

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Special Meeting

April 25, 2024

Meetings Minutes

PRESENT:

Kelly, Brenton – Chair
DeBranch, Brad – Vice Chair
Adams, Karen
Gaillard, Jean
Haslett, Joe
Jaffe, Roberta
Lewis, Dave

Beck, Jim – Executive Director
Blakslee, Taylor – Assistant Executive Director
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel
Van Lienden, Brian – Woodard & Curran

ABSENT:

Furstenfeld, Jake

1. Call to Order

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Kelly led the pledge of allegiance.

4. Meeting Protocol

Assistant Executive Director Taylor Blakslee provided direction on the meeting protocols in facilitating a remote meeting.

5. Approval of Minutes

Chair Kelly opened the floor for comments on the February 29, 2024, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes.

MOTION

Committee Member Adams made a motion to approve the February 29, 2024, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Jaffe, a roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

AYES: Adams, Caufield, DeBranch, Gaillard, Haslett, Jaffe, Kelly, Lewis
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Furstenfeld

6. Public Comment

Nothing to report.

Chair Kelly noted that an email to CBGSA stakeholders went out on April 23, 2024, informing and encouraging individuals to report dry wells.

7. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation

a. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on DMS

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of potential data management system (DMS) improvements, which is included in the SAC packet, and tech forum feedback.

Committee Member Adams asked about a pumping portal to track allocations. Mr. Van Lienden responded that pending Board direction this option is technically feasible. Mr. Blakslee commented that an allocation tracking system has been previously considered by the Board and they have elected to continue to use the current reporting system for now.

Chair Kelly asked Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez if there are ways to track data without breaching data privacy concerns. Mr. Dominguez replied we have faced a similar situation in other basins and while there are certain protections for public utilities information, if a landowner is over their allocation it would be disclosed. Committee Member Jaffe asked how that information is shared, and Mr. Blakslee replied the Board will receive a report for the previous year's allocation against the usage for each landowner.

Committee Member DeBranch commented that these opportunities are currently grant-funded and implementing programs with grant funds is great, but the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) will ultimately be responsible to decide whether to fund program on a long-term basis.

b. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Website Update Options

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan website update options. Committee Member DeBranch commented it would be helpful to reorganize the website.

8. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Amendment Components

a. Update on GSP Components Schedule

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the GSP components Schedule which is provided in the SAC packet. He highlighted several changes to the schedule and said we are still on schedule, but all the slack has been used.

Stakeholder Adam Lovgren asked about the July model update release and asked for clarification on which definition of safe yield or sustainable yield the glidepath will be using. Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez replied the sustainable yield is more common to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) while the term safe yield typically is used in adjudications.

b. Authorize 90-Day Notice to Cities and Counties for an Amendment to the GSP and Set a Public Hearing on November 6, 2024

Legal Counsel Alex Domingues provided an overview of the 90-Day Notice to Cities and Counties for an amendment to the GSP and set a public hearing on November 6, 2024. He added that the CBGSA is required to send a letter to cities and counties outlining the GSP amendment process.

c. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Project and Management Action Options

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the project and management action options which is included in the SAC packet including the addition of two new projects for consideration.

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the flow meter recalibration program and rangeland and forest management project.

Committee Member Caufield asked if an assessment has been done to determine the potential results of the rangeland project. Mr. Van Lienden responded no it has not. Committee Member Caufield added it is important for Committee members understand the potential impact before approving a project.

Committee Member Gaillard commented that controlled burning would likely occur in protected land, and suggested staff consider vegetation management as opposed to prescribed burns. He noted there are many invasive species that could be managed and suggested to avoid forest management and focus on vegetation management in the Cuyama Valley.

Committee Member Lewis expressed concerns with the cost of a potential meter calibration program. Chair Kelly asked if the program is a part of current GSA policy that would be a cost shared by the GSA or landowners. Mr. Beck replied no cost estimates are available at this time.

Stakeholder Adam Lovegren asked if flow meter calibration could be funded retroactively by a grant. Mr. Blakslee replied there could be grant programs to assist in funding, but staff is not currently aware of any.

Committee Member Jaffe commented that she agrees with the staff recommendation to not include rangeland and forest management as project in the GSP, but does agree with Committee member Gaillard's comments to focus on invasive species and water intensive plants in the valley. Committee Member Adams agreed with this as well.

Stakeholder Ann Myhre suggested keeping the project language broad and open to vegetation management rather than listing a specific approach.

d. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Basin-Wide Water Management (*Continued Discussion*)

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the basin-wide water management options which is provided in the SAC packet. He reviewed points of discussion from the last Board meeting in March 2024.

He reported that staff developed maps for SAC and Board review based on feedback in February and March 2024 to consider reviewing water budgets based on physical features and modeling data. Mr. Beck added that these areas do not identify subbasins but potential areas to consider water management policy in.

Committee Member Caufield commented he is not opposed to the areas on the map, and asked if the faults or land use are deciding the management areas. Chair Kelly replied we are just talking about irrigated lands.

Committee Member Jaffe commented we have always been looking at these three areas and how different they are in terms of land use and geology. She said we have also talked a lot about data gaps, and there are currently county approved exploratory oil wells being drilled in the county. She said the well will be drilled 11,000 feet deep and we can learn a lot about the basin if this happens.

Committee Member Haslett commented on one of the differences you experience the further west you go in the basin is the source of water and geography. He said it is important to consider this attribute when trying to manage the basin as a whole. Mr. Beck asked if Mr. Haslett would like the Board to consider bifurcating the western region and Mr. Haslett replied yes based on geographical differences.

