dependent ecosystem questions. Mr. Van Lienden said it will be covered in the placeholder section, which will be on the March 28, 2019 SAC agenda and April 3, 2019 Board agenda.

8. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

9. Public comment for items not on the Agenda

Nothing to report.

10. Adjourn

Chair Jaffe adjourned the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency the 28th day of March 2019.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair: 

ATTEST:

Vice Chair: 