

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

February 24, 2022

Meetings Minutes

PRESENT:

Kelly, Brenton – Chair
DeBranch, Brad – Vice Chair
Furstenfeld, Jake
Gaillard, Jean
Haslett, Joe
Beck, Jim – Executive Director
Blakslee, Taylor – Project Manager
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel
Van Lienden, Brian – Woodard & Curran
Pope, Aaron – Catalyst Group

ABSENT:

Draucker, Louise
Jaffe, Roberta

1. Call to Order

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair Brad 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 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. Adopt Resolution No. 21-111 Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Public Meetings Under AB 361

CBGSA legal counsel Alex Dominguez presented a resolution authorizing the use of teleconferencing under assembly bill 361.

MOTION

Committee Member DeBranch made a motion to adopt Resolution 21-111 authorizing use of teleconferencing for public meetings under AB 361. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Haslett, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: DeBranch, Furstenfeld, Gaillard, Haslett, Kelly
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Draucker, Jaffe

5. 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.

6. Approval of Minutes

Chair Kelly opened the floor for comments on the January 4, 2022, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes.

MOTION

Committee Member DeBranch made a motion to adopt the January 4, 2022, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Furstenfeld, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

7. Groundwater Sustainability Plan

a. Review of Official DWR GSP Determination and Direction for Addressing DWR-Identified Issues by July 20, 2022

Executive Director Jim Beck provided background on the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) official Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) comments received on January 21, 2022. Mr. Blakslee provided additional background on DWR's comments and a February 10, 2022, consultation meeting to review the technical memo submitted by the CBGSA in November 2021.

Woodard & Curran technical Project Manager Brian Van Lienden provided an overview of DWR's feedback from the four (4) deficiencies.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle commented that a local group met with DWR after the consultation letter was received and reported that DWR said the Adaptive Management process was a plan to make a plan.

Legal counsel Alex Dominquez provided an overview of the GSP resubmittal process which is included in the SAC packet. He let the SAC know staff recommends setting a public hearing in July 6, 2022, following a 90-day notice to counties and cities. He commented that once DWR receives the final amended plans, they have up to two (2) years to make a final determination.

Chair Kelly asked about the feasibility of potentially moving the SAC and Board July 6, 2022, meeting date.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle asked if the tech memo would amend the GSP as written. Mr. Beck replied that the GSP would need to be amended per the guidance received by DWR and a draft amended version would be provided for review at the May 4, 2022, Board meeting.

b. Set Date for Public Hearing on GSP Amendment

Mr. Dominquez reported that a public hearing will be set on July 6, 2022, to amend the GSP.

c. Direction on Historic Pumping Analysis in the Central Management Area

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the direction the Board provided on January 5, 2022, to analyze historic water use per parcel for irrigated acres in the Central Management Area

Committee Member DeBranch asked if the analysis only included the portion of the parcel in the Central Management Area boundary and Mr. Van Lienden confirmed this.

d. Direction on Central Management Area Policies

Mr. Beck let the SAC know staff is presenting the below seven (7) Management Area

Committee Member Gaillard asked if meters are required for just the Central Management Area or the whole basin and Mr. Beck replied it is for the entire basin.

1. Pumping Reduction Baseline/Starting Point

Committee Member DeBranch asked if the historic analysis could be used to set the baseline and Mr. Beck said it could be.

Committee Member Gaillard said he is concerned that using the most recent year overstates the water use due to drought conditions.

Chair Kelly commented that it is shocking how many responsible pumpers used such little water use and they should not be burdened by a proportional reduction.

Committee Member Furstenfeld said local landowners are doing the right things and the corporate water users have not and will not do the right thing until forced to do so.

Committee Member DeBranch commented that there are only roughly 30 pumpers, he also noted that the table does not show total acreage. Chair Kelly asked if the acreage could be added to the table. He also asked if the Grimmway's water use could be aggregated on the table. Mr. Beck replied that it was the Board's intent to reach an equitable solution.

