

MINUTES
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BORREGO SPRINGS WATERMASTER
Meeting Conducted via GoToMeeting
Tuesday, May 25, 2021, 1:00 p.m.

I. Opening Procedures

Andy Malone (Lead Technical Consultant, Borrego Springs Watermaster) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Malone called roll and confirmed that all five Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members were present at the start of the meeting. The following individuals were present at the meeting:

Technical Advisory Committee Members	Bob Wagner, PE (Principal Water Resources Engineer, Wagner & Bonsignore)
	Tom Watson, PG (Principal Geologist, Aquilogic)
	Trey Driscoll, PG, CHG (Principal Hydrogeologist, Dudek)
	Jim Bennett (County of San Diego and Watermaster Board Member)
	Andy Malone, PG (Principal Geologist, West Yost)
Watermaster Staff	Samantha Adams, Executive Director (West Yost)
	Lauren Sather, Staff Scientist (West Yost)
	Eric Chiang, Principal Engineer (West Yost)
Others Present	John Peterson
	Leanne Crow
	Leonardo Urrego
	Michele Staples
	Tammy Baker
	Shannon Smith (Vice Chairman of the Board)
	Nancy Karas
	Trevor Jones (Dudek)
	Diane Johnson
	Michael Wells

TAC Meeting Guidelines. Mr. Malone covered the guidelines for Committee meetings, which specify that TAC meetings are open to the public and individuals from the public are allowed three minutes each for comments during the public comment periods at the beginning and end of each TAC meeting.

II. Public Comments

John Peterson addressed the TAC to express concerns about the declining groundwater levels at production wells in the South Management Zone as described in the recent annual report to the DWR.

Lyle Brecht addressed the TAC and asked the following questions:

1. Does the TAC have any written criteria to support its recommendation to two years of metered pumping data is needed to evaluate and potentially revise the assumptions and tools used to estimate historical unmetered pumping?
2. Will the TAC assess the suitability of agricultural return flows for beneficial use in the Subbasin be evaluated in the water quality monitoring plan?
3. How does the TAC recommend to compute storage changes in the future?
4. Can we afford additional de minimus wells to be drilled in the Subbasin?

Shannon Smith submitted the following written public comments:

1. Thank you for your service as TAC members giving thoughtful consideration of the science necessary to aid the Watermaster in administering the Judgment.
2. In your work today, I would recommend that you provide the Watermaster with some prioritization of the work as you have set out in your agenda for review. In a world of unlimited resources, we would undertake any and all tasks. Our focus will need to include those tasks that will be meaningful to the Watermaster as it undertakes its decisions that are necessary to administer the Judgment and in later years address the sustainable yield of the basin.
3. I think all of us can agree that the single most important task to arrive at sustainable management of the basin was and is to reduce pumping. By virtue of the Judgment, we have already accomplished the single most important task to arrive at sustainable management of the basin. We all agreed to do so in an expedited fashion by reducing pumping 50% over the first 10 years, absent new scientific information. This compromise was endorsed by Judge Wilson when these accelerated reductions were made final by his order.
4. When planning for the pumping assessments to support the Judgment, our initial assumption was that the work to update the sustainable yield would occur in Year 4, the '23-'24 water year. I understand that the TAC believes that some work on the sustainable yield should begin sooner.
5. Our initial estimate of the Watermaster budget included an average of \$175,000 annually for engineering work, with an additional \$62,000 for modeling work in the year before a sustainable yield update was due pursuant to the Judgment. The current data presented is for an expenditure of \$262,000 next year.
6. The materials contemplate the idea of drilling a monitoring well. I would suggest that we first work hard to gather information from the existing wells in the basin before adding another. We at Rams Hill have been metered and read since 2014 and we have a few wells in the north management area where we will look to cooperating with the Watermaster for the information from those locations. Perhaps the TAC might provide the WMB with locations where new well data would be most helpful and we can first canvas existing well owners.
7. The increase in costs to pumpers at this early stage when we have not yet seen the benefits of the most important element of sustainable basin management – reduced pumping – will

require careful consideration by the Watermaster. As a result, please include priorities in your reporting so that we do not leave priorities to the Watermaster to guess.

8. Thank you again for your help in this vital role for adaptive and sustainable management of the basin pursuant to the Judgment.

III. Recommended Technical Scope-of-Work and Budget for Water Years 2022 and 2023

Mr. Malone stated that the main objective of this TAC meeting is to develop a recommended technical scope of work and budget for water year (WY) 2022 and 2023. Mr. Malone reviewed the proposed technical scope-of-work that was included in the TAC agenda packet and facilitated TAC discussion on each proposed task.

