

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, June 2, 2021

2:00 PM

Adin Community Center
605 Highway 299
Adin, CA 96006

BVAC Convene in Special Session.

Present: Committee Members: Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Ohm, and Nunn.
Absent: Committee Members: Conner

Also in attendance: BVAC Secretary Maurice Anderson
BVAC staff Tiffany Martinez
BVAC Recorder Brooke Suarez
Modoc County Counsel Sean Cameron (via Zoom)

BVAC Chairman Byrne called the meeting to order at 2:19 p.m.

Flag Salute: Chairman Byrne requested Kevin Mitchell lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

General Update by Secretary: None

Matters Initiated by Committee Members:

Vice-Chairman Albaugh expressed concerns that there has been no response from Governor Newsom to the letters that have been sent to him. Vice-Chairman Albaugh was disappointed that DWR was not in attendance to talk about the Allen Camp Dam as he had requested.

Correspondence (unrelated to a specific agenda item): None

Approval of Minutes (May 5, 2021) –

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Albaugh to approve BVAC meeting minutes from May 5, 2021. The motion was seconded by Representative Mitchell. The motion was carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Ohm, and Nunn.

Public comment rules were read by Chairman Byrne.

Laura Snell facilitated the meeting

Tiffany Martinez reviewed the time line and schedule for the GSP. Vice-Chairman Albaugh commented that only a small portion of the GSP schedule has input from the GSAs. Martinez also recapped the DWR review process. Chairman Byrne requested that both the Modoc and Lassen Boards of Supervisors be updated on the GSP prior being taken to the boards to be voted upon. Vice-Chairman Albaugh recommended that T. Martinez present at the Lassen Board of Supervisors and M. Anderson present at the Modoc Board of Supervisors.

SUBJECT #1:

Introduction of Revised Draft Chapter 8 (*Monitoring Networks*) of the GSP.

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Receive reports from the pertinent ad hoc committees, BVAC Secretary, Staff, and/or Consultant.
2. Receive public comment.
3. Accept and “set aside” Revised Draft Chapter 8 for future inclusion into the Draft GSP.

Chapter 8 revisions were presented by David Fairman. Laura Snell explained why the minimum threshold of the 12 monitoring wells changed from 150 feet to 140 feet. The 140 feet considers the depth of all the 12 wells; plus, water cost feasibility diminishes after 140 feet. Chairman Byrne asked if fall 2021 levels are lower than the 2015 baseline, should the 2021 levels replace the 2015 baseline levels in the GSP. The answer was “yes” the baseline can be changed to the 2021 levels.

D. Fairman stated that there should be little to no cost for monitoring the wells. Data from monitoring the wells will be coming from different reporting entities. M. Anderson brought up that the CASGEM wells, though currently being monitored by DWR, are contractually to be monitored by the counties. DWR currently has no intention of discontinuing the monitoring.

Committee comment:

Vice-Chairman Albaugh had verbiage changes. He also questioned why we are doing all the contour mapping. L. Snell explained that they are easy to view and help with project work locations. Patterns emerge very quickly with these maps.

Discussion was held on the water budget. Land use data for the water budget was in contention. Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated that what he has seen of DWR land use data is inaccurate. D. Fairman said that the land use data can be estimated from year to year as it will not change that much. L. Snell said that the data is rough now but will continued to be refined.

L. Snell was concerned with consistency of how the phrases sustainability indicators and sustainable management criteria are being used in the GSP. D. Fairman said indicators are the six different items that are looked at for sustainability and the sustainable management criteria are the measured values of those indicators.

Public comment:

Brian Hutchinson wanted to be sure the tributaries of Ash Creek were not forgotten in the GSP.

Motion to “set aside” Chapter 8 -

A motion was made by Chairman Albaugh to “set aside” Chapter 8 with changes. The motion was seconded by Representative Mitchell. The motion was carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Ohm, and Nunn.

Break: 3:37 to 3:42

SUBJECT #2:

Introduction of Public Draft Chapter 9 (*Project and Management Actions*) of the GSP.

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Receive reports from the pertinent ad hoc committees, BVAC Secretary, Staff, and/or Consultant.
2. Receive public comment.

David Lile presented the Chapter 9: Projects and Management Actions. He talked about the main possible projects. There are projects that can happen now and projects that could happen in the future. The projects are aimed at enhancing the water availability so that there are not water restrictions down the road. Agricultural managed aquifer recharge (AgMAR) is a possible project which involves flooding fields. Recharge has to be done in the off season but it has to be

done when the ground is not frozen and infiltration is hard in some places. The GSAs also need to do research and development projects to close the data gaps. Surface water storage could be increased by expanding reservoirs or possibly building the Allen Camp Dam. Recharge from uplands could be increased by thinning Juniper and stream channel enhancements. There could be increased voluntary water conservation. Irrigation efficiency could be increased.

Committee comment:

Vice-Chairman Albaugh had verbiage changes. Discussion was held on injection wells as a possible project. Chris Peterson from GEI Consultants had some clarifications on injection well requirements. Injection wells require filtering and testing for water quality. L. Snell stated that DWR also requires permits for recharge. T. Martinez said that there may be funding for this project.

Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated that if the state can control the water, they can control the people.

K. Mitchell stated that a dam would help reduce groundwater pumping.

Public comment:

Julie (online) Some domestic wells increasingly are having recharge issues, people are sinking wells deeper. If projects can be focused where this is happening, you will forestall the “revolt”. Doreen Smith Power has a letter she wants the committee to read. She also said the agreement needs to be listed as an objective. The agreement also needs to be tracked so an agency needs to be identified to track it and she talked about funding.

SUBJECT #3:

Introduction of Public Draft Chapter 10 (*Implementation Plan*) of the GSP.

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Receive report from the pertinent ad hoc committees, BVAC Secretary, Staff, and/or Consultant.
2. Receive public comment.

Maurice Anderson presented draft Chapter 10. There are strict implementations of projects because of the stipulations of the codes governing the projects. Staff will interpret the code sections to benefit the GSP as best as possible. The codes will make the projects lengthy and costly. Funding will be required to meet the long-term goals.

Committee comment:

Chairman Byrne doesn't want to become surface water police. Representative Mitchell read that the state has allocated money for the monitoring of water but not for helping the water situation. Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated codes are open to interpretation.

Discussion was held on the DWR annual reporting year. The irrigation season for the Big Valley basin doesn't correspond with the DWR cut offs, so technically, as Vice-Chairman Albaugh stated, the reporting year is one year behind. D. Fairman said he will check with colleagues to see how they would handle this issue.

Vice-Chairman Albaugh had verbiage changes.

A table created by Rodney Fricke had outlined other GSP project prices. Chairman Byrne would like to compare future costs with similar basins. D. Fairman said there are no similar basins to compare to.

Public comment:

Ian Espinoza commented that funding will still become available and DWR is willing to work with the community to improve land use reports. He is also looking into staff attending the BVAC meetings.

Doreen Smith Powers stated that water quality is an issue.

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

Establish next meeting date: July 7, 2021 at 2:00 pm. in Bieber.

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

A motion was made by Representative Nunn to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Representative Ohm at 5:26 pm.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Byrne, Albaugh, Mitchell, Ohm, and Nunn.