

CLOSING COMMENTS OF BOARD PRESIDENT HART,
BWD TOWNHALL – MARCH 29, 2017

I've stood before you for the last 6 years trumpeting the call that decisive action to address the overdraft in this Basin is coming. Tonight, it's here. You've been introduced to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Core Team representing San Diego County (the County) and the Borrego Water District (District or BWD) in this process. You've heard Geoff Poole, BWD's General Manager and Trey Driscoll of Dudek Engineering outline the basics of the process for developing a GSP under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). You have met the Borrego Valley Basin GSP consultant, Dudek Engineering, selected by the Core Team to work through the technical elements with the Community. You have been introduced to the members of the Advisory Committee (AC) who will provide valuable input and feedback to the Core Team as the process unfolds. Finally, soon you will meet the facilitator provided through a grant with Dept of Water Resources who will shepherd the AC's discussions to reach consensus on the issues placed before them for consideration. All of this will unfold over the next 2 plus years until a plan of action to address the overdraft is constructed as required by the elements legislated in the SGMA and approved by the Boards of the District and San Diego County.

But you haven't met everyone involved in making this happen, because these people who you have met, as smart and capable as they are, may not know enough to produce a plan of action without your involvement. They don't see what you see or think the way you think. They don't analyze facts or organize details in the same way you do. They don't have the depth of experience or professional skills or passions that you have. This isn't about saving water. This is about saving a community. This process may have been initiated to make water sustainable, but in reality it has to be about making a community sustainable for what purpose is there is having sustainable water if there's no one to use it!

In a legislator's mind they are engaged in the exercise of beneficial management when they create regulations, but if that regulatory management isn't exercised with a real and practical evaluation of its consequences, the results are often destructive. We could meet the letter of the law and destroy where we live. We know that and it is terrifying to contemplate. That's why we need the varied, passionate, divergent voices of the community involved in this process.

Here's how you can add your voice. The Advisory Committee members each represent an interest area within the community. They are accountable to this interest area to act as a conduit for an interchange of information, ideas and ultimately recommendations to address the various issues placed before them. These interest group discussions may be private or public. Define your interest and join in.

The Advisory Committee meetings to address the issues presented to them for consensus recommendations to the Core Team are public. They have an established agenda, official minutes and can be followed on either the District or the County's website, and in each of these meetings, the "public" will have specific times to provide input on the issues being discussed and deliberated. If you want to be on an email list to receive notices of the Advisory meetings, please provide your information to Geoff Poole tonight or by email at Geoff@borregowd.org and he will add you to the current list. If you want to be involved in an interest group, please give Geoff your contact information and the name of the Advisory Committee member or the interest area and that information will be sent to the appropriate AC member to let them know of your willingness to participate.

Finally, hang on! This is going to be a wild ride, filled with twist and turns, mega highs and super lows, high energy fun along with bitter disappointments. While we will strive to build consensus within the community for a shared vision, in reality, everyone has a different view. Currently, in Borrego, Republicans and Democrats work side by side to accomplish community goals. Various church members whose doctrines differ pull together for the common good. It's one of the major strengths of our community and potentially, one of our greatest vulnerabilities, for unless we are careful we may destroy the very relationships that make our Community so wonderful to live in.

While I am fully aware of the town motto - "if you haven't heard a rumor by noon, then make one up", please consider being a purveyor of fact rather than fiction or an altered truth as we move through this process of establishing a sustainable plan for our community. We need each other to make this work. Thank you.