

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
San Gorgonio Pass Regional Water Alliance
July 27, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.**

Meeting Attendees

Agency	Representative	
City of Banning		Absent
Banning Heights Mutual Water Company		Absent
Beaumont Basin Watermaster	Dan Jaggers	Present
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	Daniel Slawson Dan Jaggers Robert Rasha	Present
Cabazon Water District	Diana Morris	Present
City of Calimesa	Wynona Duvall	Present
High Valleys Water District	Stan Houghton	Present
Mission Springs Water District		Absent
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	John Covington	Present
Riverside County EDA / Flood Control	Jason Uhley	Present
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	Lance Eckhart Larry Smith	Present
South Mesa Water Company		Absent
Yucaipa Valley Water District	Joyce McIntire	Present

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Daniel Slawson called to order the regular meeting of the San Gorgonio Pass Regional Water Alliance at 5:00 p.m. Roll call was conducted of the attendees and is reflected in the list of meeting participants above.

2. Public Comments

No public comments were provided.

3. Consent Calendar

- A. Approval of Alliance Meeting Minutes from May 25, 2022 – A motion was made by Joyce McIntire and seconded by Wynonna Duvall to approve the meeting minutes.

APPROVED	VOTE
City of Banning	Absent
Banning Heights Mutual Water Company	Absent
Beaumont Basin Watermaster	Absent
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	YES
Cabazon Water District	YES
City of Calimesa	YES
High Valleys Water District	YES
Mission Springs Water District	Absent
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	YES
Riverside County EDA / Flood Control	YES
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	YES
South Mesa Water Company	Absent
Yucaipa Valley Water District	YES

4. Discussion items

A. Ongoing drought restrictions and outreach activities

Mr. Dan Jagers advised that he has received an invitation to speak to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors with four other agencies regarding the status of drought activities and the response in Riverside County. The area has done a good job in drought proofing, he explained.

Jagers provided a presentation on water supply, drought activities, and water management in the southwest.

Water Supply

- Larger water districts in California will continue to see cutbacks in 2023
- There may be effects due to the activities on the Colorado River aqueduct
- This is the worst 22-year drought in the last 1,200 years, according to the US Drought Monitor
- This region has done a good job of positioning to weather a drought but the effects that will happen across the state will trickle down

Reservoir levels and snowpack

- The reservoirs are somewhat full
- The State is not distributing water via the State Water Project (SWP), so releases are being done primarily for the environment and health and safety
- The feds and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) are keeping water high up in Shasta, and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is maintaining Lake Oroville (the SWP), which is this area's main source of supply (Eckhart)

- Reservoirs are below average but not empty, but a lot of the water is being preserved for environmental flows and in anticipation of another potential dry year for health and safety purposes
- It is unknown what is going to happen next year and the year after
- The snow survey of June 13 shows some snow in the northern Sierras but not a lot compared to normal; and zero percent of average in the central and southern Sierras for replenishing the reservoirs

Colorado River Basin

- Lake Powell and Mead are at lowest levels since filled in 1922
- The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has called for a two-to-four-million-acre-foot (af) reduction in use in 2023
- The Colorado Basin states are to develop a reduction plan by mid-August 2022 or the BOR would mandate restrictions to maintain levels in Lakes Powell and Mead
- if the State doesn't get the desired reductions of at least 15 percent by August 2022, the culmination of the Colorado River restrictions may result in additional activities from the State
- There is concern about preserving the hydroelectric generation capabilities
- The River is in a dire strait now due to the long drought in the western US
- Upper Basin states are Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona
- Lower Basin states are Arizona, California, and Nevada
- Total allocation of 15 million af per year:
 - Upper Basin states have 7.5 million af of apportionment
 - Lower calculate to another 7.5 mil af of apportionment
- Lower Basin states historically use at least 7.5 million af and more
- Taking 2 to 4 million af out of a 15 million af system is about 26 percent. If water is restricted to holding in Lake Mead or Powell, there will be a trickle-down effect
- Powell and Mead lake levels have fluctuated over the last few years:
 - Started declining in 2020
 - Lake Powell continued to decline in 2021 and in 2022 the level is now down by 163.47 feet
 - Lake Mead began to significantly lose elevation in 2021 and is down 188 feet
- Volumetrically, there are reasons to be concerned: the lakes are losing volume quickly

