

**Borrego Water District**  
**CORRECTED MINUTES**  
**Groundwater Management Standing Committee**  
**Wednesday, February 17, 2010, 9:15 a.m.**  
**806 Palm Canyon Drive**  
**Borrego Springs, CA 92004**

Attendance:    Directors:    Mendenhall, Smiley  
Staff:            Richard Williamson, General Manager  
                         Jerry Rolwing, Operations Manager  
                         Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary  
Public:            Jim Engelke, Viking                    Marshal Brecht  
                         Paul Nordman                            Brian Siefker  
                         Beth Hart                                 Diane Hydoski

**CALL TO ORDER**  
**INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of January 13, 2010 were approved as written.

**CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS**

1.        Status of Financing/Grant Requests. Mr. Williamson reported that I-Bank staff visited the District two weeks ago and inspected the site of the proposed facilities. The CEQA documents should be ready by the next Board meeting, and the application should be on the I-Bank agenda for March.

Mr. Williamson further reported that he met with Congressman Hunter regarding our federal funding request for the North Clark Lake project, which has also been submitted to Senators Boxer and Feinstein. Copies of the briefing for Congressman Hunter are available upon request.

Mr. Williamson announced that a summary of the responses to the recent questionnaire included with the last water bills would be presented at the next Board meeting. There was a lot of interest expressed in recreational facilities and solar energy. Director Smiley requested a copy of the questionnaire.

2.        Update on Groundwater Management Study. Jerry Rolwing announced that staff is updating the groundwater management priorities to better align them with upcoming grant applications. Bill Mills is assisting, and a subcommittee will probably be formed at the next GWM Committee meeting. The updated plan should be ready for the town hall meeting, tentatively scheduled for April 7 at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Williamson reported that the Department of Water Resources has requested direction from BWD as to their next task in the USGS/DWR study. To date they have inventoried wells and gathered water quality data. One possibility for their next effort would be to assess water quality impacts should we import Colorado River water and commingle it with our groundwater in the Borrego Valley. However, DWR estimated a three-year study at \$120,000 to \$200,000 per year, which seemed excessive. Mr. Rolwing suggested waiting for their report on Task 2 before making a decision. BWD is not obligated to extend the contract with DWR.

3. Discussion regarding solar power proposals for Borrego Valley in relationship to Groundwater Management. Mr. Williamson reported that since the last Committee meeting, he had met with Glenn Reiter and representatives of San Diego Gas and Electric regarding solar power opportunities. SDG&E is preparing a proposal package for solar providers, and BWD is urging them to include favorable consideration for those who plan to locate their facilities on fallowed agricultural land. Since the life of a solar facility is generally 25 to 30 years, at the termination of their contract the District could use the land for a recharge basin. If the District purchased the land using bond funds, the lease payments from the solar provider could offset the cost.

Jim Engelke explained the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, part of the Community Plan update. The program enables a farmer who wants to cease farming to transfer his development rights to another property owner. The Community Sponsor Group has endorsed the concept. Mr. Engelke had additional information from the County, available on request. He urged BWD and other community groups to submit comments to the County. Paul Nordman suggested preparing a form letter which could be used for this purpose, and Mr. Engelke and Mr. Williamson agreed to discuss the issue.

4. Discussion: Integrated Water Resource Management Plan.

a. Groundwater Banking option Development.

b. Stakeholder Involvement/process.

Mr. Rolwing announced that the first IWRMP subcommittee meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, February 23 at 9:00 a.m. The group includes Canebrake Water District and may include Jacumba Community Services District and Majestic Pines Community Services District. Membership may be expanded.

5. Status of applications for water credits. Mr. Williamson reported that the owners of the former pepper tree farm were still waiting for a letter from the County confirming their land can be legally farmed. Mr. Nordman stated that such a letter is against County policy. Director Smiley noted that the County had only communicated on the subject via e-mail, and Mr. Williamson added that their two e-mails conflicted. Mr. Engelke suggested that the owners apply to the County for authorization to farm and see if they are accepted or rejected. Mr. Williamson predicted that Supervisor Horn may be able to help.

Mr. Engelke reported he represents five developers in need of mitigation credits and urged the District to establish a process to facilitate his negotiations with the County. Director Smiley pointed out that both the District and the County have such processes, but they differ in some respects. Mr. Williamson reminded Mr. Engelke that the District has some credits for sale, and Mr. Engelke requested written confirmation. He had hoped the Viking Ranch credits would be available, and Mr. Williamson stated that the Negotiating Committee would be discussing that issue later today.

Mr. Williamson reported that the mitigation agreement with the dragon fruit farm is being reviewed by their attorney, and a recommendation will be presented to the Board at its next meeting. An issue has arisen as to whether they can sell credits outside the District, and Mr. Williamson and Mr. Rolwing will investigate.

Inquiries regarding fallowing for mitigation credits have been made by Scott Fortiner and Ellis Farms.

Mr. Williamson met last week with the County Department of Land Use and Planning and two developers regarding the need for a new fire station in Borrego Springs. The County has offered to staff and equip a station and is investigating a location, perhaps at the abandoned gas station at Borrego Springs Road and Yaqui Pass. Mr. Williamson urged Mr. Engelke to join him at the next meeting on the issue. The Board will be asked next week if the District should participate in financing a new facility.

6. Financing options for future water credit purchases. Mr. Williamson informed the Committee that the Board would be discussing a possible bond issue in connection with solar energy facilities on fallowed land.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. The next regular Groundwater Management Committee Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at 9:15 a.m.