

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

September 1, 2022

Meetings Minutes

PRESENT:

Kelly, Brenton – Chair
DeBranch, Brad – Vice Chair
Louise Draucker
Gaillard, Jean
Haslett, Joe
Roberta Jaffe
Beck, Jim – Executive Committee Member
Blakslee, Taylor – Project Manager
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel
Van Lienden, Brian – Woodard & Curran

ABSENT:

Furstenfeld, Jake

1. Call to Order

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and Hallmark Group Project Manager Taylor Blakslee provided direction on the meeting protocols in facilitating a remote meeting.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Kelly led the pledge of allegiance.

4. Update on SAC Membership

Chair Kelly reported that there remain two vacancies for representatives of the Hispanic community and said if anyone knows someone that is interested in serving to let himself or Mr. Blakslee know.

5. Approval of Minutes

Chair Kelly opened the floor for comments on the April 28, 2022, and June 30, 2022, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes.

MOTION

Committee Member Haslett made a motion approve both the April 28, 2022, and June 30, 2022, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes The motion was seconded by Committee Member Draucker, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: Kelly, DeBranch, Draucker, Gaillard, Haslett, Jaffe
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Furstenfeld

6. Groundwater Sustainability Plan

a. Direction on GSA Well Permit Policy

Mr. Beck provided background on the GSA Well Permit Policy and the direction provided by the ad hoc. Mr. Beck explained the ad hoc's recommendation for a well permit policy for a modification/replacement of an existing well and the policy for the construction of a new well.

Committee Member Gaillard explained how wells are going dry and becomes a safety hazard. He also asked if it is possible to ask well owners if the wells that are being replaced can be decommissioned. Mr. Beck replied the policy requires demonstration that the replaced well is properly abandoned.

Committee Member Haslett asked if a person is replacing a well for irrigational use, can a well owner refurbish the old well to be used for domestic use. Mr. Beck explained this was not considered by the ad hoc, but it would require additional work on the landowner to prove the total water use would not impact the GSA's ability to achieve sustainability, and in this case it would likely be considered a new well that is being drilled rather than a replacement well.

Committee Member Jaffe asked what the procedure for a landowner is when they want to drill a well. Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez replied that the landowner will go to the County and get the correct packet to complete, and the County will inform the landowner of the GSA's requirements.

Committee Member Jaffe explained the need to have specific criteria developed rather than having a generic term of "the proposed well would not be inconsistent with the GSA's GSP". Mr. Beck replied the specific criteria is outlined in the GSP.

Vice Chair DeBranch commented that option two for the draft GSA procedure is the better option.

Chair Kelly explained there are obstacles for landowners to comply with these procedures and provided an example that the GSP is not available in Spanish. Chair Kelly commented option two was the better option.

Committee Member Jaffe suggested well applications be presented to the SAC for awareness since the SAC's membership has in-depth knowledge of Cuyama Basin.

Committee Member Haslett suggested moving forward with option two.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle explained how there needs to be more specific details including what the well will be watering whether that is crops in the Central Management Area (CMA) or outside the CMA. Stakeholder Guy Lingo expressed the necessity to have a tiered approach for those further away from the CMA.

Mr. Blakslee clarified the Governors' Executive Order does not apply to domestic wells.

b. Direction on Administration of Pumping Reductions in the Central Management Area

Mr. Beck informed the SAC that the Board provided direction to bring the draft policy that was presented at the July 6, 2022 Board meeting back for review at the September 7, 2022, Board meeting. Mr. Beck reviewed the draft administration of pumping reduction policy.

Committee Member Haslett and Committee Member Jaffe explained the need to consider those who have made an effort to be sustainable and already reduced their water usage to prevent them from being penalized with the GSA's pumping reductions.

Committee Member Gaillard suggested adjusting the frequency of landowners reporting meter information and asked if de minimis users would be required to install a meter. Mr. Blakslee explained there currently is no reporting requirement for de minimis users.

