

# Big Valley Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee (BVAC)

## Approved 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 3, 2021

4:00 PM

Adin Community Center  
605 Highway 299  
Adin, CA 96006

---

BVAC Convene in Special Session.

Present: Committee Members: Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Conner, Ohm, and Nunn (via Zoom).

Absent:

Also in attendance: BVAC Secretary Maurice Anderson  
BVAC staff Gaylon Norwood  
BVAC staff Tiffany Martinez  
BVAC Recorder Brooke Suarez  
Modoc County Counsel Sean Cameron (via Zoom)  
BVAC Alt. Board Representative Gary Bridges

BVAC Chairman Byrne called the meeting to order at 4:21 p.m.

**Flag Salute:** Chairman Byrne requested John Ohm lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**General Update by Secretary:** M. Anderson thanked all involved in working on the Big Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). He also thanked the board members for their work on the ad hoc committees. He also stated that Laura Snell would be facilitating the meeting.

**Matters Initiated by Committee Members:** Vice-Chairman Albaugh also recognized the staff from both counties that have been working on the GSP. He also thanked Farm Advisors David Lile and Laura Snell as well as fellow board members.

**Correspondence** (unrelated to a specific agenda item): None

**Approval of Minutes (February 3, 2021) –**

**A motion was made by Vice-chairman Aaron Albaugh to approve BVAC meeting minutes from February 3, 2021 with the addition of Modoc Counsel**

**in attendance via Zoom. The motion was seconded by Representative Kevin Mitchell. The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 6 – Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Conner, Ohm, and Nunn.

**SUBJECT #1:**

Reports from Ad Hoc Committees on Sustainable Management Criteria, in preparation for the development of Revised Draft Chapter 7 (*Sustainable Management Criteria*) and Public Draft Chapter 8 (*Monitoring Networks*) of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

1. Receive report on **Sustainability Goal and Potential Projects**.
2. Receive public comment.
3. Provide direction to staff.

Laura Snell reviewed the GSP development process chart and where the board members were at in the process. She would like the board to finalize the draft versions of Chapters 7 and 8 of the GSP. She reviewed how to measure sustainability; minimum thresholds and measurable objectives are required in the GSP, interim milestones are not, but they would be helpful in the future. L. Snell reviewed the questions that were required to be answered for each sustainability criteria. GEI Consultants supplied notes and recommendations to the ad hoc committees (Exhibit A).

Vice-Chairman Albaugh presented the text the ad hoc committee had come up with for the sustainability goal. Chairman Byrne stated that they were looking to keep the statement brief with an emphasis on agriculture. T. Martinez said it took three meetings to come up with the text and then she went over the definitions (Exhibit B) of the wording within the text. The wording used is meant to protect the basin.

Discussion: Representative Mitchell wanted to include wording regarding “legal use of water” and Representative Nunn concurred. Modoc County Counsel Cameron questioned using the word “right” and suggested “just”. Vice-Chairman Albaugh wanted wording in text regarding groundwater recharge as well. He also wanted to keep agriculture in the forefront of the text as agriculture is taking the brunt of the water issues in the state. Chairman Byrne agreed because if there is no agriculture in the valley there will be no community.

Public Comment: Gary Monchamp requested an elaboration of the text “environmental users”. Julie was concerned with the wording “vested right of agricultural pursuits” as it makes all other water users secondary.

T. Martinez presented the potential projects the ad hoc committee had come up with. They included timber management on federal lands, juniper and pine reduction, drainage recharge, winter recharge (pasture and reservoirs), pond and plug or recharge ponds, dam construction, reservoir expansion, injection wells, and pumping from Pit River to Roberts Reservoir.

Discussion: Vice-Chairman Albaugh suggested broader wording of “pumping from Pit River to Roberts Reservoir” to “off stream storage”. He then asked D. Fairman for further comments. D. Fairman said it is good to capture water in wet years but the GSP will need to identify what will be done in drought years such as reduction in pumping or water transfers from site A to site B. DWR will require feasible projects.

Public Comment: Gary Monchamp asked if the committee has talked about water rights. Jim Copp said the 240,000 acre feet allocated to Allen Camp Dam could be moved to reservoir expansion. Rodney Fricke brought up Ag. ASR which is being looked into by T. Martinez.

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

4. Receive report on **Groundwater Levels and Storage**.
5. Receive public comment.
6. Provide direction to staff.

Vice-Chairman Albaugh presented the wells the ad hoc committee are suggesting for monitoring purposes. Five of the new grant wells were picked and seven wells which are dispersed throughout the basin. The seven wells have a 37-year history of monitoring and have dropped over that time period 16.5 feet. The minimum threshold is suggested to be 150 feet below the 2015 baseline. If the water level drops below this threshold then economic viability of pumping is lost anyway. Well analyses of chosen wells were handed out (Exhibit C).

