

Big Valley Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee (BVAC)

Unapproved Meeting Minutes

BVAC Members:

Lassen County BVAC – Aaron Albaugh, Board Representative; Gary Bridges, Alt. Board Representative; Kevin Mitchell, Public Representative; Duane Conner, Public Representative
Modoc County BVAC – Geri Byrne, Board Representative; Ned Coe, Alt. Board Representative; Jimmy Nunn, Public Representative; John Ohm, Public Representative

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

1:00 PM

Veterans Memorial Hall
657-575 Bridge Street
Bieber, CA 96009

BVAC Convene in Special Session.

Present: Committee Members: Coe, Albaugh, Conner, and Nunn.

Absent: Committee Members: Byrne, Ohm, and Mitchell.

Also in attendance: BVAC Secretary Maurice Anderson
BVAC Staff Tiffany Martinez
BVAC Staff Gaylon Norwood
BVAC Recorder Brooke Suarez
Alt. Board Representative Gary Bridges

BVAC Vice-Chairman Albaugh called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m.

Flag Salute: Vice-Chairman Albaugh requested Brooke Suarez lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

General Update by Secretary: Secretary Anderson stated that the adhoc committee tasked with selecting a contractor for future needs had picked West Yost. Vice-Chairman Albaugh wanted to know how many companies responded to the Request for Proposal. Secretary Anderson said three had replied. Vice-Chairman Albaugh confirmed that West Yost was replacing G.E.I.

Matters Initiated by Committee Members: Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated that Governor Newsom issued a proclamation extending the drought state of emergency. He then asked staff if they had heard anything about the Department of Water Resources (DWR) looking at the reprioritization of the basin. G. Norwood responded that it may be soon, as it is understood that DWR reprioritizes every five years. Vice-Chairman Albaugh then asked how the water plan stands with DWR and T. Martinez said that DWR hasn't disapproved the Big Valley GSP yet. G. Norwood stated that the BVAC has 180 days to respond if DWR disapproves the Big Valley

GSP. Since the GSP needs an engineer's stamp, Nunn asked if we have a consultant in place to which G. Norwood responded that West Yost will be the consultant and hopefully be paid for through grant funding.

Vice-Chairman Albaugh wanted to know how much DWR grant money was applied for? T. Martinez said that consideration was made for how much the counties would need for the next five years. She listed out the items of consideration and said that DWR could select what they wanted to grant money for from the list submitted. G. Norwood said that DWR may make a determination in May, but did not recall the exact grant award date. Laura Snell said she recently talked to Ian Espinoza of DWR and he said we should know soon. She also stated the Modoc and Lassen counties get higher consideration for grant funds for being rural and disadvantaged communities.

Kevin Mitchell subsequently arrived at 1:25 pm.

Correspondence (unrelated to a specific agenda item): None

Approval of Minutes (November 3, 2022) –

A motion was made by Representative Mitchell to approve BVAC meeting minutes from November 3, 2022. The motion was seconded by Representative Nunn. The motion was carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Coe, Albaugh, Mitchell, Conner, and Nunn.

SUBJECT #1: Big Valley Groundwater Basin Annual Report for the 2022 Water Year.

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Receive annual report; and
2. Receive public comment, and
3. Make a recommendation to the Lassen/Modoc GSAs

G. Norwood thanked Farm Advisors David Lile and Laura Snell for their hard work in completing the 2022 water year annual report to DWR. L. Snell went on to say that the hardest part of the annual report was adjusting the water budget and she also listed where changes were made in comparison to the previous year's annual report.

Vice-Chairman Albaugh asked about why SRV (Sacramento River Valley) index is in our annual report. L. Snell said it was the index that DWR uses but I. Espinosa of DWR told her that an index can be created for Big Valley's use. Representative Mitchell noted that there is no "normal" in the SRV index. Discussion was held regarding what it would take to come up with an index for Big Valley and not use the SRV index. Representative Mitchell suggested the terms Above Normal, Normal, and Below Normal be used when Big Valley has its own index.

The map on page 14 had been updated with two new stream gages. Representative Coe requested that the two new gages be noted as new on the map. D. Lile said he would make the change.

L. Snell stated that section 2.1 was updated with the 2022 fall and spring measurements. Vice-Chairman wanted affirmation that water levels were higher in the spring than in the fall and that map coloring was the same as what G.E.I. used. L. Snell said that both she and D. Lile were surprised by the lower water amount in the northern finger of the basin. D. Lile was concerned with Covid years 2020 and 2021 lack of monitoring and felt that those years may have skewed the numbers. L. Snell said that I. Espinoza of DWR has taken over the monitoring of the wells in the basin which will be good because it is someone they know and can connect with easily.

Hydrographs in Appendix A has a graph for each well. L. Snell stated that the big picture for water levels is doing well. Vice-Chairman Albaugh asked about how hard it was to access DWR information to complete the annual report. L. Snell responded that they couldn't access at first because the DWR system wasn't working right and that they had to contact Ian Espinoza to help. The information was not received until earlier this March.

The water budget was not changed from G.E.I.'s format. The current year information was just added to it. The write up for the water budget is similar to the previous annual report. The balance figure was taken out, D. Lile felt it was an inaccurate number. Vice-Chairman Albaugh asked if subsurface inflow from outside the basin was in the report. L. Snell responded that it was not and Vice-Chairman Albaugh said it needed to be. Both Farm Advisors stated that they know there are gaps and that the DWR grant could be used to fine-tune some of the data gaps.

Page 23 contains a required table for the annual report and was in the Big Valley GSP. The Farm Advisors changed the table from using the water budget data as it had been presented in the GSP to using actual well measurements. The GSP contains the G.E.I. version that shows the graph at a more downward slope. Using well measurements, the downward slope is not so drastic and this change is defensible as actual well measurements were used.

Discussion was held on the GSP implementation progress that has been made in the last year. Vice-Chairman Albaugh asked if the helicopter survey that was conducted by DWR was helpful in the preparation of the annual report. L. Snell said the mapping data was hard to figure out and they would have to get someone to explain it to them. Representative Nunn asked about the status of the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) station. T. Martinez replied that DWR put one in. Representative Nunn said that it would be helpful with evapotranspiration information in future reporting. Representative Coe wanted the station to be put in the progress portion of the annual report but L. Snell said that it will be put in next year's annual report. The water year runs from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022.

The Big Valley annual report will go the Lassen and Modoc Board of Supervisors meeting on March 28, 2023. T. Martinez commented that it is likely that changes will still be made to the annual report prior to it going to the March 28th meeting.

Recommendation to forward annual report to GSAs. –

A motion was made by Representative Nunn to forward the Big Valley annual report to the GSAs for review. The motion was seconded by Representative Coe. The motion was carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Coe, Albaugh, Mitchell, Conner, and Nunn.

Matters Initiated by the General Public (regarding subjects not on the agenda): None

Establish next meeting date: To be determined.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Albaugh adjourned the meeting at 2:39 pm.