

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
San Gorgonio Pass Regional Water Alliance
July 26, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.**

Meeting Attendees

Agency	Representative	
City of Banning	Art Vela Rick Minjares	Present
City of Beaumont	Thaxton Van Belle Jessica Voigt	Present
Banning Heights Mutual Water Company		Absent
Beaumont Basin Watermaster	Dan Jagers	Present
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	Daniel Slawson Dan Jagers Robert Rasha	Present
Cabazon Water District	Taffy Brock	Present
City of Calimesa	John Manley	Present
High Valleys Water District	Sam Hughes Stan Houghton	Present
Mission Springs Water District	Amber Duff	Present
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	John Covington	Present
Riverside County EDA / Flood Control	Jason Uhley Juliana Adams	Absent
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	Lance Eckhart Larry Smith Kevin Walton	Present
South Mesa Water Company		Absent
Yucaipa Valley Water District	Joyce McIntire	Present

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman 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: None.

3. Consent Calendar

- A. Approval of Alliance Meeting Minutes from May 24, 2023
The Consent Calendar was approved by the following vote:

MOVED: Hughes	SECONDED: Voigt
CONSENT CALENDAR APPROVED	VOTE 9-0
City of Banning	YES
City of Beaumont	YES
Banning Heights Mutual Water Company	Absent
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	YES
Cabazon Water District	YES
City of Calimesa	YES
High Valleys Water District	YES
Mission Springs Water District	No vote
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	YES
Riverside County EDA / Flood Control	Absent
San Geronio Pass Water Agency	YES
South Mesa Water Company	Absent
Yucaipa Valley Water District	YES

4. Review Budget and Financials

In the absence of Riverside County Flood Control, Mr. Jagers indicated that it does not seem that the Alliance is currently spending any money. BCVWD is providing minute-taking and agenda preparation at this time as part of the partnership and has submitted no expenses. He recalled that the account may contain \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Mr. Vela reminded the members about the comments of Juliana Adams from Riverside County Flood Control at the last meeting, and that she was going to bring back information to this meeting.

Chair Slawson tabled the item to the next meeting.

5. Discussion Items

- A. Beaumont Basin Watermaster report

BBWM Chairperson Art Vela reported:

- Held a workshop on July 13 focused on groundwater management

- Production from the adjudicated basin
 - Storage accounts
 - Possibility of delineating the basin into two areas
 - Suggestion to look at structure from the Groundwater Sustainability guidelines as a possible management strategy
- Next meeting on August 2

B. San Geronio Pass Water Agency activities update

Mr. Lance Eckhart, SGPWA general manager, reported on the following:

- Held an important tax rates meeting and stayed the ad valorem tax rate at 17.5 percent which covers:
 - Restricted fund for bond payments on the State Water Project, East Branch extension
 - Balloon payments are coming up and reserves are positioned to pay those down
 - SWP administrative overhead
 - State Project Water exchanges with other contractors
 - SWP repairs
- District is in a good position not to raise taxes
- Delta Conveyance (tunnel) is moving forward slowly
- Governor Newsom pushing forward larger projects with executive orders
- Ventura Water long term lease for their SWP share increased the SGPWA water supply portfolio for the next 20 years (after that, Sites Reservoir should be online)
- Met this week with Sites Reservoir representatives to talk about next steps including signing contracts for bonds
- Major changes in 2023-2024:
 - Local development continues strong
 - 100 percent hydrology (expect higher highs and lower lows)
 - SWP costs are increasing
- San Geronio median house prices have increased but there has been a small drop in the last few months but development is continuing strong
- (there is still a housing crisis here)
- Highest growth area in property values from FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 in Riverside County; trending west to east
- An increase in the ad valorem tax might be prudent given the reliance on imported water and the knowns and unknowns being faced
- Costs are expected to increase for Sites, the Delta tunnels, and Department of Water Resources (DWR) infrastructure
- Recent revenues have been offset by recent inflation
- Funding of Sites with ad valorem
 - Ongoing issue; different methods are being used to pay in
 - Possibility of partnering with DWR and Sites to put costs on the Statement of Charges to be able to use restricted funds
 - Sites restores the original SWP projection and what has been paid for
 - Will be decided in the next few months

- Water conditions: Catch the wet years while possible; dry years are coming
- Reservoirs are full, everyone is looking for places to store water in the ground
- Farmers are recharging water rather than growing crops
- Reviewed the water portfolio
 - 34,000 acre-feet (af) in the system
 - Trying to bank 20,000 af locally, but it looks like there will be some left in the San Luis Reservoir
 - Article 21 water available
- Maintenance performed on recharge ponds to keep them at full capacity until recharge rates slow
- Recharged just under 12,000 af so far this year

Mr. Jagers added that snowmelt is continuing to feed the reservoirs.

