

Ratepayer Gathering Notes

Wednesday, January 30, 2019 Rams Hill Restaurant - 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

In attendance: Bill Berkley, Herb Stone, Lee Scharf, Saul Miller, Laara Maxwell, Ray Shindler, Rebecca Falk, Gretchen G., Rex Burrows, Jack Laughlin, Liesle Paris, Linda Laughlin, Cathy Milkey, Hans Hoeffler, Don Nicholas, Jan Nicholas

These notes consist of reflections on the gathering and, most probably, incomplete recollection of the issues discussed with a focus on our ultimate goal: a **Ratepayer Statement of Concerns and Beliefs** (a new term for the Ratepayer Statement that seems to sit better with the Core Group, per comments from the AC meeting on Thursday, Feb. 28) that will address our concerns.

Also, want to reiterate our main concerns and beliefs as expressed so far (and as presented during the AC meeting)

- We believe that BWD/Ratepayers should be allocated an initial minimum of 1700 AFY
- We believe that the 20-year implementation period set out by SGMA should be shortened
- We are concerned about water quality
- We are concerned and would like information about the fundraising efforts being undertaken for land/water purchases
- We are concerned about our how the GDEs (Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems) will be addressed in the Plan

Future scheduled meetings:

Wednesday, February 6. 2-3:00 pm Library Conference Room

Tuesday, February 12. 5-6:00 pm. The American Legion

Tuesday, February 19. 5-6:00 pm. Library Community Room

We were fortunate to have Becky Faulk in attendance, as well as Ray Shindler, both folks well versed in the issues. Also, what a pleasure to have Jack Laughlin join us as well and provide us with history dating back to the 90s concerning our water situation.

It seems that still our knowledge of our current water quality situation is sparse. There are a number of water quality monitoring wells scattered about the valley; Rams Hill has provided access to its wells for quality testing – both at the resort and at the farms they have acquired and will acquire.

Generally, the data seems to confirm that the N portion of the aquifer presents higher concentrations of nitrates, the Central portion provides the best potable water, and the S portion in certain locations, presents higher concentrations of naturally-occurring arsenic.

Parenthetically, during the AC meeting, Stephen Ballas, a resident representing The Air Ranch, indicated that their two wells have not been lowered in his recollection and continue to provide good, potable water.

The concern generally expressed during our meeting, was that the greater the reduction of water in the aquifer, the greater the concentration of contaminants. (Interestingly, this issue was raised at the AC meeting and Dudek, the hydrogeology firm hired by the GSA, as I recall it ((will double check the minutes once they come out)) seems to disagree with this statement, indicating that there is not a correlation between a lower water level and increased contaminants; seems counterintuitive to me.)

Generally we seem to feel/it would appear that there is insufficient information available to truly be able to assess the level of contaminants that have entered the aquifer. (When addressing recharge in its various forms, the statement is often made that some of the recharge, particularly that not occurring from Coyote Creek, Palm Canyon and the Valley mountain runoff, but the recharge attributed to citrus flushing, can take decades to percolate down to the aquifer ... this water would, I imagine, contain certain amounts of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and such.)

The Delaneys have provided some reading we might want to consider as we move forward with our discussions about groundwater quality:

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/state/california/article95534497.html>

Some additional comments, questions and such:

- Becky reminded us that the idea of the initial 1700 AFY is not a new concept and, in fact, she, in representation of the Sponsor Group, submitted a letter to the AC in support of 2400 AFY, an idea supported by the Sponsor Group.
- The question of whether the BWD Board is truly representing the ratepayer's best interest was brought up once again.
- That the fear of litigation has and continues to influence BWD Board's decisions is a problem.
- Credit for return flows for farmers is a concern; particularly when, in accordance with what Ray has indicated, return flows will not be considered at the State level.
- One overarching question that has arisen at both of our previous meetings concerns the matter of who actually will pay for the overdraft, and how much will this GSP cost the ratepayer?

Topics for discussion at the **Wednesday, February 6. 2-3:00 pm Library Conference Room**

- 1) Continuation of the water quality issues
- 2) I will present the schedule of AC and other important GSP upcoming meetings where we will be able to present our case.