The TAC generally agreed that the proposed technical scope-of-work was large and expensive, and that it needed to be further prioritized and refined. A list of each task/subtask and a summary of the discussions and recommendations of the TAC are below:

Task 1/2 – Redetermine the Sustainable Yield (WY 2022 and WY 2023)

Task 1a – Obtain Groundwater-Level Data from the DWR and Well Owners

Task 1b – Prepare Workplan for Model Update and Redetermination of Sustainable Yield

Task 1c – Prepare Workplan for Monitoring/Testing

Task 1d – Prepare Monitoring Well Siting Study (if recommended in Tack 1c)

Task 2a – Collect Data and Information

Task 2b – Construct Monitoring Well (if recommended in Tack 1c)

Task 2c – Implement Workplan for Model Update (Year 1)

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *The DWR groundwater-level data should be the priority for data collection. Collecting these data will require outreach and coordination with the DWR and the well owners. Monitoring improvements should grow organically and in phases to be most efficient. New monitoring wells should be deferred until future phases and until justified. Grants from the State may be available to offset costs of new monitoring wells, if such wells are demonstrated to be needed.*
- *Historical and future estimates of pumping are the largest uncertainty in the BVHM. Improvements to the BVHM in WY 2022 and WY 2023 should be focused on refining historical and future estimates of pumping. The BVHM should be updated and run through WY 2021 and the BVHM-estimated pumping for WY 2021 should be compared to the Watermaster’s metered pumping for WY 2021. The results of the comparison will inform the need for specific model updates and/or model recalibration (if any) in subsequent efforts to redetermine the Sustainable Yield.*
- *West Yost will likely need technical assistance from Dudek for modeling efforts. The Board will need to approve this assistance. Andy Malone and Trey Driscoll agreed to work on a scope and cost estimate for Dudek’s assistance.*

Task 3 – Prepare Water-Quality Monitoring Plan

Task 3a – Perform Monitoring Gap Analysis

Task 3b – Prepare Water-Quality Monitoring Plan

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *The TAC generally agreed with the proposed scope-of-work to: (i) analyze the interim monitoring program for gaps and (ii) prepare the long-term monitoring plan, including filling of gaps in the interim monitoring program.*
- *There was some discussion of how to schedule the work over WY 2022 and 2023. Trey Driscoll recommended to start the work in WY 2022. Bob Wagner felt the work could be pushed off to WY 2023.*

Task 4 – Support DWR Annual Reporting

Task 4a – Define Methods to Estimate Annual Changes in Basin Storage

Task 4b – Perform Technical Review of Change-in-Storage Calculation for WY 2021

Task 4c – Perform Technical Review of Change-in-Storage Calculation for WY 2022

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *The TAC agreed that it should have a meeting to discuss appropriate methods and that the TAC could provide valuable guidance.*
- *Trey Driscoll felt that additional data from the DWR will improve the storage change estimates, and that the data should be collected before performing the next storage change calculation.*

Task 5 – Other TAC Duties

Task 5a – Annual Review of Well Production Meter-Reading Program (WY 2021)

Task 5b – Annual Review of Well Production Meter-Reading Program (WY 2022)

Task 5c – Ad Hoc Requests from the Board

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *Trey Driscoll felt that review of the meter reading results was a valuable exercise, especially in Year 1. Future reviews could be “higher level” reviews.*
- *The TAC agreed that a small budget should be allocated to address ad hoc requests from the Board for technical opinions and assistance.*

Task 6 – Annual Recommendation of TAC Scope and Budget

Task 6a – Recommend Scope/Budget for WY 2023

Task 6b – Recommend Scope/Budget for WY 2024

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *No comments.*

TAC Meetings

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *The TAC generally agreed that quarterly meetings will be sufficient to conduct its business.*

IV. Mid-Year Review of the Well Production Meter-Reading Program

TAC Discussions/Recommendations:

- *Samantha Adams recommended continuing official reads every other month and wait until the next water year to make any changes.*

V. Public Comments (time permitting)

Diane Johnson regarding water quality monitoring: I am a Director on the BWD Board. We are very concerned that exceeding various contaminant levels would necessitate tertiary treatment of our potable water. Borrego simply could not afford that, since it is extremely unlikely that we could obtain a \$25 million grant to pay for such a plant. So, we need to monitor quality closely, especially for wells close to agricultural lands.

VI. Future TAC Meetings

No future meetings were scheduled. Future refinements to the technical scope-of-work will be conducted by "Reply All" email correspondence amongst the TAC.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Malone adjourned the meeting at about 3:00 p.m.