

# Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

June 30, 2022

## Meetings Minutes

### **PRESENT:**

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

### **ABSENT:**

Furstenfeld, Jake  
Jaffe, Roberta

#### **1. Call to Order**

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Vice Chair Brad DeBranch called the meeting to order at 5:27 p.m. and Hallmark Group Project Manager Taylor Blakslee provided direction on the meeting protocols in facilitating a remote meeting.

#### **2. Roll Call**

Mr. Blakslee called roll of the Committee (shown above).

#### **3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chair Brad DeBranch led the pledge of allegiance.

#### **4. Update on SAC Membership**

Vice Chair Brad DeBranch reported that there remain two vacancies for representatives of the Hispanic community and noted to direct interested individuals to himself or Mr. Blakslee.

#### **5. Approval of Minutes**

Vice Chair DeBranch opened the floor for comments on the April 28, 2022, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Haslett made a motion to defer the approval of April 28, 2022, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes to the next SAC meeting on September 1, 2022. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Draucker, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**6. Groundwater Sustainability Plan****a. Review on Amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan**

Mr. Blakslee provided a brief update on the amended groundwater sustainability plan. Mr. Blakslee read a section of Committee Member Jaffe's letter to the SAC members which is provided in the SAC packet. Stakeholder Jim Wegis noted the water table typically rises when it rains and later falls, which cannot be said for the main basin as it only falls.

**b. Update on Model Refinement**

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the model refinement tasks and reviewed the four technical meetings that were held. He provided an overview of the model calibration statistics and the observed groundwater levels versus simulated groundwater levels.

Committee Member Haslett referenced the first graph and noted that 1998 was a record water year for California, so including this information may make the data misleading. Executive Director Beck clarified that the average line shown is a cumulation of the change in storage and that when modeling hydrogeology a record year is typically selected as the starting point.

Chair Kelly asked if the change in parameters was primarily due to changes in transmissivity values. Woodard & Curran modeler Sercan Ceyhan responded that the changes were mostly hydraulic conductivity and storage parameters.

**c. Direction on Central Management Area Policies**

Mr. Blakslee provided background on Central Management Area (CMA) policies and informed the SAC that a pumping reduction exemption for the Cuyama Community Services District (CCSD), as outlined in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan, needs to be discussed and incorporated into the allocation calculations.

Mr. Blakslee provided an update on the below nine (9) policy points that were reviewed with a Board ad hoc committee.

**1. Pumping Reduction Baseline**

Mr. Blakslee noted the first question for the policy issue is determining the baseline or starting point for pumping reduction. He reviewed how the maximum annual pumping in the CMA was calculated.

Committee Member Haslett asked if the elementary school would be subject to the reduction. Executive Director Beck replied that the school would not be subject to the reduction.

**2. CCSD Pumping Reduction Exemption**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the CCSD pumping reduction exemption and informed the SAC this was a new item for consideration under the CMA policies.

Committee Member Draucker noted Santa Barbara County is remotely watering the park, but there is very little to no watering being done. Committee Member Haslett asked if future buildings would be part of the equation. Executive Director Beck responded that it is something to be considered, and the CBGSA and CCSD will have to work that out. Committee Member Draucker commented there is land adjacent that is supposed to be apartments, but Committee Member Haslett said he believes that was project was not approved. Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle commented the housing project was reversed and the watering will be provided by the CCSD.

The SAC concurred with staff recommendations as presented.

**3. Allocation Methodology (and Variance Policy)**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the draft allocation methodology based on historic water use for 2023 and 2024 in the CMA and draft variance process.

Committee Member Haslett noted there should be a separate variance policy for 2023 and 2024. Executive Director Beck responded that the reason staff is proposing a single variance process for two years is to minimize cost and to simplify the process for landowners.

Committee Member Haslett asked how the \$250 processing fee was chosen. Mr. Blakslee responded that it was based on the fee being used by Ventura County for their variance process.

Stakeholder Spencer Harris asked if the parcel size was taken into account in establishing the allocation and Mr. Blakslee stated it is strictly based on historical pumping. Ms. Harris asked if it was possible for someone not to receive an allocation if they have never pumped. Mr. Blakslee confirmed it was possible, but if the landowner feels this was inappropriate that is the purpose of developing the variance policy.

Stakeholder Guy Lingo commented he has a farm that has not been pumped since the 1960's and asked if his pumping will be restricted. Mr. Blakslee informed Stakeholder Guy Lingo that since his land is outside of the CMA, pumping reductions do not currently apply to him.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle asked how the variance policy will affect the allocation and the model. Executive Director Beck replied the variance policy will affect the allocation of all pumpers since if one allocation goes up, others will go down by a certain percentage. He continued to explain the model is unaffected because the same amount of water is going to be pumped.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Draucker made a motion to support staff’s proposed variance policy. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Haslett, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**4. Changed Water Use Inside the Central Management Area**

Executive Director Beck informed the SAC that the changed water use in the CMA would be considered in by the Basin-Wide Water Management ad hoc.

**5. Central Management Area Boundary (Hydrological vs Operational)**

Executive Director Beck provided an overview of the four (4) options for determining the boundary for the CMA which is provided in the SAC packet.

Vice Chair DeBranch commented there that there are some issues with the well locations on the map. Committee Member Haslett suggested removing the variance fee to get more information for the map from landowners and Committee Member Gaillard suggested speaking with each parcel owner on the hydrological boundary.

Chair Kelly stated he is in favor of option two.

Vice Chair DeBranch asked staff to explain how these options affect the sustainability yield. Mr. Beck responded that the sustainability yield will remain the same regardless of which option is selected.

