

Water Ratepayer Representative Report

So, this is the fourth and final formal report and commentary on our efforts to clarify and consolidate the objectives we see as essential for the implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP.) It is also the presentation I will have given to BWD at its June 11 meeting.

The first formal ratepayer gathering took place on January 15, it was the first of 20 weekly gatherings. Our total attendance was a little over 200. In addition, I also scheduled meetings with some 24 Borregans over this five-month period to learn what I could from them, among them, Kathy Dice, Martha Dichler, Bob Moore, Lupe Fregoso, Shannon Smith, Susan Percival, and Teresa García.

We then dedicated part of April and the entire month of May to guest speakers with special knowledge, experience and history relating to water in the Borrego subbasin; these included Mark Jorgensen, Ray Shindler, John Peterson, Jack Laughlin, Geoff Poole, Bill Berkley and Jim Wermers.

During these meetings we gradually worked towards our goals and were able to pare these down to five essential objectives as part of the GSP process. The central issue for us revolves around the disproportionate, reckless, and indifferent use agriculture has made of our resource.

We, the ratepayers/BWD have reduced our water consumption by over 50% in the last 10 years or so. During this same decade, with the exception of Rams Hill, which was essentially dry for three or four years and appears to be making efforts towards water conservation, golf courses continue to irrigate as usual. However, the ongoing and intolerable excesses in the agriculture sector continue unabated, and could possibly have increased over these years. We do not know; they are unable and/or unwilling to provide pumping data.

The pumpers responsible for this mishandling of our common resource must carry the burden of the reductions. We have responsibly cut our water consumption by over 50%. We've done our part.

As a result of these many months of gatherings, meetings, letters to the editor, consulting experts, and more, we, the ratepayers accordingly ask BWD to represent us by:

1. Directing the District's attorney, Mr. Anderson, to shape the legal path to:
 - a. Achieve sustainability immediately.
 - b. Ensure that BWD is allocated a minimum of 1,700 AFY that will remain untouched by reductions.
2. Immediately initiating an all-out, community and state-wide fundraising effort to purchase land/water.
3. Including the ratepayer in its essential conversations, instituting efforts towards transparency and openness by:
 - a. Agendizing BWD meetings so as to include a reasonable amount of open time for the discussion of items relating to the GSP, long-range planning, rate increases, vision and such at the beginning of its meetings; and day-to-day

bureaucratic and operational items to be dealt with during the latter part of the meetings.

- b. Holding meetings at the Borrego Springs Library, a more informal and welcoming setting, and encouraging attendance by openly discussing and sharing information – we all want the current "we-they" dissonance to fade away into our uncomfortable past.

In the spirit of what the ratepayers wish, I'd like to share a thought expressed by Nelson Mandela: "May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears."