

# Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Standing Advisory Committee Meeting

June 26, 2025

## Meetings Minutes

### PRESENT:

Kelly, Brenton – Chair  
Haslett, Joe – Vice Chair  
DeBranch, Brad  
Gaillard, Jean  
Lewis, Dave  
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Bianchi, Grace – Project Coordinator  
Blakslee, Taylor – Assistant Executive Director  
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel  
Van Lienden, Brian – Woodard & Curran

### ABSENT:

Caufield, John  
Jaffe, Roberta

#### 1. Call to Order

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Standing Advisory Committee (SAC)  
Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call

Ms. Bianchi called roll of the Committee (shown above).

#### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Kelly led the pledge of allegiance.

#### 4. Meeting Protocol

Project Coordinator Grace Bianchi provided an overview of the meeting protocols in facilitating a hybrid meeting.

#### 5. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Committee Member Lewis asked about penalties on over pumping allocation.

### Action Items

#### 6. Approval of May 1, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Committee Chair Kelly opened the floor for comments on the May 1, 2025, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes.

Committee Member Gaillard commented on the Apache Canyon potential nonreported APN. Chair Kelly noted a correction on page 6.

### MOTION

Committee Member Haslett made a motion to approve May 1, 2025, CBGSA SAC meeting minutes, with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Gaillard. A roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

## **7. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation**

### **a. Approve CIMIS Station Landowner Agreement**

Mr. Blakslee provided a brief overview of the CIMIS station landowner agreement that is included for approval.

There was a general committee consensus to approve the agreement.

### **b. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on the Plan and Timeline to Evaluate Allocations in the Ventucopa Management Area**

Mr. Blakslee provided background on the expanding allocations in the Ventucopa Management Area.

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the proposed process to assess available data and current model. He provided an overview of the draft plan and timeline for assessing the implementation of allocations.

Committee Member Haslett asked whether groundwater levels would be analyzed in the evaluation.

Mr. Van Lienden noted that the analysis will assess groundwater level data to compare to model and this process will not include additional data collection.

Stakeholder Tristan Zannon commented on conditions in the Ventucopa area due to seasonal recharge.

### **c. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Identifying Regions to Use for Evaluating Expanded Allocations and Overview and Evaluation Plan and Schedule**

Mr. Blakslee reviewed the objective of this item and the need to identify regions for evaluating expanded allocations. He emphasized that staff are not looking for direction on regions to use for allocation of the sustainable yield at this time.

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of potential options for regions to use in the analysis. Mr. Blakslee noted that this could potentially be done on an annual basis.

Committee Member Haslett commented on basin geology and its limit to water availability outside the Central Management Area (CMA).

Committee Member Gaillard commented on new development in the basin without historic pumping could cause localized impacts. He questioned how these areas acquired permits.

Mr. Blakslee responded that well permitting is handled by the County and no restrictions exist outside the CMA.

Committee Member DeBranch emphasized that basin-wide reductions are necessary and he is in favor of having one region.

Committee Chair Kelly commented in favor of Option 3. He referenced the GSP, Chapter Basin settings in which United States Geological Survey (USGS) identified 9 regions. It's a diverse basin and there are a lot of elements that impact the basin so it should be analyzed as such.

Committee Member Haslett commented in favor of Option 3 (5+ analysis). He noted that there is a distinct difference of hydrology in many areas of the basin.

Mr. Blakslee noted that threshold regions were not used to establish management criteria.

Committee Member Gaillard commented in favor of Option 2 (5 regions).

Committee Member Lewis commented in favor of one collective region.

Stakeholder Tristan Zannon commented that in Ventucopa, it is difficult to over pump in the Ventucopa Area.

**d. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on the CMA Allocation Exchanges Policy (i.e. Water Markets)**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the background, potential implementation schedule, and key policy considerations.

- Trading System Type - SAC consensus in favor of Free market, but concerned about price
  - Committee Member Gaillard raised concerns about regulatory compliance.
  - Stakeholder Tristan Zannon asked if landowners are willing to sell water and noted he is at risk of removing crops, similar to Mr. Lewis.
  - Committee Member Haslett commented that an allocations exchange policy is premature since the adjudication could affect its feasibility.
- Landowner Participant Eligibility - SAC consensus of requiring buyers and sellers be in good standing with the CBGSA.
- Trading Rules
  - SAC in favor of buyer and seller in CMA be in good financial standing with the GSA
  - How much can be traded?
    - Supports trading only the 2040 sustainable yield – Kelly, Gaillard
    - Supports trading the entirety of a landowner's allocation – Haslett, Lewis
    - Committee Member DeBranch stated that experts should determine how much water can be traded and that the exchange discussion may be premature without more technical guidance
    - Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez said that in other basins entire allocations are traded, not just sustainable yield
  - Trade Limitations
    - Committee Member Gaillard supports a mechanism to prevent extractions that exceed sustainable thresholds
    - Committee Member Haslett noted that trades should be regulated
    - Chair Kelly commented in favor of limiting trade distance

