

Anza Borrego Desert Planning Region Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan

Tuesday October 11, 2011
2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Borrego Water District (BWD)
806 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

DRAFT NOTES

Action items are shown in italics

Attendees:

Jerry Rolwing, BWD
Lyle Brecht, BWD
Marshal Brecht, BWD
Abby King, Borrego Springs
Community Sponsor Group
Linda Haddock, Borrego
Springs Chamber of
Commerce
Kathy Dice, Anza-Borrego
Desert State Park
Ray Schindler, Consultant

Mike Spieckerman,
Roadrunner Tree Farm
Jim Warner, De Anza
Country Club
Jim Engelke, Resident
Don McKelvey, Resident
Dale Schafer, Center for
Collaborative Policy
Tish Berge, RMC
Crystal Mohr, RMC

Attending by Phone:
Anna Aljabiry, DWR
Jennifer Wong, DWR
Vicki Long, Elsinore-
Murrieta-Anza Resource
Conservation District
(EMARCD)
Pam Nelson, EMARCD
Anthony Barry, San Diego
County Flood Control
Ali Taghavi, RMC-WRIME

Agenda:

Welcome and Introductions

- The group made self introductions, and Jerry Rolwing welcomed the group.
- Tish Berge provided an overview of the agenda, noting that there were a few changes to the meeting agenda. Such changes include the following:
 - Addition of a stakeholder exercise;
 - Brainstorming on regional issues; and
 - Discussing the Regional Alternatives Development Projects.

Review Outcomes of Last Meeting, September 20, 2011

- Jerry Rolwing provided an overview of the Anza Borrego Desert (ABD) IRWM process, which was started about a year ago. He noted that the Region applied for a Planning Grant in 2010, but was not awarded. Since that time, the Borrego Water District (BWD) has had a change in the Board of Directors, has a new General Manager, and has hired RMC Water and Environment to write another Planning Grant application.
- Mr. Rolwing noted that the Region would like to provide a more robust and complete Planning Grant application this round, and he is very appreciative to all those who are participating in this meeting today in person and via conference call.

- Mr. Rolwing explained that representatives from the Elsinore-Murrieta-Anza Resource Conservation District (EMARCD) will be attending the meeting by conference call. He explained that a portion of the Anza-Terwilliger Valley in EMARCD's jurisdiction lies within the northern area of the ABD IRWM Region, within the upper watershed area of Coyote Canyon. When the Anza-Terwilliger area has flooding issues, silt comes down into the ABD Region through Coyote Canyon and potentially creates water-related impacts. Mr. Rolwing noted that due to these circumstances, the Region could potentially work together with EMARCD on a regional project to address these issues.
 - Some clarification was requested regarding EMARCD and the Anza-Terwilliger area, the following are those clarifying statements:
 - The Anza-Terwilliger Valley itself is not located within the ABD Region, but rather within the Upper Santa Margarita Watershed IRWM Region;
 - Projects that would be required to address flooding and siltation would likely be implementation projects rather than planning projects, and would therefore likely not be suitable to include within the Planning Grant application. However, the Region will be sure to address flooding and siltation issues within Coyote Canyon within the background section of the Planning Grant application.
- Mr. Rolwing also noted that at the previous meeting, the group decided on tentative times to meet in the future. It was decided that the second Tuesday of the month would work, and that is what is proposed for future meetings.
- There was a comment that in order to increase participation and have more people attend meetings, the Region will need to do more than send out reminders via email. There was a suggestion to follow-up email notices with personal phone calls to folks considered to be key stakeholders.

DWR Report

- Anna Aljabiry noted that DWR has more clear dates and preliminary award amounts for upcoming grant cycles as follows:
 - Planning Grant (Round 2) applications are anticipated to be due in February of 2012. DWR anticipates making \$9 million available in this round of funding.
 - The Project Solicitation Package (PSP), which constitutes the guidelines for the application process, will be available for public review. DWR will hold five meetings to discuss the PSP, of which Chino would be the closest to Borrego Springs.
 - The PSP for the Local Groundwater Assistance (LGA) Program will be open for public review in January of 2012 and finalized in March of 2012. DWR anticipates that applications will be due in May 2012.
 - For this program, a total of \$4.7 million will be available this round, with a cap of \$250,000 per application.
 - Implementation Grant (Round 2) applications are anticipated to be due in Fall of 2012. DWR anticipates making \$131 million available in this round.

