

Anza Borrego Desert Planning Region Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

Tuesday February 14, 2012
1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Borrego Water District
806 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Remote Access:

Webinar access – <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/join/795457570>,
Conference line – call-in number 1-888-870-8306, passcode 858 875 7424

DRAFT NOTES

Action items are shown in italics

Attendees:

Jerry Rolwing, BWD
Beth Hart, BWD
Lyle Brecht, BWD
John Peterson, Anza-Borrego Foundation
Dennis Bostad, Resident
Jan Naragon, Resident
Rick Anson, Contractor
Richard Orne, Resident
Kathy Johnston, Resident
Jane Morley, Resident
Kimberly Huangfu, Lewis, Brisbois, Bisgaard & Smith (LBBS) Law Firm
Mike Spieckerman, Roadrunner Tree Farm
Duane Young, Cocopah Nurseries
Linda Haddock, Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce

Chuck King, Borrego Springs Unified School District
Brian Baharie, Cahuilla
Tom Williamson, Williamson Engineering
Brian Moniz, DWR
Jennifer Wong, DWR
Tim Ross, DWR
Bob Pierotti, DWR
Anna Aljabiry, DWR
Dale Schafer, Center for Collaborative Policy
Tom West, RMC Water and Environment
Ali Taghavi, RMC Water and Environment
Crystal Mohr, RMC Water and Environment

Non-Participating Observers:

Ray Delahay, BWD
Marshal Brecht, BWD
Lee Estep, BWD

Attending Via Conference Call:

Melissa McKeith from Lewis, Brisbois, Bisgaard & Smith, representing Agricultural Alliance for Water and Resource Education (AAWARE)

Agenda:

Welcome and Introductions

- The group made self introductions, and Jerry Rolwing welcomed the group.

Review Outcomes of Last Meeting, January 24, 2012

- Tom West provided an overview of the previous meeting, which was held via conference call. He noted that stakeholders provided feedback on the Work Plan, Budget, and Schedule, and RMC informed the group that additional formatting and content changes would be made to increase the application's competitiveness.

DWR Report

- Anna Aljabiry provided the DWR report. She noted that DWR is preparing to receive Planning Grant applications, which are due March 9, 2012. Also, she noted that the deadline for the Local Groundwater Assistance (LGA) grant program has been shifted back, and will likely be due at the end of June, 2012. Further, she noted that DWR anticipates requesting potential projects and project values for Round 2 of the Implementation Grants in the summer of 2012 (Step 1), and will require regions to submit applications by the summer of 2012 (Step 2), at which point an adopted IRWM Plan is required.

Presentation of Final Planning Grant

- Tom West provided an introduction, noting that stakeholders had received a compiled PDF version of the entire draft planning grant application on February 7, 2012. Next, Mr. West walked the group through the compiled application. The following is a compilation of comments received regarding each attachment:
 - Attachment 1:
 - Question: What is the approval process? Do the RWMG agencies need to approve of the application before it is submitted?
 - Answer: No. The resolution from BWD authorizes them to submit the application to DWR, and no other approvals are necessary.
 - Attachment 2:
 - Question: If the MOU for the RWMG agencies is not completed before submittal, will that be a problem?
 - Answer: We will want to document progress, including the draft MOU and any approval letters from the RWMG agencies that demonstrate their willingness to enter into an MOU in the future.
 - Question: Are there any conflicts because the County of San Diego is part of two separate IRWM groups (San Diego and Anza Borrego Desert)?
 - Answer: No. San Diego and the Anza Borrego Desert are in separate funding areas, and will not be competing for

implementation grant money. Also, there are many agencies that participate in multiple IRWM planning efforts.

o Attachment 3:

- Comment: John Peterson met with representatives from the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. They are supportive of the current content of the Work Plan.
- Comment: Has the County signed off on the content of the Work Plan?
 - *Jerry Rolwing to re-send to the County to make sure they are comfortable with language in the application.*
- Comment: With regards to the Water Quality section, the Work Plan currently says, "...and other byproducts from the Region's agricultural industry may exist at high concentrations..." Is it necessary to call out the source? Do we know that is true?
 - Response: *Will alter the text to say, "...and other byproducts may exist at high concentrations."*
- Comment: Do we have data that demonstrates that the Region's groundwater basins are currently impacted by nitrates?
 - Response: there are many cases of wells being taken offline for this reason. *The Work Plan will be edited to contain specific information that demonstrates nitrate issues within the Region.*
- Comment: With regards to the Environmental Integrity section, there is a comment that overdraft has impacted biological resources. Where did this information come from? Do we have specific information about which biological resources have been impacted?
 - Answer: This reference is from the County General Plan Update section regarding the community of Borrego Springs. That document is general and does not name specific resources; however, there is data that demonstrates that Mesquite Bosque has been impacted.
 - *The Work Plan will be edited to clarify this issue and demonstrate some specificity.*

Establishment of Governance Workgroup

- Dale Schafer provided an overview of the governance efforts that are currently taking place, and asked for volunteers to be involved in the Governance Workgroup. Current members include Beth Hart, Kathy Dice, and Linda Haddock. Dennis Bostad, who has been in contact with Jim Wermers of the De Anza Country Club, volunteered. In addition, Duane Young volunteered as a representative of the agricultural industry.

Presentation of ABD Region Summary

- DWR representatives provided an overview of the *ABD Region Summary*, formerly referred to as the *State of the Basin Report*. The primary goal of this study is to bring together existing information to develop a consistent document that describes existing conditions within the Region.
- Many stakeholders expressed the idea that many studies have been conducted throughout the Region, and that the issue is not that there needs to be consensus. The focus needs to be on action and deciding potential actions that can be taken to address the issue, and make a case for why regional stakeholders should care about this issue.
- Stakeholders commented on the need for an iterative process and dialogue rather than another paper study. The Region has been studied extensively, and really needs to engage in a process that brings stakeholders to the table.
- Stakeholders commented on the need for a document that lays out the facts, and is supported by factual information. In this light, stakeholders believe that research being conducted by the USGS will be important and needs to be included in the *ABD Region Summary*. Stakeholders agree that there are lingering issues that need to be studied, such as groundwater quality and the amount and quality of water in the lower aquifer.
- Stakeholders commented that it would be helpful to have something prepared by the next Town Hall Meeting, which will take place on March 28, 2012.
- Some stakeholders noted that emphasis should be placed on impacts that have and will continue to occur if groundwater withdrawals continue with existing conditions. There is thought that the issue will not be groundwater supply, but rather that the groundwater will become too expensive to either pump or treat, which will drastically impact the Region's economy.
- Stakeholders suggested using case studies to explain what could happen in the event that DWR encounters an issue that they cannot credibly answer with existing information.
- Some stakeholders noted that in the past, scientific and technical information has not been properly communicated to the public.
- DWR noted that their focus will be on providing information to the community in a digestible format, but that it is not their intention to tell the Region what to do with that information. The information will be available for the Region's to make its own decisions.

Next Steps

- Governance Workgroup will convene on March 13, 2012 [postponed until March 29, 2012].
- Borrego Town Hall meeting will be held at 4:00PM on March 28, 2012.