Vice Chair DeBranch explained there needs to be a policy to address those who have wells in the CMA that are servicing land outside of the CMA.

Chair Kelly expressed concern for using a model that has data gaps of the well locations and where the water from the well is irrigating. Vice Chair DeBranch explained landowners have already provided well information to the GSA and it should be known and considered.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle asked if there could be a spot check for meter reporting, and how water outside of the CMA can be pumped into the CMA. She continued to ask how much this would affect the sustainability of the CMA.

Committee Member Haslett responded by saying the monitoring wells should capture the depletion of groundwater if pumpers are using wells that are outside of the CMA to pump inside of the CMA.

c. Direction on Basin-Wide Water Management Policies

Mr. Beck provided an update on the ad hoc discussion on increased water use outside the CMA and water market/trading discussions. Mr. Beck elaborated on the analysis done on the sustainable yield and 2021 water use for three regions in the basin which are outlined in the SAC packet. Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the data sources for the table showing the potential, modeled increased water use outside the CMA.

Committee Member Jaffe asked if there has currently been an increase in water use outside the CMA. Mr. Beck clarified staff is not currently aware of an increase in water use, but rather staff is asking if there should be a concern.

Committee Member Haslett suggested changing the three regions to preexisting regions that are already established and expressed his concern for using the model which has several inaccuracies.

Committee Member Jaffe noted there is primarily one groundwater pumper that has drawn down the groundwater west of the Russell Fault, and it would be inappropriate to penalize the other pumpers in that area when they are mostly de minimis users.

Chair Kelly expressed the need to have a tiered approach where areas that have the biggest overdraft will receive a different pumping reduction compared to those who are not experiencing similar overdraft conditions. Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez replied he is not familiar with another basin having a tiered approach, but there needs to be caution when developing a tiered approach

due to the legality of treating some people differently.

Committee Member Haslett explained the need to ground truth the entire model to be able to properly rely on the model.

Committee Member Jaffe described the need to identify whether we are managing toward depletion or managing toward sustainability.

Stakeholder Guy Lingo commented there is not enough information available to make a decision and this needs to be revisited in 2025 when there is more information available.

Stakeholder Cecilia Berry replied to Committee Member Jaffe that managing toward depletion and sustainability should go hand in hand and it is far too important to table this to a future meeting. Chair Kelly responded there is not enough information at this time to make a decision.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle commented there is not enough information to show an increase in pumping outside the CMA, but it is a good baseline to compare to information that is available six months from now. Mr. Beck clarified this table was never intended to identify if there was an increase water use outside the CMA, rather it was to be used as a discussion if there should be concern for the possibility of an increase water use outside the CMA.

Committee Member Haslett suggested not making a decision today, but in 2025 when there is more information available and the model is ground truthed appropriately, then that would provide more accurate information and in turn, a more accurate decision.

Committee Member Furstenfeld and Committee Member Jaffe agreed there should not be an increase in water use outside the CMA.

d. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the accomplishments done from July and August.

e. Update on Adaptive Management Analysis

Mr. Van Lienden provided an updated on the well survey, water level trends analysis, precipitation trends, groundwater production trends, and groundwater level trends.

Committee Member Jaffe asked why de minimis users need to fill out the well survey. Mr. Van Lienden replied the information would be used to analyze if these wells are impacted from pumping done in adjacent areas.

Committee Member Haslett commented that CIMIS data is not reliable for precipitation data.

Committee Member Jaffe commented the groundwater level trends west of Russell Fault is moving downward due to the production wells that were put in.

Committee Member Jaffe and Chair Kelly expressed frustration for the work being done to justify lowering the MTs and the GSA should start looking toward making changes to work toward sustainability rather than managing toward depletion.

Chair Kelly asked if the only option is to change the MTs. Vice Chair DeBranch commented when the

GSP was set there were a handful of wells already below their MTs.

