

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
San Gorgonio Pass Regional Water Alliance
September 24, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

Meeting Attendees

Agency	Representative	
City of Banning	Shah Nawaz	Present
City of Beaumont	David Fenn Thaxton Van Belle	Present
Banning Heights Mutual Water Company		Absent
Beaumont Basin Watermaster	Dan Jaggars	Present
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	Daniel Slawson Dan Jaggars	Present
Cabazon Water District	Taffy Brock	Present
City of Calimesa		Absent
High Valleys Water District		Absent
Mission Springs Water District	Amber Duff	Present
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	John Covington Anthony Mendoza	Present
Riverside County EDA / Flood Control	Jason Uhley	Present
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	Matt Howard	Present
South Mesa Water Company		Absent
Yucaipa Valley Water District		Absent

Members of the Public in Attendance: Steve Grasha, Desert Water Agency

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman Daniel Slawson called to order the regular meeting of the San Gorgonio Pass Regional Water Alliance at 5:02 p.m. Roll call was conducted of the attendees and is reflected in the list of meeting participants above.

2. Public Comments: None.

3. Consent Calendar

- A. Approval of Alliance Meeting Minutes from May 28, 2025 (revised) and July 23, 2025, 2025
The Consent Calendar was approved by the following vote:

MOVED: Slawson	SECONDED: Covington
CONSENT CALENDAR APPROVED	VOTE 10-0
City of Banning	YES
City of Beaumont	YES
Banning Heights Mutual Water Company	Absent
Beaumont Basin Watermaster	YES
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	YES
Cabazon Water District	YES
City of Calimesa	Absent
High Valleys Water District	Absent
Mission Springs Water District	YES
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	YES
Riverside County EDA / Flood Control	YES
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	YES
South Mesa Water Company	Absent
Yucaipa Valley Water District	YES

**4. Beaumont Groundwater Basin: Recharge and Recycled Water
Update and Discussion – Dan Jagers, GM, BCVWD**

Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District General Manager Dan Jagers presented an overview of local groundwater basin conditions and recharge activities within the region. The presentation informed about the interconnections between the Beaumont Basin, the Yucaipa Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), and the San Gorgonio Pass GSA. Jagers explained that understanding how these basins interact is increasingly important under California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). He described the locations and operations of key recharge facilities, including BCVWD’s Noble Creek Recharge Facility Phases 1 and 2, the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency’s Brookside Avenue Recharge Facility East and planned West site, and the proposed Calimesa Recharge Facility just outside the adjudicated Beaumont Basin.

Jagers reviewed the Beaumont Basin’s hydrogeology and ongoing monitoring programs, noting that recent modeling shows recharge water tends to migrate southeast, influenced by northwest-southeast trending fault structures that restrict westward movement. He also discussed the area affected by Chromium-6 and described the basin’s network of production and monitoring wells. He emphasized that cooperation among the Watermaster parties—BCVWD, the City of Beaumont, the City of Banning, South Mesa Water Company, and Yucaipa Valley Water District—is vital to maintaining basin health and ensuring sustainable management of both groundwater and imported State Water Project supplies.

Jagers focused on two recycled water initiatives. He summarized the Yucaipa Valley Water District’s “Crystal Vault” project, approved by YVWD’s Board in August 2025, which proposes to inject ultra-pure recycled water treated through advanced processes such as reverse osmosis and oxidation. The project is designed for indirect potable reuse, storing highly treated water underground and later recovering it as drinking water. Jagers contrasted that with the City of

Beaumont's recycled water program, which envisions surface recharge using Title 22-level treated water and expanded distribution for irrigation. He explained that because Beaumont's treatment plant does not yet produce fully advanced treated water, future recharge would require blending with additional State Water Project water or sufficient travel time in the aquifer to meet state standards.

Alliance members contributed several technical and policy perspectives. Chair Daniel Slawson asked whether "ultra-pure" recycled water is cleaner than existing groundwater. Jagers clarified that the term is descriptive rather than official, and that such water must still meet stringent state criteria. Thaxton Van Belle from the City of Beaumont added that fully advanced treatment requires reverse osmosis of all flow, followed by an oxidation process to remove any remaining contaminants, making it both technologically intensive and costly. He agreed that the City's current approach would rely on surface recharge at a lower treatment level, but noted that locating recharge sites on the opposite side of local fault lines could reduce groundwater mounding and improve effectiveness.

Shaw Nawaz of the City of Banning commented that indirect potable reuse helps overcome public reluctance toward recycled water by allowing it to percolate naturally before reentering the drinking supply. Matt Howard from the SGPRWA confirmed the approximate location of the planned Calimesa recharge site, noting that additional details would be presented later in the meeting. Discussion also touched on the financial aspects of recycled water development. Desert Water Agency Director Steve Grasha inquired about cost per acre-foot for advanced treatment, and Jagers estimated capital recovery at roughly \$1,600 per acre-foot, with total costs approaching those of imported water once energy and maintenance are considered.