Drought Response

- Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Drought starting in April 2021
- The declaration was done in a way that may not have well prepared districts to handle some of the ongoing concerns
- A very wet December was followed by a record dry mid-January through now – the driest three months on record
- The poor response caused the Governor to declare mandatory restrictions and direct the DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to implement mandatory restrictions but voluntary reductions with a target of 10 to 20 percent

- Mandatory restrictions were for every water agency to implement their Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP) minimum level 2
- BCVWD thought level 3 was more appropriate, as it allows some added opportunities to consider how to handle things

Mr. Lance Eckhart added that drought restrictions were unpopular in 2015, and there was pushback from areas that were well managed. Everyone had been treated like a bad actor; not all parts of the state are prepared, but other parts are very well prepared. He noted the pushback on “draconian measures” and “water cops” – that level of regulatory oversight and pushing the burden on local retailers. But voluntary reduction is not meeting conservation numbers, and they reserve the right to enact the water cops and fines, and all things that were seen in 2015, Eckhart cautioned. But it did not work out well last time, he noted, and there is no new plan other than what was done in 2015, which was marginally successful.

Local Drought Response

- BCVWD enacted Stage 3 of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP), as it allows implementation of more things to gain the 15 percent savings
- As a region, the actions being implemented are:
 - Educational activities
 - Drought messaging
 - Working regionally with San Geronio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA) and the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Additional measures (some required by state law)

- Fix broken sprinklers
- Water in the evenings
- Reduce outdoor irrigation days
- Replace turf with waterwise plants
- Wash only full loads of dishes and laundry
- Take shorter showers
- Use low flow showerheads
- Wash cars at car wash instead of at home
- Clean driveways and walkways with brooms
- Keep trees healthy

Districts should also be considering:

- Turf replacement programs (grants)
- Sprinkler head replacement
- Weather-based irrigation controllers
- Premium efficiency toilets
- High efficiency clothes washers
- Figure out actions for saving water
- Stay in contact with other agencies and share social media posts on local drought programs
- Encourage removal of non-functional turf and transition to drought tolerant landscaping

Mr. Lance Eckhart discussed turf replacement programs. There has been interest from larger Homeowner Associations (HOA) and there is funding available for such programs. SGPWA is looking at how to create a regional rebate program to bridge the gap between requests and grant funds.

Ongoing restrictions

- Voluntary programs may become mandatory in August
- Water use banned on non-functional turf for commercial, industrial, and institutional activities including HOAs (but there are exceptions for plants and trees within the turf)
- The legislature continues to focus on indoor water conservation and drought outreach
- The legislature continues to drive down the indoor water use target (now down to 47 gallons per capita per day from 55)
- There is no defined long-term plan to create new water other than to let local entities invest in the Delta Conveyance and Sites Reservoir

Programs such as Solve the Water Crisis are looking for proactive solutions by utilizing an organization to push fixing the water crisis, Jagers explained. In speaking with elected officials, water needs to be a top priority. The State is mandating more development to the city planning agencies, but the underlying, fundamental issues of water supply are not being solved, Jagers noted. There must be support for more long-term planning and water management planning activities. In response to Director Slawson, Jagers listed members across the State. Slawson supported BCVWD joining the coalition.

Mr. [REDACTED] explained that the majority of property owners ask why they must save water when there are so many houses being built. He advocated for a better education program regarding the importation of water and the Basin which allows development of the community. Jagers agreed this is a continuous theme across California and there is no easy solution to those questions. It is a double-edged sword, he opined. The job is to work with regional partners to plan at a level that provides water supply into the future as responsibly as possible, he noted.

Ms. McIntire noted that the State restrictions apply to all regardless of local drought and water table conditions. She pointed out that each agency can set WSCP level restrictions in different ways, and asked how may had implemented level 2, and how it could be enforced. Slawson noted that BCVWD has implemented some restrictions, but violations must be egregious to trigger a penalty.

Mr. Jagers reminded that the State is doing the same thing as last time, with a list of items that may become mandatory in August. The biggest challenge is to reach customers with the message, he noted, and listed some efforts. He added that it is expected to ramp up, and detailed the open-endedness of the WSCP. So far, this is all voluntary reduction and there are no penalties against water districts yet. McIntire acknowledged the app that will allow reporting of water waste.