Committee Member Draucker commented there should be consideration for putting reservoirs to help with recharge when there is a wet season.

f. Report on Variance Request for The Central Management Area Allocations

Mr. Blakslee provided an update on the variance request that has been submitted and provided a brief summary for each variance request. Mr. Blakslee informed the SAC the variance request forms will be reviewed by staff and an ad hoc for review with the SAC on October 27, 2022 and the Board on November 2, 2022. Mr. Blakslee reviewed the returned mail from the CMA mailout.

Committee Member Haslett recommended extending the variance deadline for the eight "return to sender" landowners.

Mr. Beck explained the issue of wells inside/outside the CMA serving lands outside/inside the CMA and asked the SAC how staff should address this issue.

Chair Kelly suggested there should be some quality control/assurance (QA/QC).

g. Update on Effort to Identify Potential Non-Reporting Pumpers

Mr. Blakslee provided an update on the effort to identify potential non-reporting pumpers and informed the SAC staff is currently in the QA/QC stage. Mr. Blakslee clarified the information being compared is DWR's 2019 crop data and user-reported irrigated lands for 2021.

Committee Member Gaillard asked if these pumpers would be given penalties. Mr. Blakslee replied the Board has directed to apply a penalty for any pumpers that are not current on owed annual extraction fees.

h. Update on Implementation of Grant-Funded Projects

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on receiving the grant funds and informed the SAC the grant agreement has been signed. Mr. Van Lienden reviewed the tasks that was discussed with an ad hoc committee, which is provided in the SAC packet.

Committee Member Jaffe asked what the \$210,000 covers in the piezometers task. Mr. Van Lienden replied this covers the planning, procurement, and installation of up to six (6) piezometers.

Chair Kelly commented there is only one monitoring well in the southeast Ventucopa area and agreed with prioritizing a monitoring well in section F and H.

Committee Member Haslett suggested putting the CIMIS station on the soccer field that is currently maintaining their grass.

Committee Member Haslett suggested surveying the entire river channel to have complete information. Mr. Van Lienden replied it would be ideal to survey the entire river, but there was consideration to spread the grant to be able to complete other tasks.

i. Schedule for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Model Update

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the schedule for the fiscal year 2023-2024 model update and reviewed the data to include in the next model update, which is provided in the SAC packet.

j. Update on Monitoring Network Implementation

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the monitoring network implementation and informed the SAC the next quarterly groundwater levels will be measured in October 2022.

k. Update on Quarterly Groundwater Conditions Report for July

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the quarterly groundwater conditions report for July 2022.

l. Update on Annual Water Quality Report

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the annual water quality report.

Chair Kelly asked if there was an annual test for arsenic, and Mr. Van Lienden responded there was currently only scheduled a one-time test for arsenic levels to establish a baseline.

7. Groundwater Sustainability Agency

a. Report of the Executive Committee Member

Nothing to report.

b. Report of the General Counsel

Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez provided an update on AB 2201 where the bill was not passed so the GSA will continue to follow the Governors' Executive Order.

c. Update on Public Workshop

Mr. Blakslee provided an update on the number of attendees at the public workshop and the topics that were discussed which is summarized in the SAC packet.

d. Board of Committee Member s Agenda Review

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the September 7, 2022, CBGSA Board of Committee Members meeting agenda which is provided in the SAC packet.

8. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Nothing to report.

9. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

10. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Nothing to report.

11. Correspondence

Nothing to report.

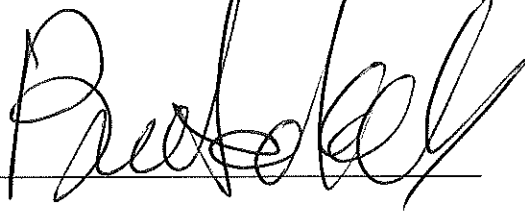
12. Adjourn

Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 9:48 PM.

Minutes approved by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency the 27th day of October 2022 with the change of Committee Member Jaffee's name spelling correction and the correction to a statement made about primarily one groundwater pumper that has drawn down the groundwater west of the Russell Fault.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly:



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ATTEST:

Vice Chair DeBranch:



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DeBranch', written over a horizontal line.