Chair Kelly made a motion to approve option 2. There is no second to the motion.

Committee Member Gaillard suggested going to each farmer and asking for their opinion since their allocation may be impacted.

**6. Management Area Criteria Evaluation**

Mr. Blakslee informed the SAC that options to consider other criteria for management areas will be considered by an ad hoc prior to the 2025 GSP update.

**7. Management Area Update**

Mr. Blakslee informed the SAC the management area designations will be considered when the model is updated.

**8. Administration of Pumping Reduction**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the process for administration of pumping reduction which is provided in the SAC packet.

Stakeholder Jim Wegis asked if water extractors outside of the CMA would be required to report water use. Mr. Blakslee responded that all those with a well in the Cuyama basin would be required to report water use annually.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Haslett made a motion to adopt action item 8 as presented. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Gaillard, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**9. Non-Compliance/ Over Pumping Enforcement**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the policy to address potential non-compliance/over pumping enforcement which is provided in the SAC packet.

Committee Member Gaillard asked what occurs when someone does not report their water use. Legal counsel Alex Dominguez responded the GSA has authority to impose higher penalties and take legal action. Committee Member Gaillard suggested the GSA get feedback from farmers, specifically those who are non-compliant.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle suggested adding verbiage that the GSA will revisit this policy in two years. Vice Chair DeBranch noted the Board can address this throughout the process. Executive Director Beck added when the annual report is done the Board would reconsider the process, if needed.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Haslett made a motion to support staff's proposal. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Haslett, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**d. Direction on GSA Well Permit Policy**

Mr. Blakeslee provided an overview of the proposed well permit process and Mr. Beck presented an overview of CBGSA requirements for new and modified wells. Mr. Blakslee reviewed considerations for the proposed well permit GSA hydrologic study requirement.

Committee Member Haslett and Vice Chair DeBranch suggested removing the 100 feet distance requirement and replacing it with the ability to put a replacement well anywhere on the property.

Chair Kelly commented that a larger or deeper well would not be a replacement well and he is in agreement with the first bullet point as presented.

Stakeholder Spencer Harris noted that moving a well over 100 feet vertically and 100 feet horizontally are completely different. He said if a well is drilled 100 feet deeper, it would be considered a new well. Committee Member Gaillard responded that if a well goes dry one would need to drill a deeper well, which is a replacement well.

Chair Kelly and Committee Member Haslett noted there needs to be a hydrologic study for construction of a new well, but not for modification to wells or replacement wells. Stakeholder Dan Clifford commented that a 100 feet distance requirement for replacement wells are too restricting. Committee Member Haslett commented that the requirements are too limiting and broad when dealing with replacement wells. Vice Chair DeBranch added that the requirements for construction of new wells seem restrictive.

Committee Member Haslett noted the Board may want to consider putting parameters in place to designate the distance of a new well to an existing well.

**e. Direction on Effort to Identify Potential Non-Reporting Pumpers**

Mr. Blakeslee provided an overview of the process that was reviewed with the ad hoc and the analysis staff is performing. Chair Kelly asked how this is budgeted. Mr. Blakeslee replied that the grant is funding this effort.

**f. Direction on Public Workshop**

Mr. Blakeslee informed the SAC this item was reviewed at the last meeting and is requesting feedback from the Board. Committee Member Gaillard suggested holding this public workshop prior to the September deadline for reporting variance.

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

Mr. Van Lienden reviewed the May and June staff accomplishments.

**h. Direction on Adaptive Management Analysis**

Mr. Van Lienden reviewed the adaptive management analysis approach which is included in the SAC packet.

**i. Update on Monitoring Network Implementation**

Mr. Blakeslee provided an overview of the monitoring network implementation which is provided in the SAC packet.

Committee Member Haslett asked Mr. Beck if the water quality test meet California drinking water standards. Mr. Beck responded that the drinking water standards pertain to public water systems, but the laboratory test is the same technique regardless of the sample coming from an agriculture or domestic well.

**7. Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

**a. Report of the Executive Committee Member**

Nothing to report.

**b. Report of the General Counsel**

Nothing to report.

**c. Board of Committee Member s Agenda Review**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the July 6, 2022, CBGSA Board meeting agenda which is provided in the SAC packet.

**8. Items for Upcoming Sessions**

Committee Member Haslett asked how the administrative staff and Board are approaching the conflict of interest for Bolthouse and Grimmway having representatives on the Boards. Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez replied that legal is reviewing this matter and will discuss in more detail at the Board meeting on July 6, 2022.

**9. Committee Forum**

Chair Kelly asked if the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) electromagnetic survey data will be included on CBGSA website. Mr. Van Lienden responded that it is available on DWR's website, and Mr. Blakslee said a link will be added to the CBGSA website.

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

Stakeholder Guy Lingo thanked the CBGSA staff for hosting this meeting.

**11. Correspondence**

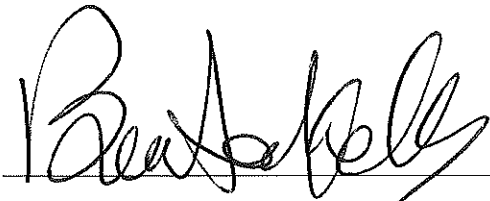
Mr. Blakslee reported that there were two pieces of correspondence. One from Kathleen March and the other from Robbie Jaffee, which are included in the SAC packet.

**12. Adjourn**

Vice Chair DeBranch adjourned the meeting at 9:53 PM.

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Minutes approved by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency the 1<sup>st</sup> day of September 2022.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE  
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly: 

ATTEST:

Vice Chair DeBranch: 