- Proposition 1E Grant (Round 2) applications will likely be due in Summer of 2012. DWR anticipates making between \$50 million and \$107 million available.
- Anna Aljabiry then asked the group if they had any questions on these items:
 - Who can apply for Proposition 1E funding? What are the restrictions?
 - Anna Aljabiry noted that individual project sponsors can submit applications as long as projects lie within designated IRWM regions and are included within an IRWM Plan.
 - Do LGA projects have to be included within an IRWM Plan?
 - Anna Aljabiry responded that no, they do not.

Meeting Goals and Objectives

- Tish Berge presented the proposed goals and objectives for the meeting at hand, and inquired if anybody in the group had additions. The group did not have additions.

Planning Grant and IRWM Schedule

- Tish Berge presented this item, noting that at the previous meeting a question was asked regarding what the overall schedule for the planning grant application and IRWM Plan Update would look like. A draft of what the overall schedule may look like was provided as a meeting handout. Tish Berge also noted that a more detailed schedule of the IRWM Plan Update will be included within the Planning Grant application.
- A question was asked if the schedule will be updated to include the more precise grant dates provided by Anna Aljabiry.
 - *RMC to update overall schedule with revised DWR grant dates.*

Governance

- Dale Schafer provided an overview of governance, noting that the Region is currently working on a Planning Grant application that will assist in development of an IRWM Plan to guide water management within the Region, and particularly within the Borrego groundwater basin. The fact is that these planning processes are anticipated to occur over multiple years, and establishing a governance system and structure for the Region's IRWM program will not happen overnight.
- Ms. Schafer noted that the first thing the group must decide is: who are going to be the stakeholders that drive this process, starting with establishing what a stakeholder is. She noted that the process must be driven by and inclusive of stakeholders. The general idea is to get a representative group of people that are willing to put time in to come to meetings and participate in the IRWM process.
- Ms. Schafer explained that as far as formal decision-making goes, the Region does not have to include all stakeholders within official voting, but that they should have a lot of input in the process. Ms. Schafer then solicited input from the group regarding what a stakeholder is, the following is the discussion on this topic:
 - It was noted that a stakeholder is somebody that has "skin in the game," meaning somebody who has a deep and abiding interest in regional water

- issues. For example, folks that would be economically impacted by water supply issues, such as homeowners and homeowners associations.
- The question was brought about if there are limitations from DWR's perspective with regards to defining stakeholders as those that have economic interests in water-related issues.
 - Anna Aljabiry of DWR noted that from DWR's perspective anybody can be a stakeholder, and it is not their desire to interfere with any region's definition of a stakeholder. She noted that the main thing for the region to consider is who they would like to be a part of their decision-making body.
 - The group then had a discussion regarding the definition of a stakeholder, the following is the discussion on this topic:
 - Somebody who has skin in the game, meaning they are going to be impacted directly by the outcome of the IRWM Plan. In other words, somebody who has a stake in the outcome of the Plan.
 - Those whose actions may impact water-related resources in the Region.
 - Somebody who is willing to participate in the process; specifically somebody who is willing to commit to attending meetings and being involved.
 - Potentially the stakeholders do not have to be individual people, but rather a group. Within each stakeholder group there can be a designated person that is selected to represent the group.
 - There should be a limitation regarding the number of people with the same interests who are allowed to participate and vote. Too many people from one group could skew the outcome.
 - At the same time, the group would like to hear divergent view points and increase participation as much as possible.
 - Next, the group went through an exercise of defining stakeholder categories that should be included within the process (note that **bold** stakeholder groups indicate that this group was not represented at the meeting):
 - **Anza-Borrego Foundation**
 - This group could be combined with others such as Resource Conservation Districts (as an environmental stakeholder group), or with the State Park as an interest dedicated to issues specific to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.
 - **Homeowners Associations**
 - **School District**
 - **Commercial Development**
 - It was noted that this is not a cohesive or organized group at this time.
 - **Residential Development**
 - It was noted that this is not a cohesive or organized group at this time.