- Committee Member Haslett commented in favor of technical analysis of these options
- General support for technical review of trade distances and hydrologic connections
- Trade timeframe
  - Committee Member Haslett - supports the allowance of trades throughout the year and single or multiyear trades
  - Chair Kelly - in favor of flexibility for farmers, particularly multi-year trades for permanent crops that need stability
  - Committee Member Lewis – agreed that multi-year trades could help small farmers like himself plan ahead.
  - Committee Member Gaillard – noted short-term, one-year arrangements may allow the GSA to maintain oversight
  - Committee Member DeBranch – emphasized that experts should guide how much and how long trades should last
- GSA charge setup or admin fee - SAC supports admin fees to cover staff time.
- Protection for small users
  - In favor of reserving allocations for small farmers – Haslett, Kelly, Gaillard
- Tracking / Transparency
  - Mr. Blakslee noted that the board previously gave direction to develop a simple accounting system.
  - Chair Kelly asked how this relates to farming units. Mr. Blakslee noted that farming units must be an in an existing
- Approval Process: SAC consensus that trades should be handled administratively by staff rather than requiring Board approval.

**e. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on CMA Carryover Policy**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of key carryover policies.

Stakeholder Tristan Zannon asked about the scenario in which the carryover policy applies.

Committee Member Gaillard is not in favor of carryover policies.

Committee Member Lewis commented if the GSA doesn't allow carryover, then it penalizes landowners for staying under the glidepath. He is in support of a carryover policy.

Committee Member DeBranch said he supports a carryover policy and added that both the water market and carryover policy should be considered together.

SAC consensus in support of a carryover policy.

**f. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Revising Sustainable Management Criteria at Opti Well No. 118**

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the issue with the Opti Well No. 118 and reasoning to request revising sustainable management criteria.

Committee Member Haslett identified the well as his neighbor's and that it most likely is not in use.

The committee requested that staff add the hydrograph to the slide for the board meeting.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Haslett made a motion to revise the minimum threshold to 72 feet for well 118 . The motion was seconded by Committee Member Gaillard. A roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

- g. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Well 608 in the Representative Monitoring Network**  
 Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the issue with well 608 and reasoning for requesting its replacement.

Committee Member Gaillard asked whether the well had gone dry and why it was destroyed.

Mr. Van Lienden responded that the landowner chose to destroy it.

**MOTION**

Committee Member Gaillard made a motion to replace Well 608 with the newly installed well in the representative monitoring network. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Haslett. A roll call vote was made, and the motion passed.

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

**8. Technical Updates**

- a. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities**

Mr. Van Lienden noted that the update on GSP activities is provided in the SAC packet.

- b. Update on Grant-Funded Projects**

Mr. Van Lienden provided a brief update on the grant-funded projects, which is provided in the SAC packet.

- c. Update on April 2025 Groundwater Conditions Report**

Mr. Van Lienden provided a brief overview of the April 2025 groundwater conditions, which is provided in the packet.

Chair Kelly pointed out an anomaly with Opti Well #95. Mr. Blakslee commented that staff will look into it.

**9. Administrative Updates**

- a. Report of the Executive Director**

Nothing to report.

- b. Report of the General Counsel**

Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez provided a brief update on the adjudication process.

- c. Board of Directors Agenda Review**

Mr. Blakslee provided a brief overview of the July 9, 2025, CBGSA Board Meeting agenda, which is provided in the SAC packet.

**10. Items for Upcoming Sessions**

Nothing to report.

**11. Committee Forum**

Committee Member Haslett asked about the status of DWR’s review of the submitted GSP.

DWR Contact George Perez confirmed they are working diligently to review the GSP and provide feedback within the two-year stipulation.

**12. Correspondence**

Nothing to report.

**13. Adjourn**

Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE  
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair Kelly: *Brenton Kelly*  
Brenton Kelly (Sep 4, 2025 11:31:00 PDT)

ATTEST:  
Vice Chair Haslett: *Haslett*  
Joe Haslett (Sep 3, 2025 13:30:32 PDT)