

Borrego Water District
MINUTES
Groundwater Management Standing Committee
Wednesday, November 10, 2010, 9:15 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Attendance: Directors: Mendenhall, Abby King
Staff: Richard Williamson, General Manager
 Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Jim Engelke, Lundberg Lane Sharman, BWX
 Paul Nordman Beth Hart
 Ray Delahay

CALL TO ORDER
INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lane Sharman corrected the next-to-the-last paragraph on page 2 of the June Minutes to state that Type 2 mitigation credits were issued to Borrego Sunshine Farms LLC. The Minutes of the GWM Standing Committee meeting of June 9, 2010 were approved as corrected.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Bureau of Reclamation Basin Study status report. Rich Williamson reported that the first scoping meeting with the BOR took place two weeks ago. They are completing the first draft of an expanded scope of work, which should be complete by January. The Groundwater Management Committee will have an opportunity to review it at its December meeting. The grant will require a 50 percent match, but in-kind services can be used (such as the USGS and IRWMP work). The study will provide information on water storage in the Borrego basin. It is contemplated that Colorado River water would be imported, treated and stored. Mr. Williamson pointed out that this study is part of a multi-pronged approach to solving our aquifer overdraft. Realization of the storage option is probably 20 to 30 years away, so interim solutions such as importation from Clark Lake will be needed.
2. IRWMP Status. Mr. Williamson reported that the planning grant application for preparation of the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan had been submitted to the State. He felt our chances of approval are good. Upon completion of the IRWMP, we would be eligible for an implementation grant. The Plan will include a prioritized list of regional projects, cost estimates and time lines. Mr. Williamson explained that the IRWM Policy Committee is comprised of BWD, the County of San Diego and the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County. They hold monthly conference calls, and the Stakeholders Committee meets each month at BWD and provides input throughout the process. Mr. Williamson noted that regardless of the planning grant approval, work will proceed on the IRWMP, with adoption to be requested at the spring Town Hall Meeting.
3. Financing/Grants request status. Mr. Williamson reported that Dennis Ciocca has identified a loan source for \$1.5 million to replace the failed I-Bank loan. It would be used to build the Wilcox reservoir and pumping station.

The District has received a STAG grant for a water importation study and design work for the Southeast and Clark Lake importation lines. The earmark for the Clark Lake study is pending. Other funding options include the Border Environmental Coordination Coalition and USDA.

4. Status of applications for water credits. Mr. Sharman requested the Committee's concurrence in his preparation of a draft letter acknowledging receipt of mitigation credits for the purpose of retiring them. This would not be appropriate for all fallowers, but could be used when applicable. Director Mendenhall agreed that the Committee would review the draft letter.

Mr. Sharman recommended that information on the history of water mitigation credits be available on the Internet.

Mr. Williamson reported that the District has been negotiating the purchase of 125 acres of citrus from Viking Ranch and acquisition of mitigation credits from fallowing. The seller will fallow the first half in the next three to four months, but the deal will not be finalized until the fallowing has occurred. The cost of the land to the District will be offset by the sale of the associated mitigation credits. Mr. Engelke reported that Viking Ranch would begin removing trees after the next harvest. Buyers are already awaiting the credits.

Mr. Williamson pointed out that the County still will not accept some of the District's credits. They are agreed to accept the Viking Ranch credits, but it is unclear how far into the future they will do so. Discussion followed over the possibility of the District assuming the CEQA enforcement role, and Jim Engelke pointed out that police powers would be required.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next regular Groundwater Management Committee Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at 9:15 a.m.