

**Record of the Minutes of the
Beaumont Basin Committee Meeting of the
Beaumont Basin Watermaster
Special Meeting
Wednesday, August 6, 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 11:02 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 Jaggars</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</i>	<i>Present</i>

Hannibal Blandon attended via teleconference 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

Shah Nawaz, City of Banning

Erin Anton, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Jennifer Ares, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Joyce McIntire, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Mike Kostelecky, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Allison Edmisten, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Brett Granlund, Yucaipa Valley Water District

Lance Eckhart, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

Larry Smith, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

Emmett Campbell, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

Michael Plinski, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Jenny Savron, West Valley Water District

Matt Ford, Thomas Harder & Co.

Lauren Healey, Thomas Harder & Co.

Mark Swanson, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

Lynda Kerney, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District

D. Lee

Erik M.

Travis Van Ligten

Jessica Wright
Anthony Mendoza

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Public Comments: None.

V. Consent Calendar

- A. Meeting Minutes
 - i. June 11, 2025 Special Meeting
- B. Status Report on Water Level Monitoring throughout the Beaumont Basin through July 27, 2025
- C. A Comparison of Production Rights versus Production through June 2025
- D. City of Banning: Notification of New Well C8 within the Beaumont Basin

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 advised that the completed 2024 Final Annual Consolidated Engineering Report should be posted in the next day or two.
- B. Report from Hydrogeological Consultant – Thomas Harder, Thomas Harder & Co. (THC) – No report
- C. Report from Administrative Consultant – Steve Stuart, Dudek – No report
- D. Report from Legal Counsel – Thierry Montoya – Frost, Brown, Todd – *Mr. Montoya reported that staff is responding to a Public Records Act request from the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.*

Montoya advised the Committee that no action could be taken during a Special Meeting.

VII. Discussion Items

- A. Update on Analysis of Losses in the Beaumont Basin - Thomas Harder & Co.

Recommendation: Discussion only; no action

Consultant Tom Harder of Thomas Harder & Company (TH&Co) provided an update on the ongoing modeling effort to evaluate changes in subsurface outflow under varying hydrologic conditions. He explained that three imported water delivery future scenarios—dry, baseline, and wet—were analyzed to assess how recharge affects basin underflow. Average deliveries over the 50-year forecast period ranged from about 11,000 acre-feet under dry conditions to about 16,000 acre-feet under wet conditions.

Harder reviewed model output comparing inflow and outflow across the basin boundaries. The West Study Area showed little change between the scenarios, with net underflow remaining near 5,500 acre-feet annually. The analysis showed that with managed recharge in the east side during a wet scenario there will be some increase in underflow to the west, but it's very minor. The East Study Area, however, displayed greater variability: under baseline conditions, net outflow was about 2,700 acre-feet per year; wet conditions increased that loss, while dry conditions reduced it. Harder emphasized that this portion of the analysis is limited to underflow and does not represent the full basin water balance or safe yield.

Harder then described particle tracking simulations from the Noble Creek and Brookside recharge sites. The results suggested that most recharge water remains within the basin during the 50-year model period, with only limited movement toward the southeastern boundary. Sensitivity runs using different porosity values indicated that the distance traveled by water molecules could vary, but the general pattern remained the same.

During discussion, Member Dan Jagers asked whether water quality implications, such as dilution of chromium-6, could be evaluated. Harder noted that such questions could be considered in the future. Chairman Vela inquired about the porosity assumptions, and Harder explained they were drawn from published values and varied across the model. Jagers also confirmed with Harder that, under the model assumptions, recharge water remains in the basin and is not lost to outside areas within the 50-year forecast period. He observed that particle tracking may differ across the Beaumont Plains fault.

In conclusion, Harder stated that preliminary results show little change in the West Basin, greater variability in the East Basin, and that underflow changes are largely due to pressure differences created by managed recharge. Particle tracking analysis suggests that most imported water does not leave the basin in the 50-year forecast period. He added that a technical memorandum is being

prepared to summarize the analysis and outline potential policy considerations for future discussion.

