

**Record of the Minutes of the  
Beaumont Basin Committee Meeting of the  
Beaumont Basin Watermaster  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, November 1, 2023**

**Meeting Location:**

Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District  
560 Magnolia Ave.  
Beaumont, CA 92223

**I. Call to Order**

*Chair Art Vela called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.*

**II. Roll Call**

<i>City of Banning</i>	<i>Art Vela</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>City of Beaumont</i>	<i>Robert Vestal</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District</i>	<i>Dan Jagers</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>South Mesa Water Company</i>	<i>David Armstrong</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Yucaipa Valley Water District</i>	<i>Joe Zoba</i>	<i>Present</i>

*Hannibal Blandon and Thomas Harder were present as engineers for the Beaumont Basin Watermaster (BBWM).*

*Steve Stuart of Dudek was present as BBWM administrator.*

*Members of the public who registered and / or attended:*

Lance Eckhart, San Geronio Pass Water Agency General Manager

Larry Smith, San Geronio Pass Water Agency

Ron Duncan, San Geronio Pass Water Agency

Emmett Campbell, San Geronio Pass Water Agency

Matt Howard, San Geronio Pass Water Agency

Kendall Lovell, Fennemore Law

Allison Edmisten, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Jennifer Ares, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Jim Vandewater

Robert Rasha, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

Lynda Kerney, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

Inmar Shihab, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

Evan Ward, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

Mark Swanson, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

**III. Pledge of Allegiance:** Chair Vela led the pledge.

**IV. Public Comments:** None.

## V. Workshop / Discussion Items

### A. Update on the Safe Yield Redetermination

Thomas Harder reported that work is proceeding on the safe yield. He discussed the model and its calibration. Using a historical calibration, prior years' safe yields were: 1978 to 2022 = 6,700 af, 2013 to 2022 = 6,200 af, he noted.

Mr. Harder explained the program and the running of multiple models, and statistical range. Currently, the model is running 200 different scenarios, and staff will recommend the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. There will be a difference of hundreds of acre-feet, could be more or could be less, he noted.

### B. Mission and Vision Statement

Current Mission Statement:

*Watermaster's mission is to manage the yield and storage within the Beaumont Basin Basin to provide maximum benefit to the people dependent on it*

Steve Stuart read the mission statement, reviewed the stipulated Judgment, and broached the potential for a water management plan including a goal or goals.

### C. Watermaster Goal for the Basin

### D. Compare Conditions in Beaumont Basin to SGMA Sustainability Criteria

### E. Identify next steps

Member Armstrong pointed out the Beaumont Basin is not a Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) basin, and the problems are known: east side / west side situation. He suggested supporting the San Geronio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA) in establishing recharge basins on the west side, as the solution is to get water into the ground.

Chair Vela noted value in the discussion and in goal setting while bearing in mind the judgement as the underlining document. There are good management ideas in SGMA that could be applied to the Basin. He indicated concern with establishing and being fully invested in the group and the goals that will make management of the Basin as a whole and the individual use of the Basin more restrictive.

Committee Members provided some suggestions for ongoing discussion and potential goals:

Basin level:

- Maintain current level in the Basin, or analyze and determine an acceptable threshold (level is managed up and down), or restore Basin to the 2004 level or another baseline
- Mr. Harder asked, "What is the level at which things become significant and unreasonable?" He noted that in other basins, levels have been identified at which lowering of pumps would be required. He described "material physical injury" and suggested analysis of current pumping and depth of wells, and what level would be considered and create an untenable position.

Other items of discussion:

- Wells are finite and there is lack of State Project Water (SPW)
- The SGPWA may not always be there to rely on
- How will SPW be divided in the future
- Work will be better as a group, by utilizing all resources to maximize success
- How to manage and prevent adverse effects
- What is the future and what is sustainable? Create a new forecast
- Impacts of AB 606 and SB 1668 (including Urban Water Management Plans)
- Look at realistic operational ranges of the 30-mile Basin
- Identify issues that prevent achieving beneficial use of groundwater for all users
- Achieve long-term groundwater sustainability
- System for early acknowledgement of any collapsing of the Basin without waiting for the redetermination
- Prioritization of SGPWA supply when SPW is not available and/or storage accounts are at zero

Member Armstrong indicated that SMWC Well 4 is better now than in the past, and suggested the group may be looking for a problem when there is none, but supported the production of a plan. The solution is for the SGPWA to put a recharge basin on the west side.

Member Zoba pointed to the depression of 40,000 af in the north part of the Basin, which impacts YVWD.

