

**Record of the Minutes of the  
Beaumont Basin Committee Meeting of the  
Beaumont Basin Watermaster  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, June 11, 2025**

**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 11:03 a.m.*

**II. Roll Call**

<i>City of Banning</i>	<i>Art Vela</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>City of Beaumont</i>	<i>Dustin Christensen</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>Joseph Zoba (until 12:20 p.m.)</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Yucaipa Valley Water District</i>	<i>Jennifer Ares (after 12:20 p.m.)</i>	<i>Present</i>

*Hannibal Blandon was present as engineer for the Beaumont Basin Watermaster (BBWM).*

*Thomas Harder was present as hydrogeologist for BBWM.*

*Thierry Montoya was present as BBWM legal counsel.*

*Steve Stuart was present as Administrator of the BBWM.*

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

Thaxton Van Belle, City of Beaumont  
Erin Anton, Yucaipa Valley Water District  
Jennifer Ares, Yucaipa Valley Water District  
Joyce McIntire, Yucaipa Valley Water District  
Mike Kostelecky, Yucaipa Valley Water District  
Lance Eckhart, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Sarah Wargo, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Kevin Walton, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Larry Smith, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Blair Ball, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Matthew Howard, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Mickey Valdivia, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
Matt Ford, Thomas Harder & Co.  
Lauren Healey, Thomas Harder & Co.  
Daniel Slawson Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District  
Mark Swanson, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District  
Robert Rasha, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

Lynda Kerney, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District  
Wes Miliband, Miliband Water Law  
D. Lee  
Anthony Mendoza

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

**IV. Public Comments:** None.

**V. Consent Calendar**

A. Meeting Minutes

- i. April 2, 2025 Regular Meeting

B. Status Report on Water Level Monitoring throughout the Beaumont Basin through May 28, 2025

C. A Comparison of Production Rights versus Production through April 2025

*It was moved by Member Zoba and seconded by Member Jagers to approve the Consent Calendar items:*

AYES:	Armstrong, Christensen, Jagers, Vela, Zoba
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	None
STATUS:	Motion Approved 5-0

**VI. Reports**

A. Report from Engineering Consultant – Hannibal Blandon, ALDA Engineering

*Mr. Blandon reported some inconsistency issues at Yucaipa Well 34. He will investigate after the meeting.*

B. Report from Hydrogeological Consultant – Thomas Harder, Thomas Harder & Co. (THC) – No report

C. Report from Administrative Consultant – Steve Stuart, Dudek

*Mr. Stuart reminded everyone to use the microphones in order to be heard on the meeting recording.*

D. Report from Legal Counsel – Thierry Montoya – Frost, Brown, Todd – No report.

*11:06 a.m. City of Beaumont Alternate Member Christensen joined the meeting.*

## VII. Discussion Items

- A. Consideration of a request from the Morongo Band of Mission Indians (MBMI) to further amend the Beaumont Basin Judgment to authorize the transfer of overlying groundwater rights to other parties, including appropriators. The proposal would remove existing limitations that tie overlying rights to appurtenant land

Recommendation: Discussion only; no action

*Legal Counsel Thierry Montoya summarized a request submitted by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians (MBMI) seeking to amend the Beaumont Basin Judgment to permit the transfer of overlying groundwater rights to third parties.*

*Mr. Montoya explained that the requested amendment would authorize unrestricted transfers of overlying rights, thereby establishing a private groundwater market and decoupling the rights from the land. He stated that such a change would be inconsistent with California water law, under which overlying rights are inherently appurtenant to the land. He explained that the amended judgment already allows for limited transfers under specific conditions, citing sections 3.3(b), 3.3(e), Rule 6.5, and Form 5.*

*Mr. Montoya also noted that the proposed amendment would undermine the current mechanism that returns unused overlying rights to the appropriative pool, thereby weakening appropriators' access to reserves and complicating long term management. He concluded that the Tribe had not demonstrated a sufficient legal ground to modify the judgment, and recommended that the Watermaster decline to advance the proposed amendment.*