Public Comment – Lance Eckhart (San Geronio Pass Water Agency): Mr. Eckhart remarked that while the modeling is valuable, assumptions such as porosity are highly sensitive and should be treated cautiously. He suggested examining a "no pumping" scenario and emphasized coordination with neighboring Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to ensure consistent assumptions about water moving east into Cabazon and the Coachella Valley.

He noted that groundwater basins "breathe" during wet and dry cycles, complicating comparisons between short-term modeling and long-term safe yield. Eckhart encouraged continued investment in monitoring programs to provide empirical data on basin conditions, supported mound control as a management tool, and cautioned against policies that might discourage local storage of imported water. He also observed that recycled water and other new sources will play a role in basin management moving forward.

B. Update on Proposed Revisions to the BBWM Rules and Regulations

BBWM Administrator Steve Stuart reminded the Committee about the presentation of the proposed revisions and ongoing discussion. He stated he had received comments / feedback from two of the five member agencies and is seeking comment from the others by September 15. Comments would be incorporated into the revision and presented at the December meeting for consideration of adoption. He will send reminder emails.

C. Consideration to Retain Dudek to Evaluate and Develop Management Strategies for when Groundwater Storage Accounts are Negative

Recommendation: Enter into agreement with Dudek to evaluate and develop management strategies for negative groundwater storage accounts for a sum of \$29,780 and send invoices to each Watermaster Committee member for 20% of the approved amount

BBWM Administrator Steve Stuart noted that the Stipulated Judgment and Watermaster Rules and Regulations establish groundwater storage accounts for Appropriators and Storage Parties. He reminded that questions have been raised about how to address situations where an account becomes negative, either due to water availability or financial circumstances. He proposed Dudek research other agencies' practices, assess management strategies, and recommend actions the Watermaster could adopt to prevent or remedy negative storage accounts. The proposed contract amount was \$29,780.

Committee members offered several perspectives. Member Jagers observed that BCVWD is the largest extractor in the basin and therefore has the greatest risk of being in deficit. He pointed out that a negative balance could arise for

different reasons: either the water was unavailable due to drought or system interruption, or the agency lacked funds to purchase supplemental water. Jagers described BCVWD's current pass-through funding mechanism, which collects money at the time of water sale to pay for imported water, and noted that this approach has kept the District's accounts in balance. He suggested the Committee consider developing rules that identify triggering events—such as drought or State Water Project interruptions—that could prompt collective action by the Watermaster.

Member Zoba expressed uncertainty about the need for an outside study. He commented that Watermaster members already understand the basic strategies to avoid going negative, and that self-management by the agencies could be more effective than relying on an engineering study. Zoba suggested that instead, the Committee could focus on developing a policy statement within the ongoing Rules and Regulations update. He acknowledged, however, that the Watermaster must still prepare for "what if" scenarios and define its responsibilities should a member agency's account go negative.

In response, Stuart noted that the Judgment already provides mechanisms for water transfers that could restore an account to balance. He added that Dudek's proposal was intended to gather and organize management options into a framework, but if the Committee preferred to frame a policy statement internally, that approach would also be workable.

Chair Art Vela recalled that the discussion originated with questions about the Watermaster's role if an agency goes negative. He stated that the ultimate goal was to avoid simply requiring the Watermaster to acquire water on behalf of an agency that fell short. Vela emphasized that a policy should include consequences or deterrents to discourage agencies from relying on the Watermaster to remedy their deficits, while still providing a clear plan of action.

Further discussion addressed potential supplemental sources of water, such as recycled water and return flows, which could provide more reliable options in the future. Jagers added that past droughts had demonstrated the need for flexible management and that off-site storage agreements and regional partnerships have strengthened reliability. He reiterated that advance planning and early recognition of triggering events would allow the Watermaster to convene and respond before a negative balance occurred.

After extended discussion, Zoba suggested tabling the item and rolling the matter into the Rules and Regulations update. He proposed that once policies addressing negative storage accounts are incorporated there, the Committee could reconsider whether additional technical work was necessary.

It was moved by Member Zoba and seconded by Member Jagers to continue this item to a later meeting.