Emmett Campbell asked how much of that decline was due to the surplus water (160,000 af allowed to be pumped in excess of the safe yield). Mr. Harder noted it would have to be analyzed. Member Zoba said he disagreed, explaining it is an issue of pumping more water than could be recovered. The surplus water still appears in the members' storage accounts, Campbell noted. Mr. Eckhart noted that controlled overdraft is built into the Judgment, and it happens to be geographically concentrated in an area. He suggested that any analysis determine the location of any overlayers that cannot be managed by the Watermaster.

Member Zoba stated the decline is near a BCVWD well and should not have gotten to that point, although it is allowed per the Judgment, but now there is a deficit depression in the Basin that has no natural recharge and nothing significant to bring it back up. Member Jagers detailed BCVWD's Well 29 extraction and efforts to manage overdraft in that area, and pointed to extraction by the golf course and other overlies. He said he would appreciate a scientific look and said BCVWD is supportive of good management of the Basin. Member Zoba suggested the consultants look into it for a future agenda item to understand why that part of the Basin is so low. The obligation is to a healthy Basin; it must be left better off for those following, he added. Member Jagers cautioned against oversimplification.

Lance Eckhart pointed to the Urban Water Management Plans and suggested the inclusion of elements of a collaborative integrated plan and begin to look at projects.

Chair Vela returned the discussion to goals. Mr. Stuart noted there is a condition in the Basin that will experience issues and suggested an operational look with application of criteria, determination of risk, and establishment of goals based on a minimum threshold. It can start with hydrogeology, he stated.

Mr. Harder posited that the SGMA approach it is a process with helpful things to achieve a sustainable Basin. He reiterated the recharge imbalance between the eastern and western portions of the Basin and posed questions, does the potential extraction of the storage account balances present a potential for undesirable results, and what are the implications for not accounting for storage losses? If the balances are drawn to zero, will an untenable position be created, and what is the untenable position?

Storage has declined since adjudication in 2003, Harder explained, but with the advent of supplemental recharge in 2007, the Basin as a whole was balanced. Since about 2010, the level has been fairly stable, and from a Basin-wide standpoint, things look fairly sustainable, he said.

Harder compared the adjudication to SGMA and discussed best management practices and the SGMA process and management criteria. Potentially impacting the Beaumont Basin are sustainability indicators: chronic lowering of groundwater levels, reduction of groundwater in storage, and degraded groundwater quality. Undesirable results would be identified, along with the conditions that cause them, he said. He pointed to overlie wells on the west side and the need to identify conditions by which they would be able to continue to pump, and if there were a risk that they would not continue to be able to do so.

The groundwater flow model is the tool which will help make determinations, Harder continued.

Member Zoba pointed out that typically, imported water is regarded as a supplemental water source but this Basin must obtain every drop of imported water possible in order to remain sustainable. If there is a hiccup and agencies are not mindful of development, more SPW will be run through a treatment plant rather than recharged to the Basin. He noted concern that the water needs to stay in the Basin. More will always be needed from the SGPWA; the idea of getting back to 2004 levels is impossible, and it must be figured out what it takes to maintain today's levels and what problems will be encountered later on, he said.

Eckhart questioned the raising of groundwater levels when there is built in controlled overdraft to create storage in the adjudication. He explained the SGPWA supply portfolio has changed with investment in the Sites Reservoir and other sources. He described the importance of more aggressive regional conservation programs and full use of recycled water. Imported water is the critical path for the region, and has been anticipated for more than 60 years, he noted.

Eckhart emphasized the need to work together to smartly use the imported water over and over again, and to highest and best use.

Member Zoba provided history on the premise of the temporary surplus and the planned contract with Metropolitan Water District (MWD) to fill the Basin, and the decision not to issue the RFP to fill the Basin. Member Armstrong noted that would be expensive water. Harder stated the Dry Year Yield Program from Chino has its pluses and minuses, but it did fund a few projects. Member Jagers recalled that the MWD contract was delayed in order to build recharge ponds, but the adjudication was followed.

The desired goal is to average orders over time to meet growth and provide redundancy, Jagers continued. He discussed the management of the storage account and reiterated that with the recent legislation, less water would be sold.

In response to Chair Vela, Mr. Harder explained the model scenarios and projections. It calculated what the safe yield is projected to be into the future. It is assumed that the recharge water is there to supply all of the overpumping (unmet replenishment), and that agencies do not have to take from their storage accounts to meet demands. Chair Vela suggested a look at a more realistic scenario that the water is not there, and agencies are pulling from storage.

There may be an economic motivator to use of water in storage when imported water costs \$399 per af, Eckhart pointed out.

Chair Vela acknowledged the serious concerns and Harder suggested running various scenarios to determine the effect on the safe yield to see if any undesirable results emerge.

