

CAWELO GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Conference Room at District Office
Thursday, February 28, 2019
9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Keith Watkins, Mark Smith, Brian Blackwell
DIRECTORS ABSENT: John Gaugel, Eric Miller
STAFF PRESENT: David Ansolabehere, Dave Hampton, LeeAnn Giles, Candice Valdez
LEGAL COUNSEL: Robert Hartsock
OTHER ATTENDEES: Simer Virdi, Sam Etchegaray, Joe Bresson, Bruce Kelsey, Garrett Busch, Michelle Carpenter, Leonard Bidart, Dick Diamond, Darin Blunt, Thomas Romanian, Glen Weedheim, Steve Maniaci, Ella Kelsey, Tim Allen, Michelle Ricker, Amy Roth, Jennifer Campoy, Todd Turley, Mike Maley, Patty Poire

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Watkins at 9:02 a.m. in the Conference Room of the District office located at 17207 Industrial Farm Road, Bakersfield, CA.

B. GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

- a) **Introductions** – Mr. Ansolabehere welcomed attendees, introduced staff, and guests were provided a brief background regarding Cawelo Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CGSA). Mr. Ansolabehere introduced Mr. Dave Hampton, who presented a power-point presentation and provided additional information on the status of the CGSA, and SGMA.
- b) **SGMA and Cawelo GSA Updates** – As well as providing a PowerPoint slide presentation on the boardroom monitor, Mr. Hampton provided an update on the Kern Groundwater Authority (KGA) in regards to coordination related issues, including weekly manager meetings covering topics such as basin water budget, sustainable yield, monitoring network, data management, and the development of the KGA and individual GSA's GSPs. Mr. Hampton also reported that the Cawelo GSA is preparing to modify its GSA boundaries to incorporate up to 20,883 non districted acres, commonly referred to as White Lands,) that will change the current Cawelo GSA acres from 45,574 acres to a potential 64,901 acres.
An inquiry was made on what urban areas would be excluded.
In response, Mr. Hampton responded that commercial properties at the south end of the of the CGSA that are serviced by Oildale Mutual and North of the River and have been requested to be transferred to the neighboring Kern River GSA.
- c) **Groundwater Model** – Mr. Hampton reported that a groundwater model is required for the whole subbasin and the Kern River GSA has taken the lead and contracted with Todd Groundwater to development the model. Todd Groundwater is using DWR's C2VSim model and updating if for our basin area. The draft model has been developed using data provided by water districts, local agencies and GSA's and has been peer reviewed by Woodard and Curran. The model that has been presented represents volumes of water entering and leaving the basin and change in the aquifer storage over a 20 year period.

The model only accounts for the volumes of water and does not consider or assign ownership of the water.

An inquiry was made on how many irrigated acres the budget was based on.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that a component of the budget is based on irrigated acres and the Agriculture Water Budget is based on 786,641 irrigated acres.

Mr. Hampton presented draft Groundwater Model results specific to Cawelo that contained preliminary numbers for deep percolation, managed recharge and seepage, net groundwater and surface water interactions, subsurface inflow, subsurface outflow, groundwater pumping, and change in groundwater storage. The preliminary numbers are based on a 20 year period from 1995 to 2014 and are only preliminary results that will be continuously updated and revised.

An inquiry was made as to whether or not Todd Groundwater has adequate information on Cawelo's historical water usage and if the draft model reflects Cawelo's contour maps.

In response, Mr. Maley reported that due to time restrictions, Todd Groundwater's focus was to provide base numbers, and would later focus on reconciling that information with Cawelo's information for a more precise conceptual model.

An inquiry was made as to whether the groundwater model was developed using Cawelo's current demand and current district acreage.

In response, Mr. Hampton responded that the model is based on the current acreage, but with the removal of urban areas at the south portion of the boundaries.

An inquiry was made as to whether or not the deep percolation is relative to the safe yield preliminary numbers.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported, that for Cawelo GSA purposes, safe yield is not being defined and the GSA would work to specify native yield and sustainable yields. Deep percolation information would be a component of both native and sustainable yields.

An inquiry was made as to whether increased groundwater pumping affects subsurface outflow and if a landowner pumps less, is there more outflows.