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

D. Consideration to Retain Dudek to Evaluate and Develop a Policy to Account for Return Flows in the Beaumont Basin

Recommendation: That the Watermaster Committee enter into agreement with Dudek to evaluate and develop a policy to account for return flows in the Beaumont Basin for a sum of \$27,400 and send invoices to each Watermaster Committee member for 20% of the approved amount

Steve Stuart explained that the proposal was a follow-up to a 2022 technical memorandum prepared by TH& Co. that estimated the volume of return flows to the Beaumont Basin. He noted that while the earlier work quantified return flows, the next step was to address ownership and accounting. Specifically, the study would confirm the legality of Appropriators claiming rights to return flows, review methodologies used elsewhere and develop a framework to incorporate return flows into groundwater storage accounts. Stuart emphasized that state precedent supports the right of purveyors to reuse their return flows, but clear policy was needed to formalize the process.

The proposal called for Dudek to conduct literature review and research, and then develop an approach for how return flows could be quantified and credited back to the agencies that generated them. Questions such as where water was applied, how it returned to the basin, and how much could properly be credited would be part of the evaluation. The contract amount was proposed at \$27,400, to be shared equally among the Watermaster members.

Committee members raised questions and observations. Member Armstrong observed that since SMWC had little or no services within the Beaumont Basin it may be exempt from participation. Stuart responded that rights to return flows would likely depend on where water was applied and whether it returned to the basin, suggesting that there could be cases where certain agencies would have no claim to return flows. Armstrong clarified that while South Mesa had limited involvement in return flows, his agency remained a team player and supported participating.

Member Jagers commented that the issue was particularly relevant to agencies overlying the basin. He observed that return flows contribute to the basin's average annual yield and therefore have long-term implications for basin management and the ten-year reevaluation. Jagers noted that return flows may vary by land use, citing older neighborhoods with irrigated turf and parks, compared to newer developments with less irrigation. He also cautioned

that state legislation promoting water conservation could reduce return flows over time, decreasing the benefit available for basin recharge.

Member Zoba emphasized the importance of considering not only the benefits of return flows but also their potential negative effects on water quality. He recommended that salt loading be included in the evaluation and stressed that agencies such as BCVWD and YVWD bear responsibility for salt management. Stuart confirmed that Dudek could incorporate water quality considerations into the study.

Chair Art Vela added that while some agencies, such as SMWC, may see little direct benefit, there could be indirect benefits across the basin. For example, if additional return flows are credited to Banning’s account, that might reduce the amount of imported water the city needs to purchase, leaving more water available to others. He cautioned against excluding agencies from participation, noting that proportionality arguments could complicate basin governance. Vela concluded that the proposal had potential basin-wide value and supported moving forward if the Committee was committed to developing a policy.

Several members indicated support for the proposal and agreed that the discussion was valuable. The Committee concurred on bringing the item back at the next regular meeting for action.

E. Consideration of Special Meetings / Workshops in 2025

Recommendation: Consider setting a schedule for special meetings / workshops in 2025

The Committee declined to add special meetings.

VIII. Topics for Future Meetings

	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:

Member Armstrong pointed to Item VIII-G (above) and requested that the Yucaipa Valley Water District Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project be placed on a future agenda for Watermaster discussion, noting the importance of reviewing such projects at the Committee level. Member Zoba responded that information on the project is still being developed and stated that YVWD intends to bring a full report to the Watermaster once testing and data are available. The Committee agreed that the matter could be agendized for discussion at a future meeting.

Member Jagers reported that the City of Beaumont is making progress on their recycled water Adaptive Management Plan, leading toward better management of the Basin.

X. Announcements

2025 Meeting Dates:

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

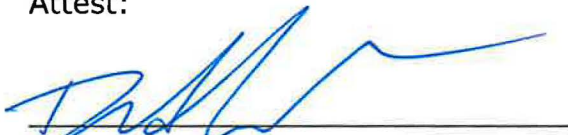
2026 Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, February 4 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 1 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 3 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, August 5 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 7 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 2 at 11 a.m.	Regular Meeting

XI. Adjournment

Chair Vela adjourned the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

Attest:



Daniel Jagers, Secretary
Beaumont Basin Watermaster