APPENDIX G

GSP Comments and Responses

Comments received by BWD regarding the Stipulated Judgment and BWD's responses have been added at the end of this Appendix.

APPENDIX G
RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the County of San Diego (County) and Borrego Water District (BWD), as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Borrego Springs Groundwater Subbasin (Subbasin), has solicited and responded to comments from the public and from other agencies concerned with the Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The Draft GSP was made available by the GSA for public review on March 22, 2019. The public comment period for the Draft GSP ended on May 21, 2019. Agencies, organizations, and individuals submitting comments on the plan are listed below, organized by category.

Letter Number	Organization/Commenter
C1	Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group
I1	Janet Johnson
I2	Bill Carpenter
I3	Lee Grismer
I4	John Geyer
I5	Eric Nessa
I6	Larry Grismer
I7	Linda Goodrich
I8	Pat Hall
I9	Mike Himmerich
I10	Jeff Grismer
I11	Bill Bancroft
I12	Steve and Debbie Riehle
I13	Terry and Pam Rhodes
I14	Rebecca Falk
I15	Rebecca Falk
I16	Rebecca Falk
I17	Rebecca Falk
I18	Diane Johnson
I19	Bill Berkley
I20	Jack and Linda Laughlin
I21	Richard and Artemisa Walker
I22	Eric Nessa
I23	Marsha Boring
I24	John Peterson
I25	Robert Kleist
I26	Garold Edwards
I27	Mark Jorgenson
I28	Don Rideout
I29	Judy Davis
I30	Cary Lowe
I31	Bill Haneline

Letter Number	Organization/Commenter
I32	Hugh Dietz
I33	Cristin McVey
I34	Henry Liu
I35	Susan Boutwell
I36	Thomas Hall
I37	Rudy Monica
I38	Lance Lundberg
I39	Barry Berndes
I40	David Leibert
I41	Elena and John Thompson
I42	Joseph Tatusko
I43	Paul Ocheltree
I44	Ray Shindler
I45	Ray Shindler
I46	Saul Miller
I47	Gary Haldeman
I48	Gary Haldeman
I49	Diane Martin
I50	I Donald
I51	Herbert Stone
I52	Karen and Fred Wise
I53	Jack Sims
I54	Joanne Sims
I55	James Roller
I56	Jeff Meagher
I57	Heather Davidson
I58	Linda Roller
I59	John and Mary Delaney
I60	Ellen Fitzpatrick
I61	Michael Wells
I62	Harold and Joanne Cohen
I63	Jennifer Edwards
I64	Wayne Boring
I65	Barbara Coates
I66	Timothy Kight
I67	Mary Leahy
I68	Betsy Knaak
I69	Ginger Dunlap-Dietz
I70	Charlene Aron
I71	Sandy Jorgenson-Funk
I72	Sally Theriault
I73	Bob Theriault

Letter Number	Organization/Commenter
I74	Merrij Smith
I75	Linda Mocere
I76	D.E. and R.A. Owen
I77	Gary Funk
I78	Linda McBride
I79	Jeanne Gemmell
I80	Cyril Weaver
I81	Marjorie and Paul Schuessler
I82	Alfred DeVico
I83	Liesel Paris
I84	Sal Moceri
I85	Heidi Noyes
I86	Robin Montgomery
I87	William Bonnell
I88	James Rickard
I89	Grace Rickard
I90	Jim Wilson
O1	Agricultural Alliance for Water and Resource Education (AAWARE), Michelle Staples, Jackson Tidus, A Law Corporation
O2	AAWARE, Michelle Staples, Esq. and Boyd Hill, Esq., Jackson Tidus, A Law Corporation
O3	T2 Borrego (Owner of Rams Hill Golf Course), Russell McGlothlin, O'Melveny
O4	Tubb Canyon Desert Conservancy, J. David Garmon, President
O5	The Nature Conservancy, Sandi Matsumoto, Associate Director, California Water Program
O6	San Diego Audubon Society, James A. Peugh, Conservation Chair
O7	Anza Borrego Foundation, Bri Fordem, Executive Director
O8	Clean Water Action, Jennifer Clary, Water Program Manager
O9	Borrego Village Association, J. David Garmon, Acting President
O10	Borrego Springs Unified School District, James L. Markman
O11	Borrego Springs Unified School District, Martha Deichler, School Community Liaison
O12	Borrego Stewardship Council, Diane Johnson
O13	Borrego Stewardship Council, Diane Johnson
O14	Borrego Water District, Kathy Dice, President, Board of Directors
O15	Borrego Valley Endowment Fund, Bob Kelly, President
S1	California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Leslie MacNair, Regional Manager, Inland Desert Region
S2	California State Parks, Gina Moran, District Superintendent

Notes: L = local agency; C= community; O = organization; I = individual; S = state agency.

All comments received on the Draft GSP have been coded to facilitate identification and tracking. Each of the written comment letters and public hearing comments received during the public comment period were assigned an identification letter and number, provided in the list above. These letters and public hearing comments were reviewed and divided into individual comments, with each comment containing a single theme, issue, or concern. Individual comments and the responses to them were assigned corresponding numbers. Each letter is the submittal of a single

individual, agency, or organization. The comment letters' identification consists of two parts. The first part is the letter and number of the document and the second is the number of the comment. As an example, Comment S2-1 refers to the first comment made and addressed in Comment Letter S2. Copies of the bracketed comment letters may be requested by contacting the Plan Manager, or visiting the GSA's website at https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/SGMA/borrego-valley/GSP.html.

To finalize the GSP, the GSA has prepared the following responses to comments that were received during the public review period.

RTC.3 ORGANIZATIONS

Comment Letter O1

Jackson Tidus
A LAW CORPORATION

April 26, 2019

Direct Dial: 949.851.7409
Email: mstaples@jacksontidus.law
Reply to: Irvine Office
File No: 7588-122439

VIA EMAIL

Jim Bennett, CHG
County of San Diego
Planning and Development Services
25510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123
jim.bennett@sdcounty.ca.gov

Geoff Poole
General Manager
Borrego Water District
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004
geoff@borregowd.org

RE: AAWARE REQUEST FOR GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY APPROVAL OF METER SYSTEM

Dear Messrs. Bennett and Poole:

We represent the Agricultural Alliance for Water and Resource Education ("AAWARE"). AAWARE's members comprise the majority of the agricultural property owners in Borrego Valley. By this letter, we ask that the Borrego Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency approve acceptable propeller meter systems so that the AAWARE members can make plans to install groundwater production meters, and not have to wait until Groundwater Sustainability Plan approval to do so.

Enclosed is information on the SWIIM well meter system that Mike Seley of AAWARE has discussed with Geoff Poole. Benefits of the SWIIM meter system include significant cost savings by:

- Eliminating the need for manual, monthly readings of groundwater production (the meter system provides real time data by cellular transmission, or if cellular is interrupted, by radio transmission); and
- Eliminating the need for semi-annual calibration verification and annual meter accuracy checks. Under the service agreement, each flow meter is regularly checked for accuracy. The maintenance schedule also includes technician visits to each site at least every four to six weeks. In addition to maintaining the telemetry and solar charging systems during these visits, technicians perform visual inspections of flow meters to ensure there are no erratic or unreasonable flow readings, blank LCDs, or damaged registers.

O1-1

Irvine Office
2030 Main Street, 12th Floor
Irvine, California 92614
t 949.752.8585 f 949.752.0597

Westlake Village Office
2815 Townsgate Road, Suite 200
Westlake Village, California 91361
t 805.230.0023 f 805.230.0087

www.jacksontidus.law

We are additionally awaiting information on the similar McCrometer meter system and service agreement. Enclosed is information from the McCrometer web site about their meters and reporting technology.

Please let us know as soon as possible whether the SWIIM or McCrometer meters, along with their data collection and reporting systems, and their calibration systems, are approved as acceptable metering systems. Please also let us know whether there are any other meter systems acceptable to the GSA.

O1-1 Cont.

Sincerely,

Michele A. Staples

Enclosures: SWIIM and McCrometer systems information

cc: Jim Seley, AAWARE*
Mike Seley, AAWARE*
Jack McGrory, AAWARE*
Boyd L. Hill, Esq., for AAWARE*
*by email only

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and you can't manage what you don't measure.
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On-Farm Water Accounting
ONFARM
GROW INFORMED
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swimsystem.com

Agenda
1. Introduction
2. Case Studies
3. How SWIIM Works
4. Delivery & Water Balance Reports
5. Remote Sensing & Software
6. Questions & Discussion
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Introduction: SWIIM Overview
A full service, turn-key solution that produces a very accurate on-farm water budget. It provides cost-effective, field- or crop-level, actionable data. It includes a software suite that enables agricultural water users to plan, manage and optimize crop water use through the use of sensors, data loggers, telemetry and remote sensing via satellite.
OnFarm
Software Dashboard
Instrumentation
Full-service installation & maintenance
Remote Sensing
ET data with satellite images
Remote sensing via satellite and aircraft
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How SWIIM Works

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Daily Ledger Water Balance Approach
i = 1,n where n is number of days of recharge
DP = deep percolation below the root zone
V_B = daily inflow (measured) = Q_B *t
ΔS = volumetric change in soil moisture storage (assumed zero over water balance period)
ET = evapotranspiration (from weather station data calibrated with regular remote sensing)
P = precipitation (measured)
A = average surface water area
d_w = average depth of water
ET
P
A
ΔS
V_B
DP
For each day, i: $DP_i * A_i = V_{Bi} + (Pi - ETi) * Ai \pm \Delta S \pm \Delta d_w * Ai$
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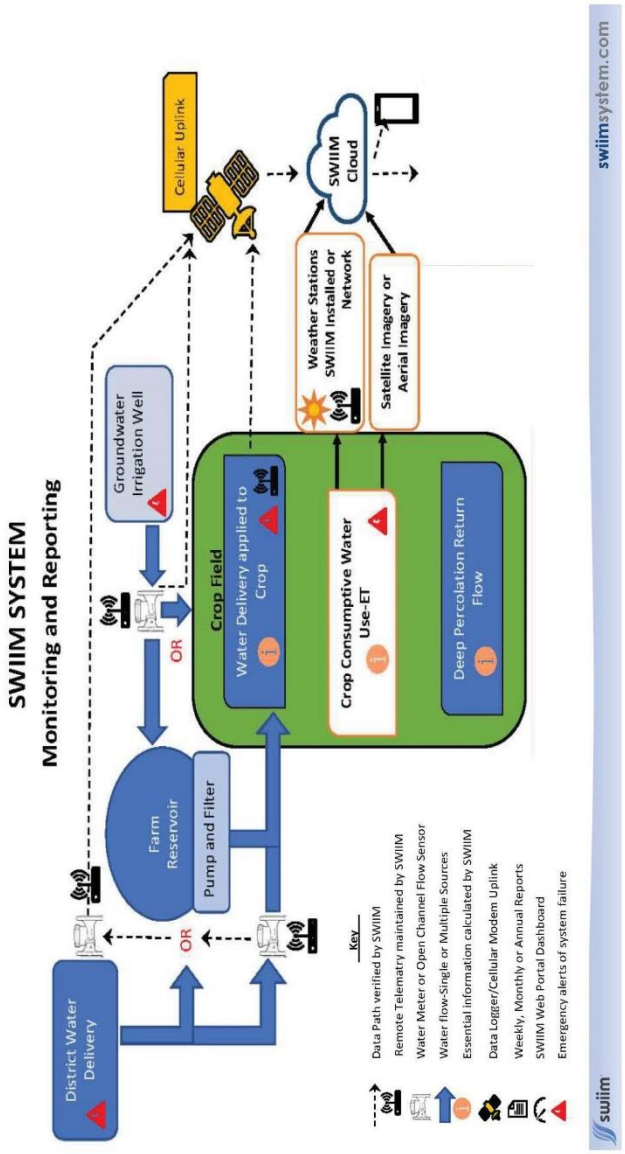
swiimsystem.com


SWIIM SYSTEM
Monitoring and Reporting
Cellular Uplink
SWIIM Cloud
Weather Stations SWIIM installed or Network
Satellite imagery or Aerial Imagery
Groundwater Irrigation Well
Crop Field
Water Delivery applied to Crop
Crop Consumptive Water Use-ET
Deep Percolation Return Flow
OR
Farm Reservoir
Pump and Filter
District Water Delivery
Key
Data Path verified by SWIIM
Remote Telemetry maintained by SWIIM
Water Meter or Open Channel Flow Sensor
Water flow-Single or Multiple Sources
Essential information calculated by SWIIM
Data Logger/Cellular Modem Uplink
Weekly, Monthly or Annual Reports
SWIIM Web Portal Dashboard
Emergency alerts of system failure
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swimsystem.com


Equipment in the Field
Reservoir Water Balance
Closed Conduit Flow Monitoring
Discrete Turn-Out
(Used to approximate)
Telemetry Interface for Equipment Configuration and Maintenance
CIMIS Weather Station
SWIIM Weather Station
Open Channel Flow Monitoring
(not used on this deployment but is available)
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swiimsystem.com