*Watermaster administrator Steve Stuart supported counsel's position and elaborated on the only two existing mechanisms in the Judgment that allow for transfer of overlying rights:*

- 1. When an appropriator provides potable water service to an overliar, the volume transferred compensates for the service.*
- 2. When an appropriator provides recycled water service to an overliar, the transfer is temporary and contingent on continued recycled water delivery.*

*Mr. Wes Miliband, representing the Morongo Band of Mission Indians (MBMI), suggested Watermaster legal counsel's memorandum was based on inaccurate assumptions about the Tribe's request. He emphasized that the Tribe's April 1 letter was intended to initiate dialogue on a possible amendment to the Beaumont Basin Judgment—not to present a fully formed legal proposal. He stated that his expectation was for a process to begin, potentially through the formation of an ad hoc committee, a meaningful dialog between the Watermaster and the Tribe.*

*Miliband clarified that the Tribe's goal is to enable transferability of overlying rights. He stressed that the proposal is consistent with California water law, and noted that other groundwater basins and adjudicated judgments in California permit this type of flexibility.*

*He explained that the current Judgment is a forbearance judgment (an uncommon structure) which limits water use options by overlying right holders. This limitation, he argued, not only affects the Tribe but also impacts appropriators and Watermaster operations. Miliband cited a 2021 court ruling by Judge Asbury that acknowledged this restriction and reinforced the view that the Judgment, as written, constrains beneficial use.*

*Miliband expressed desire to engage the Watermaster legal counsel in meaningful academic discussion. He said he intended to provide more robust documentation.*

*Public Comment: Mr. Mickey Valdivia, General Manager of the Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation and Park District, advised that the BCVRPD is also an overlying party (approximately 233 acre-feet). He said he would like to be included in the discussion with Mr. Miliband.*

*Member Armstrong reminded the Committee this topic had been previously covered in depth, but said he is willing to listen.*

*Chair Vela called for comment from the Committee, and Member Jagers expressed openness to discussion but emphasized the need for a more clearly defined written proposal before considering next steps. He noted BCVWD's historical and ongoing management of the Basin through development and return flows, pointing out that BCVWD delivers water to some developments that did not supply water rights, as they were moved around to parcels within the specific plans. Jagers stated that, absent scientific or technical justification, an ad hoc committee was premature and recommended that initial discussion take place in a public engineering workshop format.*

*Chair Vela stressed the potential complications to the Watermaster, and pushed back on the idea that the water is not being put to beneficial use. He said he was open to suggestion as to how to continue the dialogue and recommended further information could be brought forward by the Tribe before additional discussion.*

*Mr. Miliband noted the comment provided by Member Armstrong was related to Rule 7.3 and did not address the judgment topic itself. He also clarified that there is not a maximization of the beneficial use of water, and that is what the Tribe is seeking to move forward. He noted there appeared to be a lack of interest on the part of the Committee and legal counsel to engage, and noted*

*if there was no change, it would be taken under consideration for the next step.*

*The Committee took no action.*

**B. Update on Thomas Harder & Co. Study on Basin Losses**

**Recommendation: None. Presentation only**

*Thomas Harder presented the preliminary results of Task 1 of the Basin Losses Study initiated under the scope of work submitted in November 2024. The analysis aimed to evaluate the impacts of managed recharge on subsurface inflow and outflow patterns in the Beaumont Basin, comparing conditions before (1978–2006) and after (2006–2022) the implementation of managed recharge. Using the basin’s numerical groundwater model, Harder assessed changes in flow dynamics and conducted particle tracking simulations to evaluate travel paths and residence times of recharged water.*

*Key findings included:*

- Managed recharge has not altered the general flow directions into and out of the basin.*
- The West Beaumont area showed increased net inflow, primarily attributed to BCVWD’s Well 29 pumping, which induces a local groundwater depression.*
- In the East Beaumont area, managed recharge increased outflow at the Banning fault and reduced inflow from Cherry Valley due to changes in hydraulic gradients.*
- Particle tracking simulations indicated that managed recharge water remains in the basin as of December 2022 and has not exited the adjudicated area.*