Member Jagers advised about the emergency connection provided by BCVWD to Tukwet Canyon Golf Course and may be exchanged for overlie credit. In wet years, partnerships may be considered to deliver as much as possible by extraction to areas that could turn off and help recover the Basin via in-lieu recharge, Jagers noted.

Campbell suggested it may be useful to look at storage accounts to separate how much of each is the surplus water and how much is imported. Stuart recalled the discussion at the last meeting regarding priority for extraction of water.

Member Zoba questioned what would happen when SPW is not available, related to study of elasticity of the Basin. Assuming all storage accounts at zero and a 50 percent water year, which SGPWA retailer would get the water, how much, and why, he asked. Information regarding prioritization is needed for planning purposes, he said. Eckhart said it is determined through projections in each agency's Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) and SGPWA is working on a strategic portfolio plan. The unavailability of SPW has not yet been addressed, he added, and suggested improvements could be made in demand reduction and recycled water. SGPWA is pursuing the ability to maximize imports, but business certainty will be needed for making large purchases, mainly through urban planning. SGPWA reacts to the planned needs for the community it serves, he stated.

Member Jagers acknowledged the SGPWA work toward a solution. Chair Vela indicated that this discussion and any resulting goals will drive the way the SGPWA acts, noting discussions could be tense. Jagers pointed to previous conversations and said the group is working together.

Eckhart further discussed the SGPWA activities and water portfolio, emphasizing that the agency needs to know what the retailers need. Member Zoba suggested quarterly managers meetings.

Mr. Harder suggested a baseline as a means to evaluate different scenarios, then discussion of the appropriate use of water. The Judgment shows appropriator storage accounts as part of an equation that feeds into what is defined as the appropriator production right, he said. That was the only measure that looked at if the appropriator were to exceed the production right, then there would be a cause for funds going into bringing in surplus water. Part of the equation included the temporary surplus, he noted. The storage accounts are part of an equation to check whether or not the appropriators are then obligated to contribute funds to bring additional water into the Basin; it is not a physical measure but a check on production.

Member Zoba suggested adding this to a future agenda, saying he did not think the adjudication allows for going negative. Mr. Harder indicated that if going negative, the appropriator would have to contribute funds to buy the surplus water to make up the deficit. Member Zoba noted the potential for declining the Basin and argued it must remain at zero to stay sustainable. Mr. Campbell said if overpumping, there is an obligation to pay for replenishment with imported water when available. Zoba asked if that would then become a priority for water deliveries while shorting an agency that isn't negative. Jagers suggested this would apply to a demonstrated bad actor, which this area does not seem to have to date. All are doing their part, he noted, and must be proactive in wet years as partners.

Member Armstrong said he was glad the Basin is fairly healthy and commended the SGPWA on the recharge basins.

Members agreed the workshop format is good for discussion.

Mr. Stuart indicated that he and Mr. Harder would work together to move the process forward and present it at the next meeting. Mr. Harder said he would present scenarios to review and consider, but will get the safe yield done first.

Chair Vela invited public comment. There was none.

## VI. Topics for Future Meetings

	Item	Date Listed
A	Development of a Recycled Water Policy	3/27/2019
B	Development of a return flow accounting policy	3/27/2019
C	Development of a methodology and policy to account for groundwater storage losses in the Basin / groundwater management	3/27/2019
D	Procurement Policy including thresholds for RFP process	8/17/2021
E	Incidental discharge	10/6/2021
F	Evaluation of Storage Issues in the Basin	Tabled from 12/2/2021 meeting
G	Monitoring of future west side well sites and methodologies, and potential collaboration with USGS	10/5/2022
H	Direction for use of different types of storage accounts	8/2/2023

I	Revision of Rules and Regulations: i. Committee participation by electeds ii. Mechanism for BBWM to collect funds if storage account is in deficit (Development of a rate for overproduction of right) iii. General modernization of rules and regulations iv. Clarification of overlier transfers process v. Proposal from Dudek for this work	8/2/2023
J	Process and categorization of water production for the annual report	8/2/2023
K	Discussion on what to do when an Appropriator goes negative	10/4/2023 and 11/1/2023

**VII. Comments from the Watermaster Committee Members**

None.

**VIII. Announcements**

A. The next meeting of the Beaumont Basin Watermaster is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

B. 2024 Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, January 10 at 11 a.m.	Special Meeting / Workshop
Wednesday, February 7 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 6 at 11 a.m.	Special Meeting / Workshop
Wednesday, April 3 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 5 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, August 7 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 2 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 4 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting

**XI. Adjournment**

*Chair Vela adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.*

Attest:

Daniel Jagers, Secretary  
Beaumont Basin Watermaster