Discussion: D. Fairman pointed out the two trend lines of all monitored wells and the 12 chosen wells which showed less of a decline. More than these 12 wells will need to be monitored, but these are the only wells that will be given minimum thresholds. Chairman Byrne asked if the owners of the wells will approve to monitoring and do we have backup choices if the owners don't. Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated that most likely we will have approval to monitor as these wells as they are already being monitored. Vice-Chairman Albaugh asked why we picked the five grant wells? L. Snell said it was because their water levels will not be driven up and down by pumping. Vice-Chairman asked if soil samples were taken of the grant wells for recharge purposes and the answer was yes, every five feet.

Public Comment: Julie said there are at least 50 wells in Adin but only about 18 are certified. She asked if the other 32 wells are illegal? T. Martinez responded that the shallow wells do not meet sanitary standards.

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

7. Receive report on **Water Quality**.
8. Receive public comment.
9. Provide direction to staff.

Water quality was presented by Laura Snell. Big Valley has good water quality. The ad hoc committee is recommending electrical conductivity as the threshold constituent. The higher the

us/cm number, the more conductivity it has. The recommendation is 250 us/cm. It is proposed that three new grant wells and two public water systems be monitored for water quality as well as using the data collected from other programs that are already monitoring for water quality.

Discussion: Vice-Chairman Albaugh recommends using the highest conductivity level as the threshold. L. Snell stated that at this level the water is brackish and not good for agricultural irrigation. D. Fairman suggested using crop tolerance specifics for a number. Vice-Chairman Albaugh questioned why we even have to measure water quality since it is so good and there are already so many water quality programs and requirements. T. Martinez suggested listing all the programs running currently in the GSP.

Public Comment: None

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

10. Receive report on **Subsidence**.
11. Receive public comment.
12. Provide direction to staff.

Representative Duane Conner presented on subsidence of which there is none. Drones fly over and take measurements and these measurements should be used to monitor for subsidence. The threshold should be three times the natural occurrence over a four-year period. The main thing to watch is the railroad lines.

Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

13. Receive report on **Depletion of Interconnected Surface Water**.
14. Receive public comment.
15. Provide direction to staff.

Tiffany Martinez presented the depletion of interconnected surface water which has not had historic issues. There is no threshold set and data will continue to be collected.

Discussion: Chairman Byrne stated that interconnected surface water will continue to be monitored but there is no data to support depletion. Representative Nunn agreed. Vice-Chairman Albaugh said the same should be done with water quality. D. Fairman reiterated that the GSP can not write off an issue, it must be addressed. Vice-Chairman Albaugh asked if there is any evidence of interconnectivity. D. Fairman said that a couple of monitors show evidence of interconnectivity. Representative Conner stated that if this is such a complicated subject then DWR can't prove that there is interconnectivity. Representative Nunn asked if this version of addressing this subject so minimally will be rejected by DWR?

Public Comment: Gary Monchamp asked if dye injections to monitor connectivity have ever been done? L. Snell answered that there is not much data and it is costly. D. Fairman stated there is evidence that the Pit River has high salinity and that can be used as a tracer and that there may be other tracers that could be used. Randy George said flooding a field is not recharging and it would be better to build a dam.

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

16. Receive report on **Basin Boundary Modification**.
17. Receive public comment.
18. Provide direction to staff.

Representative Mitchell presented on basin boundary modification. He said that DWR left a lot of ground out of the boundary line that they established. The committee wants to resubmit a basin boundary modification.

Discussion: Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated that the last modification was denied because it was not scientific enough. The DWR boundary is not factual at all.

Public Comment: None

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

19. Receive report on **Mapping**.
20. Receive public comment.
21. Provide direction to staff.

No report given.

Discussion: The ad hoc committee on mapping asked what they were working on. T. Martinez will get information for them and then the ad hoc committee can meet. G. Norwood wants the draft Chapter 7, with direction from the ad hoc committees, to be presented at April meeting. D. Fairman can write Chapters 7 and 8. He will point out the data gaps that need to be addressed. Chairman Byrne said some of the ad hoc committees will need to meet again prior to writing the chapters. D. Fairman can write a list of questions for the committees.

G. Norwood reviewed the Brown Act as requested by Byrne. County Counsel Cameron told committee to reach out to him with any questions. The representatives should all file the 700 form.

Public Comment: Julie Purlee said the community has preemptive ability prior to DWR interference. Gary Monchamp was concerned with the 5000 acre foot deficit and could the committee please tie it all together. L. Snell said staff could create a flyer to clarify.

**Matters Initiated by the General Public** (regarding subjects not on the agenda): There will an outreach meeting on March 24, 2021 from 5:00 pm. to 7:00 pm. at the Adin Community Center. This outreach meeting will also be made available online.

**Establish next meeting date:** April 7, 2021 at 4:00 pm. in Adin.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Chairman Byrne asked for a motion to adjourn.

**A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Albaugh to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Representative Conner at 6:44 pm.**

**The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 6 – Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Conner, Ohm, and Nunn.