- **Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County**
 - It was noted that the role of this group may be similar to the County in that they are more of an advisor than a stakeholder group.
- **Outlying communities within the Region: Canebrake, Ocotillo Wells, Jacumba, Boulevard.**
- **Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (HOV Park)**
- **Majestic Pines CSD**
- **Jacumba CSD**
- **Canebrake CWD**
- **Salton CSD**
 - Note, this jurisdiction is not located within the Region.
- **Tribal Representatives:**
 - **Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians;**
 - **Campo/Manzanita band of Indians.**
- **Lodging Interests**
- **RV Park Interests**
- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- Borrego Water District
- Developer Interests
- Agricultural Interests
 - It was noted that the Agricultural Alliance for Water and Resource Education (AAWARE) may be re-forming.
- Golf Course Interests
- Community Sponsor Group
- Chamber of Commerce
 - It was noted that while the Chamber of Commerce does not at this time speak for all business interests, they can be responsible for communicating information to the business community.
- County of San Diego
 - Anthony Barry of San Diego County Flood Control noted that the County sees themselves as an advisor rather than a stakeholder within this process.
- Elsinore-Murrieta-Anza Resource Conservation District
 - Note: this RCD does not have jurisdiction within the Region.
- The group reviewed the stakeholder list, noting that it is very large and unlikely to form before the Planning Grant application is due in February 2012. However, this can be a good stakeholder list moving forward, as the Region will try to get the most people from this list (and others) together as possible to commit to being involved in developing the IRWM Plan.
- Dale Schafer then led a conversation regarding next steps to address the Region's governance structure.
 - Ms. Schafer recommended convening a Governance Workgroup to start investigating various governance plans, and find the best plan for the

Region. The desired deliverable from this workgroup would be to develop a proposal that could be taken to the larger stakeholder group (when formed), and this would be signed or otherwise formalized.

- The group then reviewed two governance proposals that were made available at the meeting, including a charter for the Imperial IRWM as well as Governance Principles that were modified from the Mokelumne-Amador-Calaveras (MAC) IRWM Region. The group decided that a formal Governance Workgroup should be formed to discuss governance issues, but that the workgroup should be given direction with regards to what is expected from them.
 - *The next e-mail sent out for IRWM-related activities will include a request to form a Governance Workgroup, and will include guidelines for what the committee is expected to achieve.*
- The group then discussed what the goals of the Governance Workgroup should be, the following provides an overview of that discussion:
 - Perhaps they should establish a draft charter, which will be a road map for how the IRWM stakeholders will work together.
 - The workgroup's deliverable should be a draft governance document that is proposed to the larger stakeholder group.
 - Should the workgroup be in charge of recruiting people to serve as representatives for the various stakeholder groups?
 - Perhaps the charter could identify desired stakeholder groups, potential representatives, and their alternates.
 - *Dale Schafer will find out if she can help out with this effort through her contract with DWR.*

Regional “Big” Issues

- Tish Berge provided an overview of the goal of this process, which is to hold a brainstorming exercise to identify water-related issues within the Region.
- Dale Schafer added that the consultant team is looking to the group to identify the big issues and goals of the Region, which will be identified and addressed through the IRWM Plan.
- Through brainstorming, the group decided there are four big issues:
 - Water Supply
 - Water Quality
 - Flood Control
 - Environmental Integrity
- The next step in this exercise involved prioritizing the four regional issues. The group was divided into three subgroups. Each subgroup spent some time to talk about the issues and determine how the four big issues rank in terms of importance. The group then shared their results, which are as follows:
 - Water Supply: chosen by all four groups as the main (highest priority issue);
 - There was no agreement among the subgroups regarding what would be the second-most important issue (one vote water quality, one vote flood control, and one vote environmental integrity);

