

Borrego Water District
MINUTES
Conservation
Standing Committee
Wednesday, April 30, 2008
9:00 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Attendance: Directors: Shimeall, Smiley
Staff: Richard Williamson, General Manager
 Jerry Rolwing, Operations Manager
 Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Greg Stumpf Ronald Del Guercio
 Lane Sharman, BWX Rudy Monica
 Mary Mitts Jim Engelke

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- School conservation programs
 Irrigation techniques for vegetable gardens
 Poster or essay competitions
 Water education for teachers
 Scholarships

Director Shimeall reported that she met yesterday with Superintendent of Schools Connie Smith. Programs planned to begin in May in the schools include managing irrigation in the elementary school garden, internet research on EPA water issues, reading programs on water, creation of posters depicting water conservation, water songs, an essay contest at the middle school, high school art and science projects, and a "save every drop" assembly. Director Shimeall encouraged District representatives to attend the assembly. Discussion followed regarding prizes for the poster and essay contests, which will be judged by the District. Jerry Rolwing recommended seeking media coverage, and display of the entries was discussed. Rich Williamson suggested giving \$500 to the schools for prizes and leave it to Ms. Smith to allocate it. The Committee concurred. Director Smiley suggested a contest for older students to design a water conservation sign for display outside the District office or at Christmas Circle, and perhaps next year they could collect data on water saving through mulching.

Director Shimeall noted another possibility, offering a scholarship for a teacher to attend the Water Education for Teachers (WET) program. It is probably too late to implement it this year, but all agreed to consider it in the fall. Lane Sharman informed the Committee that the Scripps Institute of Oceanography has a program regarding climate change which is available to students and teachers.

Mr. Rolwing offered to take students on a tour of District facilities.

Director Shimeall suggested inviting a representative of the State Park to a Committee meeting.

Mr. Sharman suggested another Water Education Week. Mr. Rolwing pointed out there is a National Water Education Awareness Week, and Director Shimeall mentioned

Earth Day. Mr. Rolwing recommended putting this issue on the next Agenda. Director Smiley suggested next year's student awards could be presented during the event.

- Similar programs in California, Nevada, Arizona

The WET program, discussed during the school conservation programs, has been successful in other states.

- Incentives for water savers

Mr. Williamson noted that the incentives for water savers have been adopted and will begin in July. They will be advertised once the budget has been approved. Director Smiley recommended that the incentives be included on the District's website, and Mary Mitts added that links to other informational sites could be provided. Mr. Williamson stated that a procedure for approving the rebates will need to be established. Issues include proof of retrofit or turf removal, water audits, individual exceptions and certification of landscapers.

Mr. Sharman requested that the next Agenda include conservation options available to farmers. Mr. Williamson noted that incentives for farmers could be part of a water credit policy. Jim Engelke pointed out that the following policy should be finalized first.

Mr. Engelke requested that the next Agenda include discussion of including the schools in the tiered rates, provided a representative of the School District can attend. Mr. Williamson explained that the elementary school has its own well, but the Health Department would like them to tie into the Water District, perhaps using the well for irrigation only. Further discussion was continued to a future groundwater management meeting (first Board meeting of the month).

- Inserts for water bills

Mr. Rolwing suggested a customer poll to see what types of incentives they are interested in. Director Shimeall circulated sample billing inserts.

Discussion followed regarding whether to require all development to mitigate or continue to offer in lieu fees. Mr. Sharman opposed the fees, noting that water credits could be used for individual construction mitigation.

Ron Del Guercio suggested displaying drought tolerant plants and drip irrigation outside the District office. Mr. Williamson outlined Mr. Rolwing's suggestion to invite four landscapers to display their work at the Community Park site. Discussion followed over the County's request that the District maintain that site and the attendant financial and liability issues. Mr. Williamson agreed to discuss it with the County. Other suggestions included consulting the State Park and the local garden club.

Mr. Williamson suggested providing water conservation materials at the library, and Ms. Mitts added that the Nature Center could also include them. Director Smiley offered to provide a suggested list of materials.

- How to handle reduction efforts larger than 10% per annum

This is one of the issues that will need to be included in the Conservation Management Plan procedures as they are developed.

2. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MONITORING DUTIES

Mr. Rolwing recommended quarterly reports on the performance of the conservation program, followed by adjustments as appropriate. He further suggested that requests for individual exceptions be addressed to the Conservation Committee. Mr. Williamson recommended a chart comparing last year's water usage to this year's, and including the information on the District's website. He agreed to bring a proposed procedure to the next Committee meeting.

3. PROGRESS REPORT ON CIMIS STATION IN BORREGO

Mr. Rolwing distributed information on the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) and sample reports. Director Smiley explained the data provided in the reports. Mr. Rolwing reported he is awaiting a reply from Sergio so he can schedule training workshops. Director Smiley recommended that information on mulching and water-saving fertilizers be included.

Mr. Williamson suggested that the District have a booth during Borrego Days, and Ms. Mitts added perhaps we could also have one at the farmer's market. Greg Stumpf suggested a table in front of the Center Market.

4. CLOSING

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next Conservation Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 4, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.