

**MINUTES**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP**  
**BORREGO SPRINGS INTERIM WATERMASTER**  
**Meeting Conducted In-Person at:**  
**Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center**  
**Friday, January 27, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**

**I. Opening Procedures**

- Andy Malone (Technical Consultant, Borrego Springs Watermaster) called the meeting to order at around 1:00 p.m and welcomed all participants attending in person and online.
- Mr. Malone confirmed that five Environmental Working Group (EWG) Members were present at the start of the meeting. Jim Dice arrived after the start of the meeting. In attendance at the meeting were the following individuals either in person or on the virtual meeting:

<b>Environmental Working Group Members</b>	Jim Bennett, County of San Diego (and Watermaster Board Member)
	Jim Dice, Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center
	Mark Jorgensen, Community Rep. (and Watermaster Board Member)
	Danny McCamish, Senior Environmental Scientist for the Colorado Desert District of California State Parks
	John Peterson, retired County Groundwater Geologist, California Professional Geologist and Certified Hydrogeologist
	Dr. Michael Wells, retired District Superintendent for the Colorado Desert District of California State Parks
<b>Watermaster Staff</b>	Andy Malone, Watermaster Technical Consultant (West Yost)
<b>Others Present</b>	Travis Brooks, Land IQ
	Trey Driscoll
	Elaine Tulving
	Sarah Kimball
	Sicco Rood
	Stephanie Mar
	Nikki Fiore
	Steve Anderson
	Gina Moran
	Megan Lulow
	Diane Johnson
	Laurel Brigham
	Travis Huxman
	Leanne Crow
Jim Dax	

## **Public Comments**

There was a question from the public on whether golf courses are going to be included in the investigation. Travis Brooks (Land IQ) stated that golf courses are included in the inventory of lands that are currently fallowed or could be fallowed in the future; however, agricultural lands will be the primary focus of the investigation.

## **II. Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands**

Mr. Brooks began by stating that the main purpose of the EWG meeting was to “kick off” the project with the EWG and review the draft “literature review” report (in agenda packet), which is the first project deliverable.

Mr. Brooks provided an overview and summary of the project objectives and scope of work, which is to develop recommended strategies for fallowing farmland that reduces water consumption and avoids or minimizes the potential for associated adverse effects (e.g., dust emissions). He then described the outline and contents of the draft Literature Review report. Discussions, questions, and answers ensued amongst the meeting participants.

UCI scientists then provided an overview of the natural geomorphic and biological setting in the Borrego Valley followed by a description of the Brush Pile Wildlife Sand Fence case study that is planned for the project. The objective is to learn about the appropriate design of sand fences that may be helpful in areas with strong winds to reduce dust and increase success of plant establishment. Discussions, questions, and answers ensued amongst the meeting participants.

Mr. Brooks then provided an overview of preliminary work that has been performed to develop farmland fallowing rehabilitation strategies and prioritization criteria for identifying the most suitable parcels for rehabilitation/restoration. Topics discussed were the importance of fluvial processes, aeolian processes, soil stability, potential for water savings, and proximity to conserved land. Mr. Brooks presented a preliminary map that characterized and prioritized parcels by their potential for rehabilitation/restoration. Mr. Brooks noted that the map would be updated over the course of the project and information from field study results and input from the EWG is acquired. Discussions, questions, and answers ensued amongst the meeting participants.

Mr. Brooks and Mr. Malone finished the presentation by requesting that the EWG submit written comments or questions on the draft Literature Review report to Land IQ by emailing Travis Brooks, [tbrooks@landiq.com](mailto:tbrooks@landiq.com), and cc'ing Andy Malone, [amalone@westyost.com](mailto:amalone@westyost.com) February 10, 2023.

## **III. Public Comments**

No additional public comments.

## **IV. Adjournment**

Mr. Malone adjourned the meeting at about 3:30 p.m.