

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

September 27, 2018

Meetings Minutes

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

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

None

1. Call to Order

Chair Roberta Jaffe called the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) to order at 4:00 pm.

Chair Jaffe briefed the group on the idea of study sessions, as discussed in previous meetings, and informed the group that they would be incorporating the study session concept into the meeting today. She reported that Woodard & Curran (W&C) was able to adjust the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) schedule to allow the SAC to have two meetings to review each GSP section. The first meeting would occur prior to comments being due and would function as a point for the SAC and stakeholders to ask any questions they have on the section or chapter. The second meeting would occur after comments are integrated in the GSP sections and additional clarification can be made at this meeting by the SAC or stakeholders. Chair Jaffe reported that this new format will allow the SAC to have a more in-depth discussion on each GSP section/chapter.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Jaffe.

4. Approval of Minutes

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Executive Director Jim Beck presented the

August 30, 2018 SAC minutes. A motion was made by Committee member Louise Draucker to adopt the minutes and seconded by Vice Chair Brenton Kelly. A roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

Chair Jaffe commented that she appreciated how well the conversations were captured in the August 30, 2018 SAC minutes.

5. Report of the General Counsel

Nothing to report.

6. Groundwater Sustainability Agency

a. Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the SAC meeting schedule for the remainder of the year. He stated that the October 2018 SAC meeting will be held on November 1, 2018 and the November SAC meeting will be held on November 29, 2018. Mr. Beck reported the December 5, 2018 joint SAC and Board meeting, along with the public workshop, will have to be rescheduled due to an overlapping event at the Cuyama Valley Recreation District. He said that GSP outreach consultant the Catalyst Group (Catalyst) will be looking into alternative dates and locations. Additionally, Mr. Beck let the SAC know that the December SAC meeting will need to be rescheduled to an alternative date, such as January 3 or January 7, 2019, due to the holidays. He said the SAC does not need to make a motion on the December SAC date today, but it is something to consider in the near future.

b. Board of Directors Agenda Review

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the October 3, 2018 CBGSA Board of Directors agenda.

Mr. Beck reported that the CBGSA continues to be on schedule and on budget. He mentioned that there were no ad hoc committee meetings last month.

7. Groundwater Sustainability Plan

a. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update

Woodard & Curran Project Manager Brian Van Lienden provided an update on GSP activities which is included in the SAC packet.

Mr. Van Lienden reported the CBGSA held a public workshop on September 5, 2018 and the major topic for discussion at the November 1, 2018 SAC meeting will be on sustainability objectives.

Mr. Van Lienden reported that W&C received input on potential monitoring well sites from the tech forum for the California Department of Resources (DWR) Technical Support Services.

Mr. Van Lienden presented a draft schedule of the GSP section approval process.

Vice Chair Kelly asked when the unwritten portion of the Groundwater Conditions section will be available. Mr. Van Lienden said W&C was going to provide those updated sections in the final draft GSP plan.

Landowner Ann Myhre commented that it should not be a surprise if there are gaps in the GSP sections because certain data is not available yet. Chair Jaffe surmised that the GSP section gaps are a work in progress.

CBGSA Board Director Byron Albano asked if W&C can refer to what we are waiting on in the unwritten sections within a given GSP section. Mr. Van Lienden and W&C Senior Hydrogeologist John Ayers said they could do this.

i. Monitoring Networks Section Release

Mr. Ayres provided an overview of the Monitoring Network section. Mr. Van Lienden reported the Monitoring Network section was released on September 21, 2018, and comments to the section are due on November 9, 2018 after an in-depth discussion at the November 1, 2018 SAC meeting.

Committee member Joe Haslett asked Mr. Ayres to clarify what water quality monitoring is required under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Mr. Ayres said the CBGSA cannot regulate major groundwater cleanup efforts. Committee member Haslett asked why we are worried about water quality if it cannot be regulated. Mr. Ayres replied that the legislation requires GSAs to investigate water quality issues. He mentioned that salinity can potentially have some influence on groundwater pumping and recharge activities.

ii. Update on Data Management System Release

Mr. Van Lienden reported that a link to the Data Management System (DMS) has been posted on the CBGSA website along with a quick-start guide to assist users. The DMS includes all the well data that W&C has been able to collect so far. Vice Chair Kelly asked if W&C included well completion reports or perforations in the DMS. Mr. Van Lienden said the DMS will include perforations if they were digitally entered by the contributing entity. Mr. Ayres reported that the USGS depth to groundwater levels were off in several places and a lot of the data is raw since not many studies have been done in Cuyama. Mr. Ayres said they have total depth to groundwater for about half of the wells, and this matches what he has seen in other areas of the State.

iii. Management Areas Discussion

Mr. Ayres reported that he would like to review the options for various management areas and present W&C's recommendation. He said the sustainability thresholds will be dependent on the monitoring areas. Mr. Van Lienden and Mr. Ayres reported the group will need to make a decision on management area soon to keep on track with the GSP schedule.