In closing, Jagers emphasized the importance of coordination, transparency, and regular communication among agencies sharing responsibility for the regional groundwater basins. He stated that continued updates to the Beaumont Basin Watermaster and active participation by all overlying and appropriating entities would ensure that basin management decisions are well-informed and protective of long-term water quality. The presentation concluded with general agreement among Alliance members on the value of interagency collaboration to secure and sustain water supplies for the San Geronio Pass region.

5. Comments and Updates by the Elected Official or Agency Representative

A. Desert Water Agency – Steve Grasha reported:

- Recent deliberations of DWA's Conservation and Public Relations Committee, focused on the state's "Conservation as a Way of Life" mandate.
- Palm Springs faces a 40% district-wide water use reduction, calling it an "impossible mandate" for the community to achieve.
- The reduction would harm the local economy, particularly the tourism and resort industry, and could make Palm Springs "noncompetitive for world-class resort living."
- Noted a disparity in state-imposed reductions, comparing Palm Springs' 40% target to the Coachella Valley Water District's 7.5%, suggesting the policy was inequitable and punitive.
- Warned that turf conversion requirements could impose an estimated \$100 million burden on condominium owners, spread across approximately 7,000 units, funded through assessments.

- Criticized state officials for viewing condominium associations as corporations rather than groups of individual residents, arguing that this perspective ignores the real financial hardship on seniors and homeowners.
- Described the mandate as a state-created, unfunded burden that promotes bureaucracy instead of practical water management solutions.
- Voiced frustration with California's broader regulatory environment, suggesting it has driven residents and businesses out of the state, reversing California's former reputation as a destination.
- Observed that golf courses and private homeowners are exempt from the harshest conservation rules, placing an unfair load on condominium communities.
- Warned that condo owners face nonjudicial foreclosure if they cannot afford mandated conservation costs, describing the system as "unjust and unworkable."
- Concluded that the policy is unsustainable and unrealistic, speculating that the state may eventually have to reconsider or withdraw it once the consequences become clear.

B. City of Beaumont – Thaxton Van Belle reported:

- The City of Beaumont has been collaborating with the City of Banning, hosting staff to share "lessons learned" from Beaumont's wastewater treatment plant design experience.
- Senate Bill 682 (PFAS regulation) has reached the Governor's desk; the bill would limit PFAS compounds in consumer products, which is significant because wastewater and water agencies are typically responsible for managing PFAS contamination once it enters the environment.
- SB 31 remains under consideration and could ease certain restrictions on recycled water use, which the City is continuing to monitor.
- In November, the Southwest Membrane Operators Association will hold its annual conference in Palm Springs, and Beaumont's wastewater treatment plant has been selected as the host site for facility tours.
- The City extended a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District for pavement repair coordination. The agreement improves coordination of construction activities between the two agencies.

C. City of Banning – Shah Nawaz reported:

- The wastewater treatment plant design is at 10 percent and the upgrade includes two potable wells currently being equipped
- Two nonpotable pump stations are in development, which will convey recycled water to Sun Lakes Country Club, other developments, and a few parks
- Getting ready to profile the Chromium 6 wells
- Preparing the UWMP; hope to join the regional effort in the future

D. Banning Heights – Absent

E. Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District – Dan Jagers highlighted:

- BCVWD has a 2-million-gallon water storage tank project out to bid; a pre-bid tour was held with 13 firms and five or six tank builders in attendance, indicating strong contractor interest.
- Noted progress on two ARPA-funded infrastructure projects:
 - Construction of a large-diameter transmission pipeline connected to the new tank.
 - Installation of a tank waterline in the canyon area to provide fire protection for high-elevation communities.
- BCVWD has submitted an application through the Riverside County Hazard Mitigation Grant Program in collaboration with eight other agencies, covering 46 critical sites.
- BCVWD's portion of the grant application seeks three standby generators for critical facilities in high-fire-risk zones.
- The total regional grant request amounts to \$17.9 million, requiring a 25% local match that may be met through general fund dollars, non-federal grants, or in-kind labor.
- Expressed appreciation to Riverside County and to Jason Uhley's team for their leadership and partnership on the hazard mitigation and resiliency initiatives.
- Proposed generators would likely be diesel-powered, since natural gas service is unavailable at most of the high-elevation sites.
- Emphasized that public safety and operational continuity take precedence during wildfire emergencies, stating that maintaining water service and fire protection capability outweighs fuel-type restrictions.
- Added that multiple water agencies are working jointly with the State and Air Resources Board to advocate for more flexible emergency generator regulations that reflect real-world needs during disasters.

F. Cabazon Water District – Taffy Brock reported:

- Applications are being accepted to replace the general manager when he retires in February

G. City of Calimesa – Absent

H. High Valleys Water District – Absent

I. Mission Springs Water District – Amber Duff (exited the meeting earlier)

J. Riverside County EDA / Flood Control District – Jason Uhley reported:

- Flood Control is partnering with the City of Calimesa on a separate project adjacent to the SGPWA recharge project; a flood control channel and storm drain system, with plans to construct a basin east of the SGPWA recharge facility.

