

## **Borrego Valley Primary Water Users Meeting**

**November 29, 2012**

**Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce**

### **Meeting Notes**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Linda Haddock – Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce  
Bill Berkley - Rams Hill, looking at resurrecting the golf course, but water cost an issue  
Beth Hart - President Borrego Water District board, 12 years in Borrego Valley  
Dennis Jensen - Oasis Ranch Management Company, 25 years in Borrego Valley  
Martha Deichler – Borrego Spring Unified School District, 7 years in Borrego Valley  
Ryan Hall - Borrego Farms, 6 months in Borrego Valley  
Duane Young – Roadrunner Tree Farm, 22 years in Borrego Valley  
Jim Seley – Seley Ranches, 50 years in Borrego Valley  
Jim Wilson - President of Board for Christmas Circle Park  
Jack Cameron - Borrego Springs Resort  
Kory Atkinson - De Anza Country Club, 3 months in Borrego Valley  
Marshal Brecht – BWD Board Member, 7 years in Borrego Valley  
Jerry Rolwing – BWD, 14 years in Borrego Valley  
Brian Moniz - DWR  
Jim Wermers – De Anza Country Club, 20 years in Borrego Valley  
David Bauer – Borrego Farms  
Tim Ross – DWR, has been working in Borrego Valley since 2004  
Laura Peters – DWR

#### **DISCUSSION**

The meeting began with introductions and a review of the agenda. A copy of the materials used in a recent DWR Leadership and Learning exchange was distributed so the attendees would have access to sample ground rules and helpful information about collaborative based negotiations. There was a brief discussion about the IRWM Round 2 planning application, and DWR confirmed that this meeting is not about getting the attendees to prepare an IRWM plan, although IRWM is one potential option.

Tim Ross presented information that demonstrates declining groundwater levels in the Valley over many decades. Although not every attendee agreed to the severity of the overdraft, the attendees recognized that it is time to try to address it.

There was discussion about recharge cycles, cones of depression, depth of the individual aquifers, and the associated water quality of each aquifer. It was noted that USGS should be publishing their most recent report and it will answer some questions and confirm or dispel some questions relating to recharge and withdrawal rates and how much time before the upper aquifer is dewatered.

Some questions were discussed:

- Is there a moratorium on the number of wells that can be drilled in the Borrego Valley? No, there is no law limiting the number of wells that can be drilled in a groundwater basin.
- Water quality is an important issue as you go deeper, especially for drinking water. Yes.
- Water quality is just as important to the production of agriculture. Yes.

The following is some of the informational items that attendees believed would be helpful to reach consensus:

- Agreement that science of the Basin should be the starting point;
  - How many wells there are in the basin;
  - The goals for long term planning;
  - What does it take to achieve these goals;
  - What are the costs for achieving long term planning of the aquifer?
  - How to ensure the plan is binding, so newcomers follow the plan;
  - Need to look at the negative impacts of the overdraft on the Valley's economy;
  - Look at the ripple effects of different options;
  - Need ordered list of issues that everyone agrees on, and define action items to arrive at agreement on issues of disagreement.
- The ABD IRWM process was described as follows:
    - IRWM was designed to lay out a process to bring folks together
    - The stakeholders direct how the money is spent through IRWM process
    - The governance structure for the IRWM application was designed to allow the larger stakeholder group to have the initial decision, if consensus was not reached then issue gets elevated to the group of large producers, if still no consensus, then the issue gets elevated to the three agencies - Self-interest was the motivator to keeping the decision making in the largest group of the stakeholders

Laura Peters distributed a draft outline of five potential paths forward for consideration by the Group before the next meeting. The initial options identified were: 1) update existing groundwater management plan, which BWD has authority over; 2) prepare an IRWM plan; 3) Develop a negotiated settlement; 4) develop a stipulated agreement; and 5) no action.

It was noted that a court stipulation might be necessary to enforce the negotiated agreement among basin pumpers. At this time it seemed like the attendees need to address more fundamental issues first, so the attendees were asked to consider potential issues for future discussion.

The attendees agreed to meet monthly for at least the next six months (starting in January) to determine a path forward. It was agreed that representatives from the following sectors would participate:

Agriculture - 4 members

Recreation – 3 golf courses – 1 RV

Municipal – 3

Schools – 1

Park – 1

DWR – 3

The attendees agreed to two primary goals for future meetings:

1. Desire for local management of the Basin
2. Develop a plan for managing the basin that the larger community supports so as to ensure successful implementation of the plan over time.