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Reports & Technical Data

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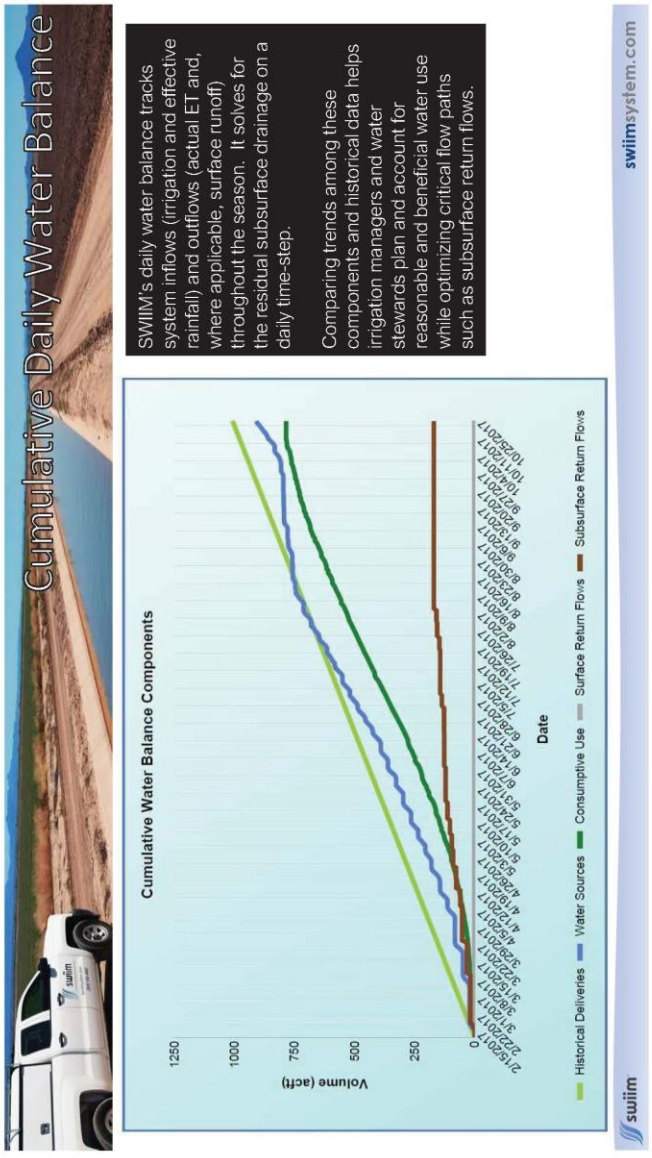
Delivery & Water Balance Reports
swiim
Deliveries
Water Balance Full Report
swiimsystem.com


Cumulative Daily Water Balance
SWIIM's daily water balance tracks system inflows (irrigation and effective rainfall) and outflows (actual ET and, where applicable, surface runoff) throughout the season. It solves for the residual subsurface drainage on a daily time-step.
Comparing trends among these components and historical data helps irrigation managers and water stewards plan and account for reasonable and beneficial water use while optimizing critical flow paths such as subsurface return flows.
Cumulative Water Balance Components
Volume (acft)
1250
1000
750
500
250
0
Date
Historical Deliveries
Water Sources
Consumptive Use
Surface Return Flows
Subsurface Return Flows
swiim
swimsystem.com

Remote Sensing Integration
2017
ET Actual
in/day
High: 0.2
Low: 0.0
Image Notes:
Date of Image: 8/28/2017
Average ETa (in): 0.18
Landsat Cloud Cover: 10%
ET Actual
in/day
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6
Miles
swiimsystem.com
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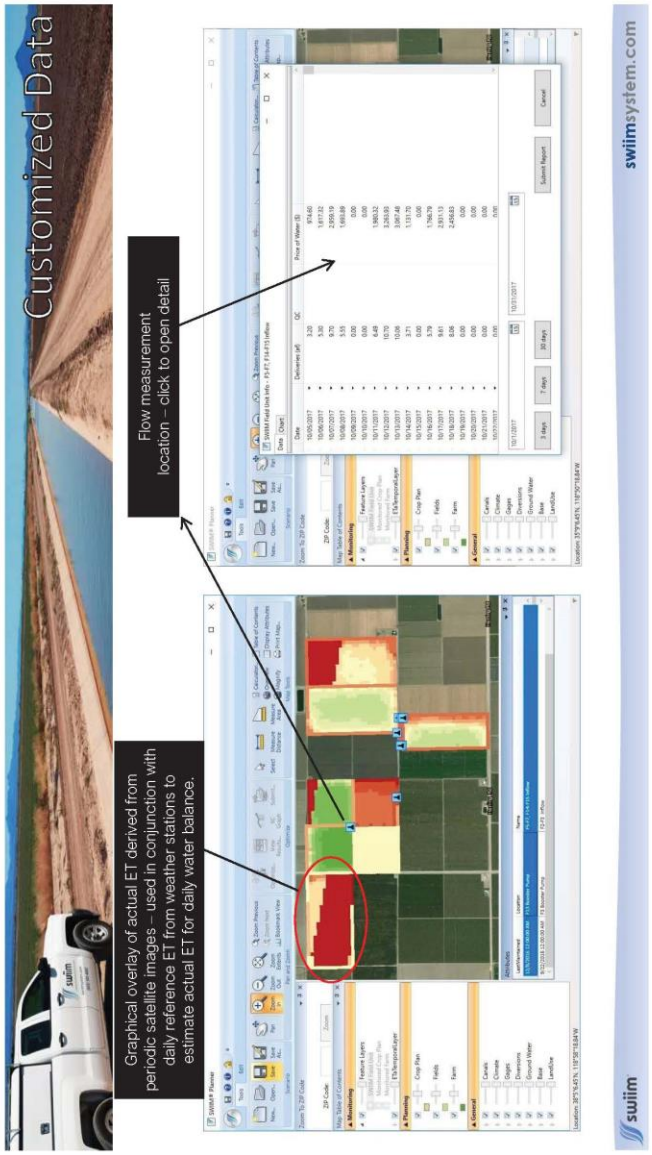
Remote Sensing Comparison
Field A ETc and ETa
Field A Crop Coefficients
ETc
ETa
Kc
Ka
swiimsystem.com
swiim


Customized Data
Graphical overlay of actual ET derived from periodic satellite images – used in conjunction with daily reference ET from weather stations to estimate actual ET for daily water balance.
Flow measurement location – click to open detail
swiim
swimsystem.com

SWIIM Dashboard (OnFarm)
OnFarm automatically aggregates data from any source to provide a real-time, unified farm decision dashboard.
• Simplified view of SWIIM data and reports.
• Integration of weather, soil moisture, agronomic, and other 3rd party data in the same view.
• Optimizes irrigation to reduce water, energy, and fertilizer.
• Enter and track manually recorded field data.
• Monitor and alerts for risks like frost.
• Plans and schedules activities more accurately to avoid field conflicts.
swiim
swiimsystem.com

You can't protect what you don't quantify
and you can't manage what you don't measure.
swiim
SUSTAINABLE WATER & INNOVATIVE IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT
Thank you!
ONFARM
GROW INFORMED
swiim
swimsystem.com

4/26/2019 Water Flow Instruments for Agriculture and Turf | McCrometer

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The Benefits of McCrometer Flow Meters for Irrigation and Agriculture

Agricultural and turf irrigators operate in difficult environments with extreme climates where water flow measurement can be the difference between profit or loss. Choosing the right irrigation flow meter doesn't need to be complicated. With 60+ years of experience in agricultural irrigation, McCrometer provides reliable and low maintenance flow meter solutions to meet this industry's tough requirements.

McCrometer flow meters offer **unbeatable value** in cost of installation and ownership, and set the standard for ease-of-use, reliability and economy. Our leading edge meters offer versatile water flow measurement that have been trusted by irrigators since 1955.

Watch the video below to learn more about McCrometer's Mc Mag^{3000}, battery operated mag meter with a 5 year Guaranteed Battery Life.

Request a quote or more information on products designed for Agriculture & Irrigation

How to Select the Right Irrigation Flow Meter

In any irrigation network, water meters are a critical tool for irrigators. With many different choices, choosing the ideal flow meter for your application is vital. Whether you're looking for greater control, easy installation, accuracy, billing solutions, consistent irrigation schedules or improved water quality, there are a number of solutions from which to choose.

To help eliminate the guesswork and get you operating quickly and efficiently, below is a list of mechanical or electromagnetic meters to help you learn more about which choice might be right for you.

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https://www.mccrometer.com/Agricultural-Turf 1/3

A Few of our Agriculture Irrigation Flow Meters .... Find out More ...

- **Mc Propeller:** Affordable, easy to install and operate, easy to service in the field, long-life components. The best-selling propeller meter in the U.S. Trusted by irrigators since 1955.
- **FlowConnect:** Built in remote meter reading for collecting and transmitting flow data from McCrometer's Mc® Propeller and Water Specialties propeller meters.
- **Dura Mag:** Battery powered flanged mag meter with a 5 year battery life eliminates the need for AC power and arrives pre-calibrated with an internal datalogger with 5 years of data storage, and telemetry-ready output options.
- **FS100 Flow Straightener:** Uses breakthrough flow straightening technology for highly accurate, reliable flow measurement with minimal upstream/downstream pipe runs requirements.

	Propeller Meter	Mag Meter	Telemetry Ready	Accuracy	Line Sizes	Easy to Install & Service	Custom Lengths / Flanges
DuraMag		✓	✓	±1%	4" - 12"		✓
FlowConnect			✓	N/A	N/A		
Flow Straightener	✓			±2%	6" - 12"	✓	
Mc Mag3000™		✓	✓	±2%	4" - 12"	✓	
Mc® Propeller	✓		✓	±2%	2" - 96"	✓	✓
Ultra Mag®		✓	✓	±0.5%	2" -48"		✓
Water Specialties Propeller Meter™	✓		✓	±2%	2" - 72"	✓	✓

What Our Customers are Saying:

"My decision to specify McCrometer is based upon these four basic facts: they are ruggedly built, simple to install, easy to read, and above all have had consistent high quality for more than 20 years."

4/26/2019
Water Flow Instruments for Agriculture and Turf | McCrometer
David R. Bower, Ewing Irrigation Products
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3/3
https://www.mccrometer.com/Agricultural-Turf

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Instruments: Connected Solutions

Connected Solutions

Today's water managers face several challenges when it comes to reading the data on their flow meters. Collecting the data can be time consuming, with delivery either inconsistent or irregular due to weather restrictions or meter inaccessibility. Manual reading can be inaccurately reported, and the infrequency of the data collection is often insufficient for planning. Add to that the expensive cost of labor, vehicles and fuel, it's no wonder they're demanding more. How many times have we heard "There must be a better way!"

Fortunately, there is. McCrometer's FlowConnect™ is a built-in solution for collecting and transmitting flow data from the Mc Propeller and Water Specialties meters. Its unique one-piece design eliminates the need for cables, pole mounting and other hardware typically required with traditional telemetry systems. FlowConnect's features include ExactRead™ Technology, a proprietary technology for exact match from meter to website, affordable and reliable remote meter reading with a streamlined design, timely and accessible data for water management decisions, pre-assembled on new meters for simplified installation and retrofits on existing meters in less than 30 minutes. With multiple register input and output options, modem options and power options, McCrometer, your trusted partner for flow meters, offers innovative built-in remote meter reading. Finally, this is a much better way of automatic meter reading.

McCrometer also offers Smart Output for use with their line of electromagnetic insertion and full bore flow meters. Smart Output™ is compatible with Sensus and Itron systems, which makes these mag meters plug and play into larger AMI and AMR systems. McCrometer has an electromagnetic flow solution for nearly every application – line sizes 4"–138": hot tappable insertion meters, full bore type, battery/solar or AC/DC powered. And now, their entire line of mag meters are AMI compatible, with Smart Output.

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4/26/2019
Connected Solutions | McCrometer USA - Overview | McCrometer
FlowConnect
McCrometer CONNECT
Smart Output
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2/2
https://www.mccrometer.com/connected-solutions/family?productCategoryId=53725859469

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McCrometer CONNECT

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I also understand my privacy choices as they pertain to my personal data as provided in the McCrometer privacy policy under "Your Privacy Choices"

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McCrometer CONNECT™ offers the most comprehensive choice in wireless remote monitoring for irrigation and crop management from the convenience of your computer, smart phone or tablet.

Complete turnkey solutions for growers and irrigators
Highest quality local service and support
Selection and Flexibility

With McCrometer CONNECT, you have the real-time, industrial-strength crop data and tools you need

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right at your fingertips. Make timely and effective irrigation and crop management decisions from wherever you are: in the field, on the road or in your office.

- 24/7 Connectivity
- Simple. Convenient. Affordable.

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4/26/2019 Smart Output | McCrometer USA - Overview

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Smart Output

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I also understand my privacy choices as they pertain to my personal data as provided in the McCrometer privacy policy under "Your Privacy Choices"

Water engineers and technicians will find McCrometer has a versatile Smart Output mag meter solution that is Sensus or Itron system compatible for nearly every type of AMR and AMI application. These accurate, reliable and cost-effective mag meters are available for line sizes from 4 to 138 inches in hot tap insertion or full bore styles, which can be AC or DC powered, battery powered or solar. Smart Output gives water utility managers the flexibility they need to network the flow meters across their distribution systems with the AMI solution of their choice. Smart Output reduces costs, calls, travel, and labor, while it increases efficiency, ensuring your data is accurate.

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https://www.mccrometer.com/smart-output/product?id=5233394815 1/2

4/26/2019 Smart Output | McCrometer USA - Overview

Smart Output mag meters from McCrometer are designed with a highly intelligent module in their transmitters that is similar to a communication protocol. This capability allows McCrometer mag meters to transmit data on a schedule or on demand, as well as receive diagnostic queries to ensure or update meter operation. There's no need for technicians to gather flow data manually or check meter status with McCrometer's Smart Output mag meters.

