

**MINUTES**  
**Borrego SGMA Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting #5**

Thursday, July 27, 2017  
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Location: Borrego Water District, Board Room  
806 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>Committee members:</b>	<u>Present:</u>	Jim Seley, Jim Wilson, Suzanne Lawrence, Ryan Hall, Rebecca Falk, Dave Duncan, Bill Berkley
	<b>Core Team members:</b>		Beth Hart, BWD                      Lyle Brecht, BWD Geoff Poole, BWD                      Leanne Crow, County of San Diego
	<b>Staff:</b>		Meagan Wylie, Center                      Wendy Quinn, BWD for Collaborative Policy                      Trey Driscoll, Dudek, GSP Consultant
	<b>Public:</b>		Michael Sadler, <i>Borrego Sun</i> Mike Seley, Seley Ranch Diane Johnson, Stewardship                      Ralph Singer, ABF, BWC Council                      Dennis Jensen, Oasis Ranch Linda Haddock, Chamber of                      Management Commerce, BWC                      Betsy Knaak, ABDNHA

**Item #1:            Welcome, Introductions and Opening Remarks**

Review Agenda and Meeting Objectives: Meagan Wylie welcomed the attendees and reviewed the meeting ground rules, agenda and Brown Act provisions. Those present introduced themselves.

Approval of June 29, 2017 A/C Meeting Minutes: Upon motion by Member Duncan, seconded by Member Wilson and unanimously carried by those present, the Minutes of the June 29, 2017 A/C Meeting were approved as corrected. The last sentence of the third paragraph of Item #3 was deleted and replaced with the following: "The purpose of the grant for Category 1 is to deeply explore relevant issues around our severely disadvantaged community (SDAC) status and how those issues interface with the plan process." The following was added at the end of Item #5: "When the contaminants are a cause for alarm and what the existence of contaminants may mean as to water use was discussed. More monitoring will provide a better basis for answering questions."

Review status of Action Items from June 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Ms. Wylie reviewed the action items. All were complete or in progress. Mr. Poole announced that the new Borrego Water District (BWD) website, BVGSP.org, should be complete in about a week. There will be a section dedicated to the A/C. Ms. Wylie will put the hyper link shown on the bottom of each A/C Agenda. Member Duncan suggested including e-mail addresses for A/C members on the BWD website. Mr. Poole will work with the members to see if they want a new e-mail address for A/C business and whether they want their e-mail address posted on the website. Ms. Crow requested a list of any new e-mail addresses to ensure they are included in the SGMA interested persons list.

Ms. Wylie invited the A/C's attention to a handout, "Draft AC Interests & Issues Tracking," a tool for developing recommendations to the Core Team. She suggested trying the format for a few meetings to see how it works. Member Falk suggested that the column "Consensus Level" be changed to "Straw Poll Consensus Level." She also emphasized the need for the A/C to move forward into more substantial issues. She recommended that all members read BWD Director Brecht's draft Working Risk Management Brief, presented at yesterday's BWD meeting, and that it be included in the

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next A/C Agenda package. She also recommended an early effort to discuss percentage water allocations assumed by the Borrego Water Coalition (BWC), 70 percent agriculture, 20 recreation and 10 residential. Member Duncan suggested the Core Team (CT) develop a “roadmap” of potential issues/topics for the AC to address over the next few months of Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development. Member Lawrence suggested meeting in a workshop format, perhaps with facilitators who are experts in the current topics of discussion.

BWD President Hart invited the A/C’s attention to a handout, “Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Questions and Answers.” She welcomed suggestions from members or their constituents. Director Brecht suggested putting it on the website, marked “draft,” and Ms. Wylie agreed to do so, and also include it as a discussion item in the next Agenda. Mr. Poole will distribute an e-mail copy that will allow members to suggest edits in “track changes” for future amendments.

### **Item #2: Continued Discussion and Potential Actions: Proposition 1 Grant Funding Opportunity**

Ms. Crow explained that only a few basins in the State are critically overdrafted as well as severely disadvantaged, Borrego being one, so there is a good chance of receiving Proposition 1 grant funds. The County and BWD, as a multi-agency Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), need not submit a joint application. The County expects to seek funding for an Environmental Impact Report, General Plan amendments and zoning in the amount of \$500,000. She suggested that BWD apply for an equal amount that could include a socioeconomic study as well as the well metering and monitoring program. Ms. Crow clarified that given the time constraints of the grant and the County’s contracting process, it would be challenging for the County to implement a well metering program with grant funding. Mr. Poole reported that BWD had conditionally approved a contract with LeSar Development Consultants for a socioeconomic study which will assist with the grant applications. Member Lawrence suggested including some community engagement work to ensure the study goes beyond written data and “brings people along.” Mr. Driscoll presented a slide outlining the Proposition 1 grant application process and agreed to provide a link to the webinar from which it was extracted. Discussion followed regarding the \$1 million grant limit per GSA, and whether the \$500,000 for BWD would all be used up by the well metering. Director Brecht believed it would not.

President Hart asked the A/C for additional suggestions for Proposition 1 grant funded projects. Member Falk suggested water quality testing, and Member Hall suggested removal of dead trees from fallowed agricultural land and retraining laid off agricultural workers. Ms. Crow clarified that grant funds can only be used for specific purposes and Member Hall’s suggestions may not be acceptable projects by DWR. Member Duncan reported that his ratepayer constituents agreed on the critical importance of the metering program. Member Wilson suggested the pumpers might share in the cost, partially grant funded, to free up funds for other projects as well.