C. Current status of water supply / drought and related activities

Mr. Jagers noted that it has been a wet year in the south which has created a condition that retail water usage compared to last year is significantly less. This is bad for revenue but great for catching up. BCVWD is off approximately 22 percent of sales as of the end of June compared to last year. Local water managers are working on collecting data sets necessary to work together as a region.

Mr. Eckhart stressed the importance of having the financial wherewithal to pay for the water when it is available. Jagers concurred and recommended setting funds aside in the dry years to fund the wet year purchases.

Mr. Slawson reported attending a webinar at which he shared local area successes but was followed by representatives from northern California commenting on the continued presence of grass yards and lack of rain gutters on roofs. He expressed hope for Sites and the tunnel.

D. Grant opportunities and funding

Mr. Eckhart reported working with HOAs (Sun Lakes, Solera, Four Seasons) on a pilot program and grant application for large scale turf replacement. Starting these types of programs will be a long-term process, he noted.

The Countyline Road recharge grant application was not successful, Eckhart stated. Other sources are being sought, as the project is almost shovel-ready.

Eckhart reported on the SGPWA pilot program to provide gap funding for small agencies to facilitate grant projects. Other agencies have inquired. He noted other projects in progress and said the SGPWA voted to offer gap funding.

Grant funds for a few USGS monitoring wells in east Banning / Cabazon were received through the SGMA grant process, Eckhart said.

More federal grant opportunities are coming forward, he noted. Consulting firms can point in the right direction.

E. Legislative Report:

Mr. Jagers advised of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking from the State Water Resources Control Board on Hexavalent chromium (Chrom-6) maximum contaminant levels (MCL) which will affect local purveyors. It appears the State is going back to 10 parts per billion.

Mr. Vela agreed this is challenging, as there is a major capital and operating price tag for building treatment facilities to comply with the new standard. Like the last time the State tried this, there is much debate regarding the standard and the State's considerations. The State is not giving water agencies a lot of time to comply, he added. To generate the revenue needed to build treatment facilities could require a Prop 218 rate adjustment. The EPA looked at their standard of 100 ppb and did not find reason to change it, he said.

The potential PFAS standard will have a cost for compliance and will be another issue for water agencies to confront, Vela noted.

Mr. Jagers pointed out that the Chrom 6 is naturally forming in the geological formations. He estimated that 40 to 50 percent of BCVWD wells would be adversely affected.

Mr. Vela and Mr. Jagers discussed the Chrom 6 treatment technology, costs, and the resultant hazardous waste.

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

A. City of Banning – No report

B. Banning Heights Mutual Water Company – Absent

C. City of Beaumont – Jessica Voight reported:

- The 2x2x2 Recycled Water committee including BCVWD, SGPWA and the City of Beaumont has been collaborating
- The recent fires came close to facilities but caused no infrastructure issues
- The highest production from the recommissioned reverse osmosis facility occurred this month
- The Mesa Lift Station upgrade project is underway and going to bid soon
- The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) is entering a master plan study. Now is the time to consider connecting to the Brine Line

- D. Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District – Daniel Slawson and Dan Jagers highlighted:
- Dedication for the MDP Line 16 stormwater recharge project is scheduled for Sept. 7
 - Working to move projects forward
 - Currently recharging a lot of water and working with the SGPWA
 - A request was received today from ACWA for agencies to do energy load-shedding today / conserve electricity on hot days
- E. Cabazon Water District – Taffy Brock reported:
- Working on getting Well 1 pump back online after failure
 - Cleaning and construction on tanks
- F. City of Calimesa – No report
- G. High Valleys Water District – Stan Houghton and Sam Hughes reported:
- Locators to be installed for the aerial survey beginning the pipeline project
 - Rate study underway with the help of the SGPWA – interest in ratepayer acquiescence
 - Finished survey with a company to get SCADA back up
- H. Mission Springs Water District – Amber Duff reported:
- Provided detail on the Regional Water Reclamation Facility construction
 - General Manager is retiring; event on Aug. 3 at 5 p.m.
 - Brian Macy will be the interim GM
- I. Morongo Band of Mission Indians – John Covington reported:
- Chrom 6 comments appreciated; all will fall under the new MCL
 - PFAS is coming next; several class action lawsuits have been settled. He recommended testing
 - Lead and copper rule also coming
 - Morongo Band continues to make improvements on the water and wastewater systems
- J. Riverside County EDA / Flood Control District – Absent
- K. San Geronio Pass Water Agency – No further report
- L. South Mesa Water Company – No report
- M. Yucaipa Valley Water District – No report

7. Suggested Presentations and Topics for Future Meetings

- Chromium 6
- PFAS
- Lead and Copper rule
- Briefing on San Geronio Pass Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- 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
- Review budget and financials

8. Future Meeting Dates

- January 24, 2024
- March 27, 2024

9. Adjournment

Chairman Daniel Slawson adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.