

MINUTES

**Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin: Borrego Springs Subbasin
Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
Advisory Committee (AC)**

August 30, 2018 @ 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: UCI Steele Burnand Research Center: 401 Tilting T, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

I. OPENING PROCEDURES

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Borrego Water District (BWD) General Manager Geoff Poole.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call of Attendees

Committee members: Present: Jim Seley, Rebecca Falk, Dave Duncan, Bill Berkley, Gina Moran, Diane Johnson, Jack McGrory, Ryan Hall

Absent: Jim Wilson

Core Team members: Leanne Crow, County of San Diego Jim Bennett, County of San Diego
Geoff Poole, BWD

Staff/Consultants: Meagan Wylie, Center for Collaborative Policy Trey Driscoll, Dudek, GSP Consultant (via teleconference)
Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary Rachel Ralston, LeSar Development (via teleconference, Item III.A.b only)
Hugh McManus, Dudek Consulting Team Jay Jones, Environmental Navigation Systems, Inc. (ENSI)

Public: Michael Sadler, *Borrego Sun* Linda Haneline
Stephen Ballas Bill Haneline
Martha Deichler Kathy Dice
Betsy Knaak Suzanne Lawrence

D. Review of Meeting Agenda

Meagan Wylie reviewed the meeting ground rules and Agenda.

E. Approval of July 26, 2018 AC Meeting Minutes

Upon motion by Member Seley, seconded by Member Berkley and unanimously carried by those present, the Minutes of the July 26, 2018 AC Meeting were approved as written.

F. Updates from the Core Team

Jim Bennett reported that the main activities since the last AC meeting focused on completing the draft Chapters of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Dudek has completed Chapters 1 and 2 and expects to complete the remaining chapters within several weeks. A detailed overview of the draft GSP components will be presented over the course of the next three AC meetings.

Mr. Bennett also recalled that letters were sent to pumpers regarding their respective proposed Baseline Pumping Allocations (BPAs) in mid-July, and several responses have been received. The responses are currently being reviewed and analyzed. Some farmers also submitted pumping data based on metered use. Member Falk asked how many pumpers had not responded to the provided letter, and Mr. Bennett agreed to obtain the number. Member Seley asked whether, if a pumper does not respond to the proposed BPA, he/she is assumed to agree with it. Geoff Poole felt a confirmation of receipt of letter would be beneficial, and agreed to discuss with the Core Team. Mr. Bennett clarified that the letters went out certified mail which includes return receipts. Member Hall asked whether the BPAs took

AC Minutes: August 30, 2018

into account water use other than irrigation, such as people living on the property and maintenance. Mr. Poole replied that the core team should look into this.

Mr. Poole reported that in response to Member Seley's request made at the July AC meeting to have the Agricultural Alliance for Water and Resource Education's (AAWARE's) technical expert review Dudek's BPA report, a meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow, August 31. This will be the first of a series of meetings.

G. Updates from Advisory Committee Members

Member Duncan reported that there had been no ratepayers' meetings since the last AC meeting. However, a question was raised as to how close the projected water table levels at the end of the GSP implementation period would be to the screening levels in the production wells, as there are concerns being expressed regarding future water quality values as water table levels decline. Trey Driscoll replied that this topic would be addressed in Chapter 3 of the GSP.

Member Johnson reported that the Stewardship Council had been considering the water quality component of the GSP. Pesticides that are currently regulated will be monitored, but concerns are emerging about substances that are used in the Valley for agriculture activities, but not yet regulated. She suggested creating a working group to look at these potential contaminants/constituents of concern and report back findings to the AC and Core Team. The Core Team agreed to consider and discuss it at the next AC meeting.

Member Falk asked about the Borrego Springs line item in the Proposition 3 bond measure, coming up on the November ballot. Specifically, if the bond measure passes, and the money is used to purchase farmland or water, will it belong to BWD? If someone subsequently purchases land or water credits from BWD, will BWD get the money? Mr. Poole indicated discussion on this topic is premature, but will be necessary if the bond measure passes.

H. As Needed Opportunity to Clarify Technical/Informational Material presented at July 26, 2018 Meeting
None

II. TECHNICAL AND POLICY ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION OR INTRODUCTION

A. Baseline Pumping Allocations & Reductions

Mr. Bennett explained that the Core Team was reviewing BPAs and proposed reductions per Member Falk's concern regarding the lack of adequate previous discussion about proportional versus non-proportional reductions across sectors. The Core Team's current approach is instituting proportional reductions across sectors, with consideration of the Human Right to Water allocated in order to allow that portion of the municipal sector to be exempt from any reductions. Mr. Poole added that although the proposed BPAs contemplate a 75 percent reduction in water use over the 20-year timeframe, consideration of the Human Right to Water may lessen municipal reductions to roughly 50 percent. More information on this estimate is expected to be presented at the next AC meeting. Member Falk wanted it on record that she has gone along with the idea of proportional reductions across sectors since it seemed clear that the Core Team was inflexible on this point, but that as representative of the Sponsor Group, she wanted to make it clear in case the GSP ends up in court that the Sponsor Group has already expressed its position in a letter to the Core Team that it strongly prefers municipal users be exempt from any and all future water use reductions. Members Duncan, Moran and Johnson concurred.

Member Seley stated that if these issues go to court, then the decisions on water allocations will be made by courts of law, and not by Advisory Committee.

III. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Socioeconomic Efforts: Proposition 1 Grant Tasks Update
 - a. Tasks 2 and 3 Draft Report

AC Minutes: August 30, 2018

Jay Jones presented an overview of the socioeconomic efforts funded by the Proposition 1 grant, focusing on the area's Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) status. Dr. Jones' company, Environmental Navigation Services, Inc. (ENSI) has been working on this along with LeSar Development Consultants and Dudek. He reviewed that Task 1 is the SDAC engagement, Task 2 is the baseline data compilation (SDAC data, groundwater quantity and level, groundwater quality and overall BWD infrastructure and costs), and Task 3 is management analysis (how the aquifer will respond to pumping reductions, how BWD operations will be affected, and SDAC impacts).

Dr. Jones presented charts showing inflows (groundwater recharge and return flows) and outflows (pumping and evapotranspiration). He explained the overdraft analysis methodology, assuming the current pumping rate of 5,700 acre-feet per year and calculating the overdraft over time using the methodology. The model provides a statistically based analysis that can be used to assess differing pumping rates.

Member Falk asked whether any projections were based on climate change, and Dr. Jones replied that they were not. However, Mr. Driscoll reported that he was addressing climate change within the GSP water budget calculations, and would be presenting more information in the future. Member Seley pointed out that the 2015 United States Geological Survey (USGS) report showed a return flow of 20 percent, whereas Dr. Jones' data showed 10 percent. Dr. Jones explained that the range was 10 to 30 percent, and it is continually reducing. His models utilize the USGS data. Mr. Bennett pointed out that irrigation practices are getting more efficient, so the long-range estimate average 20 percent but currently with efficient irrigation is estimated at 10%. Member Berkley asked if there were any plans for bioretention basins or injection wells. Dr. Jones replied that bioretention basins could potentially be feasible on State Park land, but was unsure if the State Park would consider it. Dr. Jones indicated injection wells have been a viable option in other basins and wasn't sure of its applicability in this basin.

Member Johnson brought up the notion that Borrego Springs differs from other SDACs due to various factors such as small population and remote location. Dr. Jones explained that he was trying to break down community data in terms of jobs, and whether water use reduction would create a problem. Public member Martha Deichler pointed out that if enrollment declines, the schools would lose money. Mr. Poole asked how many students would have to leave Borrego Springs before a school closed, and Ms. Deichler agreed to find out. Member Seley noted that if farmers leave, so do their workers and their children.

b. Community Engagement Efforts Update

Rachel Ralston reported she had gained important information from the business survey. One of the biggest issues is the potential income shift and how that affects the SDAC. She invited the AC's attention to the revised residential survey report, included in the Agenda package. On September 19, there will be two community meetings at the Borrego Springs High School Community Room, 5:00 – 6:30 in English and 6:30 – 8:00 in Spanish.

Ms. Ralston reported that 247 responses were received from the English residential survey, and 54 responses from the Spanish residential survey. Fifty percent of both English and Spanish responders indicated they would be willing to pay up to \$25 more per month for water. There was a discrepancy in income between the two demographics, English speaking earning \$36,000 to \$150,000 annually while the Spanish speaking were \$36,000 or less. Ninety-five percent of English speakers owned their homes, while eighty-three percent of the Spanish speakers rented. The Spanish speaking community is concerned about having to leave Borrego Springs if jobs in agriculture and golf course maintenance become unavailable.

Ms. Ralston announced that the new Borrego GSP Facebook page would be launched soon, and an e-mail contact list was being developed.

c. New Well Site Feasibility Study

AC Minutes: August 30, 2018

Mr. Poole introduced the presentation on the new well site feasibility study, another project funded by the Proposition 1 grant. He explained that BWD needs to replace five of its wells over the next five years, and Dudek has been investigating which wells should be replaced first, and where the new wells should be placed. Hugh McManus of Dudek pointed out there were two approaches to locating an optimum well site: identifying existing wells and reviewing the distribution system. He then prepared a well location ranking matrix and estimated the remaining useful life of the wells being considered for replacement. The saturated thickness of the aquifer and water quality were reviewed, as well as potential interference from nearby wells. Four sites were recommended, the best choice being Well 4 and second best near the airport. Mr. Poole pointed out that Well 4 needs to be replaced anyway. Member McGrory recommended considering the Pivot Well site for second choice.

Member Berkley asked whether the well sites in the study were interconnected. Mr. McManus thought well options 1, 2 and 3 were, but that the last well, in the South Management Area, was separate. Mr. Poole agreed to confirm. Public member Betsy Knaak asked whether the second choice well site would affect native plants in the area, such as the mesquites in the sink. Mr. McManus replied that effects on Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems would be studied when BWD is ready to locate a well on the site. Member Berkley asked why only the middle and lower aquifers were analyzed in the study, and not the upper aquifer. Mr. McManus replied that the saturation thickness of the upper aquifer was limited, but Dr. Jones felt it was not much different from the middle. Member Falk asked Mr. McManus to include a map of the saturation thickness of the upper aquifer in his finalized presentation.

- B.** California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Process Overview
This item was continued to the next AC meeting.

IV. CLOSING PROCEDURES

- A.** Correspondence

The correspondence was included in the Agenda package.

- B.** General Public Comments

Suzanne Lawrence asked the Core Team to evaluate new legislation and report back. SB 1000 was passed in 2016, signed in 2017 and became effective in 2018. It requires every city and county in the State to review and address environmental components in its master plan.

Member Falk requested copies of slides to be used in the CEQA process overview in advance of the next meeting.

A letter in the Agenda package from the *Borrego Sun* brought up property values in Borrego Springs and the fact that they could be impacted by SGMA.

- C.** Review Action Items from Previous AC Meetings, Next AC Meeting Date(s), and Next Steps

Ms. Wylie summarized today's action items. The next AC meeting was scheduled for October 4, 2018.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.