

MINUTES

Owens Valley Groundwater Authority

Board Members:

INDIAN CREEK-WESTRIDGE CSD	Luis Elias	BIG PINE CSD	BryAnna Vaughan
COUNTY OF MONO	Rhonda Duggan	LONE PINE PAIUTE SHOSHONE TRIBE	Mel Joseph
CITY OF BISHOP	Karen Kong	OWENS VALLEY COMMITTEE	Mary Roper
COUNTY OF INYO	Dan Totheroh		

August 12, 2021

The Owens Valley Groundwater Authority meeting was called to order at 2:08 p.m. via videoconference.

1. Pledge of allegiance

The Chairperson led the pledge of allegiance.

2. Public Comment

Carol Ann Mitchell (TVGWMD) stated she wished to make her districts comments on your action item to create management areas as proposed: "We have strongly objected to the Tri-Valley being lumped together in a management area with Fish Slough. Even DWR has recognized Fish Slough as its own basin. Tri Valley has asked for an explanation in our meetings at which your staff and consultants have attended. There has been no concrete answer to our question and no detailed information provided. We did ask for a public meeting to explain this to our constituents but that has never happened. We regret that Tri-Valley and its Board members have sometimes been seen as enemies by the OVGA and that the opportunity to show the State of California that SGMA can improve our area may be lost. However, we want you to know that Tri-Valley loves the Owens Valley and our way of life as much as you do".

3. Introductions

The Board introduced themselves with Indian Creek/Westridge CSD absent and Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe leaving early with an alternate, Janice Aten in attendance.

4. Approval of minutes from the July 22, 2021 Board meeting

The Chairperson requested a motion to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2021 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as amended by Dan Totheroh, seconded by Rhonda Duggan. The Chairperson requested a roll call vote; Luis Elias – absent, Rhonda Duggan – Y, Karen Kong – Y, Dan Totheroh - Y, BryAnna Vaughan – Y, Mel Joseph - abstain, Mary Roper – abstain . Motion passed 4 Yes, 1 absent, 2 abstentions.

Philip Anaya provided public comment and stated the following is the narrative he wished to convey in the meeting of July 22, 2021 under his comment in item 7: Philip Anaya requested under Management Actions of the Draft Sustainability Plan, could they, the OVGA Staff and Consultant, consider under Additional Activities (of the DGSP) an action of formally requesting a voluntary GSP for the Adjudicated Portion of the Basin and working for Basin wide sustainability with the LADWP. Philip Anaya also requested under Management Areas (of the DGSP), the addition of Bishop Creek for water table monitoring and the management of excess "non adjudicated" (that being flows in excess of required Chandler Degree and California Fish and Wildlife minimal flows) Bishop Creek surface flow waters for recharge of the local aquifer.

5. Board Member Reports

The Chairperson opened up Board Member reports and there were no reports or updates provided.

6. OVGA staff reports

a. Financial Report

Laura Piper, Inyo County Water Department provided the financial report and stated the OVGA cash balance is \$408,274.76; revenue of \$572.61 for 4th quarter interest, expense was \$2576.50 in staff services costs.

b. Report on Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority activities

John Vallejo stated the IWVGD met yesterday and are still working through the basin wide adjudication that was filed by

the water district which has the potential to interfere with funding from the state for some of their GSP projects including the Recycled Water Project; there are a few ongoing lawsuits regarding the fee; IWVGD are still having overdraft issues and searching for funding to import water.

- c. Michael Draper, Mono County, stated one survey was received in the past 3-4 weeks; data will start being analyzed in order to add it to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan and should have it analyzed by the end of August.

7. Discussion and possible direction to staff regarding future management actions and associated projected costs to implement the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Dr. Steinwand provided an in-depth PowerPoint presentation on proposed management actions; stated it is the last component of the GSP; provided budget assumptions; and the development steps. The Board, staff and public discussed this in detail and at length. Sally Manning stated she understands this is a presentation about the budget because it needs to be in the GSP; we are snowballing towards the January deadline to submit the GSP and complete the grant work; the public hasn't really seen this plan yet; she has not seen certain comments incorporated or acknowledged; Inyo County gets a big hunk of money from LADWP for water work every year that could be spread to the OVGA for the Owens Valley portion; stated it's a conflict for the Water Director to be the OVGA Executive Director; and the Board should consider an independent coordinator once into the plan. Philip Anaya stated he made two suggestions for additional activities in the management actions and can any be added; he would like to see a proposal for some property tax per parcel assessment to support the OVGA so it's not carried by the community service districts; he stated now's the point in time to consider all of the possible management actions that the GSP is going to accomplish here in the basin; the activity that occurs in Tri-Valley is strictly agriculture, Fish Slough is strictly environmental; the wellfields all the way down through the central and south part of the Owens Valley all have distinct and specific issues that will need to be addressed in the GSP; there could potentially be eight management areas.

Dr. Steinwand relayed the GSP timeline, the 60 day comment period, revisions to the GSP and consideration at the December meeting.

Mel Joseph left the meeting at approximately 2:50 pm.

8. Action Item: Creation of Owens Valley Groundwater Basin Management Areas

The Board, staff, and public discussed this item in detail; how the management areas are defined; why Tri-Valley and Fish Slough are in the same area; and why it was divided into the three basin management areas. Sally Manning stated that Tri-Valley and Fish Slough flipped flopped as far as being connected; she understand the arguments about the hydrogeological connection however she thinks the sustainability criteria would be really different for the two; rare plants and pup fish rely on a very shallow groundwater table vs an agricultural area is very different sustainability criteria; she doesn't feel there was sufficient time allowed for public comment at the stakeholder outreach meetings; and expressed her frustration. Lynn Boulton stated if we try to go after LADWP if they excessively over pump the groundwater and we've only been reporting to the DWR just on three management areas, then the average across the three management areas make it look like everything is acceptable and then there is a problem area within that, any of those three areas then we've not provided documentation to DWR that there is a problem so they are going to go along and say the adjudication is working just fine; they won't see the adjudication exceptions given to LADWP are masking a lot of problems. Emily Fox stated she hoped distinct triggers or criteria for within these management areas is actually represented in the draft GSP so that is clear. Sally Manning stated the arguments for and against seem to be the same; she doesn't see the harm in making the area's smaller and more manageable; listening to the description of what the management will consist of it sounds mostly like its monitoring and then responding to things; this is an opportunity to be more proactive as far as management; Inyo County in the LTWA has no regulatory authority over LADWP; why would we allow LADWP to pump at Owens Lake when the OVGA can have regulatory authority over them. Philip Anaya stated in 2013/14 the ditches (in west Bishop) went dry in August, wells didn't start drying up until December; he stated he sent Dr. Steinwand two websites that talk about how surface flow management works with the SGMA. John Vallejo stated the SGMA covers groundwater not surface flow management. Philip Anaya stated how about staff offering not a real specific plan but what would it look like if we separated some of the distinct areas within the Owens Valley portion as an alternative; maybe there is a hybrid that resolves the issues that have been presented.

Rhonda Duggan left the meeting at approximately 3:25 pm.

The Chairperson requested a motion to approve the Owens Valley Groundwater Basin Management Areas as presented. Motion to approve by Dan Totheroh, seconded by Karen Kong. The Chairperson requested a roll call vote; Luis Elias – absent, Rhonda Duggan – absent, Karen Kong – Y, Dan Totheroh - Y, BryAnna Vaughan. – Y. Motion passed 3 Yes.

9. Discussion regarding future agenda items

Dr. Steinwand stated one item is to consider whether to release the GSP for public comment.

10. Adjourn

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4:18 pm.