With advanced plug-and-play, real-time Smart Output communications, McCrometer's FPI Mag Flow Meter, SPI Mag Flow Meter and Ultra Mag Flow Meter provide highly effective solutions for automatic meter reading (AMR) and advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) in support of utility smart grids that help conserve valuable water resources, reduce expensive non-revenue water costs, and simplify daily operations and routine maintenance.

McCrometer's Smart Output technology is backed by the company's 60-plus years of solving flow measurement problems.

Letter O8

Commenter: Jennifer Clary, Water Program Manager, Clean Water Action
Date: May 21, 2019

O8-1 The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) appreciates your comments on the Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and participation in two referenced meetings.

O8-2 The GSA acknowledges your request to provide additional information in the GSP regarding how successful efforts to reach all classes of beneficial users, where is more effort – or a different approach – needed and specifically interested in your success in reaching domestic well users. We note your questions regarding the success of general public engagement and efforts to Spanish-speaking residents. Additionally, you ask to identify how input received was incorporated and to provide more specifics about how the plan was amended in response to public input. In response, the Borrego Water District (BWD) placed into the administrative record, the SDAC [Severely Disadvantaged Community] Impact/Vulnerability Analysis (Task 2 Report) prepared by Environmental Navigation Services Inc., dated April 15, 2019. The report was prepared to understand the implications that the implementation of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) will have on the SDAC population of Borrego Springs.

O8-3 The GSA acknowledges your comment that the communications plan is woefully lacking in detail and hope that that it can be amended in the final plan. Specifically, you request clarification on the role of the Advisory Committee in the final plan, and what are the goals, strategies and tactics for stakeholder outreach and communications. In addition, the GSA notes that the commenter believes the key goal of the plan should be to educate residents and beneficial users about the need to raise funds for plan implementation. Finally, the commenter asks whether the $6,000 for outreach identified in Table 5-2 is sufficient to accomplish GSA objectives. In response, as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding, the Advisory Committee was formed for Plan Development. The primary purpose of the GSA under SGMA is to develop a GSP to achieve long-term groundwater sustainability. SGMA requires and directs GSAs to involve stakeholders and interested parties in the process to regulate groundwater. The purpose of outreach activities as described in the GSP was to provide individual stakeholders and stakeholder organizations, and other interested parties an opportunity to be involved in the development and evaluation of the GSP. Lastly, the GSP includes

an initial estimate of $6,000 for outreach activities, which will be evaluated during implementation of the GSP.

O8-4 The GSA acknowledges your comment regarding identifying which wells were potentially compromised due to water quality issues or the lowering of the groundwater table. Specifically, which domestic wells will potentially be impacted by increasing groundwater contamination and lowering groundwater levels? How does the plan identify those impacts and when and how would mitigation efforts be triggered? Also, the GSA notes your comment that the plan seems to confuse mitigation with additional plan actions and that your interpretation is that mitigation requires the impacted party to be directly assisted. The Draft GSP specifically discusses in Section 3.2.1 Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels – Undesirable Results that "Overall, there are 77 domestic wells in DWR's well completion report database.

As shown Figure 3.2-4, four of the township and range sections have water levels estimated to be below the bottom of the well in the section. Furthermore, the difference between the average well depth and the average groundwater level is less than 50 feet in seven township and range sections, representing 20 domestic wells, which indicates a high likelihood that some may lack access to adequate water in existing wells. With groundwater levels expected to continue to decline early in the GSP implementation period, domestic users are currently experiencing undesirable results, which will be alleviated by 2040.

The majority of the wells in this situation are close to the BWD water distribution system" (Draft GSP page 3-10).

Groundwater level declines would be significant and unreasonable if they are sufficient in magnitude to lower the rate of production of pre-existing groundwater extraction wells below that needed to meet the minimum required to support the overlying beneficial use(s), and that alternative means of obtaining sufficient groundwater resources are not technically or financially feasible. To the extent lowering groundwater levels impact de-minimis pumpers, significant and unreasonable impacts to those pumpers could be avoided.

> For example, alternative means of obtaining water for de-minimis and domestic pumpers who can no longer pump may include connection to the municipal water system (i.e., BWD), groundwater well maintenance or rehabilitation (e.g., well pump lowering), or for some beneficial users, well redevelopment or deepening. However, use of these alternative means of supply, by themselves, do not

> necessarily offset undesirable results for lowering groundwater levels in the context of the Subbasin as a whole (as opposed to individual uses or users), because the ultimate source of supply remains groundwater pumped from the Subbasin, even if from another location (Draft GSP page 3-8).

Table 2.2-6 Management Area Background Water Quality indicates that in water quality in the Subbasin is good and generally meets regulatory standards for intended beneficial use. Available Subbasin-wide data does not suggest that domestic wells will be impaired by increasing groundwater contamination. That said, the GSA recognizes that there has historically been limited sampling of domestic wells in the Subbasin by public agencies. The County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health (DEH) Land and Water Quality Division, requires that all building permit applicants demonstrate that their private water well supply is potable prior to occupancy or change of use.

The DEH reviews the water testing results submitted by the owner or their certified laboratory to verify potable quality for domestic use. However, it remains the responsibility of the private well owner to maintain the ongoing health standards and safety of their water supply. At a minimum, testing for bacteria and nitrates is required by an owner or applicant to verify a potable water supply prior to County issuance of a building or septic system permit. If the water sample results do not meet health standards for drinking water, or if an applicant fails to submit water testing results from a private water well, building occupancy will not be granted by the County (County of San Diego 2019). By proactively monitoring groundwater levels and groundwater quality in the Subbasin, the GSA will be able to ascertain if undesirable results to domestic well owners will potentially result in impairment to beneficial use.

It is noted that private domestic wells require regular maintenance and typically have an average lifespan of 30 to 50 years with pump lifespans of 4 to 10 years. One well failing in the Subbasin does not necessarily indicate an impairment or an undesirable result. Well failure can be the result of several factors including but not limited to age, well casing material and depth, screen and filter pack clogging due to bio-fouling or mineral encrustation and poor well construction. If it is determined that declining groundwater levels or deteriorating water quality is the result of management actions taken by the GSA, then the GSA will evaluate potential impacts and options at that time.

O8-5 The GSA acknowledges your comment that the plan reference the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program is already described in Draft GSP Section 2.1.2 Water Resources Monitoring and Management Programs. We note your comment that East San Joaquin River Program required that all domestic wells be tested for nitrates and that all agricultural operations should develop and implement irrigation and nutrient management plans to limit their discharge of nitrates to groundwater.

O8-6 The GSA appreciates your comment regarding how the Projects and Management Actions will be prioritized if the GSP is to reach the sustainability goal by 2040. First and foremost, Projects and Management Actions that result in a reduction in water demand at the lowest cost may affect prioritization, taking into account the magnitude of required reduction to reach the sustainability goal. Not all of the Projects and Management Actions need to be implemented simultaneously and depending on results of additional study and monitoring, some Projects and Management Actions such as the Water Quality Optimization Program and/or the Intra-Subbasin Water Transfers may not be required to be implemented but have been included in the Draft GSP should future monitoring prove impairment of beneficial water use due to groundwater quality degradation or supply.

O8-7 The Water Trading Program is a proposed Project and Management Action and expected to be implemented; however it is unclear how the commenter concluded that the GSP states that "definitively that this is something that it definitely will do" as this text does not appear anywhere in the Draft GSP. The GSA notes your concern that the timeline for implementing [water trading] is too ambitious.

O8-8 The GSA notes the comment that water conservation action provides explicit savings and that in the Final GSP, it would be helpful to quantify expected conservation for each identified measures, along with costs for each. Detailed development of measures and of costs is part of the Water Conservation Program development and not part of GSP development. Preliminary measures and associated costs are provided in Draft GSP Section 4.3 Projects and Management action No. 2 – Water Conservation.

O8-9 The GSA acknowledges that the commenter agrees with the metering requirement for the pumping reduction program and looks forward to proposals to ensure that any program to track metered water use is effectively enforced. In addition, the GSA notes the commenter agrees that some agricultural fallowing will be necessary to meet the 2040 sustainability goal and measurable objectives. Also, the GSA

acknowledges that the commenter hopes this effort will be informed by an analysis of the impact of fallowing on farm workers and how that impact might be mitigated.

O8-10 The GSA notes your request to clarify the intent of the Water Quality Optimization Program. In brief the Water Quality Optimization Program is a proposed mitigation measure should beneficial water use be harmed by impaired water quality in the future. The GSP emphasizes that available data do not suggest that existing water quality is impairing any beneficial uses. Should future monitoring prove impairment of beneficial water uses due to groundwater quality degradation the GSA would conduct analysis to determine the cause of the impairment and determine feasible mitigation options. This process is described in Section 4.6.1, Water Quality Optimization Program Description, of the Draft GSP.

O8-11 The GSA notes that the Borrego Valley Endowment Fund retained the Local Government Commission on behalf of the Borrego Valley Stewardship Council to conduct independent review of the Draft GSP. The GSA notes the comment to establish necessary land use, water management and community governance policies that will accelerate achievement of a sustainable Borrego Springs. The GSA notes the comment that all work products be included in the body of the GSP and not included solely as attachments or appendices. The GSA notes the comment regarding proportional reductions. The GSA notes the comment regarding accelerated pumping reductions. The GSA notes the assertion that existing data and anecdotal evidence illustrates that groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) within the Subbasin, especially within the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, continue to experience undesirable results. The GSA points out that your letter provides no data or anecdotal evidence to support this general conclusion regarding GDEs. The GSA acknowledges your comment regarding stakeholder engagement and DAC considerations being inadequate, and your request to strengthen outreach and document engagement in the GSP. The GSA notes your comment regarding land use changes and groundwater recharge potential. Specifically you request evaluation of land use zoning and evaluation of impacts on both water quality and recharge.

O8-12 The commenter is referred to the GSA's response to Letter O12.

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Comment Letter O9

BORREGO VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
BORREGO SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

May 21, 2019

County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
C/O: Jim Bennett
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin
Borrego Springs Sub-basin

Dear Mr. Bennett,

I am writing on behalf of the Borrego Village Association (BVA), a 501(c)(6) non-profit corporation, whose mission is to facilitate sustainable economic development of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the unincorporated village of Borrego Springs. Our mission is predicated on the premise that through sustainable economic development we will be able to grow our community sufficiently to be able to sustain healthy schools, a more robust healthcare delivery system, and healthy businesses that support our population.

I am grateful to you and the other members of the Core Team who have worked tirelessly on our behalf to create the draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan. We understand that while SGMA directly addresses hydrological issues, that it is the intent of SGMA to leave communities such as ours as healthy and economically vibrant. In this regard, SGMA and the mission of the Borrego Village Association are well aligned.

The purpose of this letter is to articulate our strong opposition to the concept of Proportional Reductions across all sectors of current water users, i.e. a 70-75% reduction from baseline allotments for Municipal Users as well as Agriculture and Recreation. In our view, Proportional Reductions are completely inappropriate and unnecessary based on current and historic pumping levels. Municipal Users account for a fraction of the water pumped by Agriculture and a half of what is pumped by Recreation. Neither of these industries is sustainable, thus requiring the community to transition to lower water-use industries, e.g. tourism, that will support the long-term economic sustainability of the region.

O9-1

BORREGO VILLAGE ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 1133 BORREGO SPRINGS, CA 92004

We urge the GSA to remedy this shortcoming of the GSP by requiring no reduction in water allotment to Municipal Users beyond their Baseline Allotment of approximately 1700 acre feet per year. Our calculations indicate it would be possible to modestly grow the population of our community if no additional reductions are mandated for Municipal Users in the GSP. We believe modest growth of our population will be possible as a result of the economic development model now being implemented by the Borrego Village Association, and that such growth will lead to the healthy, vibrant community envisioned by SMGA.

O9-1 Cont.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may provide you with additional information regarding the interface of the activities of the Borrego Village Association and the issue of Proportional Reductions.

Sincerely yours,

J. David Garmon, M.D.
Acting President, BVA

JDG: ms

BORREGO VILLAGE ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 1133 BORREGO SPRINGS, CA 92004

Letter O9

Commenter: J. David Garmon, M.D., Acting President, Borrego Village Association
Date: May 21, 2019

O9-1: The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) acknowledges the commenter's opposition to proportional reductions and that Borrego Water District (BWD) would not be subject to reductions below 1,700 acre-feet per year.

While the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) does not set specific groundwater use reductions, the GSP includes Project and Management Action No. 3 – Pumping Reduction Program. As indicated in the GSP, the GSA will prepare the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation (after GSP adoption) in advance of considering formal adoption and implementation of any groundwater use reductions and a specific ramp down schedule. The GSP also indicates an agreement among the pumpers is a possible scenario where groundwater use reductions could be developed.

The comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

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Comment Letter O10

From: Nancy L. Collins <NCollins@rwglaw.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 3:04 PM
To: LUEG, GroundWater, PDS
Subject: Letter to County of San Diego
Attachments: Letter to County of San Diego.pdf

Attached please find a letter from James Markman regarding the above-referenced matter. The original is being sent via first-class mail.

