

**Record of the Minutes of the
Beaumont Basin Committee Meeting of the
Beaumont Basin Watermaster
Special Meeting
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

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 11:06 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>Jennifer Ares</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.

Thierry Montoya was present as legal counsel for the BBWM.

Members of the public who registered and / or attended:

*Brittany Lim, South Mesa Water Company
Ron Duncan, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Kevin Watson, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Emmett Campbell, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Matt Howard, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Mike Kostelecky, Yucaipa Valley Water District
Joyce McInlire, Yucaipa Valley Water District
Erin Anton, Yucaipa Valley Water District
Thaxton Van Belle, City of Beaumont
Robert Rasha, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District
Lynda Kerney, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District
James Bean, 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 reset. They are still in the calibration phase of the numerical model. He said he expected to present the report in February 2024.

B. Watermaster Goal for the Basin

- a. Discuss Undesirable Result(s) for Basin
- b. Discuss Model Scenarios to Evaluate Undesirable Result(s)

C. 40,000-AF Storage Depletion in West Side of Beaumont Basin

[The following discussion addresses Discussion Items B and C]

Mr. Harder reminded the Committee about questions raised including potential for undesirable results, what is causing the imbalance on the west side of the basin, and how can testing be done to determine what is significant and reasonable to come up with benchmarks and criteria for Basin management. He reviewed the six Sustainable Groundwater Management Act sustainability indicators, explaining that the three most applicable to the Beaumont Basin are:

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels
- Reduction of groundwater in storage
- Degraded groundwater quality

Mr. Harder discussed the hydrology of the basin. He pointed out that recharge, both natural and artificial, flows to the southeast and does not reach the west part of the basin due to fault barriers. Other than precipitation, the west side gets little natural recharge.

Mr. Harder identified overlying party wells, most of which are located on the west side of the Beaumont Basin. The overlies pump about 1,600 af per year, with about 1,300 af pumping by appropriators in the western side of the Basin. All of the safe yield is assigned to appropriators mostly on the west side of the Basin, he noted. This might be something to consider for analysis in the future.

Over time, the change in groundwater storage shows negative on the west side of the Basin, Harder continued. On the east side, there has been a rise in groundwater storage and as a whole, the Basin increased in storage by 22,000 af since 2013. Without the imported water, this Basin is in overdraft, he stated. He provided two hydrographs for the Moreno 6 well (west side of Basin) and the Banning C-4 well (east side of Basin), to show a marked decline in water level in the west side compared to a steady level in the

east side since 2003. The Moreno 6 hydrograph shows that recharge is definitely not keeping up with the discharge.

Mr. Harder advised that the Beaumont Basin process is missing some of the SGMA required elements:

- Identification of what constitutes significant and unreasonable conditions
- Identification of metrics to avoid those conditions
- Identification of projects and management actions that would be implemented if significant and unreasonable conditions are possible

In order to test the boundaries of the Basin without causing an undesirable result, hypothetical situations with extreme conditions may be modeled, Mr. Harder continued. He presented unlikely but plausible scenarios for potential analysis to establish a basis for identifying significant and unreasonable results and provide a planning tool for future projects and management actions.

Member Jaggars pointed out there is approximately 335 million square feet of land on the west side of the Basin. One inch of rain across that area is 641 af of water, which, if 1/3 of it percolated that is about 211 af of contribution. Member Zoba has spoken about the reduction in area rainfall, he reminded, and calculated that loss at 630 af per year, which exacerbates the problem.

Member Jaggars also pointed out water loss on the west side. Irrigation water assigned to houses in Calimesa may have a return flow component, and those get conveyed down the same conduits to exit the Basin, he said. All solutions to capture the west side flow as it exits and bring it back up should be considered, he suggested.

Extraction is being considered in the area of the southeast where water is lost from the recharge locations, Jaggars continued. As well sites are developed, all the tools available should be used to strategize where to capture water and bring back into the system.