- There was some agreement for the third-most important issue (two votes for flood control, one vote for water quality);
- There was also some agreement for the fourth-most important issue (two votes for environmental integrity, one vote for water quality).
- Ali Taghavi then joined the meeting via conference call to discuss if there is agreement within the group on what work he can provide to the Region through the technical assistance contract he has with DWR. The following is an overview of his presentation to the group:
 - At this point Mr. Taghavi has interviewed and spoken with many people within the Region. His conclusion is that there is little consensus, and in some cases no consensus with regards to the issues (particularly groundwater) that the Region is grappling with.
 - Ali surmises that he needs to go back to the science and the fundamental technical basis of the issue before the Region can move forward with solving their groundwater issues.
 - In order for Ali to move forward with scoping out what DWR can assist the group with the following needs to be done: need to collect all of the data and information available, go through it in a stakeholder process to agree on the basis of the issue, go through with formulation of the problem to defining the problem and the scope (depth of the problem).
 - Will rely on USGS and past studies to the extent that data and information is available.
 - Need to not just focus on the Valley floor, but groundwater throughout the Region.
 - Part of this work would be to complete technical work as necessary for the Planning Grant application. Following the submittal (of the application), it would be beneficial to go forward with the information gathered in a stakeholder process (open process) before work can be done on the formal IRWM Plan or the groundwater-related alternatives development being proposed within the Planning Grant application.
 - Mr. Taghavi proposes the following work product would come out of his technical assistance work (through the existing DWR contract): A State of the Basin report, which gets the Region to agree on what the current state of the basin is. In particular, this work product will address: the scale of overdraft, and how the Region can move forward in managing the basin in a sustainable manner.
- Mr. Taghavi then solicited questions from the group. The following is an overview of the discussion:
 - How would you address this issue in a more regional fashion (not just analyzing the Valley floor)?
 - Mr. Taghavi noted that while most of the data is available for the Valley floor, given that the Region is involved with a regional process (IRWM), they need to start addressing groundwater in the rest of the region as well to see what the most effective areas are

- and where the most “bang for the buck” is with regards to addressing groundwater.
- Despite the regional focus, because the majority of the region’s population lives in the Valley floor, the focus of the State of the Basin would be this area.
- Will this study be looking at interregional issues, such as those in the Anza-Terwilliger area north of the Anza Borrego Desert IRWM Region?
 - Mr. Taghavi noted that the Region needs to focus on its own challenges before they can start looking at interregional issues. While these interregional issues may be important, they are not the priority at this time.
 - There are still obviously things we do not know about the basin, and therefore these things cannot be resolved by looking at past studies. Such unknowns include:
 - Comprehensive understanding of groundwater quality;
 - Economic impact(s) as they relate to water quality and/or groundwater overdraft;
 - Given that there are unknown pieces of information, would those unknowns be addressed and called out for future studies as part of the IRWM process?
 - Mr. Taghavi noted that as we see where there are data gaps and missing pieces of information, we will definitely make recommendations for future actions to address such shortfalls.
 - It is a common question that people ask: why now? Why is groundwater such a large issue now? The economic impacts will likely answer the why now question, because it is likely that they will show that if something is not done soon, it will become prohibitively expensive to resolve the Region’s groundwater issues.
 - Mr. Taghavi noted that in addition, there are many economic and financial incentives to looking for solutions and options. The IRWM program is such an incentive, and going through this process will potentially bring money into the Region.
 - Is it necessary to get consensus on these issues now?
 - Ms. Dale Schafer noted that most people agree that there is an overdraft issue, but there is a serious discrepancy regarding the details resulting from this conclusion such as how much water is left, how long the Region has before water is inaccessible, and what the basin’s future is. The purpose of this work is to begin resolving groundwater issues, which must start with agreeing on the current state of the groundwater basin.
 - Mr. Taghavi noted that he will not be starting from scratch or going through a detailed analysis of the geology/water data. The point will be to present work that has been done to date to set the issue within the right

policy context. He added that rather than providing the group with a conclusion and next steps, he would like to work with stakeholders to develop a conclusion to ensure that everybody is on the same level and will not be fighting over the science. The goal at the end of this process will be an agreement on the current conditions of the basin.