Nancy

Nancy L. Collins
Legal Secretary

RWG LAW

RICHARDS WATSON GERSHON
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Secretary to James L. Markman, Paula Gutierrez Baeza, Roy Clarke and Isra Shah

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL & U. S. MAIL

County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
c/o: Jim Bennett
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, California 92123

Re: Re: Comment of Borrego Springs Unified School District on Draft Sustainability Plan for the Borrego Springs Groundwater Basin

Dear Sirs:

The undersigned represents Borrego Springs Unified School District ("the District") concerning the SGMA process for the Borrego Springs Groundwater Basin. There is one specific comment which we hereby provide to you regarding the District's Baseline Pumping Allocation quantified by you in a letter to the District dated July 13, 2018. That comment is that in determining rampdown reductions in the District's Baseline Pumping Allocation related to water production serving the District's elementary school, you are required to recognize that the pumping right exercised by the District is a priority overlying right under California law, but also is protected against prescription by California Civil Code section 1007. Therefore, unlike other overlying rights, such as agricultural production rights and recreational (golf course) production rights, the District's overlying rights remain superior to the rights of any appropriator and, specifically superior to the rights of Borrego Water District. That factor of priority of pumping must be considered in developing a rampdown or pumping reduction program as part of the final Implementation Plan.

O10-1

Please respond or call at your convenience if you would like additional information about the District's input and suggestion stated in this letter.

Very truly yours,

James L. Markman

cc: Mark Stevens, Superintendent
Borrego Springs Unified School District

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RICHARDS WATSON GERSHON

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Letter O10

Commenter: James L. Markman, Borrego Springs Unified School District
Date: May 21, 2019

O10-1: The commenter's claim is that the water rights of the School District are superior to other appropriators, which include the Borrego Water District. The letter further requests that this right be considered when developing a rampdown or reduction program. The comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP and calls for a legal conclusion to which the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is not required to respond. Therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

While the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) does not set specific groundwater use reductions, the GSP includes Project and Management Action No. 3 – Pumping Reduction Program. As indicated in the GSP, the GSA will prepare the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation (after GSP adoption) in advance of considering formal adoption and implementation of any groundwater use reductions and a specific ramp down schedule. The GSP also indicates an agreement among the pumpers is a possible scenario where groundwater use reductions could be developed.

The comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP and calls for a legal conclusion to which the GSA is not required to respond. Therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

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Comment Letter O11

From: Martha Deichler <mdeichler@bsusd.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 3:27 PM
To: LUEG, GroundWater, PDS
Subject: Borrego Springs GSP

County of San Diego
Planning and Development Services
% Jim Bennett
5510 Overland Ave. Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

May 17, 2019

Ref: Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin
Borrego Springs Sub-basin

Dear Jim Bennett;

I have much respect for the time and process the County, Borrego Water Coalition, Borrego Water District, Advisory Council and other interested parties have put into the creation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. It has been a long, complicated and at times arduous journey requiring much patience and willingness to listen on everyone's part - especially yours. Thank you for your time and your expertise on behalf of Borrego Springs.

I am writing in reaction to the Draft GSP's lack of any reference to the results of the Environmental Navigation Services, Inc. study of our SDAC (Severely Disadvantaged Community). I am referring specifically to the high cost of water for our local low-income residents as well as the potential loss of employment when golf courses and agriculture are reduced and/or eliminated. These two aspects of our water situation could have drastic impacts on the economic viability of our community. With loss of jobs, families will move out of Borrego in search of employment and the local infrastructure will suffer. Specifically, schools will lose students, lose state funding, lay off teachers and become a skeleton of a school district with high school becoming an online program for a few.

The loss of our labor force will impact the local economy as housekeepers, gardeners, dishwashers, laborers and other low skilled workers leave our valley in search of employment elsewhere. The infrastructure of our village depends on these workers and their families; their leaving will have a definite negative impact. In addition, a town without children is truly not a livable place.

Please consider the plight of our low income citizens as well as the plight of our town as you ponder next steps in our GSP.

Sincerely,

Martha Deichler
School Community Liaison
Borrego Springs Unified School District

O11-1

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Letter O11

Commenter: Martha Deichler, School Community Liaison, Borrego Springs Unified School District
Date: May 17, 2019

O11-1 The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) appreciates comments from the Borrego Springs Unified School District. The commenter asserts that implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) will result in loss of employment and labor force, and result in substantial reduction of population leading to an absence of children. The commenter is referred to the response to Comment O12-5 regarding consideration of Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs).

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Comment Letter O12

Bennett, Jim

From: David Garmon <jdgarmon@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 4:40 PM
To: LUEG, GroundWater, PDS
Cc: Diane Johnson
Subject: Groundwater Sustainability Plan Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin
Attachments: BVSC Comment Letter.pdf

Dear Jim,

Please find attached below the comment letter from Diane Johnson, who is the Stewardship Council representative to the AC. Diane is traveling from Canada today and has asked me to submit this letter on her behalf.

Thank you,

David

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Borrego Valley Stewardship Council

Borrego Springs, CA

May 21, 2019

County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
C/O: Jim Bennett
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin
Borrego Springs Sub-basin

Dear Mr. Bennett,

Please accept this review of the draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) from the Borrego Valley Stewardship Council. The Stewardship Council is an umbrella organization in Borrego Springs composed of businesses, non-profits, and governmental agencies. Please visit our website for a listing of our institutional signatories at http://www.borregovalleystewardshipcouncil.org/home.html.

The Borrego Valley Stewardship Council is committed to the sustainable development and growth of the Borrego region in its entirety. As such, we have great interest in most aspects of the GSP as described below.

We are grateful for the diligent work you and your team have put into this process over the last two years, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and your team for the health and vitality of the Borrego Valley.

O12-1

I. DETAILED REVIEW OF THE GSP BY CHAPTER

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.2 Sustainability Goal

The Sustainability Goal should be based on climate change impacts and future conditions, and should acknowledge that maximizing groundwater recharge will be a necessary component of achieving sustainability. The current draft GSP makes no reference to climate change impacts on achieving the sustainability goal; nor does it reference soil conditions, recharge rates, or land use change impacts on achieving that sustainability goal. In fact, the sustainability goal as stated in the draft GSP is not a goal at all – but simply a restatement of the intent of SGMA. It is extremely vague and not quantified in this section. This is completely inadequate and must be resolved.

O12-2

1.3.1 Organization and Management Structure

The GSA should include personnel with a focus on climate change effects on groundwater conditions and recharge rates. There is no clear identification that any of the staff on the GSA "Core Team" or Advisory Committee (AC) have background or expertise in either soil science or considering the impacts of land use on groundwater conditions. However, the organizational structure does include broad representation from relevant sectors. Personnel from the state park may be equipped to address climate change, but this is unclear. Similarly, the BVSC representative should uphold climate change concerns, but it is unclear whether they have the necessary expertise. The GSA should seek to ensure the Core Team and AC is populated with adequate expertise on both climate science, soil science, and hydrology. The GSP should be updated to include a thorough description of the requisite background of Core Team and AC members.

O12-3

1.3.3 Implementation Costs

Estimated costs to implement the GSP, and the GSA's approach to meeting those costs should include costs related to climate change impacts and adaptation, as well as costs to implement groundwater recharge. The current draft GSP includes no reference to soil conditions, recharge, or land use impacts or changing conditions as a result of climate change, and how these changing conditions could affect GSP implementation costs. The GSP implementation cost estimate does include a 10% contingency, but this is drastically insufficient, given the lack of detail in the current projects and management actions and implementation budget. The GSP implementation cost estimates need to be re-evaluated in conjunction with more detail being provided to the projects and management actions.

O12-4

Further, a thorough analysis of projected costs, and how the GSA will raise those funds, needs to be conducted to determine the potential impacts to vulnerable communities, and how to mitigate those impacts.

O12-4 Cont.

Chapter 2: Plan Area & Basin Setting

Plan Area

a) 2.1.1 Summary of Jurisdictional Areas and Other Features

Disadvantaged Communities

This section should include specific reference to disadvantaged communities. The current draft includes no specific reference to where most vulnerable community members (e.g., specific neighborhoods or population groups) within the subbasin are located.

This section should include locations and extent of communities dependent upon groundwater and noting where community wells are located near higher production wells, such as irrigation wells, that could potentially impact domestic well users' groundwater supply or quality. The current draft includes a map with density of wells per square mile, but does not include a map of the 52 "de minimis extractors," such as the 49 domestic wells in the subbasin and small water systems. Despite the requirement of SGMA not extending to de minimis users, the Borrego Subbasin GSP *should* include these users, because the overall water budget for the entire basin is relatively small, thus "de minimis" users actually make up a recognizable percentage of total extractors.

This section should represent various portions of the basin dependent upon groundwater for beneficial uses, including communities dependent upon groundwater for domestic uses. While the draft plan does map existing land use designations and zoning, it does not include specific data by land use on groundwater dependent users; all of the Borrego community and all users are groundwater dependent. This should be explicitly stated and mapped.

O12-5

b) 2.1.2 Water Resources Monitoring and Management Programs

Monitoring & Regulatory Alignment

This section should note where monitoring programs are located and where there may be gaps in monitoring. Components of the monitoring plan should include: 1) if stakeholders have requested additional monitoring; 2) either when additional monitoring will be implemented or why the request will not be approved at this time; and 3) water-relevant climate, land use and recharge

O12-6

variables (such as land use, soil conditions, precipitation, temperature, and evapotranspiration).

The current draft GSP highlights BWD's existing tiered rate structure, but does not indicate how this relates to water affordability for lower income groups. The draft provides a clear description of plan area geographic bounds, contributing watersheds, and land use designations with size and percent land cover. However, monitoring only lists the groundwater elevation monitoring wells included in CASGEM. No reference is made to soil conditions, precipitation, temperature, or evapotranspiration. Demand Offset Mitigation Water Credits Policy is the only management program in the section that adequately describes how this will impact or aligns with the GSP. All other programs included should follow this model, and this level of detail. These components need to be incorporated into the monitoring plan.

The current draft GSP references that the County Groundwater Ordinance will need to be evaluated and possibly revised to ensure consistency with GSP sustainability goals, but provides no guidance on what that would look like. There is also no information on metrics measured, past impacts, or anticipated future impacts.

The current draft GSP does a sufficient job explaining the impact of wells to the GSP, but still includes no metrics and no real information on how this information will be incorporated into the GSP.

This section raises a number of questions:

- How does BWD's Conservation Management Program (including tiered rates) determine water affordability for low-income communities?
- How does the Draft GSP integrate with the 2009 Anza-Borrego Desert IRWM Plan?
- How will the GSP integrate into the Region 7 Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin?
- Why is there a discrepancy between BWD and the County's Water Credits Policy? As such, which water credits will be validated under the GSP's Baseline Pumping allocations?
- How many wells have been applied for vs. approved since passage of SB 252 and release of this plan?
- How will domestic wells and small water systems be protected from negative impacts of the baseline pumping allocation?

Each of these questions must be answered favorably for this section to adequately fulfill the requirements of the regulation.

O12-6
Cont.

The current draft of this section only describes the applicable laws and regulations present in the basin; it needs to be augmented to describe how monitoring of each of those programs will be incorporated into the GSP, how those existing programs will limit operational flexibility, and how the GSA will adapt to those limits.

O12-6 Cont.

c) 2.1.3 Land Use Elements of Topic Categories of Applicable General Plans

This section of the plan should identify:

- disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged unincorporated communities;
- where water agency consolidations or service extensions are being considered;
- potential sources of contamination from current land use practices;
- expected land use changes due to climate change impacts or development and socio-economic conditions, that may affect water supply and water demands, as well as groundwater recharge rates;
- projected water demand as a result of climate change or population growth, and its impact on achieving the sustainability goal; and
- how climate, land use and soil conditions impact groundwater recharge, and the affect this may have on water supply and demands how the GSP addresses those effects.

O12-7

This current draft of this section does a very good job of identifying all the policies that are relevant and in alignment with the GSP, but need to greater specificity on how the GSP will uphold or implement these various policies.

According to the San Diego County Groundwater Ordinance: "One of the purposes of the ordinance is to ensure that development is not approved in groundwater dependent areas of the County unless a project applicant can demonstrate that there are adequate supplies available to serve both existing and proposed uses." The existing Community Plan and General Plan land use policies are listed in the draft GSP, but the degree of integration is included only as a yes/no factor. This raises the questions,

1) How will the GSP affect the pre-existing San Diego County Groundwater Ordinance? and

2) How will this impact pumping allocations?

These questions should be answered in this section of the GSP, as well as providing detail on how the integration requirement is met, and identifying in

which section of both the GSP and the General Plan (GP)/ Community Plan (CP) this is discussed.

This section also fails to answer the following questions, necessary for meeting the regulatory requirements:

- Do current well permitting practices protect vulnerable water supply sources, such as shallow wells (for all beneficial uses)?
- Are there documented instances of stakeholder concerns regarding current land use or well ordinances impacting other beneficial uses?
- Which current ordinances need to be amended in order for the basin to meet its sustainability goals?
- Are the policies considered to implement the GSP actual policies that are currently in existence, or policies that would need to be established?

Each of these questions must be sufficiently answered for this section to adequately fulfill the requirements of the regulation.

O12-7 Cont.

Recharge

The San Diego County General Plan (GP) and Borrego Valley Community Plan (CP) include positive policies to protect the basin from continued overdraft and to minimize the impact of stormwater runoff (e.g., Goal LU-8; COS-5.2), yet include no mention what so ever of recharge. The current draft GSP should be augmented to include this information, and future GP / CP updates should do the same.

The current draft GSP includes positive language regarding future GP and CP needing to consider the sustainability goals of the GSP. The draft language also does an excellent job acknowledging the misalignment between agricultural preservation goals in the General Plan and groundwater sustainability in the Borrego subbasin. However, additional detail needs to be provided on how that consideration and GP / CP updates will occur, as well as how the agricultural preservation and groundwater sustainability goals will be reconciled.

