

MEETING SUMMARY – MARCH 6, 2014

BORREGO WATER COALITION

Thursday, March 6, 2014, 10 am to 2 pm

1. Introduction

The meeting started with the members introductions. The facilitator reviewed all numbered documents that were to be discussed at the meeting as well as the meeting agenda. The members noted the time of the March 27th town hall meeting to be at 4:00 P.M. The facilitator went over the ground rules.

2. Discuss Desired Reduction Goals, Baseline, Planning Horizon, and Shared Reduction

The facilitator reviewed several key planning parameters that the group would need to develop to provide a framework for more specific actions that reduce water use. These included an overall goal for reduced use and a duration for plan implementation (or “planning horizon”). Members provided feedback on what they felt were reasonable and realistic goals for reducing the overdraft and the planning horizon. They agreed that their efforts will be best directed toward actions that are cost effective. The group will need to be able to think about what is most cost effective for an individual sector and across all sectors.

The facilitator also introduced different options for active reduction of groundwater use for each user group (“shared reduction formulas”). Variations included basing this on the current proportion of use, a flat rate for all users, population, acreage, and a historical ideal. Members discussed strengths and weaknesses of the different examples. The members suggested that the time frame of the proposed plan to be 20 years.

3. Facilitating Land Conversion

On a conference call, the Coalition members had the following discussion with Mr. Tom Hall, Esquire:

- Because of Anza-Borrego Foundation’s (ABF’s) proven record of success and their good reputation, he envisions ABF to be the best non-profit organization geared for the task of acquisition of the farmlands and their conversion to parkland with all entitlement to be transferred to Parks.
- Some Coalition members did not agree that it would be in the best interest of the community to strip all future use of the farmlands and give entitlement to Parks. They entertained the idea of a buffer zone of lands adjacent to the parks being more appropriate for parkland, and land closer to town center for other uses.
- In the past, in some instances ABF has purchased land and sold it to be used for purposes other than parkland. With the proceeds of those sales, ABF has purchased and donated some other suitable land to the parks.
- The members discussed the potential role of the Coalition in such planning and the need to develop a case statement in order to pursue public funds.

- The facilitator noted parts of Mr. Hall’s letter that identified critical information needed to develop a land conversation program, including but not limited to: the need to inventory the farmland to be fallowed; establish appraisal techniques and values; develop a strategy to designate farmland to be apportioned to parkland and other uses; and explore tax structures.
- The Coalition should also weigh the advantages of using ABF for its credibility, experience, and availability versus the possibility of forming another non-profit organization.
- There is also a need to think about packaging BWC’s final product to include the BMO document and the upcoming economic study.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Facilitator to distribute copy of facilitation support scope and budget.

4. Standing Items

- Adoption of February 6 Meeting Summary
 - February 6 Meeting Summary was finalized and adopted.
- Update on the Parks
 - The possibility of any of the parklands to be utilized as recharge basin is unlikely. Members could explore this, but the Park would not support this based on its mission and the Public Resources code.
- Update on the District’s GWMP Update Process
 - Borrego Water District (BWD) is hosting a March 27th town hall meeting where members of the public may ask questions. A representative from the US Geological Survey will attend.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** District to post USGS draft report and supplemental documents when available.
 - A consultant hired by BWD is interviewing some of the Borrego residents and is writing a story about the people of Borrego.
 - BWD is working on water usage documents to be presented to its board of directors.
 - Facilitator requested that the draft USGS report be shared with Roger Mann (the economist). Roger needs access to Dropbox. He will send a confidentiality statement to BWD.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Chamber to add economics consultant to Dropbox.
- Report-outs on discussions with the press
 - Some of the members were contacted and interviewed by the press to express their opinions about different BWC issues. The reporter is an environmental investigative reporter and was told that the members are working together. He believes BWC’s efforts in establishing a Ground Water Management Plan may be very positive as an example for other communities.
- Member Announcements
 - The Sponsor Group is not very optimistic about San Diego County increasing the land density in farming area.

5. Review of External Support

- Economics Consultant
 - Dr. Roger Mann, the economist, has submitted his final scope of work. Roger will be at the Coalition meetings in April and May to present his initial findings, answer questions from members, and ask members some questions.
- Facilitation Support through DWR
 - Members inquired about the possibility of obtaining additional funding from DWR after June 30th. They were told by DWR that no additional funding is expected from the Department.
- Revised County maps of Borrego Land Use Zoning
 - The members appreciated the clarifications made by the County to the maps. The facilitator will request hard copies of the maps from the County.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** County to send copy of zoning maps to Coalition.
- UCI Economic Contextualization and Development Scenarios. UCI still has no news from the National Science Foundation on the grant funding.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Facilitator to share latest materials including scenarios with UCI.
- Borrego as a Sustainable Destination and BWC participation:
 - Jonathan Tourtellot from the National Geographic Center for Sustainable Development has shown interest in Borrego because of its proximity to the national park. He is very well connected with the UNESCO World Heritage. He will be conducting a work shop on sustainable agriculture and tourism attraction. He is planning to be at Borrego for a week starting April 11th.
 - The facilitator suggested that one of the Coalition members who will attend the workshop prepare a brief summary for the April meeting.

6. Review of Action Items, Next Steps, and Closing Remarks

- Any information that needs to be sent to the economist should be sent to the facilitator.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Facilitator to brief economist on latest materials and set up call with members to review planning parameter assumptions.
- Next steps
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Members to work on land value formula.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Members to draft proposal for financing activities after June 2014.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Members to discuss packaging of final recommendations.
 - The Coalition reiterated the need for the financing group to explore the funding means available for continuation of the Coalition work beyond July 2014.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Facilitator and member to develop planning parameter template for caucus groups to fill out by COB March 25.

7. Attendees

Borrego Water District

Lyle Brecht, Board Member
Beth Hart, President of Board

	Jerry Rolwing, General Manager
Agriculture	Bill Bauer, Borrego Farms Dennis Jensen, Oasis Ranch Mike Seley, Seley Ranch (alternate) Duane Young, Cocopah Nurseries
Recreation	Bill Berkley, Ram Hill Golf Course Jim Moxham, Borrego Springs Resort (alternate) Jim Wermers, De Anza Country Club Dan Wright, The Springs at Borrego and Road Runner
Schools	Martha Deichler, Borrego Unified School District
Watershed & Desert Ecosystem	Kathy Dice, Anza Borrego Desert State Park Ralph Singer, Anza Borrego Foundation
Commerce & Business	Linda Haddock, Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce
CA. Dept. of Water Resources	Tim Ross, Senior Engineering Geologist
Center for Collaborative Policy	Dorian Fougères, Senior Mediator Vida Tarassoly, Assistant Facilitator
University of California, Irvine	Emily Brooks, Doctoral Student Observer
Law Offices of Thomas J. Hall	Tom Hall, Esquire (via telephone)