

**INDIAN WELLS VALLEY COOPERATIVE GROUNDWATER
MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
DISCUSSION NOTES**

October 15, 2009 – 1:00 p.m.

Chairman Don Zdeba called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Don Zdeba introduced Adam Bingham who is the new hydrologist/geologist for Searles Valley Minerals. Mr. Bingham is from Brown and Caldwell. Mr. Bingham will be representing Searles Valley Minerals on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Presentation of Kern County Specific Plan by Lorelei Oviatt, Kern County Planning Department Division Chief: Funding has been made available for an Indian Wells Valley Specific Plan (Plan). The intention of this Plan is to create a plan for economic support and at the same time balance real environmental issues. Indian Wells Valley has very few ways to bring in water. Ms. Oviatt distributed a map of current zoning in the valley. Kern County has been waiting to work on the Plan for two reasons: 1) staffing limitations and 2) completion of Joint Land Use Study. Staffing limitations are due to several proposed wind, solar, and mining projects. Work on the Plan will begin the first quarter of next year and the first step will be to create a vision of the community for the future. This will involve community participation and interactive voting. Every developed lot and its water use and every undeveloped lot that could be developed is compared to how much water is available. From this information, new and strategic ways to handling land use will be determined. This is not an easy task. One of the fundamental issues that Kern County must face is getting real facts on paper: how many lots are developed, how many lots are not developed, how much water is being used, and what is the available water supply. Supply of water could include waste water and brackish water. Another issue that must be faced in the Plan is SB 375, an initiative to reduce greenhouse gases by reducing vehicle mile trips. Ms. Oviatt reported that Kern County is already doing their part to reduce greenhouse gases by applying weather stripping and replacing doors, insulation, and weather stripping on pre-1986 homes. The main issue of the Plan in this valley is balancing land use and water without leaving anyone out. Ideas that could be used include increasing the size of lots in agriculture areas and/or transfer of density ordinance. The valley is already working on this key with the brackish water supply, how to bring in more water, a landscape ordinance, and updating the City of Ridgecrest General Plan. When the County develops the Specific Plan, an Environmental Impact Report will be done, issues and mitigation will be sorted out, and then it would be presented to the County Board of Supervisors for adoption. The Plan will then become a blueprint for how the Indian Wells Valley will develop.

Approval of Discussion Notes: Motion was made by Glenn Harris and seconded by LeRoy Marquardt to accept the September 17, 2009 Discussion Notes as presented. The Motion was carried, unanimously.

Public Comment for Items on the Agenda: Public asking question was Judie Decker.

Brackish Water Treatment Project: Tom Mulvihill reported that the Indian Wells Valley Water District (IWVWD) is waiting for lab results on the solid waste from the Brackish Water Treatment. The results will determine whether the waste will be transported to a landfill or toxic dump. The final report will be completed once this has been determined and will be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The IWVWD has received Proposition 50 grant fund reimbursement of approximately \$260,000.00 from the State of California for the Brackish Water Treatment Project.

Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Update: Tom Mulvihill reported at the last Regular Board Meeting the current final draft Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance was reviewed by the Board of Directors. The Board recommended the City of Ridgecrest approve the Ordinance as presented. This final draft will be presented at the study session of the City Council/Redevelopment Agency Regular Meeting on Wednesday, October 21st at 6:30 p.m. If the City approves the Ordinance the first reading could occur on November 4th with a second reading on November 18th.

Integrated Regional Water Management Program: Leroy Corlett was not present.

Solar Millennium Scoping Meeting: Glenn Harris reported on the Solar Millennium Project. Mr. Harris reported that the California Energy Commission (CEC) has updated their website to reference the fact that there is an agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that environmental documents will be prepared. Hector Villalobos, Manager of the BLM, signed the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This will go to the state and national offices and will eventually be published in the federal register. This will start the Environmental Impact Statement process. The CEC will prepare the document in conjunction with BLM. There will not be a third party contractor. The BLM is the federal lead on this project and will be making sure all of the federal pieces of an EIS are included. The state will be making sure all of their pieces are included. On the federal end, there is a scoping process that will take place. Scoping meetings will be scheduled and public input will be accepted.

Report from Committee to Update Objectives: The Committee (Tom Mulvihill, LeRoy Marquardt, Mike Stoner, Don Zdeba and Glenn Harris) met on October 6th to revisit the current objectives and propose changes for the 2010/2011 Objectives. Mike Stoner is on vacation and information is needed to complete the draft. Once the information is received and the draft is complete, it will be emailed out to the Group for review and discussion at the next Group meeting. One objective discussed was to develop a one page document, similar to an executive summary that would consist of three or four metrics that, if done well, would be indicative of the Group doing an excellent job of water management in the valley. Glenn Harris added that some of the objectives are included in the originally signed agreement and if we change the objectives, new signatures would be needed. The same format for the objectives will be used as in the past.

Project Review Report: Tom Mulvihill reported the following Projects: 1) Tentative Parcel Map 11524 to create four parcels ranging from 12.15 acres to 14.65 acres on 60.3 acres to facilitate a future 158 lot R-1 subdivision and a 123 unit condo project. The project is located at the S.E. corner of Bataan Avenue and Sunland Street. The applicant is Benchmark Opinions, 2) Tentative Parcel Map 11943 request to create a 4 lot General Commercial subdivision on 5 acres

on North China Lake Boulevard, South of Felspar Avenue and North of Home Depot. Applicant is Kirchmeier Trust, and 3) Tentative Parcel Map 11781 proposing to divide a 20.23 acre parcel into 15 lots ranging in size from 1 acre to 2.1 acres for industrial use. The project is located on the west side of North Brady Street, approximately 600 feet south of Inyokern Road.