O12-8

It is unclear whether GP Conservation and Open Space Element, Goal COS-4: Water Management, and/or COS-4.3 - "Maximize stormwater filtration and/or infiltration" will promote groundwater recharge, or if it only refers to stormwater mitigation where groundwater is not shallow. This policy should be clarified, and potentially reevaluated to maximize groundwater recharge potential.

The discussion in this section of estimated buildout and impacts on the GSP is inconsistent. The draft GSP states that Borrego could not meet the water needs if all allowable lots were built out, yet also states that implementation of existing

O12-9

land use will not affect sustainable management. The draft does, however, acknowledge that updated buildout estimates should be considered in conjunction with the GSP.

O12-9

Climate

The GP includes a "climate change and land use" goal (LU-5) (e.g., "sustainability"), but there is absolutely no discussion of potential climate change impacts on development patterns in the plan area. This section of the GSP needs to address this gap in existing policy by identifying potential impacts of increasing drought and evapotranspiration rates potentially making agriculture unsuitable for the subbasin, and therefore potentially causing major change in land use patterns. Further, current policy nor the draft GSP includes no discussion what so ever of climate change impacts to water supply and demand, or how the GSP will address those affects.

O12-10

d) 2.1.4 Beneficial Uses and Users

This section of the plan should include a description of the beneficial uses and users of groundwater in the basin, including potential climate impacts to beneficial uses and users, the land uses and property interests potentially affected by the use of groundwater in the basin, the types of parties representing those interests, and the nature of consultation with those parties. This section should also identify whether groundwater recharge is a designated beneficial use in the appropriate Basin Plan (per Regional Water Quality Control Board), and discuss potential locations for groundwater recharge.

The current draft GSP states that the "beneficial uses" evaluated in this GSP are not strictly synonymous with those analyzed in the Basin Plan. It is of no benefit to the GSA or the community for the GSP "beneficial uses" to be different from the Basin Plan "Beneficial uses;" these should be consistent.

Groundwater recharge nor habitat preservation / restoration are currently not included as beneficial uses in the GSP, even though they are included in the Colorado River Basin Plan. Is this because there is no active recharge currently exists in the subbasin?
The GSA should: a) consider including groundwater recharge and habitat preservation/restoration (especially in the washes/creeks & the Anza Borrego Desert State Park) as a beneficial use in the GSP, and b) seek modification at the Regional Water Board to the existing Beneficial Use Designations to ensure consistency between the Basin Plan and the GSP.

O12-11

The current draft GSP lists de minimis users as a beneficial user in this section, but then includes them with municipal users in the water budget. This is misleading and affects proper analysis. This section should be augmented to include a narrative description of issues affecting the supply and beneficial uses of groundwater. Additionally, the GSP should distinguish between domestic well owners and small water systems independent of the municipal water supply in the water budget.

O12-11 Cont.

e) 2.1.5 Notice and Communication

The notice and communication section is required to include the following:

- An explanation of the Agency's (GSAs) decision-making process.
- Identification of opportunities for public engagement and a discussion of how public input and response will be used.
- A description of how the Agency (GSA) encourages the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin.
- The method the Agency (GSA) shall follow to inform the public about progress implementing the Plan, including the status of projects and actions.

O12-12

Essentially, this section does not include a true communication strategy. Rather, this section merely describes how the GSA communicated with the public (essentially just fulfilling minimum brown act requirements).; no real communication strategy, just explaining how they met brown act violation; no explanation of decision-making, just how they engaged with the AC.

This section should also describe how climate change and related uncertainties, available adaptation strategies, groundwater recharge potential and available optimization strategies (including potential land use changes) are integrated into the GSA's communication strategy. The current draft GSP includes absolutely no mention of climate impacts, nor is there any mention of groundwater recharge opportunities.

O12-13

The current draft GSP states that there is currently no program to actively replenish the aquifer, and that aquifer storage and recovery are not being considered as an option at this time because using imported water to recharge the basin was determined to be economically infeasible. However, the GSP should consider other forms of managed aquifer recharge, such as stormwater capture and agricultural runoff management.

O12-14

The communication section should adequately outline the types of outreach performed throughout the GSP process and how outreach will continue moving forward. The current draft GSP includes little mention of <u>how</u> diverse groups were engaged; nor does it include future plans to share progress with these groups. Disadvantaged Communities ("DAC') and Severely Disadvantaged Communities ("SDAC') are not mentioned even <u>once</u> in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, despite the entire Borrego Subbasin being designated a SDAC.

GSP meetings should always be held at times and places that enable all stakeholders to participate in at least some of the meetings. All Borrego Subbasin GSA Advisory Committee Meetings were held during work hours, thus precluding many community members from attending.

Meetings, outreach, and education materials should always be translated into appropriate languages spoken in the community. Meetings should provide services such as meals and/or childcare to enable working families to attend. While the current draft GSP does refer to translated materials, these materials are not included in the stakeholder engagement plan, nor are translation services in general mentioned in the stakeholder engagement plan.

Public comment should be taken during all meetings, and written comments should be accepted throughout the process. The current Draft GSP references targeted "SDAC engagement" via a Proposition 1 Stakeholder Engagement grant. Yet, outcomes from that engagement is not included in the draft GSP. This lack of information raises the following questions:

- What was the feedback from outreach to "Domestic water users" and "Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities?"
- How are these interests represented in the sustainability goals?
- How will they be included moving forward?

A list of all meetings, including times and locations, should be included in the communication section of the GSP. A sufficient number of meetings should be held to ensure stakeholders have adequate opportunities to learn about the GSP creation process and provide public comment. One public meeting, "Ad Hoc Committee on Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) Involvement," occurred on 4/27/2018. Yet attendance is listed as "unknown." Meeting minutes and meeting agenda for this convening are <u>not</u> listed on the website. The two most public meetings ("Community Meetings" on 3/16/18 and 9/19/18) also lack meeting minutes and agendas on the GSA website, despite the GSP referencing that these materials <u>are</u> on the website. for either of the 2 most public meetings.

O12-15

O12-16

The Notice and Communication section, as well as the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the draft GSP is woefully lacking. This raises the following concerns: has there been adequate stakeholder surveying and mapping? How were stakeholders informed of the process? How are the interests of small businesses, the tourism industry, and residents represented in the GSP? What were the key messages shared?

To remedy these shortcomings, the GSA should:

- Provide responses to the questions above in the Notice and Communications section of the GSP;
- Identify the outreach plan moving forward through GSP implementation, especially in development and implementation of Projects and Management Actions;
- Describe how public comments and feedback are incorporated into the GSP;
- Provide more opportunities for public input (e.g., more Community Meetings with agendas and minutes posted online) with special effort to ensure these meetings are accommodating of all community members;
- Determine how the stakeholder engagement plan will be evaluated and adapted moving forward, and share that methodology with all stakeholders.

The Borrego Subbasin GSA must augment its stakeholder engagement plan and communication section of the GSP to incorporate the following changes:

- Post meeting minutes and agendas from all community meetings;
- Identify specifically which/where vulnerable community groups are;
- Explain how vulnerable communities have been (and should be) engaged;
- Describe the major concerns of community members as identified by community members;
- Establish a process for incorporating public input into GSP revisions;
- Determine how the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be evaluated and regularly updated.

O12-17

f) 2.1.6 Additional GSP Elements

According to CWC Section 10727.4, the GSP must describe the "processes to review land use plans and efforts to coordinate with land use planning agencies to assess activities that potentially create risks to groundwater quality or quantity." While the current draft GSP does indeed list the relevant land use planning documents, there is no description of the process followed, or that will continue to be used, for reviewing and coordinating with other land use planning activities.

O12-18

This section of the GSP must be augmented to fully meet the regulatory requirement.

O12-18

This section of the GSP should describe how soil conditions and land use may further impact groundwater dependent ecosystems and how to mitigate such impacts. It should also consider an increase on water storage losses due to higher climate change temperatures. The current draft GSP includes no mention what so ever of potential impacts to groundwater dependent ecosystems, nor of water storage loss from higher temperatures; it merely mentions loss of storage in the context of potential intra-basin transfers. The GSP should be augmented to address these inadequacies.

O12-19

Basin Setting

g) 2.2.1 Hydrological Conceptual Model

Drinking Water

The Hydrological Conceptual Model (HCM) should specify which aquifers are the main source of water for drinking water purposes, as well as for DACs, households relying on private wells, small community water systems, and school districts. The current draft GSP identifies the upper aquifer as the main source of water in the subbasin historically. Yet, this section does not explicitly state whether it is also the shallow aquifer that serves as the main source of water for DACs, households relying on private wells, small community water systems, and school districts. This must be rectified by including more information on the upper aquifer as it pertains to community drinking water.

For aquifers of interest for drinking water wells, the HCM should specify the overall water bearing characteristics of the aquifer (e.g., overall water quality, overall water production capacity, vertical and lateral extent, hydraulic conductivity, and storativity).

The HCM should specify how much recharge can be accomplished in different hydrogeologic environments/aquifers, and particularly provide a brief description of potential benefits and concerns of the potential recharge areas.

The HCM should be attentive to information provided for shallow aquifers and water quality concerns.

O12-20

h) 2.2.2 Current and Historic Groundwater Conditions

Groundwater Elevation

O12-21

The HCM should clearly state specific groundwater levels in relation to various land uses. In particular, the HCM should note where first-encountered groundwater is relatively deep; where groundwater users reliant upon shallower wells; and where users may not have the resources to drill new, deeper wells. Special notice should be given to drinking water uses. The current draft GSP provides no information regarding dewatering of wells, rehabilitation costs, rehabilitation data, or any other information about the impacts to DACs. The GSP should, but does not currently include a map identifying the locations of all drinking water systems, DACs, and areas of critical lowering of GW levels. The GSP should use monitoring wells screened for a specific aquifer, not combining aquifers, so as to indicate whether, and if so where, dewatering of wells is occurring.

O12-21 Cont.

Groundwater Quality

This section of the plan should include a map of known groundwater conditions, including sensitive uses and users of groundwater that may be impacted or threatened to be impacted.

According to the GSP, "The lateral distribution of the wells in the monitoring network that measure groundwater quality is limited, and does not extend to the outer portions of each management area." The GSP also notes that "high salinity, poor-quality connate water is thought to occur in deeper formational materials in select areas of the aquifer as well as shallow groundwater in the vicinity of the Borrego Sink in the southern portion of the Plan Area." The GSA needs more monitoring data for "de minimis" domestic well users and small water systems, especially regarding the potential impacts to disadvantaged community members and cost projections for remediation. The GSP should also indicate which wells are being considered to be taken out of production or drilled deeper to mitigate water quality concerns. Increasing contamination trends are noted in the GSP, but there is little discussion of how these issues will be addressed under the sustainability goal and management actions.

O12-22

Drinking Water

This section should also include information regarding contamination of wells, treatment costs, water quality data, or any other information regarding the impacts to disadvantaged communities. This should also include a map noting the locations of all drinking water systems, DACs, and areas of critical water quality contamination. The current draft of the GSP does not include this information. However, meeting minutes posted on the GSA website note that community members are concerned about elevated nitrate levels in some drinking water wells. This is referenced in the GSP, but not adequately.

O12-23

i) 2.2.3 Water Budget Information

The water budget should include historical use of groundwater for all types of uses and users, in particular the uses of small drinking water systems, regardless of whether they will be subject to pumping restrictions. Future use for drinking water needs must utilize data from sources such as county general plans and LAFCo documents (e.g., population projections and water demand forecasts).

The historic groundwater use percentages in the Borrego Subbasin (i.e., 70% agriculture, 20% golf course, 10% municipal) is not sustainable. This section should include a description of how historical conditions have impacted the ability of BWD and the County of San Diego to manage the basin within sustainable yield. Further, including domestic/de minimis users with the overall municipal users water budget and municipal pumping reductions is both inappropriate and inaccurate. These uses must be separated and accounted for independently in the water budget.

Data used to develop the water budget is out dated and inaccurately represents the groundwater conditions in the subbasin. The GSP must use the most recent data, and exclude data sets producing a biased result. For example, the hydrological modeling projections currently used in the draft GSP include time periods extending far back in time, prior to when pumping began, and do not take into account shifts in the hydrologic regime which have occurred as a result of climate change. The water budget currently does not (and must) consider projected recharge reductions due to land fallowing and water conservation.

These inadequacies must be addressed in order for the water budget to accurately represent present groundwater conditions and support the sustainability goal.

O12-24

j) 2.2.4 Management Areas

The purpose of this section is to ensure that management areas are designed in a way to protect, rather than harm, particular uses and users of groundwater. Management areas should be designed to set stricter requirements near vulnerable drinking water sources. The current draft GSP provides no indication of where potentially vulnerable drinking water source are within the management areas. The GSP should include a map identifying the location of all drinking water systems, DACs, and areas of particular threat from lowering of groundwater levels.

O12-25

Chapter 3: Sustainable Management Criteria

k) 3.1 Sustainability Goal

According to 23 CCR § 354.24, the GSP must include a sustainability goal using information from the basin setting to establish measures that will ensure sustainable yield, and describe a realistic path to achieving the goal over a 20-year period. The sustainability goal should also consider all beneficial uses and users susceptible to harm from changing groundwater conditions over the 20-year time frame.

The GSP's primary sustainability goal, and five sub-goals, are brief and overly broad. As previously stated, utilizing the BVHM modeling from 1945-2010 that cites groundwater conditions from a time period before major agricultural development began, does not accurately reflect the current hydrogeological make-up of the basis, nor does it consider future impacts from climate change. The GSP should use the most recent data and hydrogeologic modeling that includes potential impacts from climate change, and exclude data sets producing a biased result.

