

**Borrego Water District  
MINUTES  
"11th Annual Town Hall Meeting"  
Wednesday, March 28, 2012, 4:00 PM  
Borrego Springs Performing Arts Center  
590 Palm Canyon Drive  
Borrego Springs, CA 92004**

**Attendance:**

Directors Present: President Hart, Vice-President Lyle Brecht, Secretary/Treasurer  
Marshal Brecht, Delahay, Estep

Staff: Jerry Rolwing, General Manager  
Heather Davidson, Customer Service Representative  
Jeanne Fredericks, Customer Service Representative  
Diana Del Bono, Administrative Assistant  
Troy DePriest  
Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary

Public: Mary Delaney Milt Caldwell  
Dale Schaefer Anna Aljabiry, DWR  
Robert Taylor Mary Taylor  
Linda Stanley Elizabeth Rodriguez, Merchant  
Bob Mendenhall Lane McVey  
Selia Hoefer Richard Gray  
Joan Kirk Jim Wermers  
Duane Young, Cocopah Malissa McKeith, AWWARE  
Robert Viora Jim Seley, Seley Ranches  
Bill Wright Julia Brady  
Sicco Rood Michael Spieckerman,  
Ray Shindler Roadrunner Tree Farm  
Jeff Hinz Candy Hinz  
Dennis Bostad Laura Peters, DWR  
Walter Kitching Richard Trask  
Dick Walker Dennis Dickinson  
John Negrych Ceena Negrych  
Richard Dodd Leane Dodd  
Jack Laughlin Sandy Huff  
Bob Raney Jim Lohr  
Kathy Brigham Pam Blake  
Dan Jellis Glen Peterson  
Sue Salt Jim Engelke  
Lane Sharman, BWX Ralph Singer, ABF  
Dan Mayer Hans Hoefer  
John Delaney Dave Link  
Claudia Faunt, USGS Peter Martin, USGS  
Lyn Loerke Christine Christman  
Neal Christman Jennifer Wynne

Lucy Larson	Clare Rayleen Liebhardt
George Dean	Becky Blanchard
Kathy Johnston	James Johnston
Eleanor Shimeall	Clark Shimeall
Duane Bright	Imean Tagima
Margie Sennan	Ted Emory
Thomas Gray, Seley Ranches	Casey Jones, <i>Borrego Sun</i>
L. Seagrin	Dennis Burns
Susan Gilliand	Craig Amrstrong
Joyce Anderson	Tracey Alexander
Briana Puzzo	Ralph Bebe
Jan Nichols	Mark Lambrecht
Murray Skeels	Janice Skeels
Mike Strandberg	June Llewellyn
Rebecca Falk, RRR	Andy Knapp, Club Circle
Nancy Parker	Kathryn Bussey
Mark Stevens	Diane Hydowski
Dick Troy	Tom Williamson
Ray Larson	Joya Hoyt
Don Nicholas	Jane Morley
Gary Haldeman	Tim Ross, DWR
Dale Schafer, CCP	Ali Taghavi, WRIME, Inc.

1) **Greetings & Introductions. Moderator.** Gary Haldeman announced that there would be a question and answer period at the end of the presentations. Speakers will be limited to three minutes each.

2) **Where is the District now financially? Will rates increase for FY 2013? Lyle Brecht, Vice President of the Board, Borrego Water District.** Director Lyle Brecht presented slides showing audited cash flow statements from 2005 to the present. The Board has faced difficult decisions in its efforts to address the aquifer overdraft, restore the District's credit rating and balance the budget. Options are to do nothing or manage our basin. Director Lyle Brecht pointed out that doing nothing is the most expensive course, so the District is beginning to plan with DWR for basin management.

3) **Overdraft: What is it? Where are we today? Tim Ross, PhD, Senior Engineering Geologist, California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Southern Region.** Dr. Ross reported that the DWR had been working to locate wells in Borrego Valley and measure water levels. He explained that an overdraft means that extractions from groundwater exceed the amount of recharge. We are experiencing a persistent decline.

4) **The overdraft: From today into tomorrow. Claudia Faunt, PhD, Hydrologist, US Geological Survey (USGS) and Peter Martin, retired Hydrologist, USGS.** Dr. Faunt reported that pumping in the Borrego Valley currently exceeds recharge by four times (20,000 acre-feet per year versus 5,000). As the upper aquifer is

dewatered, it will be necessary to access the middle and lower aquifers, where the water is of lower quality. Predictive simulations were run on five scenarios: no action, low growth, medium growth, high growth, and reduction of water usage to reach sustainability (agriculture and golf by 80 percent and municipal by 48). Analysis is continuing and a report will follow.

**5) Borrego Springs Pipeline Feasibility Study: What have we learned? Jerry Rolwing, General Manager, Borrego Water District.** Mr. Rolwing reported that the District had received a \$266,750 State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) through the US Environmental Protection Agency for a pipeline feasibility study. After analyzing several alternative routes and meeting with other public agencies, the February 2012 final report concluded that based on financial, right-of-way, ecological and use restriction difficulties the District should concentrate on sustainability over importation.