*Mr. Harder clarified that these results represent one element of the broader water budget and are distinct from safe yield determinations. He concluded by outlining next steps, including analysis of three future recharge scenarios in coordination with San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA).*

*Member Jagers discussed the mechanical operation of the Basin, and emphasized the value of strategically placed wells around recharge facilities to hydraulically control groundwater mounding. He noted that northward extraction could help restore inflow balance, and stressed the importance of mechanically operating the Basin in conjunction with hydrogeological considerations. Jagers also pointed out potential influences from return flows not fully represented in the model.*

*Lance Eckhart commended the study and advocated for regional coordination to manage mounding and distribute imported water more effectively. He noted*

*that such hydraulic controls could bring water quality and cost benefits. Eckhart also highlighted SGPWA budget allocations for a basin master planning effort, which would build on the findings presented.*

C. Update on Draft 2024 Consolidated Annual Report and Engineering Report

Recommendation: Approve the 2024 Annual Report

*Engineer Hannibal Blandon presented the most recent comments and technical updates to the draft Annual Report and noted that information on the operating safe yield and changes in groundwater levels had become available and was now included.*

*Three major content areas had been incomplete in the draft presented in April but were now fully developed and discussed:*

- Treated Wastewater Discharge: The report's terminology was clarified to refer to "treated wastewater discharge" rather than "recharge," to reflect the fact that not all effluent is recharged to the Basin. Updated data from the City of Beaumont Wastewater Treatment Plant indicated an average discharge of 3.51 MGD in 2024, equating to approximately 3,958 acre-feet annually. Table 3-5 in the report was revised accordingly.*
- Chromium-6 (Cr-6) Update: A discussion of the new California Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Hexavalent Chromium (10 µg/L effective October 1, 2024, with compliance due by October 1, 2026 for agencies serving more than 10,000 people) was included. Multiple wells in the basin exceeded or approached this limit, notably BCVWD Wells 25 and 26. Member Jagers noted that BCVWD Well 3, which is currently offline, also exceeds the MCL. He offered to provide data for inclusion in the final report.*
- Operating Safe Yield (OSY) for 2024: The OSY was calculated using updated production, recharge, and groundwater storage data. A storage increase of 839 acre-feet was noted from winter 2023 to winter 2024; however, due to substantial recharge volumes, the OSY was negative (-1,910 acre-feet). This figure reflects a short-term condition rather than a shift in long-term basin sustainability. Mr. Blandon explained that discrepancies in OSY values (-1,910 vs. -1,959 acre-feet) stemmed from updated production data submitted by the City of Banning after the draft report was circulated.*

*Member Armstrong requested that Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) activities on the western side of the Basin be brought forward for discussion in a future Watermaster meeting. Mr. Blandon clarified that ASR has not been agendized to date, and suggested it be formally proposed for future inclusion. Mr. Armstrong expressed interest due to the proximity of his own well to the ASR project and concerns about potential impacts on local groundwater conditions. Member Zoba noted that the required forms would be filed with the BBWM by YVWD, and that would be the time to provide an overview.*

It was moved by Member Jagers and seconded by Member Armstrong to approve the 2024 Consolidated Annual Report and Engineering Report as presented with revisions as discussed.