Technical Advisory Committee Report: The Technical Advisory Committee did not meet this month.

RAWS Update: Glenn Harris reported that all five Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS); Five-Mile Canyon, Indian Wells Canyon (2), Walker Pass, and El Paso Peak are functioning and collecting data. One-quarter of an inch of rain was recorded along the ridge from the last storm. The lower elevations RAWS did not record any moisture.

Watershed Coordinator Job Description Review: Glenn Harris reported that they still have not received the information on what the new rules will be for the job description. Until the information is received, the grant package will not be completed.

Future Water Situation in the Valley: Glenn Harris reported the TAC is continuing to work on this topic. This will be a big document and will take a while to make sure that everything is put together.

Potential Grant Opportunities: Pat Quist reported that the EKCRCD has received \$50,000 grant funding for the eradication of weeds (Yellow Star Thistle, Pepper Weed, etc.) in the Kern and Indian Wells Valleys.

Review Action Register: The Action Register was reviewed and changes made. An updated version of the Action Register will be sent to the Group with the November meeting agenda.

Items for the November Agenda: Items for the November Agenda include: 1) Brackish Water Treatment Project, 2) Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Status, 3) Integrated Regional Water Management Program, 4) Solar Millennium Scoping Update, 5) Report from Committee to Update Objectives, 6) Project Review Report, 7) TAC Report, and 8) Potential Grant Opportunities.

The following Agency Reports were made:

City of Ridgecrest: Dennis Speer reported that there were 8 new sewer connections and 3.5 million gallons of waste water was reclaimed last month. Twenty four building permits have been issued year-to-date. Last year there was a total of 23 building permits issued. A Request for Quote for the Waste Water Treatment Plant is due by November 26th.

Quist Farms: Pat Quist informed the Group they have finished the harvest and planted the nursery stock. They will begin to winterize. Ms. Quist announced that she is President of the EKCRCD and will be attending the annual meeting in Squaw Valley and will not be able to attend the next Group meeting.

Kern County Water Agency: Terry Rogers gave an update on the legislative special session. This special session was held to re-address the water bills (groundwater monitoring, 20 x 2020, etc.). This could identify basins in critical overdraft by Department of Water Resources (DWR). The language is also being clarified for both groundwater monitoring and water conservation language to say that not meeting the goals cannot be used against you. If this comes to pass, Mr. Rogers recommends that the monitoring program meet the DWR requirements. If it does not, the state will move in and perform the groundwater monitoring.

Indian Wells Valley Water District: Tom Mulvihill made available draft copies of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance at the meeting to anyone who would like to review it. Today, the District had a construction site meeting at the Primavera well field for prospective contractors to discuss the Arsenic Treatment Plants and facilities that are currently out for bid. Also included is the permanent facility for Well 34 located on Brown Road. Over 7 contractors paid for plans. Bids will be opened on October 29th at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Mulvihill announced the Fall Xeriscape Workshop will be held at the USO Building on Saturday, November 7th, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Guest speakers will be Mike Mumford, Outdoor Metal Artist, and Renée Günter, Los Angeles Landscape Designer. A joint plant sale of the Oasis Garden Club and Desert Planters of Ridgecrest will also be held. Flyers were distributed. Mr. Mulvihill reported that at the last Regular Board Meeting 3 commercial xerifitic landscapes in the valley were recognized: Kentucky Fried Chicken, Alta One Federal Credit Union, and Holland and Lyons Mortuary.

Eastern Kern Resource Conservation District: LeRoy Marquardt reported that the EKCRCD received grant funding of \$50,000.00 for weed eradication. [Repeat of "Potential Grant Opportunities" report]

Bureau of Land Management: Glenn Harris reported that the BLM is beginning a new fiscal year and it appears that congress is close to passing the budget.

Kern County Water Agency: Tom Haslebacher reported that they have been very busy. They have just finished the monitoring water levels in the Indian Wells Valley. Data is not available yet in the database. Hydrographs should be updated next month and should be available for everyone to review. Sand Canyon and Grapevine Canyon are dry.

Searles Valley Minerals: Don Zdeba reported that Searles Valley Minerals received funding approval to replace 5 miles of the Westend potable water line. The section to be replaced will be from the west side of the intersection of China Lake Boulevard and West California Avenue across China Lake Boulevard to Sunland Street, north to East Ridgecrest Boulevard and up the hill to the tank. A purchase order is waiting for final approval for engineering services and construction management from Marmac Engineering. The permitting process could take 3 to 6 weeks. Project could get started before the end of the year. Middle or end of June 2010 is the target to have the new line in service.

General Public Comment: None.

With no further comments or discussion to come before the Group, Motion was made by Glenn Harris and seconded by LeRoy Marquardt to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose Koch". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Rose" and last name "Koch" clearly distinguishable.

Rose Koch
Recording Secretary

The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2009.

I.W.V. COOPERATIVE GROUNDWATER
MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

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