**6) What is the District doing to address the overdraft? Why should we act now? Beth Hart, President of the Board, Borrego Water District.** President Hart noted that there will be significant economic consequences to the ratepayers if we do nothing to address the overdraft. It is illegal to overdraft the basin, but there are no legal means of enforcement. The State is assisting the District and other neighboring agencies to acquire a planning grant through the Integrated Regional Water Management Program. Our application is pending, and if approved, an implementation grant application may be submitted.

**7) Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs): How have they benefited other regions? How can a plan benefit this Anza-Borrego Desert region? How can stakeholders participate? Why is the stakeholder process important: Dale Schafer, Senior Mediator, Center for Collaborative Policy [CCP] & Ali Taghavi, PhD, Principal, Civil Engineer, WRIME, Inc.** Dr. Taghavi described recent events in the Hemet/San Jacinto area, which faces issues similar to Borrego's: overdraft, water quality degradation, flooding and water rights. They implemented aggressive conservation and pumping limits themselves via a stipulated judgment instead of a government mandate. Those exceeding pumping limits must pay a penalty or recharge the groundwater. Options for Borrego include importation, conservation, rate increase, tax on agriculture, pumping water from the Clark Lake area, recycling, and fallowing/water credits. We need regional integration and basin management authority through the IRWM planning process. Potential stakeholders include agriculture, the State Park, BWD, ABF, the Chamber of Commerce, the Sponsor Group, schools, Indians and the Canebrake County Water District. Representatives from these groups have been meeting and participants are welcome, either as a voting member representing a group or an individual, nonvoting discussion participant.

**8) Recap. Lyle Brecht, Vice President of the Board, Borrego Water District.** In summary, Director Lyle Brecht pointed out that the overdraft is real, it is increasing, building a pipeline is not presently feasible and the IRWMP is providing an option. He urged the community to work together, study the information on the BWD website and attend meetings.

**9) Moderated written questions from the audience.** Mr. Haldeman read written questions submitted by the audience. Any Knapp asked what percentage of agricultural land is family owned versus corporate. Mr. Rolwing estimated about ten percent were family owned. Mr. Knapp further inquired about the economic benefit to the community from golf versus agriculture. President Hart explained there was no way to measure this. Director Lyle Brecht hoped the IRWM planning grant would assist the District in answering economic questions.

The next question related to representation of homeowners and ratepayers in the IRWMP. Dale Schafer of CCP replied that as elected officials, the BWD Board is their representative. Individual homeowners' associations may also send representatives.

Bob Raney inquired about nitrates in agricultural soil. Dr. Ross explained that the groundwater in the valley is all connected, and although there are areas of high nitrate since it is a fertilizer, there are maximum permissible levels for drinking.

Rebecca Falk asked how a drought would affect the predictive simulation model, and Dr. Faunt replied that it would be input as a variable.

In response to the question of how fast water migrates laterally in the upper aquifer, Dr. Faunt stated that it varied.

Richard Denton asked what can be done to restrict the overdraft and what has been accomplished. Dennis Dickinson inquired about the end product if the IRWM planning grant is approved, and how long would the grant last. Dr. Taghavi estimated 18 to 24 months. He envisioned a list of projects, revised and adapted over time, followed by an implementation grant application. Anna Aljabiry explained that the IRWM plan needs to address all issues in our region, and the projects should be prioritized.

Mr. Raney asked if the cost of hookups for new construction could be increased in order to slow growth. Director Lyle Brecht replied that the District would study this issue when the financial situation improves.

In response to a question regarding significant withdrawals of water by others than BWD, Mr. Rolwing stated that agriculture used approximately 70 percent of the water, golf 20 percent and domestic users 10. Agricultural and golf course users have their own wells.

Richard Gray cited the amount of money spent on studies and suggested an economic study. Director Lyle Brecht noted that this is part of the IRWM proposal.

Kathy Johnston asked whether there is a "Plan B" should the IRWM grant application fail. President Hart explained that the District does not have adequate funding without State assistance.

Ms. Falk asked whether references to "water rights" include agriculture, and President Hart replied that the water rights are attached to the property. Ms. Shafer explained that well owners can pump as much as they can use, but it needs to be a "reasonable and beneficial use," not wasteful.

**10) Comments from the Public.** Malissa McKeith spoke on behalf of the Agricultural Alliance for Water and Resource Education (AAWARE). She emphasized that the agricultural community does not deny there is an overdraft. They create jobs and need to continue working together. Ray Shindler expressed the opinion that agriculture would not give up water but would continue to pump until the supply was exhausted. He predicted we would end up in adjudication. John Delaney expressed concern regarding the environment and the lack of concern by big corporations.

Lane Sharman urged the use of solar energy, starting with the Water District's pumps. He also suggested an independent managed basin authority.

There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.