Mr. Van Lienden commented that staff has land use data for all areas but we are focusing on irrigated lands and Land IQ will also be verifying these areas and refining existing data.

Committee Member Debranch commented that this item and maps might be premature and we ought to consider some other items before we develop management areas. He added he does not understand how you can have multiple water budgets if everything is connected.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle asked for an update on the current fault investigation. Mr. Van Lienden replied we will review fault investigation findings in a later agenda item. She said if you go forward on managing different areas, you will need strong justifications on the boundaries and it is important to base that off of technical studies.

Committee Member Adams asked if a vote to accept the four areas is made, when would the opportunity to revise management areas occur. Mr. Blakelee replied that a concurrence to consider water budgets in the four areas would result in Woodard & Curran developing budget numbers for the four outlined areas for further technical examination of water management is required for those areas.

Committee Member Gaillard said he would like to see three budgets, central parts and all surrounding areas. He said you have to look at the entire central area, rather than the CMA and surrounding areas.

Committee Member Haslett commented he disagrees with the premise of the whole motion, and said the central management area is the issue, and no other management areas need to be created. He said water use in the other areas is not the issue, the central management areas is, and he only agrees with managing water in the Central Management Area.

Committee Member Gaillard commented that he is in favor of one management area and revisiting other areas every five years.

Committee Member Adams said she agreed with one management area as well, since no data was introduced that showed the other areas are interconnected.

Chair Kelly said he would like to see water budgets for all four areas.

Committee Member Caufield said he would like to see the data for either three or four areas.

Committee Member Jaffe said she would like to see the data for the four areas and is interested in keeping the east and west regions separated.

Vice Chair DeBranch said he was not in favor of multiple budgets and recommended the basin be treated as a whole.

Committee Member Lewis said he lives in the CMA, and it is obvious a handful of pumpers have caused a lot of the problems in the CMA and did not provide a recommendation for this item.

e. Discuss and Take Appropriate on GSP Draft Chapter

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the GSP draft chapters. He reported that if approved these chapters would be included in the draft GSP in September and in the final for the public hearing in November 2024.

Chair Kelly asked if this is the final version or if comments or edits can be made. Mr. Blakslee replied yes edits can be made to the chapters.

Committee Member Jaffe asked if there was an update on Interconnected surface water areas, she also said Chapter 3 needs some fact checking and needs to be updated. Mr. Van Lienden replied staff will ensure these changes are corrected.

Mr. Beck said you can make a motion to approve the chapters with the recommended corrections. Chair Kelly commented it is hard to approve a chapter without an update made to the items being listed for correction.

Committee Member Jaffe noted that the GDE section needs to be reexamined.

The SAC elected not to vote on Chapters 3 or 5 due to several errors in the draft chapter.

9. Technical Updates

a. Update on Fault Investigation Study

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the fault investigation study which is included in the SAC packet.

Chair Kelly asked if additional well data could be obtained from the new monitoring well and Mr. Van Lienden replied staff could potentially get more information from the driller and incorporate into the analysis.

Committee Member Lewis asked for the information to be simplified for stakeholder review.

Mr. Van Lienden commented that the information being presented is preliminary and an update will be provided in July 2024.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle commented that the fault investigation is related to previous efforts to try and change the basin boundaries and is helpful to determining the permeability of the faults.

b. Update on Water Resources Model

Mr. Van Lienden provided an update on the water resources model which is provided in the SAC

packet.

Stakeholder Adam Lovgren commented that staff should consider a different model for smaller field sizes to make it more accurate.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle asked how rainfall is being accounted for in the model, and Mr. Van Lienden replied it take into account all water coming into and being used within the basin.

Committee Member Haslett asked if the data being shown is just for the CMA or the entire basin. Mr. Van Lienden replied the data being shown is for the entire basin.

c. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the GSP activities which is provided in the SAC packet.

Micah Eggleton commented that the wrong version of GSP chapter 3 was inadvertently distributed and a correct version will be shared in the Board packet.

d. Update on Grant-Funded Projects

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the grant-funded projects which is provided in the SAC packet.

Committee Member Lewis commented it would be nice to have local roads displayed on the maps.

10. Administrative Updates

a. Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Blakslee reported that a dry well reporting notice was emailed on April 23, 2024. He also reported on the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024-2025 groundwater extraction fee hearing, and the July 2024 public workshop.

Committee Member Lewis asked what reporting a dry well will do. Mr. Blakelee replied it triggers an investigation and helps the GSA identify if the well is experiencing an outage due to water levels or mechanical functions.

Stakeholder Lynn Carlisle commented that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has set up a reporting system and is trying to develop programs to help dry wells. She asked if the reports are being submitted to DWR's My Dry Well system. Mr. Blakelee replied yes, the report would be uploaded to the DWR system but no reports have been received to-date.

b. Report of the General Counsel

Nothing to report.

c. Board of Directors Agenda Review

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the Board of Directors Agenda which is included in the SAC Packet.

11. Items for Upcoming Sessions

Nothing to report.

Committee Member Jaffe asked if there is a policy for new wells or replacement wells. Mr. Blakslee replied there is a policy for both new wells and replacement wells and each has a form that must be filled out.

12. Committee Forum

Nothing to report.

13. Public Comment

Nothing to report.

14. Correspondence

Nothing to report.

15. Adjourn

Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly: *Brenton Kelly*
Brenton Kelly (Mar 4, 2025 14:14 PST)

ATTEST:

Vice Chair DeBranch: *Brad DeBranch*
Brad DeBranch (Feb 24, 2025 13:15 PST)