Mr. Harder added that one of the best ways to mitigate groundwater level decline is in-lieu supply (recycled water) and pointed to the golf courses on the west side. If recycled water can be brought to the overlies in lieu pumping, that would make a big difference, he said.

Chair Vela commented that it is interesting and challenging that a majority of the overlying water right is allocated to the side of the Basin on which there is not much imported or natural recharge. How sustainable is that, he asked. There is not much wiggle room in the adjudication, he noted, and even with alternatives, they will not happen overnight (i.e., a recharge facility on the west side is five to seven years out). This is a long-term issue

that should be resolved at some point, as demands on the west side will increase, he noted.

This will be able to be evaluated through the safe yield reset process, Mr. Harder noted. The process will include a forward projection for the next 10 years. It will be assumed that overlie pumping will continue at 2022 levels to give an idea of where groundwater level will be and provide a 10-year window to figure something out.

Chair Vela suggested interest in conceptually developing safe yields for each side for discussion purposes, as they are two different bowls of water. It can be estimated, Harder stated. Mr. Jaggars reminded that exchange / transmission of water / interconnect could be considered in the short term to mitigate and manage. He noted that San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA) General Manager Lance Eckhart has some ideas about and is working on recharge on the west side that may be achievable.

Member Armstrong said he does not see the west side as being in peril. In December 2022 he was at 285 feet to water, and in December 2023 was at 256 – a comeback of 30 feet over the last year. Mr. Harder described the separation with the Banning fault between the South Mesa Water Company (SMWC) area and the Basin area, and noted that SMWC is not pumping a significant amount from Well 4.

Member Armstrong noted the State Water Project (SWP) runs through the area and suggested the solution is the SGPWA building a recharge basin on the west side. He said he would rather spend money on purchasing State Project Water to put water in the ground and fix the problem. Mr. Harder noted that he is grouping the west area, and there may be areas to which that would not apply. There are multiple ways to solve the problem, he advised.

Harder asked, if current actions continue under extreme hydrology, at what point would results be bad.

Member Vestal asked if the model identifies the natural loss rate; Mr. Harder said it does. This has been done in the past for the Watermaster, he added. Most of the losses happen on the east side because of the amount of water flowing, he noted. Member Jaggars said he would provide a copy of that 2015 report to the City of Beaumont.

Mr. Harder further described the analysis process, based on the Safe Yield projection. He shared some example extreme hydrology scenarios and requested member input.

Member Jaggars pointed out the added benefit of high quality water from the SWP in wet years. He noted the benefits of the East Branch Extension

and Harder acknowledged that what is being done now is working, but the area is dependent on imported water to remain sustainable.

Mr. Harder shared a number of hypothetical extreme scenarios to help characterize and evaluate undesirable results in the Basin, and asked for input from the Appropriators to help devise the extreme hydrology scenarios. Mr. Harder offered to develop a scope and cost for evaluating these hypothetical scenarios. Mr. Harder requested ideas by the February meeting. Mr. Jaggars noted that BCVWD implemented stage 3 of the drought contingency plan in the last drought to reduce the use of groundwater. Mr. Jaggars requested an email from Mr. Harder with the request for further information for the extreme hydrology scenarios.

Mr. Stuart suggested ranking the different scenarios by probability and starting the simulation with the scenario most likely to occur, and adding next steps to get an understanding of what it takes to get to an undesirable condition.

D. Management of Storage Accounts

E. Identify next steps

Mr. Stuart recalled the 10-year period of controlled overdraft at the beginning of the stipulated judgment / physical solution. There was a question of whether or not, when that period ended, was the surplus water removed from storage accounts, he noted.

Mr. Stuart reviewed the four appropriators assigned a temporary surplus allocation from the 160,000 af determined to be in surplus and provided calculations of pumping from 2003 to 2013 versus the amount of temporary surplus allocated. At the end of the 10-year period, Banning, SMWC, and YVWD did not produce up to what was allocated to them, but BCVWD overproduced, he reported. About 21,000 af of surplus water was not extracted from the Basin over that 10-year period, and then the controlled overdraft period ended, he stated.

