

## Ratepayer Gathering Notes

Wednesday, March 14, 2019

The American Legion

**In attendance: Sanjiv Nanda, Ralph Batie, Jesse Fadiuk, Michael Sadler, Dan Jellis, Roger**

These notes consist of reflections on the gathering and, most probably, an incomplete recollection of the issues discussed, some matters that occurred to me after the gathering, but all with a focus on our ultimate goal: **Ratepayer statements to be submitted to the GSA during the implementation process for their implementation.**

Following are our four main concerns, beliefs, objectives:

- We believe that BWD/Ratepayers should be allocated an initial **minimum** of 1700 AFY; this allocation should be excluded from any reductions.
- We believe that the 20-year implementation period set out under SGMA should be shortened
- We believe that water quality is an essential concern, it should be addressed immediately, and if/when water quality issues are determined, the parties responsible are held to account for any remediation that might be necessary
- We believe that the GDEs (Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems) must be considered in the overall water allocation calculus

### Future scheduled meetings:

Wednesday, March 20	5-6:00 pm	The Library	Water quality concerns
Wednesday, March 27	4:30 - 5:30 pm	Rams Hill Restaurant	Provisions made to protect GDEs
Wednesday, April 3	5-6:00 pm	The Library	
Wednesday, April 10	5-6:00 pm	The Library	
Wednesday, April 17	5-6:00 pm	The Library	
Wednesday, April 24	5-6:00 pm	The Library	

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There was no need to introduce SGMA or the GSP as all present had a pretty sophisticated idea of the process, general information, history and objectives.

The GSP will now probably be available towards the end of the third week in March; it will be available on the BWD website - <http://www.bvgs.org/> - and in hard copy form at the B.S. Library and BWD.

All comments made regarding the GSP are to be made in writing to the GSA within the 60-day public review period. The GSA will respond in writing to all comments submitted prior to the conclusion of the review period.

There will be four or five meetings held during this period:

- Meeting 1      Day 7      Brief intro
- Meeting 2      April 4      Sponsor Group
- Meeting 3      Day 28      Lasar (Rachel) Spanish/English
- Meeting 4      Day 35

▪ Meeting 5 Day 42

Once the review period has concluded, the GSA approves the GSP (within a few months) and then submits the Plan to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for final approval; this should occur at some point towards the end of 2019. Implementation then begins in 2020.

I have not followed through on the following: During my upcoming conversation with Geoff Poole I will also be trying to figure out how/in what form the AC will continue functioning. Just found out at the Annual Ratepayer Meeting that when the AC was created, it was also slated to conclude its functions once the GSP is approved, which should come in mid-May. Hope to have more info for you for our next meeting.

There was considerable discussion as we clarified each one of our four points.

- Minimum 1700 AFY - reiterated BWD's history of reductions, from years of 3500 AFY to 2400 AFY to our current 1700 AFY. Referred to Tom Bunn's position in his letter of October 24, 2017, on BWD record ("**a reasonable approach would be to allocate the Water District its historical use, and allocate the remainder of the safe yield to overlying users, without any compensation to those users. This approach would be consistent with SGMA and California water rights law.**")
- Shortened reduction period. All agree that the quicker the better (otherwise we confront a significantly lowered aquifer, costlier water pumping, and water of poorer quality.) One suggestion was that the reduction rate be "front loaded," which is to say that the reductions could be more aggressive in the beginning so as to minimize the lowering of the aquifer.
- Water quality issues. Clear agreement that the cost of bringing contaminated water up to drinking standards is cost-prohibitive. Informed the group that BWD is aggressively pursuing the investigative work now.
- GDE. All agree that we want to protect what remains, but also understand that what has been lost through the lowering of the water table cannot reasonably be restored, in particular with respect to the mesquite bosque.

Quickly outlined the six Projects and Management Actions from Chapter 4 of the Plan; these are the categories under which our four points must fall in order for them to be implemented. Please read Chapter 4 of the Plan for the details, but they are the following:

- PMA 1 Water Trading Program
  - PMA 2 Water Conservation
  - PMA 3 Pumping Reduction Program
  - PMA 4 Voluntary Fallowing of Ag. Land
  - PMA 5 Water Quality Optimization
  - PMA 6 Intra-Subbasin Water Transfers
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Activities for upcoming gatherings and breakout groups:

1. Letter writing campaign (Interested so far: Gretchen, Joanne, Ralph [if you are interested, drop me an e-mail; we'll get organized soon])
2. Sanjiv sent me some information on Petition Sites; I'll give these a look and get back to Sanjiv and the rest of you in the hopes we can put something together. Any tech savvy folks ???

3. I'll be preparing a summary of our position (four points) to be submitted to the GSA for review and comment. Will run this by you in the next month or so for review and comments.
4. Anyone have access to an e-mail list we could use (with permission) to promote our position?
5. Any other ideas as to how to attain our goal? (Such as: tamarisk removal, is there an unknown end-use for the wood; limited replanting with native vegetation; water set-aside for GDEs; local fundraising outside BWD to purchase farmland; ...)

Please go to the BWD website (<http://www.bvgsp.org/>), click on the Ratepayer Gathering tab, and access schedules and notes from each gathering.

Please follow upcoming issues of the Borrego Sun. We will be featured in various ways. Your concerns will now be a regular part of our local paper.

Thanks again for your involvement. Come to our meetings. Voice your concerns. Help us further clarify and draft our objectives. Bring a friend to the next gathering.