Of the five sub-goals, only two of them explicitly consider domestic well owners (chronic lowering of groundwater levels and water quality concerns), however, the goals aren't tied back to the basin setting, nor do they identify specific vulnerable areas or how these goals impacts the sustainable yield.

It is unclear whether the sustainability goal intends is to address pre-SGMA impacts, or maintain current conditions.

The sustainability goal explains how land use and groundwater recharge was considered towards achieving the sustainability goal within 20 years of Plan implementation

O12-26

local determination of the sustainable management criteria (sustainability goal, undesirable results, minimum thresholds, and measurable objectives).

a) 3.2 Undesirable Results

The GSP only considers 3 of the 6 possible sustainability indicators: Only considering 3 of the 6 possible sustainability indicators:
1. Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels
2. Reduction of Groundwater Storage

O12-27

3. Degraded Water Quality Makes sense to not consider seawater intrusion, but land subsidence & connected surface waters should be included!

O12-27 Cont.

Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels

The GSP accurately identifies de minimis users as one of the groups most vulnerable to lowering groundwater levels, and cites the technical, financial and geographic constraints these users face when compared to better resourced pumpers like BWD or larger agricultural users. While this is notable, it is unclear how outreach was conducted to help better understand the negative impacts different stakeholders are experiencing due to declining groundwater levels. Some alternative means of obtaining water for de-minimis and domestic pumpers who can no longer pump are mentioned in the plan, however these alternatives lack further discussion in the minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, or projects and management actions.

It's noted that the some de minimis wells may currently lack access to adequate water, and may be close to the BWD water distribution system, however the project management actions fail to discuss how consolidation is being considered for these de minimis users. The GSP includes figures (i.e. Figure 3.2-4) with average domestic well depths, however this map should include specific well data to better identify the most vulnerable areas.

O12-28

The GSP also reports, "The exact number of agricultural and domestic wells that have been abandoned and re-drilled deeper and/or relocated due to production rate loss from declining groundwater levels is not known. However, anecdotal information and field observations have confirmed that inactive wells exist throughout the Plan Area" (Section 3.2.1, Page 3-10). Similar to well consolidation, the GSP fails to address the data gap of abandoned wells, and the steps being taken to follow up on anecdotal concerns.

The GSP fails to consider pre-SGMA impacts to groundwater levels, instead opting to set the highest bar as maintaining current conditions, or levels at a lower than current state.

Minimum Threshold for Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels:

The minimum threshold for chronic lowering of groundwater levels is based principally on the documented screen intervals of key municipal water wells and domestic/de-minimis wells located in the basin, however, not all of the de-minimus wells have accurate data to identify where at-risk wells may be located. The GSP should indicate how the GSA's intend to improve well monitoring data for de minimis users as part of the interim milestones

O12-29

Measurable Objective for Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels:
The GSP proposes linear pumping cuts for agricultural, municipal, and recreational users, however these is no description of how different uses and users of groundwater were considered and whether the measurable objectives and interim milestones will help achieve the sustainability goal as it pertains to the most vulnerable uses of groundwater, namely de minimis users and small water systems. It is unclear how the margin of safety protects de minimis users. In addition, the outlined 5-year evaluation of the interim milestones and measurable objectives does not indicate how stakeholders will be engaged throughout these interim evaluations

O12-30

Lowering of Groundwater Storage
Lowering groundwater levels are intrinsically linked with decreased groundwater storage, however the , and begins to address how the sustainability goals will impact the San Diego County General Plan and Borrego Spring Community Plan.

O12-31

Degraded Water Quality
Must include how stakeholders will be engaged throughout these interim evaluations, specifically how to set MT's for growers in the region to meet ag needs.
Increased need for monitoring water quality in domestic wells. Indicate how the GSP will integrate with the RQCB 'Basin Plan' groundwater quality objectives.

O12-32

Minimum Threshold/Measurable Objectives

The GSP fails to indicate how these will be determined or met.

b) 3.5 Monitoring Network

Data gap in 3.5.4.2 - Well screened in multiple aquifers
- Screen can be slots or other measure that allows water through and keeps solids out
- Water comes from the aquifer into the well
- When you're using a monitoring well that is screened in different aquifers, you're getting a combined result - not really seeing what the impacts on a given aquifer are
- Need to use monitoring wells screened for a specific aquifer, not combining aquifers

O12-33

Chapter 4: Projects and Management Actions

However it is unclear how the top priority PMA's (land fallowing and pumping reductions) will impact domestic/small water system users

Expected benefits and metrics for evaluation for each PMA do a poor job of mentioning how PMA's will impact groundwater-dependent vulnerable groups

O12-34

PMA's were not put before stakeholders (see feedback in Section 4.0), therefore stakeholders are not aware of project goals, timelines, benefits, and risks

Prior to adoption, the GSA should hold public meetings to gather input on the PMA's via publicly available meetings (appropriate meeting times, translation and childcare services, etc.).

Notes: According to public meetings posted on the GSA website, there was no 'Community Meeting' held to discuss the projects and management actions - the most recent Advisory Committee meeting (Jan 2019) includes slides on the PMA's and how to provide input, however, minutes from the meeting aren't posted (incorrect minutes are posted from Aug 2018); AND as seen from the previous schedule of Advisory Committee meetings, these meetings tend to take place beginning at 10:00 am during workdays.

O12-35

Thank you very much for your consideration of our concerns regarding this draft of the GSP. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding the Stewardship Council's interests/concerns.

Sincerely yours,

Diane Johnson
BVSC Representative to the GSP Advisory Council

Letter O12

Commenter: Diane Johnson, Advisory Committee Member, Borrego Valley Stewardship Council
Date: May 21, 2019

O12-1 The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) welcomes comments submitted on behalf of the Borrego Valley Stewardship Council and recognizes your participation on the Advisory Committee and your commitment to sustainable development and growth of the Borrego region.

O12-2 The GSA acknowledges your comment that the Sustainability Goal should be based on climate change impacts and future conditions, and should acknowledge that maximizing groundwater recharge will be a necessary component of achieving sustainability. With regard to groundwater recharge, the commenter is referred to the GSAs response to Letter I19. With regard to climate change, the commenter is referred to Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Section 3.3.1.1 and Section 3.4.1 for a discussion of how Department of Water Resources (DWR) climate change factors were considered and applied in the establishment of minimum thresholds and measurable objectives.

The comment also indicates that sustainability goal is not a goal at all but simply a restatement of the intent of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and inadequate. The GSA notes this concern, and the commenter is referred to GSP Section 3.1, which adequately describes the GSAs sustainability goal in accordance with SGMA and DWR regulations. Furthermore, GSP pgs. 3-21 and 3-22 explains how climate change was considered in the development of sustainable management criteria.

O12-3 The GSA notes the comment that the GSA should include personnel with a focus on climate change effects on groundwater conditions and recharge rates. The commenter indicates that there is no clear identification that any of the staff on the GSA "Core Team" or Advisory Committee (AC) have background or expertise in either soil science or considering the impacts of land use on groundwater conditions. The commenter requests that the GSA ensure that the Core Team and AC be populated with personnel with adequate expertise on climate science, soil science, and hydrology, and that the GSP be updated to include a thorough description of the requisite background of Core Team and AC members. The commenter is referred to GSP Section 1.3 and Appendix E, which describes the organization and management structure of the GSA.

This comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

O12-4 The GSA acknowledges the comment that estimated costs to implement the GSP, and the GSA's approach to meeting those costs should include costs related to climate change impacts and adaptation, as well as costs to implement groundwater recharge. The commenter also indicates that the Draft GSP includes no reference to soil conditions, recharge, or land use impacts or changing conditions as a result of climate change, and how these changing conditions could affect GSP implementation costs. The commenter believes the GSP implementation cost estimates should be re-evaluated in conjunction with more detail being provided to the projects and management actions. The commenter requests an analysis of how the GSA will raise funds, and to determine potential impacts to vulnerable communities, and how to mitigate those impacts.

With regard to groundwater recharge, the commenter is referred to the GSAs response to Letter I19. With regard to climate change, the commenter is referred to GSP Section 3.3.1.1 and Section 3.4.1 for a discussion of how DWR climate change factors were considered and applied in the establishment of minimum thresholds and measurable objectives. The commenter is referred to GSP Chapter 5 for a description of GSP implementation, including costs. It should be noted that the specificity of cost estimates are commensurate with the level of detail of the Project and Management Actions (PMAs), and are subject to change. Finally, the commenter is reminded that the GSA will prepare the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation (after GSP adoption) in advance of considering formal adoption and implementation of any of the PMAs in the GSP.

O12-5 The commenter requests that the GSP be revised to indicate reference where the most vulnerable community members (e.g., specific neighborhoods or population groups) within the Subbasin are located. The commenter is referred to GSP Section 2.1.1 (Summary of Jurisdictional Areas and Other Features) for a description of the characteristics of the community including Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) status. In addition, the commenter requests that the GSP include locations and extent of communities dependent upon groundwater, including where community wells are located near higher production wells, such as irrigation wells, that could potentially impact domestic well users' groundwater supply or quality. The commenter asserts that despite the requirement of SGMA not extending to de minimis users, the Borrego Subbasin GSP should include these users, because the overall water budget for the entire basin is relatively small, thus "de minimis" users actually make up a recognizable percentage of total extractors. In addition, the

commenter indicates that should represent various portions of the basin dependent upon groundwater for beneficial uses, including communities dependent upon groundwater for domestic uses and include specific data by land use on groundwater dependent users. Lastly, the commenter indicates that all of the Borrego community and all users are groundwater and this should be explicitly stated and mapped.

The Draft GSP adequately describes SDAC concerns, including the location of municipal and domestic wells which serves the SDAC. The Draft GSP adequately describes the location of de-minimis well users, and establishes thresholds protective of those uses. GSP Chapter 3 includes Figure 3.2-4 which shows the approximate location of de-minimis users along with BWD's distribution systems. In addition, Chapter 3 addresses how the GSP establishes thresholds that are protective of de-minimis users (Section 3.2.1 and Section 3.3.1). SGMA does not require identification of SDACs at the level of detail requested by the commenter. The GSA has appropriately identified the SDAC at the general scale of the U.S. Census Designated Place (CDP) and tracts.

The GSA sought grant funding to prepare the GSP and identify vulnerabilities and potential impacts from the GSP process on SDAC-related issues (e.g., water supply, cost, and infrastructure concerns). The BWD placed into the administrative record the SDAC Impact/Vulnerability Analysis (Task 2 Report) prepared by Environmental Navigation Services Inc., dated April 15, 2019. Besides defraying costs for the community, the report was prepared to understand the implications that the implementation of SGMA will have on the SDAC population of Borrego Springs. The report describes specific vulnerabilities, including challenges associated with potential loss of seasonal jobs in the agricultural and recreational sectors, funding and access to public schools, and water rate impacts to the lowest income portion of the community. The 20-year SGMA compliance period does provide time for the community to adapt, and potentially using the BWD's tiered rate structure and the GSA's commitment to seeking state funding to support the SDAC as the primary potential mitigation strategies to address SDAC concerns. GSP Section 2.1.5 has been amended to briefly summarize the results of BWD's Impact/Vulnerability Analysis.

O12-6 The commenter indicates that GSP Section 2.1.2 should note where monitoring programs are located and where there may be gaps in monitoring. In addition, the commenter requests that components of the monitoring plan should include: (1) if stakeholders have requested additional monitoring; (2) either when additional monitoring will be implemented or why the request will not be approved at this

time; and (3) water-relevant climate, land use, and recharge variables (e.g., land use, soil conditions, precipitation, temperature, evapotranspiration).

The GSA notes the comment that the Draft GSP highlights BWD's existing tiered rate structure, but does not indicate how this relates to water affordability for lower income groups. The commenter indicates that no reference is made for monitoring data specific to soil conditions, precipitation, temperature, or evapotranspiration. In addition, the commenter requests that all programs include the level of detail provided for the Demand Offset Mitigation Water Credits Policy and that these components [soil conditions, precipitation, temperature, or evapotranspiration] need to be incorporated into the monitoring plan.

The commenter states that the Draft GSP provides no guidance on how the County Groundwater Ordinance will need to be evaluated and possibly revised to ensure consistency with GSP sustainability goals. The GSA is unclear on the following comment: ". . . no information on metrics measured, past impacts, or anticipated future impacts." The commenter indicates the following six items need to be addressed and favorably answer to adequately fulfill the requirements of SGMA: (1) relationship of tiered rate to water affordability for low-income communities; (2) 2009 Anza-Borrego Desert IRWM Plan; (3) Region 7 Water Quality Control Plan; (4) BWD and the County's Water Credit Policy; (5) wells since passage of Senate Bill (SB) 252 and release of this plan; and (6) how will domestic wells and small water systems be protected from negative impacts of the baseline pumping allocation. Your comment suggests that describing applicable laws in the Draft GSP is not sufficient and that the GSP must to be augmented to describe how monitoring of each of those programs will be incorporated into the GSP, how those existing programs will limit operational flexibility, and how the GSA will adapt to those limits.

