

# Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

April 29, 2021

## Meetings Minutes

**PRESENT:**

Kelly, Brenton – Chair  
DeBranch, Brad – Vice Chair  
Furstenfeld, Jake  
Haslett, Joe  
Jaffe, Roberta  
Beck, Jim – Executive Director  
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel

Jean Gaillard

**ABSENT:**

Draucker, Louise

**1. Call to Order**

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair Brenton Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and Hallmark Group Project Manager Taylor Blakslee provided direction on the meeting protocols in facilitating a remote-only 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 still remain vacancies for representatives of the Hispanic community and the SAC continues to search for candidates willing to serve.

**a. Appoint a SAC Member**

Chair Kelly introduced Cuyama resident and local farmer Jean Gaillard who applied to be a Committee Member on the SAC. Mr. Gaillard thanked the SAC for the opportunity to serve said he is looking forward to participating in this important process for the Valley.

**MOTION**

Committee Member DeBranch made a motion to appoint Jean Gaillard to the Standing Advisory Committee. Committee Member Furstenfeld seconded the motion, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**5. Approval of Minutes**

Chair Kelly opened the floor for comments on the February 25, 2021, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes and no changes were suggested.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Jaffee made a motion to adopt the February 25, 2021, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Committee Member DeBranch, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**6. Groundwater Sustainability Plan**

**a. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities**

Woodard & Curran’s Technical Project Manager Brian Van Lienden provided an update on the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) activities and the overall project schedule which are included in the SAC packet.

**b. Approval of Meter Guidance and Reporting Instructions**

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the meter guidance and reporting documentation.

Committee Member Jaffe asked if the data will be used for more than just invoicing and Executive Director Jim Beck said yes, in addition to informing water use for invoicing, the data will be used to calibrate future model updates and for water management tracking in management area.

Committee Member DeBranch asked staff roughly how many wells there are and how are we tracking those wells. Mr. Blakslee replied that staff requested well data from the four counties and while Ventura and San Luis Obispo have reported they have comprehensive records, Santa Barbara County reported that their data is only available from roughly 1980. Therefore, staff will use the county data but will send the meter requirement notice to all parcel owners in the basin.

Chair Kelly shared concerns he has heard from stakeholders on the economic burden of installing meters on multiple wells and asked what the enforcement/compliance strategy was. He also asked if staff had concerns with meter technology related to accuracy.

Mr. Beck replied that evapotranspiration was another option, but there was a lot of initial stakeholder concern with this approach. He said the Board wrestled with this but ultimately determined meters is the most accurate and equitable long-term solution.

Mr. Gaillard asked if there are unpermitted wells and how will we track these. Mr. Beck said there may be, but we expect landowners to report these, if they don’t, we hope to use OpenET to track

Brenton requested that the hydrographs are shown with a smaller scale to see changes more clearly.

**e. Update on Annual Groundwater Quality Report**

Mr. Van Lienden presented the annual water quality report which is included in the SAC packet.

Chair Kelly commented that Opti well No. 88 does not have a threshold set and staff replied they would update that.

Committee Member Jaffe asked how the CBGSA is handling the State Water Resources Control Board comment letter. Mr. Beck replied that staff will consider these comments during DWR's review of the GSP.

Mr. Beck said the water quality data creates more questions than answers and demonstrates the need to develop more data before making decisions on such a narrow data set.

Mr. Van Lienden reported that staff is working with P&P to identify additional wells to add to the water quality network and is investigating potential causes of increases to TDS measurements from historic values.

**7. Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

**a. Report of the Executive Director**

Mr. Beck reported on upcoming grant funding opportunities and Mr. Blakslee reported that staff anticipates \$60 million to be made available as a joint planning and implementation grant in the fall. Mr. Van Lienden noted that those funds are contingent on the Legislature passing the budget and Ms. Carlisle asked if it would be helpful to write support letters. Mr. Beck said this is always helpful and thanked Ms. Carlisle.

**b. Board of Directors Agenda Review**

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the May 5, 2021, CBGSA Board of Directors meeting agenda which is provided in the SAC packet.

**c. Report of the General Counsel**

Nothing to report.

**8. Items for Upcoming Sessions**

Nothing to report.

**9. Committee Forum**

Nothing to report.

**a. Update on Cannabis Industry Activities**

Committee Member Jaffe reported on the Santa Barbara/Stakeholder cannabis process to review 700 acres of permits for cannabis projects in the Cuyama Valley. She said it is not known how much water will be used but projections estimate cannabis use at 3.3 acre-feet per acre. She said the Cuyama Valley Cannabis Advisory Committee (CVCAC) is made up of community members and cannabis growers and both she and Mr. Gaillard are on the Committee.

possible wells and may need to consider more time-intensive options, but we have not currently budgeted for those options.

Jim Menzies said wells that have falling water will record air as water use and this is an issue with meters and requested the SAC and Board develop a workable solution to this. Mr. Beck said we were trying to provide as broad direction as possible and did not want to delve into an engineering-level guidance. He suggested Chair Kelly document this issue and bring this up at the Board meeting where they may direct staff to develop a solution for this.

Mr. Blakslee asked the SAC if an online reporting option would be valuable. Brad asked if we thought there was a cost savings in the future using this method. Mr. Beck said automating this data will save money in the future. However, if only half the landowners supply the information online it likely wouldn't save money. Mr. Beck recommended submitting the data manually for the first year. Chair Kelly suggested adding a survey for online reporting in the forms that will be mailed to all parcel owners.

#### **MOTION**

Committee Member DeBranch made a motion to recommend the Board approve the meter guidance and installation documents. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Jaffe, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

Committee Member Haslett commented that he does not agree with requiring meters on all wells. He said it is too much of an absolute and does not agree with this approach.

#### **c. Update on Monitoring Network Implementation**

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on monitoring network implementation activities which is summarized in the SAC packet. He reported that all 10 transducers have been installed.

#### **d. Update on Monthly Groundwater Conditions Report**

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the groundwater level monitoring network and levels for January through March 2021 which are included in the SAC packet.

Chair Kelly noted that the pie chart did not add up to the current number of wells. Mr. Van Lienden said staff will check this and update the presentation.

Committee Member Jaffe said she is concerned with the report on wells below the minimum threshold and said we need to have more clarity and discussion on adaptive management options. She asked if there are plans for adaptive management. Mr. Beck replied that her concerns are valid and adaptive management options will depend on regional effects of pumping. He noted the first pumping restrictions are set to begin in 2023 and the model needs to be updated and commented that he does not think adaptive management can be accelerated ahead of the pumping reductions. He said staff will continue monitoring levels and develop potential adaptive management options if required, but staff did have plans to meet with an adaptive management ad hoc to discuss this further.



She said the growers are working with the CVCAC to make their projects work, but she is concerned the additional water consumption will negatively affect the basin’s efforts to achieve sustainability.

She reported that some growers are using voluntary offsets (paying another grower in the Valley to fallow land). She said the community is concerned with this approach but willing to consider it; however, the community strictly believes offsets must be in the Central basin. She said the good news is communication is continuing, but it is very challenging to imagine additional water being pumped out of the basin. She commented that she wished the CBGSA was representative in these discussions.

**10. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**

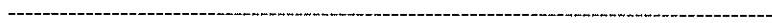
Nothing to report.

**11. Correspondence**

Nothing to report.

**12. Adjourn**

Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.



Minutes approved by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency the 11th day of August 2021.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE  
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Vice Chair DeBranch: \_\_\_\_\_