



# Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Newsletter

Edition 3, October – December 2018

## Progress Update on the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Water is a precious natural resource. Without it, we would not be here. The Cuyama Basin is critically overdrafted<sup>1</sup>, according to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and changes in groundwater management are needed to sustain the economic welfare and quality of life for the region.

In response to California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act or SGMA, the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) was formed in 2017. CBGSA is responsible for developing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Cuyama Basin. The GSP must be completed and submitted to DWR by January 31, 2020.

A goal of the GSP is to identify **management actions and projects** that will bring groundwater use in the Cuyama Basin into balance by 2040. The GSP will be updated every five years between 2020 and 2040 to ensure that progress is being made toward this goal.

Since work on the GSP started, progress has been steady. Several sections of the GSP have been either completed or are in draft form. The sections are posted online at <http://cuyamabasin.org/resources.html>, and include:

1. Plan Area Description, Board approved 7/11/18
2. Hydrologic Conceptual Model, Board approved 10/3/18

3. Management Framework Matrix, Released 7/27/18
4. Undesirable Results Narrative, Released 7/27/18
5. Groundwater Conditions, Released 8/24/18
6. Monitoring Networks and Appendices, Released 9/21/18

The next sections coming up for review are noted below with their anticipated release time. If you'd like to review and comment on these sections as they become available, watch for them here:

<http://cuyamabasin.org/resources.html>.

- Sustainability Thresholds – December 2018
- Project and Management Actions – January 2019
- GSP Implementation Plan – February 2019

The GSP sections are presented for approval by the CBGSA Board of Directors after review and input by the public, the Standing Advisory Committee, and the CBGSA Board of Directors.

When the GSP is in final draft form in the spring of 2019, there will also be a public comment period before it is considered for adoption by the CBGSA Board.

Your involvement in the GSP development process is crucial. The project team appreciates everyone's input, clarifications, and local knowledge. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting or workshop.

Jim Beck  
Executive Director, CBGSA, [jbeck@hgcpm.com](mailto:jbeck@hgcpm.com)

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<sup>1</sup>"A basin is subject to critical conditions of overdraft when continuation of present water management practices would

probably result in significant adverse overdraft-related environmental, social, or economic impacts." DWR Bulletin 118



Photo courtesy of Sunridge Nurseries

## Why Get Involved?

Anyone owning property, living in, or working in the Cuyama Basin is strongly encouraged to get involved during the development of the GSP. As everyone uses groundwater in some form (e.g., drinking water and irrigation), active involvement, from every point of view, is important. It is your future and your groundwater.

You can start getting involved by reading the information and materials provided on the website at [www.cuyamabasin.org](http://www.cuyamabasin.org), and by attending a monthly meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC), CBGSA Board of Directors meeting, and the periodic community workshop. These are all open to the public and provide a chance to share your views and ideas and ask questions.

## Message from the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC)

Starting in October 2018, the SAC meetings have been restructured to allow additional time for reviewing, discussing and asking questions about the GSP sections that are being released in draft form for public review.

To be better prepared to represent the community's perspective to the CBGSA Board of Directors, SAC members are focusing some of their efforts on better understanding the GSP sections. The GSP sections are technical documents. By better understanding them, and providing input to the technical team, the SAC will be able to provide more informed input to the CBGSA Board of Directors.

Please join us at a monthly SAC meeting (see schedule on page 4) to learn more about the technical aspects of the GSP and the sections being reviewed and discussed.

The third round of English and Spanish language community workshops were held in New Cuyama on September 5, 2018. About 50 community members attended the two workshops, and participants were able to ask questions and provide suggestions/ideas directly to the technical team after each of the following topics were presented:

1. Modeling Groundwater for Current and Future Groundwater Use
2. Possible Management Actions and Projects to Reduce Groundwater Overdraft
3. Management Zone Concepts

For those not able to attend the September 5 workshops, a recap of each of these topics is provided on page 3.

Also, a big thank-you to Grimmway Farms for sponsoring the sandwiches provided by the Cuyama Buckhorn and to Cuyama Orchards' Byron Albano for the wonderful apples.

The SAC looks forward to seeing all of you at the next community workshops – see the Save the Date below.

*Robbie Jaffe*, Standing Advisory Committee Chair

## Save the Date

December 3, 2018

Community Workshops (English and Spanish), **New Cuyama High School Cafeteria, 4500 CA-166**. Doors open at 6 p.m., 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. presentations and participant involvement. Snacks and water will be available.

### Topics for Discussion

Learn and ask questions about:

1. **Initial Hydrogeologic Model Results** for Historic and Future Groundwater Conditions.
2. Initial **Water Budgets** for the Cuyama Basin.
3. Options for **Sustainability Goals and Criteria** for the Cuyama Basin.

This will be the first time the technical team will talk about the options for the **sustainability goals** that will need to be established to **set the maximum thresholds** for the use of our groundwater.

## Recap of September 5 Workshop

Three topics were presented and discussed at the September 5 workshops which are summarized below. The following topics were presented as information. The GSA Board has taken no action yet relative to these topics.

### 1. Modeling Groundwater

In accordance with the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a computer model has been developed by the technical team at Woodard & Curran to best understand the long-term changes to groundwater conditions in the Cuyama Basin. This model will be used to estimate water budgets for historical, current, and future conditions in the Cuyama Basin.

The groundwater model is being calibrated to mimic historic groundwater conditions from 1995 to 2015. Once the calibration is complete, current and projected future **water budgets** will be analyzed.

To analyze **water budgets for current conditions**, the model will use best available estimates of population from 2017 and recent historical land and water use.