Mr. Ayres presented an example of management areas based on jurisdictional boundaries. He then displayed an option of management areas based on physical boundaries separated into a central basin, west basin and east basin. The third option was based on current basin conditions as measured by depth to groundwater.

Mr. Ayres recommended four management areas by using a combination of current basin conditions and physical conditions, where three of the four areas are delineated by the Russel Fault and Santa Barbara Canyon Fault.

Vice Chair Kelly commented that his property is between east of the central basin and the southeast basin area. He said there are some significant irrigated operations along the river channel. He asked what the rationale for splitting Ventucopa into two management areas is when that data is based on only a few wells. Mr. Ayres stated that his rationale for treating these parts of Ventucopa as separate areas was that the two wells in the southeast area of

Ventucopa respond exactly the same and the Ventucopa area wells also track with each other.

Committee member Haslett said he agreed with Mr. Ayres' reasoning for the management areas.

Committee member Brad DeBranch asked why there is a push to decide the management areas now as opposed to waiting a couple months. Mr. Ayres replied that W&C now has all the data to begin implementing the management areas.

Mr. Albano commented that he felt Mr. Ayres reasoned out the management area recommendations very well. He said he will contact Mr. Ayres about some additional well data he has, but he is unsure of how reliable the data is. Mr. Albano said he is willing to add his wells into the monitoring network. He commented that the groundwater responds significantly different up the road from his property where the bedrock comes down across the valley and would be interested to understand why that is.

Ms. Myhre asked if more data was collected in five years, would the management areas be revised. Mr. Ayres said it is ultimately up to the Board, but yes, everything is up for discussion in those five-year update periods.

Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center Executive Director Lynn Carlisle asked why the Cuyama Community Services District (CCSD) was listed as a management area. Mr. Ayres said it was shown for purely jurisdictional reasons, but he is not an advocate of that option since it does not necessarily represent conditions.

Committee member DeBranch asked if different measurable objectives could be set without management areas. Mr. Ayres said it is possible, but he has received different information from DWR regarding this question.

Committee member Draucker asked why Mr. Ayres said it would not do CCSD any good to be in a separate management area. Mr. Ayres said because the CCSD is being impacted by the surrounding area. Committee member Draucker asked if thresholds are set by certain elevations of groundwater. Mr. Ayres said it depends on the type, but generally there is a monitoring well with a minimum threshold set and when the groundwater falls below the minimum threshold on the well, the area is triggered as experiencing an undesirable result.

Vice Chair Kelly said he appreciated Mr. Ayres' presentation and recommendation, however his only concern is all the production is within the channel and the monitoring wells are somewhat far away from those areas. He recommended pursuing additional data points recently offered by Mr. Albano and Grapevine Capital's Ray Shady.

Committee member Mike Post recommended approving the management area map.

Committee member Jake Furstenfeld asked if land use changes and well levels are impacted in a management area, can action be taken to address potential impacts. Mr. Beck said those concerns can absolutely be addressed. Mr. Ayres stated that the annual report would be able to determine impacts within the management area. Committee member Furstenfeld appreciated the information and agreed with the W&C's management area recommendation.

Committee member Leticia Valenzuela asked how W&C is going to guarantee the frequency of monitoring done in each management area. Mr. Ayres replied that there are wells currently being monitored, and those will provide the minimal knowledge we will have going forward. He mentioned that W&C will be adding more monitoring points in the future.

Ms. Myhre said her concern about using the Russel Fault is the possible elimination of high groundwater levels when that boundary is not brought to New Cuyama.

Chair Jaffe commented that there is a gradient between management areas and it will not be black and white. She reported that there is consensus among the SAC members on W&C's Management Area approach. Mr. Van Lienden said this presentation was presented to the tech forum on September 21, 2018 and there was general buy-in from them as well.

Vice Chair Kelly asked if the model recognizes management areas and Mr. Van Lienden replied that the model will not, but in the reporting W&C will recognize management areas.

Blue Sky Center Director of Finance and Creative Projects Jack Forinash asked who makes the final decision on management areas and Mr. Ayres replied the CBGSA Board does. Mr. Forinash expressed concern that New Cuyama's interests could be impacted.

Chair Jaffe called for a five-minute recess

b. Discussion on Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model Section

Mr. Ayres provided an overview of the Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model (HCM) section and its contents.

Committee member DeBranch asked what the concern on faults are. Mr. Ayres said the potential breaks in faults is a concern. He mentioned that certain faults are believed to be in existence but are not found on any maps or publications.

Vice Chair Kelly asked if the principle aquifer cross sections on page 2-27 will be moved to another GSP section. Mr. Ayres said they are model outputs and do not belong in the HCM but will be in the model documentation.