Slawson noted the importance of reaching out to large water users such as schools and parks. Jagers added that agricultural interests in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys are being asked to reduce their use by 1/3 (1 million af).

Director Slawson invited public comment. There was none.

5. Comments and Updates by the Elected Official or Agency Representative

- A. City of Banning – Absent.
- B. Banning Heights Mutual Water Company – Absent.
- C. Beaumont Basin Watermaster – Mr. Jagers reported that the draft Annual Report will be considered for adoption at the June meeting. Administrative help is also being sought to help projects moving forward.
- D. Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District - Daniel Slawson reported that BCVWD has enacted WSCP Stage 3 and there have been issues with reducing water usage and approval of Will-Serve Letters (WSL). At Stage 5, the District has a point at which it stops issuing WSLs. He said it is good to see neighbors reaching out and willing to work with the District and to be good stewards. Recycled water plans continue, he said. There are major issues with gaining materials for construction projects; prices are increasing. The District is being proactive to procure as possible. Three Board members (including Slawson) are up for reelection in November.

Mr. Jagers explained construction activity and noted that the State specifically identifies that unless it can be demonstrated that water is not available, housing development is not to be hindered. With all the activity in the region, it is difficult to hard stop, as there are plans to continue to provide water supply. His concern is whether this is localized drought or long-term effects of climate shift. The speed at which things are happening are surprising in the level of impact, he noted.

BCVWD is moving forward on a joint project with Riverside County Flood Control, Jagers advised. Other projects and active construction are being balanced with the desire to avoid spending inflated prices on purchase of goods. He suggested sharing information and acquiring as much grant funding as possible.

- E. Cabazon Water District – Ms. Diana Morris reported that applications have been received and the agency should have a new general manager soon.
- F. City of Calimesa – Wynona Duvall listed the following projects in progress:
 - a. County Line Road Corridor Improvement Project street improvements (in partnership with the City of Yucaipa)
 - b. South Mesa Water Company plans to replace a water main and construct system improvements along County Line Road using grant fundingShe thanked Ms. McIntire for assistance with water information.

- G. High Valleys Water District – Stan Houghton reiterated the budget and materials cost concerns. He noted the offers from other agencies to share supplies and said he hopes to replenish inventory when prices come down. The agency is seeking grants.
- H. Mission Springs Water District – Absent.
- I. Morongo Band of Mission Indians – No report.
- J. Riverside County EDA / Flood Control District – Jason Uhley reported:
- a. The Beaumont Master Drainage Line 16 project with BCVWD would provide flood protection in the Cherry Valley area and will convey floodwater to the Noble Creek recharge basins for stormwater capture
 - b. A more normal monsoon season is expected this year with storms predicted this week.
 - c. Storms become an issue for the burn scar with mud coming out of the canyons. The debris risk is minimal except along the Canyon. He advised of potential road closures. The mountain is continuing to heal slowly.
- K. San Geronio Pass Water Agency – Lance Eckhart provided updates on:
- a. Available funding to help small systems and suggested conversation with High Valleys
 - b. Calimesa Recharge Project
 - c. Delta Conveyance Project – the environmental impact report (EIR) was released today
 - d. Sites Reservoir – project moving forward quickly. It is hoped to have an EIR out in the next few months
 - e. Drought messaging and collaboration
 - f. Contract with the Resource Conservation District for conservation specialists and workshops (venues needed)
- Eckhart discussed the collection of taxes for SWP facilities and the ability to offer choice due to the availability of imported water. He noted that the region should get more serious about turf replacement.
- L. South Mesa Water Company – Absent.
- M. Yucaipa Valley Water District – Joyce McIntire reported on the Calimesa Recycled Water Conveyance Project, which connects the recycled water main line and is proceeding along 3rd Street.

7. Suggested Presentations and Topics for Future Meetings

- Drought
- Supply issues and how agencies are affected
- Drought response actions and presentation from Lance Eckhart, SGPWA

- Update and Discussion Regarding Funding for the Sites Reservoir Project
- Discussion Regarding Funding for the Delta Conveyance Project
- Discussion Regarding Funding for the Regional Cabazon/Banning Backbone Project

8. Future Meeting Dates

- September 28, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.
- January 23, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.
- March 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

Daniel Slawson acknowledged the attendee from the City of Beaumont and invited the City to re-join the Alliance.

He adjourned the meeting at 6:17 p.m.