To look at **water budgets for future conditions**, the team will use best available estimates of projected land and water use and population in 2040.

To understand long-term changes in groundwater conditions, both current and future conditions and associated water budgets will be analyzed using historical hydrologic data from 1967 through 2017. An additional assessment of future conditions will also be performed to estimate the effects of climate change.

### 2. Possible Management Actions and Projects to Reduce Groundwater Overdraft

Based on the technical work that has been completed to date, the GSP team was able share some of the **possible** management actions and projects that **may be used** to help bring balance to groundwater use in the Cuyama Basin.

Once the water budget and sustainability goal are established for the Cuyama Basin (these will be discussed at the December 3 workshops), possible management actions and projects will be reviewed, discussed, and refined.

The final management actions and projects for inclusion in the GSP will be tailored to the conditions in the Cuyama Basin. The goal is to close the gap between water demands and water supplies to achieve sustainability in the Cuyama Basin by 2040.

The following concepts were presented at the September 5<sup>th</sup> workshops as concepts. These concepts and other identified potential management actions and projects will be evaluated over the next several months, then presented to the SAC and the GSA Board of Directors for their consideration.

An approach for **demand management** may be developed that includes actions to reduce future groundwater use and guide how groundwater is used in the future. While the details of a demand management approach have not yet been developed, potential actions could include setting pumping allocations for groundwater users, establishing a water market, and/or setting fees for groundwater use.

Future reductions in groundwater use could be implemented using a “glide path” in which pumping allocations are gradually reduced over a period of years to achieve sustainability by 2040.



Photo courtesy of Sunridge Nurseries

**Water supply projects** are used to increase available water supplies. The following are some potential water supply projects that were presented at the workshops:

**1. Storm and Flood Water Capture Projects.** These projects would capture excess flood flows and direct them to a recharge location where the water would be recharged into the aquifer. Recharge locations could be prioritized based on soil properties and current groundwater conditions. However, the availability of

water for recharge could be limited due to the timing of Cuyama River flows and downstream water rights.

**2. Water Supply Imports/Exchanges.** The GSA could explore potential water purchase agreements to provide additional water supplies and could possibly be incorporated into a water exchange agreement with water users at Twitchell Reservoir downstream of the Cuyama Basin. Although importing new supplies into the basin via a new pipeline is thought to be too costly, this alternative will still be evaluated to establish an estimated cost of this potential project.

The technical team will evaluate these and other potential actions and projects and provide additional information to the SAC and Board. The most promising actions will be analyzed using the computer model of the Cuyama groundwater basin to see what combinations of management actions and projects would be necessary to achieve future sustainability.

### 3. Management Areas

Management areas are not necessary but can be established in a basin at the GSA's discretion by considering: (1) Jurisdictional boundaries such as the four county lines, (2) Physical boundaries such as the Russell and Santa Barbara Fault lines, (3) Current groundwater conditions, or other factors. Management areas are one method that can be used to set different minimum thresholds, set different measurable objectives, set up different density and frequency of monitoring, and vary implementation of projects and management actions. The CBGSA Board is considering proposed management areas for adoption at its November or December 2018 meetings.

### Water Quality and SGMA

SGMA says that the GSA will look at water quality as it relates to undesirable effects that could result from the movement of salts or contaminants in the groundwater. Therefore, the GSP will describe water quality from the perspective of whether or not groundwater pumping degrades water quality to the point where it becomes significant and unreasonable in the Cuyama Basin.

There are several State agencies that are responsible for regulating groundwater quality:

1. The **State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)** oversees and regulates water rights and water quality for the State of California. Two aspects of

their programs are the Drinking Water Program, which oversees compliance with safe drinking water standards for community water supplies and programs to provide technical and financial assistance for small community systems.

2. Nine independent **Regional Water Quality Control Boards** oversee surface and groundwater quality programs and coordinate with the SWRCB. Each Regional Board makes critical water quality decisions for its region, including setting standards, issuing waste discharge requirements, determining compliance, and taking appropriate enforcement actions to prevent or clean up contamination. The Cuyama Valley is within the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, which can be reached at <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/>.
3. **California Department of Water Resources (DWR)** protects, conserves and manages State water supplies, oversees water resources planning and the construction and operation of the State Water Project. DWR oversees and develops guidance for SGMA and groundwater sustainability planning.

### Get Involved Now, Help Shape Your Future

1. Visit [www.cuyamabasin.org](http://www.cuyamabasin.org) for more information about GSP developments and reports.
2. Attend a monthly meeting of the Board of Directors, 1st Wednesday, 4 p.m. **The next meetings are on November 7 and December 3** (Note: December 5 meeting will be held on December 3 rather than the usual Wednesday.)
3. Attend a monthly meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, Thursday preceding the first Wednesday of the month at 4 p.m. **The next meetings are on November 1, November 29.**
4. Attend one of the community workshops (English and Spanish language) on **December 3, 2018**. See details on page 2.
5. Send an Email: [tblakslee@hgcpm.com](mailto:tblakslee@hgcpm.com) or write a letter: Cuyama Basin GSA, 4900 California Ave, Tower B, 2nd Floor, Bakersfield, CA 93309 or call during normal business hours, Monday - Friday, 9 am to 4 pm: (661) 477-3385.

The Board of Directors and Standing Advisory Committee meetings are held at the Cuyama Family Resource Center, 4689 CA-166, New Cuyama. Meetings are open to the public and public comments are welcomed. Agendas and meeting materials are available 72 hours before the meetings at [www.cuyamabasin.org](http://www.cuyamabasin.org).