As mentioned in the Stipulated Judgment Exhibit C as a footnote to the table, "Controlled overdraft will not exceed 160,000 af during the first 10 years of operation under the physical solution," he read.

In an evaluation of all adjudicated basins in 2016, the State Water Resources Control Board indicated the Beaumont Basin appropriators should bank some of the temporary surplus water for future use after the period of controlled overdraft. Therefore, Stuart posited, any surplus water not extracted during that 10-year period is available to those appropriators that left it in the Basin, and it went into their storage accounts. It carries over because it was originally intended to provide additional capacity in the Basin for future use, conjunctive use projects, etc., and it is all based on

the 160,000 af of volume he said. There is no time assigned to that volume of water, he noted.

Stuart reviewed the graph Comparison of Appropriator Temporary Surplus to Annual Pumping 2003 to 2013 and presented calculations for each appropriator.

Mr. Stuart prepared a table that reorganized the listing of the parameters that factor into the Appropriator's Production Right calculation. The table was reorganized based on discussions at the last meeting.

Mr. Jagers pointed out these are an aggregate of tables in the annual reports and provide a "how did it happen" scenario. He noted that the Water Shortage Contingency Plan is based on this type of math and suggested all pay attention to the more sophisticated representations to be clear on what kind of shape each agency is in over time. He acknowledged the work of the SGPWA and emphasized the value of the data in management and planning.

Mr. Stuart suggested a revision of the Rules and Regulations to avoid future questions. He advised that he could put together a scope of work to make those changes. Chair Vela agreed and said he would be interested in what changes would be proposed and what Committee members would want. Chair Vela said he appreciated the graphical representations.

Member Jagers stated that agencies have worked to get themselves into shape, which is why the Basin is maintaining some balance. He suggested defining how the Committee operates to give future Committee members a document with an easy path to follow. He agreed that a holistic look at / overview of the Rules and Regulations would be beneficial and requested an outline of the project. Mr. Stuart said this could be an element.

Chair Vela noted that members may be hesitant to include anything that may restrict how the agencies individually manage their own storage accounts. Mr. Stuart clarified that it is more of a foundation for how to account for things defined in the judgment and the different parameters of the storage account.

Questions about the temporary surplus included when it ended, if at all, and the if overlied rights / appropriative water is not used within the year earned, is it lost – it has not been accounted for in that way, Stuart stated. These are the things the Rules and Regulations can lay out.

Chair Vela suggested the agencies first identify what banks of water they will be using, although it should be a net zero. Mr. Stuart indicated there does not seem to be a benefit to identify which bucket of water is being used for production.

Member Jagers referred to management actions taken during the drought, and explained he did not want to constrain BCVWD from operations. He noted cooperation between agencies and said he was encouraged by the current state and the tools being developed.

The Committee concurred on a request for Dudek to revise the Rules and Regulations. Mr. Stuart will provide a list of items to revisit and consider updating in the Rules and Regulations.

Member Jagers added that policies would include recycled water and recharge accounting systems, and stormwater capture. Return flow and losses were suggested by Chair Vela. Member Armstrong suggested that Legal Counsel Montoya participate in the revision. Mr. Montoya noted the Rules have been staid for a long time and should be updated, modernized, and made more relevant of the circumstances and challenges.

Mr. Blandon pointed out the summary information shown in the tables is very similar or identical to that presented in the annual report. He suggested inclusion of a new section in the annual report comparing the appropriators' production right to management of the storage account. He said he is beginning to compile the annual report for 2023. Chair Vela concurred.

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. Mechanism for BBWM to collect funds if storage account is in deficit (Development of a rate for overproduction of right) ii. General modernization of rules and regulations iii. Clarification of overlier transfers process iv. 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, February 7, 2024, at 11 a.m.
- B. 2024 Meeting Dates:

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 12:26 p.m.

Attest:


 Daniel Jagers, Secretary
 Beaumont Basin Watermaster