AYES: Armstrong, Christensen, Jagers, Vela, Zoba  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None  
STATUS: Motion Approved 5-0

- D. Update on Proposed Revisions to Watermaster Rules and Regulations  
Recommendation: None. Presentation only; no action required

*Administrator Steve Stuart provided an update on the proposed revisions to the BBWM Rules and Regulations, last discussed at the March 5, 2025 Special Meeting. He pointed to a summary of committee comments and highlighted key areas of focus based on prior feedback from the City of Banning and Yucaipa Valley Water District.*

*Two primary topics were emphasized:*

- 1. Return Flows: Mr. Stuart described the need to develop a methodology for quantifying return flows and determining how they should be credited in storage accounting. He referenced earlier work by Thomas Harder in April 2022 and stated his intention to bring forward a proposal at a future meeting to address both calculation and ownership attribution for return flows.*
- 2. Depletion of Appropriator Storage Accounts: The issue of appropriator accounts going negative was raised as a priority concern. Mr. Stuart noted that options under consideration include levying replenishment fees, implementing transfer mechanisms between parties, and creating procedures for addressing deficits through temporary water transfers or other accounting methods. He committed to presenting draft methodologies for discussion at the next meeting.*

*Mr. Stuart also requested written comments from the agencies that had not already done so to complete the current phase of revisions and move toward formal consideration and adoption.*

*Member Jagers advocated for exploring strategic use of SGPWA storage accounts as a regional buffer against future overdraft. He suggested the SGPWA maintain a reserve within the Beaumont Basin that could be accessed in times of drought or when appropriators approach negative storage. Mr.*

*Jaggers proposed leveraging existing reserves (approximately 1,500 acre-feet locally and an additional 3,200 acre-feet stored externally) and encouraged integration of SGPWA into contingency planning. He emphasized that such an approach could provide regional flexibility and promote fairness, particularly for agencies with high usage levels.*

*Member Zoba acknowledged the value of the discussion but expressed concern over the possibility of broadly subsidizing deficits across agencies. He advocated for investment in regional water supply development—such as recycled water and local recharge projects—over reliance on imported water contracts that divert funds outside the region. Mr. Zoba urged a proactive strategy to strengthen basin resilience and reduce dependence on external sources.*

*Mr. Stuart indicated the discussion provided sufficient input and that no further guidance was required at this time. He will bring forward proposals at a future meeting addressing both return flow accounting and negative storage account management.*

E. Proposed Schedule for Future Special Meetings of the Watermaster

Recommendation: Consider meeting dates and direct staff as desired

*Mr. Stuart presented two proposed special meeting dates. Member Zoba expressed concern about the added \$12,000 cost to hold the extra meetings. Vela and Jaggers acknowledged potential loss of Committee momentum, but consensus was to stay with the existing schedule.*

*Chair Vela tabled this item. No added dates were set.*

F. Thomas Harder & Co. Proposal to Participate in Future Special Meetings

Recommendation: Approve the proposal for future meeting support

*Chair Vela tabled this item.*

G. Certification of Groundwater Production, Imported Water Spreading, and Change in Storage in the Beaumont Groundwater Basin in Water Year 2024

Recommendation: Certify groundwater production, imported water spreading, and change in storage in the Beaumont Basin in Water Year 2024

*Mr. Blandon advised that some of the groundwater production numbers require reconciliation. Chair Vela tabled this item.*

**VIII. Topics for Future Meetings**

*Item G was added at the request of Member Armstrong:*

	Item	Date Listed
A	Development of a Recycled Water Policy including Incidental Discharge	3/27/2019
B	Development of a return flow accounting policy	3/27/2019
C	Monitoring of future west side well sites and methodologies, and potential collaboration with USGS	10/5/2022
D	Discussion on what to do when an Appropriator goes negative	10/4/2023 and 11/1/2023
E	Discussion on Policy to Document and Account for Emergency Potable Water Transfers from Appropriator to Overlying Party (Tabled from 4/17/24 meeting)	4/17/2024
F	Procurement Policy including thresholds for RFP process	8/17/2021
G	YVWD Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project	6/11/2025

**IX. Comments from the Watermaster Committee Members:** None.

**X. Announcements**

Wednesday, August 6 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 1 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 3 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting

**XI. Adjournment**

*Chair Vela adjourned the meeting at 12:27 p.m.*

Attest:

  
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Daniel Jagers, Secretary  
Beaumont Basin Watermaster