- How much information do we need to have regarding the other basins within the Region?
 - Mr. Taghavi noted that ultimately the IRWM Plan needs to at least demonstrate that work will be done in other regions, and therefore will show where data gaps are throughout the Region. The IRWM Plan needs to address the entire Region, even if there is not robust information available.
- What about the regions and places in the region that do not want to be involved? During the last round of planning grant funding we were led to believe that while we cannot force them to be involved, we have to make a good faith effort to get regional stakeholders involved.
 - Ms. Tish Berge noted that RMC will be sure to provide information within the work plan that demonstrates outreach to groups outside of Borrego Springs. The group could also decide to include further outreach to other areas as a task within the Work Plan for the Planning Grant.
- Ms. Dale Schafer inquired if the group was in agreement with Mr. Taghavi's proposed "State of the Basin" plan.
 - It was added that if the USGS study is released during this process (anticipated December 2011), the State of the Basin should be sure to include this information.
 - Nobody present was opposed to Mr. Taghavi's proposed scope of work (State of Basin Plan). Mr. Taghavi will move forward with formalizing a scope and getting it into DWR.
- The group continued a discussion on outreach and involving others within the region. A suggestion was made to include a more personal touch in outreach efforts, such as following up email invitations with phone calls.
- Mr. Rolwing noted that there is a substantial amount of mistrust for the Borrego Water District and DWR from other areas (particularly Canebrake CWD), which will need to be overcome.

Regional Alternatives Development Projects

- Tish Berge provided an overview of this item. The Alternatives Development Projects (planning studies according to DWR) will be components of the Planning Grant application. These projects will need to have individual work plans, budgets, and schedules similar to a regular scope of work. In addition, each project must be supported with background information that describes the need for each project. Due to the amount of work that needs to be done to formalize these projects, it is proposed that a Work Plan Committee is formed.

- The group then discussed the potential Work Plan Committee. The following is a summary of that discussion:
 - What kinds of minds are you looking for? Highly technical?
 - Ms. Berge noted that while these items are technical, there is also a substantial amount of content and background needed to develop the work plan.
 - Ms. Berge added that there is not a formal governance structure, so the group will need to facilitate as much stakeholder input as possible, but will need to also get something completed by DWR's timeline. There will always be more chances to refine and develop further planning studies in the future as IRWM planning is an iterative process.
 - How far can we go with this? What is the scope of these projects?
 - Ms. Berge replied that this is very broad. The Planning Grant application essentially sets a "plan to plan" in that it proposes future planning-related work that will be done when developing the IRWM Plan.
 - Ultimately these projects will be seen as "hole-closers" in that they will be soliciting answers to very practical questions and issues within the Region. These projects will be answering the "so what" of issues raised within the background section of the work plan.
 - Who will be willing to participate in development of the Work Plan? This will involve holding two conference calls before November 8th (next full Anza Borrego Desert IRWM Meeting).
 - Lyle Brecht of BWD volunteered;
 - Vicki Long of EMARCD volunteered;
 - Linda Haddock of the Chamber of Commerce volunteered;
 - *Kathy Dice will ask John Peterson of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park if he would like to participate.*

Next Steps

- Tish Berge noted that the next meeting is scheduled for November 8th, 2011.
- *Jerry Rolwing to send future meeting dates to the stakeholder group and include information about the Governance Workgroup.*
- A question was raised about the Governance Workgroup, how will these meetings be conducted?
 - *Jerry Rolwing will ask Beth Hart of BWD if she would like to be involved.*
 - *Dale Schafer will contact Kathy Dice (and other participants) regarding this committee.*
- Tish Berge wrapped up the meeting by inquiring if folks got what they wanted out of the meeting.
 - Participants responded that this has provided a solid road map of where this process is headed.