Committee Member DeBranch said the Central Management Area will force additional water use outside the Central Management Area and sustainability needs to be addressed at the basin level.

2. Increased Water Use Inside the Central Management Area

No specific SAC discussions.

3. Increased Water Use Outside the Central Management Area

Committee Member DeBranch asked about the GSA authority to limit pumping outside the Central Management Area. Mr. Dominguez said the GSA can limit pumping, but it is important to link actions to what is listed in the GSP.

4. Central Management Area Boundary (Hydrologic vs Operational)

Chair Kelly asked if the model could be used to create an operational boundary. He said that he recommends an operational boundary based on roads and wells.

5. Management Area Criteria Evaluation

No specific SAC discussions.

6. Administration of Pumping Reduction

No specific SAC discussions.

7. Non-Compliance/Over-Pumping Enforcement

No specific SAC discussions.

Committee Member Gaillard said it would be valuable to find out how other GSAs in the California has dealt with these issues.

Stakeholder Carlisle asked why staff analyzed historic water usage. Mr. Beck replied that the Board directed staff to consider this as a potential method for allocating the pumping reduction. Ms. Carlisle said she is concerned the GSA is developing an approach that aligns with adjudication methodologies and asked for the reason and motivation for potentially using this methodology be noted and recorded in the Board meeting minutes at the March 2, 2022, Board meeting.

e. Approval of Water Year 2021 Annual Report

Mr. Van Lienden presented the draft Water Year 2021 Annual Report for consideration of approval. He provided an overview of updated groundwater contours, change in groundwater levels, and change in groundwater storage.

Chair Kelly commented that not including the minimum threshold updates seems like an omission and recommends adding this.

No recommendation was made by the SAC to approve this report.

f. Direction on Adaptive Management Actions

Mr. Van Lienden reported that the Board provided direction for W&C to reach out to well owners of wells that are potentially dry to verify information about those wells. He reported that of the 18 potentially dry, or nearly dry wells, he had reached 10 owners and reported that groundwater level consultant Provost & Pritchard will perform field investigations with those landowners during their next measurement in April 2022.

g. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities

Mr. Van Lienden provided an updated on recent GSP activities which is included in the SAC packet.

h. Update on Model Progress

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the model update an aquifer test which is included in the SAC packet.

i. Update on Monitoring Network Implementation

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on implementation activities which is summarized in the SAC packet.

j. Update on Quarterly Groundwater Conditions Report for January 2022

Mr. Van Lienden presented the groundwater level measurements for January 2022.

Committee Member DeBranch asked how many wells were already below their minimum thresholds

when the GSP was submitted and Mr. Van Lienden replied eight (8) of the 20 were.

8. Groundwater Sustainability Agency

a. Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Blakslee reported on the following items:

- Department of Conservation Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program grant opportunity.
- DWR aerial electromagnetic preliminary data available.
- DWR’s Cal Live Groundwater Conditions resource.
- Meeting in-person guidance.

b. Report of the General Counsel

Mr. Dominguez reported on the status of AB 361 as it relates to meeting remotely.

c. Board of Directors Agenda Review

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the March 2, 2022, CBGSA Board of Directors meeting agenda which is provided in the SAC packet.

9. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Nothing to report.

10. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

11. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Ms. Carlisle commented that that Cuyama community is very concerned with the impacts the adjudication may have on the work the GSA is doing and requests the GSA host a workshop to answer community questions on the adjudication. Mr. Beck suggested Ms. Carlisle to bring this up during the SAC report at the Board meeting or during the public comment portion of the Board meeting. Ms. Carlisle requested that legal counsel Joe Hughes update the community on the conflict of interest with having two Directors on the Board of Directors and the Water District Board who are suing the GSA. Mr. Beck suggested Chair Kelly will report on this under his SAC report to the Board and legal will discuss this internally.

12. Correspondence

Nothing to report.

13. Adjourn

Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency the 24th day of April 2022.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly: 

ATTEST:

Vice Chair DeBranch: 