In response to this comment, the GSA has revised Section 2.1.2 to provide additional information on the relevance of the water resource management programs to implementation of the GSP as well as operational flexibility considerations. Adequate information on soil conditions, precipitation, temperature, and evapotranspiration is found in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 incorporates climate change considerations into the development of sustainable management criteria. Otherwise, this comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

O12-7 The GSA acknowledges your comments on Section 2.1.3 Land Use Considerations and your request to identify the following items: (1) disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged unincorporated communities; (2) where water agency consolidations

or service extensions are being considered; (3) potential sources of contamination from current land use practices; (4) expected land use changes due to climate change impacts or development and socio-economic conditions, that may affect water supply and water demands, as well as groundwater recharge rate; (5) projected water demand as a result of climate change or population growth, and its impact on achieving the sustainability goal; and (6) how climate, land use and soil conditions impact groundwater recharge, and the affect this may have on water supply and demands how the GSP addresses those effects.

Your comment indicates that the Draft GSP needs specificity on how the GSP will uphold or implement various policies. In addition, you question how will the GSP affect the pre-existing San Diego County Groundwater Ordinance and how will this impact pumping allocations.

Additionally, you indicate that Section 2.1.3, Land Use Considerations, fails to answer the following items necessary for meeting SGMA requirements: (1) do current well permitting practices protect vulnerable water supply sources, such as shallow wells (for all beneficial uses); (2) are there documented instances of stakeholder concerns regarding current land use or well ordinances impacting other beneficial uses; (3) which current ordinances need to be amended in order for the basin to meet its sustainability goals; and (4) are the policies considered to implement the GSP actual policies that are currently in existence, or policies that would need to be established?

Adequate information on well permitting practices is found in GSP Section 2.1.2; adequate information on stakeholder concerns is found in GSP Section 2.1.5; and adequate information on current ordinances and policies and how they relate to GSP implementation is found in GSP Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1.3), population growth is expected to be minimal, as existing regulatory, environmental, and public service constraints severely limit the ability for Borrego Springs to grow. Water demand and supply is provided in GSP Section 2.2.3. In addition, the commenter is referred to previous responses O12-1 through O12-6 for responses to issues around climate change, land use and soil conditions.

O12-8 The GSA notes your comment that the San Diego County General Plan and Borrego Valley Community Plan include positive policies to protect the basin from continued overdraft and to minimize the impact of stormwater runoff (e.g., Goal LU-8; COS-5.2), yet include no mention what so ever of recharge. The GSA acknowledges your comment that Draft GSP should be augmented to include this information. In addition, you indicate that detail needs to be provided on how the

misalignment between agricultural preservation goals in the General Plan with the goals of the GSP will be aligned in the update to the General Plan.

The GSA notes your comment that it is uncertain whether General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, Goal COS-4: Water Management, and/or COS-4.3 - "Maximize stormwater filtration and/or infiltration" will promote groundwater recharge, or if it only refers to stormwater mitigation, and that this policy should be clarified and potentially reevaluated to maximize groundwater recharge potential.

As described in the GSP (Section 2.1.3), "At the next County General Plan update, land use policies will be brought in line with the sustainability goals of this GSP. This will be done by considering the sustainability goals and the projects and management actions of the GSP in the updated community plan and through revisions to the County's groundwater ordinance."

O12-9 The GSA notes your comment that you infer that the GSP states that Borrego Springs could not meet the water needs if all allowable lots were built out, yet also states that implementation of existing land use will not affect sustainable management. This comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1.3), population growth is expected to be minimal, as existing regulatory, environmental, and public service constraints severely limit the ability for Borrego Springs to grow. As stated in the GSP (pg. 2-21): "Future general plan and community plan updates should consider the sustainability goals of this GSP. Updated buildout estimates should be considered in conjunction with the sustainability goals, projects, and management actions outlined in this GSP."

O12-10 The GSA notes your comment that there is absolutely no discussion of potential climate change impacts on development patterns in the plan area. In addition, you indicate that current policy nor the Draft GSP includes no discussion what so ever of climate change impacts to water supply and demand, or how the GSP will address those affects. The commenter is referred to previous responses to Comment O12-1 through Comment O12-7 regarding issues around climate change, land use, and soil conditions.

O12-11 GSP Section 2.1.4 includes adequate information on beneficial uses and users at an appropriate level of detail to comply with SGMA. Groundwater recharge is discussed in GSP Section 2.2.1.4 and specific areas conducive to recharge are shown in Figure 2.2-11; in addition, recharge sources are quantified in GSP Section

2.2.3. As discussed in GSP Section 2.1.6, there is no program to actively replenish the aquifer, and there are no conjunctive use and/or underground storage programs within the Plan Area. Natural recharge is not considered a beneficial use.

Finally, the GSA notes the commenter's opinion that de minimis users should be listed as a separate beneficial use in Section 2.1.4. This comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

O12-12 The commenter asserts that the GSP does not describe a true communication strategy. GSP Section 2.1.5 includes adequate information on notice and communication at an appropriate level of detail to comply with SGMA, and the commenter is referred to Appendix C which includes additional detail on the GSA's communication strategy. In addition, GSP Section 2.1.5 has been amended to briefly summarize the results of BWD's SDAC Impact/Vulnerability Analysis.

O12-13 The GSA notes the comment that Section 2.1.5 should describe how climate change and related uncertainties, including adaptation strategies, groundwater recharge potential, and other optimization strategies, are integrated into the GSA's communication strategy. The commenter is referred to previous responses to Comment O12-1 through Comment O12-11 for responses to issues around climate change, groundwater recharge, land use and soil conditions.

O12-14 The GSA acknowledges this comment on aquifer replenishment. The commenter is referred to previous responses to Comment O12-1 through Comment O12-11 for responses to issues around climate change, groundwater recharge, land use, and soil conditions.

O12-15 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's concern about the GSA's communication strategy. GSP Section 2.1.5 includes adequate information on notice and communication at an appropriate level of detail to comply with SGMA, and the commenter is referred to Appendix C which includes additional detail on the GSA's communication strategy. As stated therein,

> the GSA gathered valuable information [from the public, including the SDAC] about community concerns, which primarily related to rising water rates, economic impacts (e.g., job loss), land use changes, water use allocations, water quality, and long-term environmental impacts. This information was then incorporated into the development of this GSP, and considered in the evaluation of groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE), development of projects

and management actions, seeking additional funding opportunities to minimize impacts on ratepayers, and land use implications.

In addition, GSP Section 2.1.5 has been amended to briefly summarize the results of BWD's SDAC Impact/Vulnerability Analysis, including mitigation strategies to address potential economic impacts of GSP implementation.

O12-16 Commenter points out attendance is not known for several meetings in Appendix C2 (List of Public Meetings), and indicates meeting minutes for several meetings are not posted on the website. The County website has archives of all GSA GSP advisory committee meetings and does not include meeting minutes that were hosted solely by the BWD.

O12-17 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's concern about the GSA's communication strategy. GSP Section 2.1.5 includes adequate information on notice and communication at an appropriate level of detail to comply with SGMA, and the commenter is referred to Appendix C which includes additional detail on the GSA's communication strategy. In addition, GSP Section 2.1.5 has been amended to briefly summarize the results of BWD's SDAC Impact/Vulnerability Analysis, including mitigation strategies to address potential economic impacts of GSP implementation.

O12-18 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's concern about the GSA's coordination of land use planning and SGMA compliance. It should be noted that the County—who is the only land use planning agency in the Subbasin—is also part of the GSA. Accordingly, no special inter-agency coordination is needed to ensure land use plans are updated to be consistent with the GSP. This isn't necessarily the case for other GSAs in the state. GSP Section 2.1.3 includes adequate information to comply with CWC Section 10727.4.

O12-19 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's claim that the GSP lacks information on soil conditions, land use impacts, groundwater dependent ecosystems, and climate change. The GSP includes adequate information on all these topics. The commenter is referred to previous responses to Comment O12-1 through Comment O12-11, and to the master response of groundwater dependent ecosystems.

O12-20 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's claim that the GSP lacks information on drinking water sources and water quality for SDACs, domestic well owners, small water systems and school districts. The source and quality of water is the same as described in the GSP for the whole Subbasin. The commenter is referred to Chapter 2 for complete information about aquifer properties, water quality, and water

budget. Furthermore GSP Chapter 3 provides additional information relevant to private well owners, small water systems, and de minimis users, including figures of how much water remains in the upper aquifer (e.g., Figure 3.2-1).

O12-21 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's opinion that the GSP should go into detail on each users' wells, the depth to groundwater for each, and speculate as to users' needs, costs, and/or resources to rehabilitate or drill new wells. GSP Chapter 3 includes adequate information that describes undesirable results for all beneficial users of groundwater within the Subbasin, including de minimis users of groundwater. It is not within the scope of the GSP nor necessary to meet SGMA requirements to go into the level of detail requested by the commenter.

O12-22 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's concerns about groundwater quality. The GSP adequately describes groundwater quality problems, including specific areas of concern. This information is primarily found in GSP Section 2.2.2.4, but is succinctly summarized in Chapter 4, pg. 4-30, which states,

> naturally occurring poor water quality has been identified in specific areas: near the margins of the Subbasin where unconsolidated sediments are in contact with fractured bedrock; for select wells screened predominantly in the lower aquifer of the South Management Area that have concentrations of arsenic above the drinking water maximum contaminant level; and near the Borrego Sink where elevated sulfate and TDS [total dissolved solids] are likely associated with dissolution of evaporites from the dry lake.
>
> Historical groundwater quality impairment for nitrates is noted for select portions of the Subbasin predominantly in the upper aquifer of the North Management Area underlying the agricultural areas and near high density of septic point sources. The source of nitrates is likely associated with either fertilizer applications or septic return flows.

In addition, the GSP has been amended to clarify that BWD does not have wells in the Borrego Sink area, and utilizes wells that produce water meeting Title 22 requirements without further treatment.

O12-23 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's opinion that the GSP should go into detail on the water quality characteristics for SDAC users' wells, and speculate as to users' needs, costs, and/or resources to treat a presumed water quality issue. The GSP includes adequate information that addresses water quality concerns within

the Subbasin. It is not within the scope of the GSP nor necessary to meet SGMA requirements to go into the level of detail requested by the commenter.

O12-24 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's objection to including domestic/de minimis users' water uses into the larger municipal beneficial use umbrella. The GSP includes adequate information on groundwater conditions in the Subbasin, including the water budget. The commenter is referred to the master responses for the baseline pumping allocation and on the initial estimate of sustainable yield.

O12-25 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's opinion that the GSP should define management areas based on vulnerable drinking water sources, and that a map of drinking water systems, DACs, and groundwater levels should be provided. As discussed in the GSP, management areas are defined through a combination of criteria, one of which includes the predominant uses of groundwater (i.e., agricultural, recreational, or municipal). The commenter is referred to Figure 2.1-2 for a map of BWD's water service area and identification of small water systems. The commenter is referred to Figure 3.2-4 for a map that approximates the location, depth, and available water for de minimis users, as well as their location relative to BWDs drinking water distribution system.

O12-26 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's opinion that the GSP's sustainability goal and sub-goals are too brief and overly broad.

O12-27 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's statement that the GSP considers only three of the six possible sustainability indicators. The GSP considers all six sustainability indicators but has determined that undesirable results for seawater intrusion, land subsidence, and interconnected surface waters are not presently occurring or likely to occur over SGMA's planning and implementation horizon. For this reason, the GSP does not establish sustainable management criteria for those three indicators, as discussed in GSP Section 3.2.

O12-28 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's concerns about how the GSP's sustainable management criteria for chronic lowering of groundwater levels is protective of domestic and de minimis well users. The minimum threshold justification (GSP Section 3.3.1.1) is equally applicable to domestic and de minimis well users as it is to municipal beneficial uses served by BWD. Specifically, it states that an undesirable result would occur if groundwater level declines "lower the rate of production of pre-existing groundwater wells below that necessary to meet the minimum required to support the overlying beneficial use(s), where alternative

means of obtaining sufficient groundwater resources are not technically or financially feasible."

Furthermore, GSP Section 3.2.1 provides additional information about domestic and de-minimis wells: "an important objective in this GSP is that access to the upper aquifer or upper middle aquifer be maintained, as much is practicable, in areas with de minimis and other domestic wells not currently served by municipal supply (Figure 3.2-1 and Figure 3.2-2)." The GSA's groundwater level monitoring network is sufficient to detect whether significant groundwater depressions and/or accelerated rates of decline might affect domestic and/or deinimis well owners, and such information will be included in annual reports and 5-year GSP evaluations. However, it is neither within the scope of the GSP nor feasible at this time to identify conditions in each private/domestic de minimis well or predict whether or to what degree individual's well yields might be affected in the future. Regarding inactive wells, it should be noted that PMA No. 4 (Water Quality Optimization) (described in GSP Section 4.6.1) includes consideration for proactive abandonment of inactive wells to minimize migration pathways.

O12-29 The commenter is referred to response to Comment O12-28.

O12-30 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's inquiry on how the measurable objective and interim milestones protects domestic and/or de-minimis well owners. The commenter is referred to response to Comment O12-28.

O12-31 This comment appears to have been truncated, but is interpreted as asking how the sustainable management criteria for lowering of groundwater in storage will impact the San Diego General Plan and Borrego Springs Community Plan. As described in the GSP (Section 2.1.3), "At the next County General Plan update, land use policies will be brought in line with the sustainability goals of this GSP. This will be done by considering the sustainability goals and the projects and management actions of the GSP in the updated community plan and through revisions to the County's groundwater ordinance."

O12-32 This comment appears to be incomplete, but is interpreted as asking how the GSA intends on monitoring and evaluating the sustainable management criteria for groundwater quality. The commenter is referred to GSP Sections 3.3.4, 3.4.4, and 3.5.