In response, Mr. Mike Maley reported that depending on the area and drought conditions, if there is a decrease in groundwater pumping there is a possibility of increase in outflow.

An inquiry was made as to whether Cawelo Water District has room to build groundwater basins.

In response, President Watkins reported that the Board of Directors and staff are considering potential projects. Mr. Hampton noted that the District is considering different options to increasing storage capacity.

An inquiry was made as to whether the actual Cawelo GSA water budget is currently in a better standing than the numbers that were provided in the 1995-2014 time period.

In response, Mr. Hampton responded that the numbers are preliminary, but he believes they are fair.

Mr. Hampton further presented a draft Agriculture Water Budget and a draft Urban Groundwater Budget. The Agriculture Water Budget provided preliminary numbers for crop water requirements, agriculture surface water deliveries, precipitation infiltration, and groundwater pumping. The draft Urban Groundwater Budget provided preliminary numbers for urban groundwater pumping, urban surface water deliveries, precipitation infiltration, and net groundwater consumption.

d) **Groundwater Budget** – Mr. Hampton reported that Cawelo GSA has developed a draft Groundwater Budget based on the current Cawelo GSA acres, surface water delivered per year, precipitation infiltration, managed and natural recharge, ET demand for the entire GSA area, and net groundwater demand.

e) **Native and Sustainable Yields** – Mr. Hampton reported that Native Yield would potentially be based on the groundwater supply that comes from natural recharge, such as subsurface inflows into the basin and precipitation infiltration within the basin. The Sustainable Yield is required by SGMA and is required to be reported for the full basin. The Sustainable Yield would generally be considered the amount of groundwater that can be pumped without causing undesirable results, without exceeding minimum groundwater thresholds, and meets sustainability goals.

KGA members and other GSAs have been in discussions regarding moving forward with a range for the initial Sustainable Yield of .25 AF/acre to .75 AF/acre. The range provides an initial starting point, and allows the GSAs to work on providing data to refine the water budget models that will later determine a better yield number.

Mr. Hampton presented a draft Sustainable Yield model that provided information specific to the Cawelo GSA. The model provided preliminary numbers, including a potential water budget deficit of 2,000 to 14,000 AF per year, depending on the circumstances involved. Preliminary draft Sustainable Yield numbers and how the Sustainable Yield could potentially be allocated amongst the different landowners was discussed.

An inquiry was made if the Native Yield would be allocated to landowners, and what would the estimated allocations be for the district.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that it has yet to be determined and the GSA is considering various factors..

f) **Allocation Concepts** – Mr. Hampton presented potential allocation concepts for the Cawelo GSA that included Native Groundwater Yield, District stored surface water in the ground for District service area landowners, District surface water deliveries for District service area landowners, and wet year surface surplus for both service area and non-service area landowners. The GSA is open to suggestions from landowners and the public regarding an initial allocation concept.

An inquiry was made as to whether or not the draft Native Groundwater Yield amount was determined on a District or the sub-basin level.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that the Native Yield would be based on the Cawelo GSA and not the overall sub-basin.

An inquiry was made as to how the Native Groundwater Yield be evenly split among the land within the Cawelo GSA considering surface water supplies and without using historical pumping information.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported this is a starting point and that potentially a significant component of the Native Yield is precipitation infiltration, which is an annual supply component that occurs on all the land at some level.

An inquiry was made in regards to transferring surplus waters and if it would be able to be moved.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that the potential to market surplus water is open for discussion, that it would be reviewed by staff and the Board, and can be proposed to fellow districts and GSA's.

An inquiry was made if a landowner in the white area can move and market water within the GSA boundaries to a fellow landowner in the non-service area.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that it is a possibility, but transferability rules have not yet been determined. President Watkins noted that if it is within the same GSA, there is a potential for marketing surplus water between landowners and properties.

Mr. Hampton further reported that with the preliminary draft water budget, there is almost sufficient water supply to cover the current operations. With other factors, such as the precipitation infiltration data, potential errors, there appears to be a 2,000 to 14,000 AF deficit. To address any deficit, the District would need to develop district programs, for example, to acquire additional new water and supplies, or decrease demand by purchasing lands to develop those lands into recharge properties.

