

**Borrego Water District
MINUTES
Conservation
Standing Committee
Wednesday, March 4, 2009
9:00 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004**

Attendance: Directors: Andersen, Shimeall
Staff: Richard Williamson, General Manager
 Jerry Rolwing, Operations Manager
 Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Jim Engelke, Charlie White Don McKelvey
 Wendy Kurdy Brian Siefker, Southwest Development Co.

**CALL TO ORDER
INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Conservation Standing Committee Minutes of February 4, 2009 were approved as written.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Committee Approval of Irrigation/Turf Removal Projects

Jerry Rolwing reported he had verified Loretta Horowitz's turf removal and would be paying her rebate. The project was approved previously subject to verification. She removed 2,700 square feet of turf and will be paid the maximum of 2,500.

Another application was submitted by Eugene Fisher for removal of 2,240 square feet of turf. Mr. Rolwing recommended approval. To date the District has spent \$16,880 on rebates, and \$33,120 remains.

Don McKelvey asked whether Palm Canyon Resort would qualify for a rebate if they irrigated their lawns with gray water. Discussion followed, and Mr. Rolwing suggested establishing another category for gray water irrigation credit rather than including it with turf removal. Mr. McKelvey agreed to investigate the details for consideration in next year's budget. Rich Williamson offered to arrange a meeting with Mr. McKelvey and the County to determine their requirements.

- BMP for Commercial Customers

Mr. McKelvey distributed a written report, and announced that an ad would appear in the *Borrego Sun* tomorrow regarding the proposed Best Management Practices. He planned to visit the San Diego Water Board and maybe attend a Water Conference later this month in Long Beach. Mr. McKelvey explained that he is working on a database for restaurants, categorizing them according to whether they are part of a hotel or include a separate bar. Mr. Williamson pointed out the need to be sensitive to business challenges in today's economy, but point out ways they can save water. Statistics show restaurants don't use that much more

water than residents, and that can be pointed out to the public when they complain that businesses are not subject to tiered rates.

Mr. McKelvey had investigated various devices that can be inserted into a system to save water, and suggested compiling information on a disk that would be available to businesses. He went on to summarize a number of contacts, included in his written report, through which he gathered some of his ideas.

Brian Siefker pointed out that car washes are more economical in water use than washing cars at home, because they recapture water and filter contaminants.

Mr. Rolwing reported he posted a request for BMP Subcommittee volunteers at the Post Office and Christmas Circle.

Wendy Kurdy reported she had installed a low flow toilet which she purchased in January from a plumber in Idaho. She had a receipt and photos and requested a rebate. The Committee approved it.

Ms. Kurdy mentioned a product called Netafim, which increases irrigation efficiency. Mr. Rolwing asked her to provide additional information.

- EPA Water Sense Membership

Mr. Rolwing distributed information regarding the EPA's "Fix a Leak Week," March 16 through 20. This month's bills have already been mailed, so it would need to be distributed by special mailing if the Committee so chooses, or put it in the next bills and change the dates.

Mr. Williamson reminded the Committee that as we approach the end of the fiscal year, tasks will include evaluation of the tiered rate program when it begins in July and at the next Committee meeting, consideration of whether to continue the conservation incentives. Our goal is a 20 percent reduction in water use over five years, and if we don't achieve it, a more aggressive tiered rate program may be in order. He asked that review of water usage be included as a standard Committee Agenda item. Mr. Rolwing offered to prepare a report for the next meeting, comparing before and after usage for residents who received rebates.

Director Shimeall asked whether Montesoro was buying water from the District, and Mr. Williamson replied that they buy some of it. We share a well with them. Discussion followed regarding whether mitigation should be required for the golf course redesign. It was the consensus that since the County had already approved the tract, mitigation could not be required until additional new homes are constructed.

Jim Engelke announced that the County Department of Parks and Recreation has money earmarked to support a park in Borrego Springs and is anxious to spend it. Now that the District will be exercising its latent park powers, he suggested a project be selected – perhaps the vacant park site which was never developed because of lack of an entity to maintain it, Christmas Circle, or Club Circle Golf Course. Mr. Williamson recommended that the matter be referred to the Services Committee, and agreed to contact the County to let them know we are working on it. Mr. Rolwing will invite Mr. Engelke to the next Services Committee meeting, and Mr. Williamson asked that Mr. Engelke provide a copy of the plans for the vacant park site.

Mr. Rolwing reported that Water Wise Consulting would be conducting a training program in Spanish for gardeners on March 17. Joan Putney of the local garden club will be holding a workshop for "do-it-yourself" gardeners. Director Smiley is organizing a seminar for the agricultural industry, tentatively March 26 at Borrego Springs Resort. Three speakers have been invited, and the topics include the CIMIS station and mulching.

2. **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MONITORING DUTIES**

- Status of Conservation Incentive participants

Mr. Rolwing reported on the budget status for the rebate program: Turf removal \$16,880 spent, \$33,120 remaining; low flow toilets \$1,250 spent, \$10,950 remaining; low flow washers \$6,400 spent, \$9,600 remaining; irrigation system improvements \$2,210 spent, \$7,790 remaining.

3. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Mr. Williamson reported that ACWA and *National Geographic* publish a magazine twice a year, *Water for Tomorrow*, to help the consumer conserve water. It is 35 cents per issue, and he suggested ordering ten copies and having them available at the District office. The Committee concurred.

Mr. Williamson explained that the District has nearly \$32,000 earmarked for education, and he would like to upgrade our website to make it more user friendly and colorful. With the Committee's concurrence, he will make a more detailed proposal at the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next regular Conservation Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 1, 2009.