

Borrego Water Coalition (BWC) Meeting
 Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce
 May 2, 2013
 8:00 – 12:00

ATTENDEES

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| Agricultural Representatives – | Dennis Jensen - Oasis Ranch Management Company
Jim Seley – AAWARE, Seley Ranches
Mike Seley – Seley Ranches
Duane Young – Roadrunner Tree Farm
Ryan Hall - Borrego Farms |
| Recreation - | Jim Wermers – De Anza Country Club
Dan Wright – Road Runner Club
Bill Berkley - Rams Hill Golf Course
Jim Moxham – Borrego Springs Resort |
| Resorts/Lodging -
BWD & District Ratepayers - | Derek Downey – La Casa del Zorro
Beth Hart – President, BWD
Lyle Brecht – BWD Board Member
Jerry Rolwing – BWD |
| School District -
Public Space -
Commercial Businesses -
Watershed and Desert Ecosystems - | Martha Deichler – Borrego Spring Unified School District
Jim Wilson - President of Board for Christmas Circle Park
Linda Haddock – Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce
Kathy Dice – Anza Borrego State Park
Ralph Singer – Anza Borrego Foundation |
| CA Dept of Water Resources - | Tim Ross, Senior Engineering Geologist
Laura Peters, Senior Engineer, WR
Brian Moniz, Senior Engineer, WR |
| County of San Diego | Jim Bennett, County Hydrogeologist |
| Guests | Suzanne Lawrence, UCI Desert Research Center
Travis Huxman (by phone), UCI Desert Research Center
Ray Schindler, Save Our Aquifer Coalition
Richard Walker, Save Our Aquifer Coalition Borrego Springs
Resident |

University of CA, Irvine Desert Research Center (UCI)

Representatives associated with the University of California, Irvine (UCI) introduced the work they will be doing in Borrego Springs. UCI’s Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego (SBAB) Desert Research Center plans to conduct community driven science research. They hope that the resources of the university will support the community in resolving self-identified local environmental issues.

In particular, UCI is planning to submit a proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF), in September 2013 and requested BWC participation. They will be holding a May 17 scoping session from 9:00 to 4:00 to develop science questions based on community needs. BWC representatives from each sector were invited to attend. It was emphasized that the process must engage stakeholders from the very beginning through to the end.

Discussions with SBAB include the potential for future research initiatives regarding: (1) Renewable Energy, (2) Water Quality, (3) Water Resources, (4) Economic Development, and (5) Biodiversity.

Economics of Urgency

The Coalition then discussed the economic issues the community is facing. All agreed that it is not fair for one sector to pay all the cost and another sector receive all the benefits. Additionally, if a sector leaves the community for any reason, the economic impacts need to be understood and anticipated. For example, economic impacts may be greater than just the loss of jobs; schools, businesses, and the service industry may also be impacted.

Each sector will need to frame their unique economic scenario and have these economic impacts integrated into a picture of the entire economic ecosystem of the Valley. For example, once the economic gaps are defined, we will be able to quantify potential losses, develop solutions, identify costs and budget for them.

Meeting Practices

There is a concern about the BWC meetings growing into a town hall setting. It was decided early on that the meetings would be for invited participants only. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) identified a process whereby the public could interact with their respective representatives to provide input into the BWC. The primary concern is that the signatories to the MOU agreed to conditions of participation that abide by the Chatham House rule; where participants are free to use the information discussed in BWC meetings, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers may be revealed. This allows participants to speak freely without fear of retaliation.

It was suggested that standard clauses relating to the Sherman Act be read at the beginning of each meeting. Essentially, each member agrees that they will not discuss outside business during BWC meetings to avoid potentially harming business competition.

All agreed to continue meeting in the Chamber board room, and everyone agrees to sit around the table.

The Coalition will create a BWC link on the Chamber website. Executive summaries of the meeting notes will be posted on the website.