Potential allocation concepts could allow groundwater allocations (credits) associated with lands to be transferable to other lands in the Cawelo GSA, provided that landowner's current demands are met. Another proposal is to allow landowners to determine the terms for transferability between themselves, while having the Cawelo GSA track groundwater transfers; and/or to potentially establish an "over-pump fee", during drought periods, if transferable groundwater allocations are not available to recover water.

An inquiry was made in regards to transferability and the Cawelo GSA being able to track surface water transferability and how the GSA will be able to track and control Native Yield waters being transferred within the district and within the sub-basin.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that a method to track SGMA groundwater transfers from districts in the sub-basin to Cawelo GSA has not been determined, and that Cawelo's first priority is to focus on tracking transfers within the district, and then to possibly develop transferability to and from the districts within the sub-basin.

An inquiry was made as to how the Cawelo GSA would be able to track transfers of water within the Cawelo GSA and track waters leaving the Cawelo GSA.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that the Cawelo GSA has not yet developed a system to track those transfers, but will begin exploring possible data management.

Mr. Ansolabehere noted that currently the District has a process in place that allows landowners who have surplus surface water to market the water within the District.

An inquiry was made as to if or how unused Native Yield waters would be managed.

In response, Mr. Ansolabehere reported that a system has not been developed for unused Native Yield waters, but a process will need to be developed with input from landowners and the public.

President Watkins noted that using and storing groundwater credits will be considered in managing groundwater water under SGMA.

Mr. Hampton discussed a number of potential water allocation concepts, including the allocation of Native Yield, and District surface waters stored underground. He also mentioned potential allocations of surface water deliveries under District policies, development of programs that allow landowners the opportunity to bank or store privately owned surface water within the GSA, and potentially allowing a portion of that water to be transferred outside Cawelo GSA boundaries.

As the model and data continue to improve, the water budget can change and Cawelo will continue to adapt the plan accordingly.

An inquiry was made as to why the District is not receiving Federal water from Northern California which could be put into District recharge basins for use during dryer years, and if there was a potential to receive additional water supply through the Cross Valley Canal or the District's current system.

In response, Mr. Ansolabehere reported the District has and will receive Federal water and the need for future water supplies is always a priority. Water supplies from the State

Water Project and the Delta or the North are never guaranteed, and the District will continue to seek and obtain all possible water supplies.

An inquiry was made on what the current proposed acre-foot pumping credit in the Cawelo GSA.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that preliminarily, a proposed Sustainable Yield range is 1.3 – 1.6 ac-ft for the Cawelo GSA. How that will be allocated and the Native Yield is yet to be determined.

- g) **Minimum Groundwater Levels** – Mr. Hampton reported there is a need to consider Sustainability Indicators, Undesirable Results, and Minimum Thresholds. The minimum thresholds are groundwater elevation limits, that when exceeded, could potentially cause undesirable results. Undesirable results can occur when any of the Sustainability Indicators become significant and unreasonable.
- Mr. Hampton presented a table of historical spring water levels of the District from the years 2006 to 2016 that provided preliminary numbers to help forecast a potential future worst case scenario. This information is being considered to help establish Minimum Thresholds that are required by SGMA but there is a need to also consider potential subsidence impacts for the Cawelo GSA area.
- h) **Survey** – Mr. Hampton reported that the Kern Groundwater Authority (KGA) has provided an Agriculture Stakeholder Survey for landowners to complete. The survey covers the Cawelo area and Mr. Hampton requested that the landowners complete the survey if they have not done so already. It was noted the survey can also be completed online through the KGA's website.

- C. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – The floor was open for public comments, at which time an inquiry was made as to if today's presentation would be made available.

In response, Mr. Hampton reported that the presentation will be provided on Cawelo Water District's website.

An inquiry was made as to whether the numbers in the management plan could be updated with more accurate information.

Mrs. Patty Poire noted that with time restrictions and lack of data, the numbers will be more specific as further data becomes available in the future, but the focus is to complete the plan with as much accurate information as possible.

- D. The Cawelo Groundwater Sustainability Agency special board meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Brian Blackwell, Board Secretary