

Bennett, Jim

From: Lee Grismer <lgrismer@lasierra.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2019 11:40 AM
To: LUEG, GroundWater, PDS

Dear Mr. Bennett:

I would like to add my voice to the growing concerns surrounding the Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin Sustainability Plan (GSP). Rather than contribute to the already well-articulated and logistically infallible arguments of my neighbors at the Borrego Air Ranch, I would like to address these issues from a completely different perspective. I am a professor of Biology and the Director of Research in the Biology Department of La Sierra University in Riverside and I have been a property owner at the Air Ranch since 1986. Although I applaud the conservation premise of the GSP, I believe it is short-sighted from an ecological perspective as those who drafted the plan were unaware of other activities that take place at the Air Ranch. We at the Air Ranch have always been a small, ecologically minded community and conscientious stewards of OUR water. My residence also serves as a non-profit research retreat and training centered for ecologist and their students from around the world. Myself and my son, Dr. Jesse Grismer—also a biologist—regularly host training and research workshops on various aspects of conservation—one of which involves water conservation. To date, we have hosted professors and their students from all over the United States as well as from Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and México. These scientists take what they learn from the workshops and from the habitat surrounding the Air Ranch back to their home countries and incorporate these data into their classroom curricula and research labs. The point here being that the Borrego Air Ranch has a tangible international impact on conservation efforts in other countries. Locally, I have students doing non-take recapture population studies on some of the species of reptiles that are Red-Listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) that occur on the Air Ranch. Additionally, I have been using my residence at the Air Ranch as a base station to support my field research on the amphibians and reptiles of Anza-Borrego since 1986. Asking Air Ranch residents to cut their water usage by 75% would completely deconstruct the utility of my property as a base station, research retreat, and intermittent residence.

Mr. Bennett, ultimately the larger issue here I believe is the far-reaching impact the Air Ranch has on conservation overall—not just one of its subcategories of water management. I sincerely hope that a broader, more agnostic view of international conservation and the realization of the role the Borrego Air Ranch bears on this issue will work its way into the decision-making process. If conservation is truly the end game here, then shutting down the Borrego Air Ranch would be analogous to trying to build a new build while simultaneously putting a moratorium on nails.

I would be happy to meet with you any time at your convenience if you have any or concerns or issues you would like to discuss.

Sincerely,
L. Lee Grismer, Ph.D.
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Department of Biology
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"A risk free world is a very dull world, one from which we are apt to learn little of consequence." - Geerat Vermeij

"If people are good only because they fear punishment, and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed." - Albert Einstein