- While the new basin is primarily for flood control, SMWC has expressed interest in jointly developing it for groundwater recharge.
- These efforts mean there will likely be two recharge-related projects side by side in Calimesa.
- Estimated project timelines: the initial phase is about one year away, while the second phase may take three to four years; design work by the City of Calimesa has not yet begun.
- The recently passed Proposition 4 allocates \$100 million statewide for Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) programs.
- Recalled that the San Gorgonio IRWM group, formed in 2018, could potentially compete for these funds.
- Noted there are 48 IRWM regions statewide, meaning competition will be intense — an average of about \$2 million per region if distributed evenly.
- Larger, active IRWM programs (such as Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, SAWPA) are already positioning themselves to secure funding and potentially integrate SGMA-related funds through IRWM channels.
- Advised that IRWM funding is unlikely to be available before 2027, but suggested the Alliance may want to revive its regional IRWM plan to remain eligible for future grant opportunities under Proposition 4.

K. Morongo Band of Mission Indians – John Covington reported:

- It has been quite a few years since the IRWM group has met, but they were usually held at the City of Banning.
- Encouraged Mr. Nawaz to suggest getting the group back together to look at the available funding

L. South Mesa Water Company – Absent

M. Yucaipa Valley Water District – Absent

N. San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency – Matt Howard reported:
County Line Road Recharge Project

- Collaborative project between San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District and SGPWA.
- Goal: Repurpose an unused South Mesa Water Company pipeline to convey State Water Project (SWP) water westward to new recharge basins in Calimesa.
- Funded by \$3.1 million in ARPA funds from Riverside County Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez, covering roughly half of total project cost.
- San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD) managing the SWP turnout, meter, and weir box; SGPWA responsible for pipeline relining and basin construction.

- Construction contract awarded; groundbreaking ceremony expected in early October 2025.
- Project will provide the Calimesa management area (within the Yucaipa SGMA) its first facility capable of recharging SWP water.

Heli-Hydrant Firefighting Support System

- Designed to support aerial firefighting by creating permanent, reliable helicopter water refill points throughout the region.
- Funded through \$1.8 million in ARPA funds and additional contributions from Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.
- Seven heli-hydrants planned:
 - Two in Cabazon – completed and operational (demonstrated with live helicopter drops).
 - Two in High Valleys – one complete, one nearing completion.
 - Future sites: SGPWA's Triangle property (purple star), SMWC land (gray), and Banning Heights (red) funded by Flood Control.
- Tanks hold approximately 8,500 gallons each and refill quickly, providing a dependable water source during fire emergencies.

Water Banking Partnership with AVEK (Antelope Valley–East Kern Water Agency)

- New Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed to explore development of a joint groundwater banking project in the Palmdale–Lancaster region.
- Purpose: Store excess SWP water in wet years and recover it during droughts, improving long-term supply reliability for the Pass area.
- Potential for 10,000–20,000 acre-feet of future storage capacity.
- Planned activities: hydrogeologic, technical, and environmental studies, property acquisition, and regulatory framework development.
- Project would diversify the regional water portfolio and enhance operational flexibility during statewide or local supply interruptions.

Regional Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) 2025

- Joint effort between SGPWA and Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District (BCVWD) to prepare the 2025 UWMP.
- The plan was offered to all regional retailers; some agencies (e.g., Yucaipa Valley Water District, South Mesa Water Company) opted to align with San Bernardino Valley MWD's plan instead.
- Collaboration expected to reduce costs and promote consistency among participating agencies.
- Includes "Conservation as a Way of Life" compliance, water shortage contingency planning, and growth-related demand projections.

- Discussion noted that each agency will have a dedicated chapter within the regional plan, reflecting individual supplies and contingency measures.

Water Purchases and Regional Supply Coordination

- SGPWA negotiating with SBVMWD to purchase 5,000 acre-feet of surplus water under the Startup Agreement framework.
- Water to be recharged in the San Bernardino Basin with future exchanges via the State Water Project—no new infrastructure required.
- SGPWA currently delivering its full 19,500 acre-foot entitlement for 2025, with expectations of recharging more than 20,000 acre-feet regionwide.
- Ongoing collaboration with BCVWD and other local agencies has expanded storage capacity—approximately 10,000 acre-feet available for future use across multiple basins and storage programs.

O. Beaumont Basin Watermaster – No report

6. **Suggested Presentations and Topics for Future Meetings**

- Update and Discussion Regarding Funding for the Sites Reservoir Project
- Discussion Regarding Funding for the Delta Conveyance Project
- Discussion Regarding Funding for the Regional Cabazon/Banning Backbone Project
- PFAS
- Lead and Copper Rule

7. **Future Meeting Dates**

Committee is dark in November

Meeting time is 4th Wednesday of odd months at 5 p.m.

- January 28, 2026
- March 25, 2026
- May 27, 2026
- July 22, 2026
- September 23, 2026

8. **Adjournment**

Chairman Daniel Slawson adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.