

Borrego Water District
MINUTES
Conservation
Standing Committee
Wednesday, January 7, 2009
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: Beth Hart Marshal Brecht
 Jim Engelke

CALL TO ORDER
INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Committee Approval of Irrigation/Turf Removal Projects

Jerry Rolwing distributed three requests for turf removal rebates. John Pavlovich has removed 400 square feet of turf and plans to replace it with rocks and desert landscaping. He plans to remove more and will submit additional requests at that time. The Committee approved his rebate.

Ronald DelGuercio removed 2,800 square feet of turf and replaced it with desert landscaping. He is also requesting the District's participation on 20 percent of the cost of his irrigation retrofit following his irrigation efficiency audit. The Committee approved a rebate of \$4,422 (\$2,500 for the turf removal and \$1,922 for the irrigation improvements).

Loretta Horowitz removed 2,500 square feet of turf and replaced it with cactus. The Committee approved the rebate conditionally, pending Mr. Rolwing's verification.

Mr. Rolwing reported that six more irrigation efficiency audits had been conducted, for Don Pachuta, Raymond Wickel, Dennis Nourse, Robert Veborg, Martha Mitchell and Loretta Horowitz.

- BMP for Commercial Customers

Mr. Rolwing reported he had reviewed all the District's commercial accounts and separated out the multiple residential units and institutions. Best Management Practices for these groups will be addressed at another time. Further discussion of this item was continued to the next meeting due to Don McKelvey's absence.

- EPA Water Sense Membership

Mr. Rolwing reported he had received a brochure from Water Sense, including promotional tools. He recommended we start using their logo on the District's communications. Water Sense also has billing inserts available. Director Shimeall noted that these are also offered by the Water Education Foundation.

2. **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MONITORING DUTIES**

- Status of Conservation Incentive participants

The Water Conservation Program report was included in the Agenda packet.

3. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Beth Hart inquired about the status of the agreement between the District and the County regarding water credits. Rich Williamson replied that it was being finalized, using standard irrigation rates for different crop groups. The Groundwater Management Committee will discuss the draft at its next meeting. Jim Engelke expressed opposition to the District's 2:1 mitigation requirement on the grounds that it differed from the County's (1:1) and could be legally challenged.

Mr. Rolwing announced that the Ramona Water District is holding a series of workshops on irrigation during January and February. Mr. Williamson suggested getting the name of their consultant, if any, and perhaps conducting a similar event here. Marshal Brecht reiterated his suggestion that the District provide advice on irrigation timing in the *Borrego Sun*. Mr. Rolwing agreed to contact Coachella Valley Water District, which provides such information. He further proposed working with Tom Fredericks to compile and publicize a list of common irrigation errors. Director Shimeall recommended including the information in water bills so gardeners, who may not use the Internet, would have access to it.

Mr. Brecht inquired about the status of De Anza Country Club's turf removal water credits. Mr. Williamson replied that he was going to Sacramento next week to investigate funding for the credits.

Director Smiley suggested a water conservation seminar for agriculture, perhaps during a luncheon. He and Mr. Rolwing agreed to begin contacting potential speakers and hopefully hold it in late February.

Discussion followed regarding the potential for solar farms and a possible trade of solar energy for desalinated water.

Ms. Hart inquired about the status of tree removal rebates. Mr. Williamson explained that the draft mitigation policy requires a minimum of five fully planted acres to qualify for water credits. Rebates for removal of smaller amounts will be considered in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Brecht asked if he could receive meeting agendas in advance of the meetings. Mr. Williamson offered to put them on the website, or they may be picked up at the District office the Monday preceding the meeting.

Mr. Rolwing reported he had received communication from EZ Turf (artificial grass), indicating that San Diego Water Authority offers a rebate for its installation and suggesting BWD do the same. Mr. Williamson pointed out that we are already offering a rebate for turf removal, but it is up to the homeowner to select the replacement and the District shouldn't offer an incentive for a particular alternative.

Discussion followed regarding the tiered rate program. Mr. Williamson noted that the Proposition 218 requirements have changed.

Mr. Engelke explained that the American Legion has purchased property behind the *Borrego Sun* office and would like to connect to the sewer. Mr. Williamson pointed out that if the cost is less than \$10,000, they have to. Mr. Engelke replied that it would cost \$30,000 and he hoped for District participation, but Mr. Williamson explained that the District is not

obligated to do so. Mr. Rolwing suggested a reimbursement agreement whereby future customers could repay the Legion's cost.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next regular Conservation Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2009.