Adjudication

There will be an educational forum on the June 19 (1:00-3:00 pm) at the Borrego Water District (BWD) regarding the pros/cons of adjudicating the Borrego Valley groundwater basin as a potential mechanism to establish an authority to manage the basin. The organization, Save our Aquifer, has organized and paid for this educational forum. They have arranged for an attorney experienced with adjudications in other basins to present at this forum. BWC members are encouraged to attend.

San Diego County Groundwater Ordinance

San Diego County government (County) amended the County groundwater (GW) ordinance for Borrego Valley in January 2013. The change enables BWD water credits to qualify for the County's groundwater mitigation requirements for new development in Borrego Valley.

The discussion then addressed the option of modifying the existing County GW ordinance to assist in managing the basin. A model groundwater management ordinance is in DWR Bulletin 118. It establishes some basin management objectives, addressing water levels, water quality and subsidence. In addition, the model ordinance establishes measures that will be taken once certain extraction thresholds are reached.

The ordinance would need to be tailored to Borrego Valley and be written with the ability to change basin management objectives over time. While it is possible to adopt a groundwater management ordinance, the

County has never considered this for Borrego Valley. Until a formal proposal from the individuals and entities that pump groundwater from the Borrego Valley basin is made to the County, it is unknown whether the County would consider adoption of a groundwater management ordinance.

A question arose about what County requirements would apply to a proposal for new agricultural lands greater than 5 acres. If such a proposal required the clearing of the land it would require a clearing permit that would be evaluated pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This would require the county to analyze potential impacts to groundwater resources. Such a project would be subject to the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) Policy Regarding CEQA Cumulative Impact Analyses for Borrego Valley Groundwater Use which would encourage applicants to include with their project offsetting groundwater use reduction measures at a 1:1 offset.

Another question was would a landowner lose water rights if water has not been used within 5 years on land that has historically been used for agricultural use with a clearing permit. The County noted that groundwater rights would not be lost; however, the landowner would be subject to a new clearing permit. This would include a CEQA review.

The County representative agreed to share a list of items the BWC would like the Board of Supervisors to consider to address relating to Borrego Valley. Potential items include allocation of staff hours to projects to assist Borrego Valley groundwater issues, such as groundwater water level and quality monitoring.

Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) and the Roundtable of Regions (ROR)

The Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County has a good model for implementing IRWM. A handout of a PowerPoint slideshow was distributed for informational purposes.

Approximately 20 ROR members were contacted in an effort to assess what it would take for BWC to develop a grass roots IRWM plan in time for Round 3 funding in mid-2014. Findings include:

- Everyone contacted used a consultant to produce their plan
- No one produced a 2012 IRWM plan without spending \$400k+
- Several were working to develop a 2012 IRWM plan for less than \$400k but not complete
- Cannot receive Round 3 funding without IRWM and GWM plans supporting one another

Updating the existing Groundwater Management Plan (GWMP)

As the authorizing entity, BWD cannot give away its AB3030 authority to a group like BWC, but BWC can be instrumental in the planning and implementation process of the GWMP. The current (2002) GWMP has no capacity to create a practical solution and would have to be updated according to the required process.

Regardless of whether the BWC chooses to develop an IRWM plan, the GWMP will need to be updated in order to apply for implementation funding, so it makes sense to review what is required to update it.

Facilitation Application

The DWR facilitation review committee will be meeting to review BWCs application for facilitation assistance on Monday, May 6. If all goes well, a professional facilitator will be available in September.

Action Items:

Linda Haddock – scan MOU and distribute final MOU

Linda Haddock – email Ventura PowerPoint presentation to group

Linda Haddock – set up a BWC webpage on the Chamber website

Press release committee – summarize meeting notes for posting on the website (executive summary)

Press release committee – draft brief press release to announce the new web page

Laura – send email regarding attendance at UCI scoping meeting May 17th

Laura – submit application for facilitation

Next meeting on June 6

July meeting will be on 11th