O12-33 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's notes on minimum thresholds and measurable objectives. The GSP does not fail to indicate how minimum thresholds and measurable objectives will be met. The commenter is referred to Chapter 3 and

Chapter 4 of the GSP. The remainder of the comments do not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

O12-34 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's statement that it is unclear how PMA's will impact domestic/small water system users. As de-minimis users are not subject to the pumping reduction program, implementation of PMAs are expected to result in improved groundwater conditions when compared to the impacts of doing nothing. For small water systems considered as non-de minimis users, the commenter is referred to the master response on the baseline pumping allocation and pumping reduction program.

O12-35 The GSA acknowledges the commenter's assertion that PMA's were not put before stakeholders. The commenter is referred to GSP Appendix C2, which includes a list of public meetings. Public meetings that reviewed PMAs in full, or aspects of PMAs, occurred on May 31, 2018; August 30, 2018; November 29, 2018; and January 31, 2019. Both AC and community meetings are open to the general public.

Comment Letter O13

From: Diane E.P. Johnson <depjohnson@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 5:01 PM
To: LUEG, GroundWater, PDS
Subject: Stewardship Council comments on BVGSP

Borrego Valley
Stewardship Council

May 21, 2019

County of San Diego

Planning & Development Services

C/O: Jim Bennett

5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310

San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin

Borrego Springs Sub-basin

Dear Mr. Bennett,

1

The Borrego Valley Stewardship Council (BVSC) submits the following comments in reviewing the Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

I. Introduction

The Borrego Valley Stewardship Council is a convening entity, guided by the Borrego Valley Geotourism Charter, that regularly brings together a collection of civic and community organizations, government officials, agency staff, academic institutions, and interested citizens to address major issues of concern impacting the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the Valley, and residents. The Council was formed in 2014 in cooperation with the National Geographic Society's Geotourism Program and the University of California, Irvine Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center. Signatories include Anza-Borrego Desert State Park--California State Parks; Borrego Water District; Borrego Springs Unified School District; Borrego Art Institute; Anza-Borrego Foundation; Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association; Borrego Modern; Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau; Borrego Village Association; Tubb Canyon Desert Conservancy; Borrego Outfitters; Borrego Springs Homeowners Association; de Anza Country Club; La Casa del Zorro; and The Springs at Borrego RV Resort. These organizations comprise virtually all the major NGOs and businesses in town. (http://www.borregovalleystewardshipcouncil.org/home.html)

The BVSC wishes to thank you, and the BVGSA Core Team and Dudek for tremendous efforts in producing such a substantial Draft GSP. A remarkably wide breadth of skills and types of work were required. As the Stewardship Council representative to the GSA Advisory Committee, I attended many meetings and witnessed the dedicated, on-going efforts put forth.

II. Background of intent: SGMA and related water law

SGMA has opened a new era in California water law, with its emphasis on *local* solutions to *local* groundwater basins. The DWR website on SGMA and Groundwater Sustainability Agencies states, "The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) established a new structure for managing California's groundwater resources at the local level by local agencies." (https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management/Groundwater-Sustainable-Agencies)

The San Diego County SGMA website states: "The intent of the law is to strengthen local groundwater management of basins most critical to the state's water needs with an understanding that groundwater is most effectively managed at the local level. SGMA requires basins to be sustainably managed by local public agencies (e.g., counties, cities, and water agencies) who become groundwater sustainability agencies, or GSAs. The primary purpose of the GSAs is to develop *and implement* [italics added] a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to achieve long-term groundwater sustainability." https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/SGMA.html

It is important to note that, just as the Bill of Rights is predicated on the existence of the U.S. Constitution, SGMA was written in the context of the long-established and regularly updated and reaffirmed California Water Plan. The Plan underlies all state water legislation and programs, emphasizing four societal goals in addition to the traditional hydrologic goals of state water law:

"Update 2018 organizes the intended outcomes that have been expressed by the water community around four broad categories of public benefits, or "societal values."

2

O13-1

- **Public Health and Safety** — All Californians are protected from health and safety threats and emergencies.

  Comment: This includes guaranteed access to safe drinking water, as expressed in the Human Right to Water Act, AB 685, ch. 524, 2012 Cal. Stat. 91 (Codified at Cal. Water Code § 106.3 (West 2012). AB685 is "a comprehensive law guaranteeing the right to safe, affordable water without discrimination, prioritizing water for personal and domestic use and delineating the responsibilities of public officials at the state level. AB 685 specifically charges relevant California agencies with fulfillment of the law's mandate by considering the human right to water in policy, programming, and budgetary activities."
  https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Water_Report_2013_Interactive_FINAL(1).pdf]

- **Healthy Economy** — A strong, diverse economy provides satisfying ways of life and well-being, as well as opportunities for economic prosperity, for all Californians.

  Comment: The economy of Borrego Springs is totally dependent on its groundwater aquifer. Beneficial users in Borrego Springs include not only its 3500 residents (who pay over $300,000,000 to the County in property taxes each year), but also visitors – numbering in the hundreds of thousands annually -- to the town and to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. If water becomes so unaffordable to municipal water users (residents and businesses) that the Borrego Water District cannot be sustained, then both residents and the Park – an important State resource – are irreparably damaged.

- **Ecosystem Vitality** — Ecological functions and processes that sustain ecosystems and fish and wildlife habitat are maintained and improved.
- **Opportunities for Enriching Experiences** — All Californians have opportunities for cultural, spiritual, recreational, and aesthetic experiences."

O13-1 Cont.

III. Stewardship Council comments on the Draft GSP

A. The underlying assumptions of the Draft GSP are more reflective of the long-time California tradition of conflating property rights with water rights, and regarding water as a privately-held resource free to its owners. Water is now recognized as a public common-pool resource, and the right to potable water is a basic human right in California Moreover, the Draft GSP breaks the tenet of local control. Its hard line on across-the-board proportional reductions to pumping allocations comes not from any one sector of the local Borrego stakeholder ecosystem, but is instead being driven by Sacramento-based large agricultural interests funding attorneys to assist them in resisting change. AS shown above, SGMA says that decisions should be derived locally, so as not to perpetuate the inequitable water interests that have made California the last state in the nation to adopt integrated watershed management planning. Borrego Springs should not be held hostage to the interests of state-level big agriculture.

O13-2

B. Collaborative governance and transparency are also tenets in SGMA; the law makes clear that the relevant County is an important part of the local control it encourages. It's hard to see how, after accepting a special grant given to Borrego because it is an SDAC, the GSP can both ignore SDACs in its contents and its intentions. The County, including its trong property-rights advocates, would be better served to be at the table than ceding control to the state Water Boards.

O13-3

3

C. The Stewardship Council would also like to reiterate its 2016 letter to the county in which it encouraged fully embracing the GSP process; particularly around inclusion, equity, and transparency. Including SDAC communities and Tribes/native Americans, equity in water allocation, land use and economic development. Transparency in water transfers and land use decisions is required.

O13-3 Cont.

Sincerely,

Diane E. Johnson

4

Letter O13

Commenter: Diane Johnson, Borrego Valley Stewardship Council
Date: May 21, 2019

O13-1: The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) acknowledges the commenter's assertion that Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was developed in the context of the long-established California Water Plan. It should be noted that the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was developed in compliance with the SGMA of 2014 (California Water Code Section 10720–10737.8, et al.) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) GSP Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Section 350 et seq.). Appendix A of the GSP includes the Preparation Checklist for GSP Submittal, which identifies where in the GSP each of the statutory requirements of SGMA are addressed.

OS13-2: The commenter alleges the Draft GSP breaks the tenet of local control and is in objection to proportional reductions.

In response, the GSP does not set specific groundwater use reductions. The GSP includes Project and Management Action No. 3 – Pumping Reduction Program. As indicated in the GSP, the GSA will prepare the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation (after GSP adoption) in advance of considering formal adoption and implementation of any groundwater use reductions and a specific ramp down schedule. The GSP also indicates an agreement among the basin pumpers is a possible scenario where groundwater use reductions could be developed.

The comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

O13-3: The GSA acknowledges the commenter's assertion that the County should be at the table rather than the State Water Board. The GSA further recognizes the commenter's concern regarding ignoring the Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC). In response, the GSA sought grant funding to prepare the GSP and identify vulnerabilities and potential impacts from the GSP process on SDAC-related issues (e.g., water supply, cost, and infrastructure concerns). Besides defraying costs for the community, the work conducted for the grant will provide insight for Borrego Water District's (BWD's) future decision-making efforts, both of which are beneficial to the SDAC. The GSA intends to continue to pursue future grant opportunities for the benefit of the SDAC and the entire Borrego Springs community.

The comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft GSP, and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

Comment Letter O14

May 15, 2019

County of San Diego,
Attn Jim Bennett
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Jim

As you already know, Borrego Water District retained the services of Environmental Navigation Services, Inc. (ENSI) to provide a variety of studies related to the implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Borrego Springs Subbasin (Basin) of the Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin and its possible impacts upon BWD infrastructure and the Borrego Springs Economy. All of the Reports have now been completed and BWD is submitting them to The County and become part of the public record for the comment period of this Basin's GSP.

O14-1

Sincerely

Kathy Dice, President
Board of Directors

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Letter O14

Commenter: Kathy Dice, President, Borrego Water District
Date: May 15, 2019

OS14-1: The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) has added the Environmental Navigation Services Inc. studies provided by Borrego Water District to the public record. The letter does not address the adequacy of the Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), and therefore, no further response is required or necessary.

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Comment Letter O15

BVEF
BORREGO VALLEY
ENDOWMENT FUND

P. O. Box 2714, Borrego Springs, CA 92004
Phone: 760-767-9919

May 21, 2019

County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
C/O: Jim Bennett
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin
Borrego Springs Sub-basin

Dear Mr. Bennett,

Since its inception, the mission of the Borrego Valley Endowment Fund has been inextricably linked to the health and well being of the residents of the Borrego Valley. In fulfillment of its mission The Fund has supported efforts to improve healthcare delivery, to ensure sustainable water supply, and to promote clean air.

We are writing today regarding our concerns about clean air in the Borrego Valley. **We note that Section 5 of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan contains no costs associated with Air Quality Monitoring, which we believe is a significant deficit of this draft of the GSP.**

Attaining the goals of the GSP will necessitate the fallowing of thousands of acres of agricultural land, and fallowed agricultural lands have the potential to significantly and adversely impact the Air Quality of the Valley through increased air pollution. For the past three years The Fund, in partnership with the University of California, Irvine and the Borrego Water District, has supported Air Quality monitoring in the Borrego Valley, with particular attention to particles measuring 2.5 um and 10 um.

O15-1

BVEF
BORREGO VALLEY
ENDOWMENT FUND
May 21, 2019

Page 2

Air pollution poses a great environmental risk to health. Outdoor fine particulate matter (particulate matter with a diameter <2.5 µm) exposure is the fifth leading risk factor for death in the world, accounting for 4.2 million deaths and > 103 million disability-adjusted life years lost according to the Global Burden of Disease Report.

Air pollution can harm acutely, usually manifested by respiratory or cardiac symptoms; as well as chronically, potentially affecting every organ in the body. It can cause, complicate, or exacerbate many adverse health conditions. Tissue damage may result directly from pollutant toxicity because fine and ultrafine particles can gain access to organs, or indirectly through systemic inflammatory processes. Harmful effects occur on a continuum of dosage and even at levels below air quality standards previously considered to be safe.

The issue of Air Quality is of particular concern for the Borrego Valley given our demographic shift toward older age groups and the greater susceptibility to air pollution of those older groups.

Thus, we are writing to suggest that the costs associated with Air Quality monitoring be included in the GSP. We believe Air Quality monitoring will be an essential tool for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act as the GSP is implemented and agricultural lands are fallowed.

O15-1
Cont.

Thank you,

Bob Kelly
President, BVEF

Letter O15

Commenter: Bob Kelly, President, Borrego Valley Endowment Fund
Date: May 21, 2019

O15-1 The Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) appreciates your comments on the Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and commends your mission to support efforts to improve healthcare delivery, to ensure sustainable water supply, and to promote clean air. The GSA notes your comment that Section 5 of the Draft GSP contains no costs associated with air quality monitoring, which you believe is a significant deficit of the Draft GSP. The GSA also note your comment that attaining the goals of the GSP will necessitate the fallowing of thousands of acres of agricultural land, and fallowed agricultural lands have the potential to significantly and adversely impact the air quality of the Borrego Valley through increased air pollution. In addition, the GSA acknowledges your partnership with the University of California, Irvine (UCI), and the Borrego Water District (BWD) to support ongoing meteorology and particulate matter monitoring with particular attention to particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns or less (PM_{10}) and monitoring for particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less ($PM_{2.5}$). The GSA acknowledges your request that the costs associated with air quality monitoring be included in the GSP.

The GSA notes that UCI implemented a research study to evaluate, model and attribute particulate matter air quality in Borrego Springs, California. The three year program evaluated current and historical air quality trends, developed and calibrated a particulate matter air quality model of the region and is in the process of attributing likely air quality sources of degradation (UCI 2017, 2018). Data for this research was provided from the installation and monitoring of five new weather stations in Borrego Springs by real-time continuous airborne particle nephelometers. Nephelometers measure the visual quality of local ambient air by measuring the scattering of light due to particles in continuous air samples. Nephelometers do not make direct measurements of mass but instead measure secondary properties of particles from which the mass must be inferred to compare to regulatory particulate matter requirements. Light scattering technologies must be calibrated against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA's) Federal Reference Method. UCI's weather stations are primarily for scientific research and are not intended to meet regulatory mass-balance stations requirements used to determine compliance with federal EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards or state ambient air quality standards. Additional information regarding particulate matter monitoring requirements is