Chair Jaffe asked what the "conceptual" part of the section title means. Mr. Ayres said the section was named in the regulations and that this word is used because it is the initial framework for the model. Chair Jaffe asked what the main takeaway points are from the HCM. Mr. Ayres replied Cuyama Basin is a very complex, but the main takeaways from the HCM are things like: what is the basin boundary, where the major faults are, the main formations, and the general topography. He said that the HCM is more about understanding the big picture and if it passes the smell test.

Vice Chair Kelly said he thought the HCM components were done well, but he felt the way the components work together was missing in the HCM. Mr. Ayres said W&C actually updated the model grid a couple times based on the data. Vice Chair Kelly said he thought it was important to use the HCM in understanding the Integrated Water Flow Model (IWFM). Mr. Ayres said the recharge components do not belong in the HCM, but the Water Budget section instead.

Chair Jaffe said it would be helpful to have a brief description of what each GSP section includes.

Mr. Beck asked W&C to look into what it would take to write a brief narrative on each GSP section. He mentioned the Hallmark Group will also distribute the GSP schedule again.

Mr. Albano asked if W&C had thought of acquiring a 3D model of the Cuyama Basin. A couple of the SAC members said it would be helpful. Mr. Beck said it could be helpful, but we would have to determine if we have the budget for it.

Vice Chair Kelly said that in the HCM comments presented several committee members have asked how the age dating of water will be presented in the Groundwater Conditions section. Mr. Ayres said the tritium study was not very compelling to him in that it is getting old and there is not much of it left. He mentioned that in deep aquifers, there is not a lot of movement, but there is mixing of newer water sources, and he is unsure of the ratio. Mr. Ayres said he will look at the tritium study again and respond.

Vice Chair Kelly mentioned that some of the mountain ranges, such as the Caliente range, are referenced but not labelled on the maps. Mr. Ayres said he will label these.

A motion was made by Committee member Post to adopt the HCM section and seconded by Committee member DeBranch. A roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

c. Discussion on Groundwater Conditions Section

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the Groundwater Conditions section.

Committee member Furstenfeld asked if we are losing storage with an increase in subsidence. Mr. Ayres said that is technically correct but is not relevant. Where subsidence occurs is where clay layers compress. The water in the clay helps it hold its shape, but when you dewater clay they start moving toward alignment and compress. So, a foot of subsidence means you have a foot of squished clay. He commented that wells do not screen where the clay layers are.

Chair Jaffe asked when should subsidence become worrisome. Mr. Ayres said that is a discussion within the threshold conversation that will take place at next month's meeting. Mr. Ayres said when subsidence impacts structures would be concerning, but he does not anticipate subsidence to impact groundwater storage in a significant way in Cuyama. Mr. Ayres stated if you do not have a lot of water infrastructure, you may not worry about subsidence.

Landowner Steve Gliessman asked if subsidence can affect storage differently in areas that are a mixture of sand and clay and Mr. Ayres replied that there is not a lot of space being lost in those areas.

Committee member Post asked if there is a relationship between subsidence and being on the subduction side of the San Andreas. Mr. Ayres said it is possible that tectonics play into fault creep and that fault creep is happening in the central basin.

Mr. Ayres showed the groundwater elevation contour maps and commented that water can take months to years to move through the gradients.

Committee member Post asked if it is possible to age the water in the aquifer. He mentioned that if the water was made post-glacially, and we are now extracting that water, that should allude to something. Mr. Ayres said he will look into this.

Chair Jaffe said her understanding on pumping deep water is that it affects ground water quality. Mr. Ayres said that is why salinity is tracked.

d. Technical Forum Update

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the August 31, 2018 technical forum call. A summary of the issues discussed is provided in the SAC packet. He reported the date for the upcoming technical forum will need to be pushed back to October 26, 2018 to accommodate the sequence of the Cuyama Basin Water District Board meeting.

e. Stakeholder Engagement Update

GSP Outreach Catalyst Group's Mary Currie provided an update on stakeholder engagement activity. Ms. Currie reported on the September 5, 2018 workshop. She mentioned that there were 10 new stakeholders that attended the workshop and signed in.

Committee member Draucker informed the group that the workshop was held on the same day as three other events and the CBGSA should be mindful of other events that come up to ensure maximum participation from stakeholders.

Ms. Carlisle said a microphone is essential for the workshops to ensure everyone can hear and Mr. Beck said he agreed and the team is already working on a solution.

Ms. Currie encouraged the group to read the workshop summary for comments to assist in formulating future decisions.

8. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Chair Jaffe asked for feedback from the Committee on the study session that was implemented this meeting. Committee member Haslett suggested reviewing just one GSP section per meeting. W&C staff informed the group that the GSP schedule does not allow the SAC to review just one section at a time.

9. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

10. Public comment for items not on the Agenda

Nothing to report.

11. Adjourn

Chair Jaffe adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

I, Jim Beck, Executive Director of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a fair statement of the proceedings of the meeting held on Thursday, September 27, 2018, by the Cuyama Basing Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee.

Jim Beck

Dated: November 1, 2018