Ms. Crow noted that the application period is August through October. Member Lawrence recommended applying early, to allow time for any amendments to the application that the State might request.

**The Committee broke for lunch at 12:15 p.m. and reconvened at 12:30 p.m.**

### **Item #3: Discussion and Potential Action: Requiring the Metering of all Wells in Borrego Springs Subbasin and Proposed Monitoring Program**

Director Brecht reminded the A/C that the GSA does not have authority to require well metering until adoption of the GSP. It must be voluntary at this time, but the A/C can recommend that it be included in the GSP. Member Falk noted that the BWC recommended mandatory metering after GSP adoption, and

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metering as many wells as possible at the earliest opportunity. Ms. Crow explained that for basins without GSAs, the State has adopted a fee schedule whereby pumpers without meters end up paying more. Member Wilson suggested making it clear to the pumpers that metering and monitoring may eventually be mandatory, and if they install or refurbish their meters now it may be totally or partially grant funded.

Member Duncan made a motion that the A/C recommend that once the GSP is adopted, metering be mandatory; and make it clear to the pumpers that if they volunteer for the program early, their costs may be subsidized. The motion was seconded by Member Berkley, and discussion followed. Member Wilson pointed out that pumpers may get credit against future water use reduction demands if they begin early.

### **Item #5: Benchmarking under SGMA Presentation**

Mr. Driscoll suggested presenting his information from Item #5 at this point, since it was relevant to the current discussion. He explained that the GSP process includes a water budget update, allocation of groundwater extraction, development of sustainability goals and objectives, identification of projects and management issues, and development of an implementation plan. He pointed out that while historical pumping rates and consumptive use can be used to measure extraction, metering is the most reliable method. The benchmarking period is typically five years in groundwater rights adjudications but a 10-year period is expected to fairly establish historical production.

### **Item #3: Discussion and Potential Action: Requiring the Metering of all Wells in Borrego Springs Subbasin and Proposed Monitoring Program (continued)**

Discussion continued regarding the motion to recommend mandatory metering in the GSP. Member Falk suggested including the issues of water cost and penalties for withholding information, but Member Duncan preferred to address those separately. Member Seley agreed to obtain information from his constituents on whether they want to volunteer for the voluntary metering program, perhaps get some historical water usage data, and provide the information to Mr. Driscoll.

Ms. Wylie polled the A/C on the motion. Members Wilson, Berkley, Lawrence, Duncan and Falk supported it. Members Hall and Seley felt they needed more time. They supported metering but were not comfortable with someone coming onto their property to read the meters. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of pumpers reading their own meter, how self-reading would be verified, and options for remote, wireless meter reading. Member Seley wanted to discuss the issue with his constituents. Further discussion was continued to the next meeting, and the motion was tabled.

### **Item #4:**

#### **Discussion: Policy on Projects Creating Additional Water Use post January 1, 2015 Pending Determination of Existing Allocations**

Member Falk pointed out that the County does not have a policy preventing new projects which require increased water use. She asked the A/C to recommend that until the allocations are determined, a procedure be implemented, perhaps sign-off by BWD, to prevent or review new water use. Ms. Crow explained that any new project has to go through the California Environmental Quality Act, and the issue will be addressed in the GSP. The County does not currently have authority to do anything else. Mr. Poole pointed out that BWD signs a letter of availability before construction can begin, and is looking at this procedure with counsel. The water credit program also serves to limit increased water use. Director Brecht agreed to work with Member Falk to address her questions on the water credit program.

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### **Item #6: Review Timeline for GSP Development and Milestones for AC Input/Recommendations on High-level Topics**

Ms. Crow summarized an outline of the GSP, including among other things, data compilation and assessment, monitoring, data management, water level and quality data collection and budget. The A/C will provide input on the GSP deliverables, and Ms. Crow presented a timeline. Mr. Driscoll is nearing completion on the draft water budget and groundwater model. Projects, management actions and best management practices will be addressed in the fall of 2017 through the spring of 2018, and ordinance review and a draft GSP in the summer of 2018. Discussion followed regarding whether the A/C should meet more than once a month, and Director Brecht suggested using subcommittees. Ms. Wylie will check with legal counsel as to whether the Brown Act would apply to subcommittees, and will see that the slides presented today are posted on the County website and e-mailed to the A/C members.

### **Item #7: Receive Updates from A/C Members on Group Discussions**

Member Falk reported that at the last Sponsor Group meeting, all members present wanted to implement metering and monitoring as soon as possible. Member Seley reported that his constituents had questions concerning whether we are trying to reduce water usage or farmed acreage. He will discuss this further with Mr. Driscoll. Ms. Wylie requested the A/C members to send her any materials they want distributed at subsequent meetings.

### **Item #8: General Comment from A/C Members and Receive A/C suggestions for Future Meeting Topics**

No additional comments or suggestions.

### **Item #9: General Public Comment**

Dennis Jensen reported that the agricultural constituents were working to provide recommendations to the GSA. They are concerned about being regulated out of business without compensation. Director Brecht pointed out that no one has a right to water over a sustainable yield, so everyone in the basin is actually in violation.

### **Item #10: Next Steps, A/C Meeting Date(s) and Closing Remarks**

The next meeting was scheduled for September 28. Ms. Wylie will distribute a proposed agenda in advance and let the members know whether to send responses to her or to Mr. Poole.

Member Hall pointed out that the agricultural businesses support the community during the summer by creating jobs and supporting local businesses.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.