Call and Notice of Special Meeting of Borrego Springs Watermaster Board

The undersigned Chairperson of the Borrego Springs Watermaster Board of Directors does hereby call and set a Special Meeting of that Board to occur Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 10:00am. The purpose of the meeting is to: i) consider approval of changes to the draft 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 Groundwater Management Plan (GMP) Update and, ii) discuss the draft final budget for water year (WY) 2027. The agenda for that Special Meeting and the direction for the public to access the meeting will be sent to the Watermaster distribution list and posted to the Watermaster website (https://borregospringswatermaster.com) at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Dated: 5.28.26

Tyler Bilyk, Chairperson
Borrego Springs Watermaster Board

Borrego Springs Watermaster
Special Board Meeting
June 3, 2026 @ 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Available by Remote Access Only*

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Instructions for Public Comment

The public may address the Board on items within the Watermaster's Jurisdiction that are included or not included on the meeting agenda.

To address the Board on items that are not included on the meeting agenda, the public may request to speak during ***Agenda Item II – Public Correspondence***. Comments may be limited to three minutes per speaker.

To address the Board on items that are included on the meeting agenda, the Board Chairperson will call for public comments immediately following the agenda item's staff report presentation and prior to Board discussion.

AGENDA

Items with supporting documents in the Board Package are denoted with a page number.

I. OPENING PROCEDURES (Chair)

A. Call to Order and Begin Meeting Recording
B. Pledge of Allegiance
C. Roll Call
D. Approval of Agenda

II. PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE/COMMENT (Chair)

The Board may direct staff to include topics brought forward during Public Correspondence and Comment on a future meeting agenda. No action or discussion is otherwise taken by the Board. Written correspondence includes items received between May 14, 2026 and June 27, 2026.

A. Correspondence Received
   i. May 15, 2026 memo and presentation from Trey Driscoll .....**Page 4**
   ii. May 26, 2026 letter from David Garmon .....**Page 36**
B. Public Comment

III. ITEMS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Consideration of Approval of Changes to the 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update (ADAMS).....**Page 40**

B. Consideration of Approval of the WY 2027 Budget (ADAMS).....**Page 53**

C. Next Steps on Requested Public Outreach Efforts (ADAMS).....**Page 71**

IV. REPORTS

A. Legal Counsel Report

B. Chairperson's Report

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR JUNE 24, 2026 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING .....**Page 73**

VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

VII. NEXT MEETINGS OF THE BORREGO SPRINGS WATERMASTER

A. Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 9:00 am

B. Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, July 15, 2026 at 3:00 pm (tentative, may cancel)

C. Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 3:00 pm

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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To:

Technical Advisory Committee Members	Bob Wagner, PE (Principal Water Resources Engineer, Wagner & Bonsignore) – *representing AAWARE*
	Tom Watson, PG (Principal Geologist, Aquilogic) – *representing T2 Borrego*
	Jim Bennett (County of San Diego and Watermaster Board Member) – *representing County of San Diego*
	John Peterson, PG, CHG (retired) – *representing Roadrunner Golf and Country Club*
	Dr. Russell Detwiler (University of California, Irvine) – *representing the Borrego Springs Community*
Watermaster Staff	Andy Malone, PG (Principal Geologist, West Yost)
	Samantha Adams (Executive Director, West Yost)
	Lauren Salberg, PG (Staff Geologist, West Yost)

From: Trey Driscoll, PG, CHG, Yara Pasner, PhD and Marisa Earll, INTERA *(representing Borrego Water District)*

Date: May 11, 2026

Re: Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model High-level Review

General Comments

General Comment 1: The hydrogeologic conceptual model (HCM) for the Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model (BVHM) needs to be updated, particularly for the southern management area (SMA), where aquifer parameters are unrealistic and the model does not represent flow dynamics well (*i.e.*, the model is not able to reproduce confined responses to pumping which causes substantial model residuals).

General Comment 2: Subsurface exchange between management areas is potentially a significant factor in evaluating pumping management strategies for the Borrego Valley. Under the historical overdraft condition, the natural north-to-central subsurface flow gradient has been reversed. Sustainable management scenarios suggest this gradient will recover as groundwater levels recover, which could increase water availability in the central management area (CMA)—including the region supporting potential groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs; mesquite bosque). Proposals to relocate pumping to the northern management area (NMA) may delay or impede this recovery and should be carefully evaluated. However, unrealistic aquifer parameterization in the BVHM (see Specific Comments 1–3) may limit the model's ability to accurately simulate lateral flux exchange between management areas,

reducing the model's reliability as a tool for evaluating pumping relocation scenarios and their potential impacts on subsurface flow recovery.

General Comment 3: Evapotranspiration (ET) from potential groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) is not well represented in the model. In particular, the rooting depth for phreatophytes currently represented in the BVHM (interpreted to represent the mesquite bosque based on land use location) may need to be deeper to better align with best available data (Fiore, Brigham, and The GDE Collaborative Team, 2025). In addition, tamarisk does not appear to be represented in the BVHM. Each of these limitations may cause the model to underestimate ET from GDEs.

General Comment 4: We recommend updating the BVHM to MODFLOW-OWHM (v2.2.0). The BVHM uses the first version of the MODFLOW numerical modeling code One-Water Hydrologic Flow Model (MODFLOW-OWHM), v1.0.0, which was released in 2014. Since that release, numerous updates and corrections have been incorporated into later versions of MODFLOW-OWHM, including updates to the Farm Process Package (FMP) and modifications to many MODFLOW packages. In 2020, the USGS released an updated version known as MODFLOW-OWHM v2.0.0, with subsequent development leading to the model's current release of v2.2.0. Version 2.2.0 offers continued development and technical support from Dr. Scott Boyce, Assistant Professor of Hydrology at University of California Davis and the developer of MODFLOW-OWHM. Based on discussions with Dr. Boyce, the code conversion/implementation portion of updating the BVHM from MODFLOW-OWHM v1.0.0 to v2.2.0 is estimated to require approximately 2 weeks for the basic code conversion and implementation. However, the FMP conversion is likely to be more involved, and additional time will be needed to review the existing files/framework, verify that the converted model is reproducing comparable model budgets and outputs following the conversion, and evaluate any differences introduced during the update.

General Comment 5: The BVHM appears generally appropriate for evaluating broader management-area-scale pumping distribution scenarios such as Scenarios 1B and 1C, which shifted approximately 920, and 1,800 AFY from the central and south management area, respectively, to the northern management area. Comparison of modeled groundwater-level responses between Scenarios 1A and 1C indicates clear regional hydraulic responses, including reduced drawdown in portions of the CMA and SMA, increased groundwater elevations in the NMA, and broad changes in regional groundwater gradients. However, calibration residuals and HCM limitations, particularly in portions of the SMA and CMA where unrealistic aquifer parameters may limit the model's ability to accurately simulate groundwater-flow dynamics, may reduce confidence in localized transfer-response predictions (see Specific Comment 2). The BVHM is better suited for evaluating regional trends and relative scenario comparisons than assessing localized impacts associated with small pumping transfers between individual wells or parcels. Smaller transfer proposals may be more appropriately evaluated on a case-by-case basis using analytical approaches, monitoring data, and adaptive reevaluation over time.

Specific Comments

Specific Comment 1: Large model residuals in the SMA suggest the model does not represent flow dynamics well in this region. Across the SMA, the mean absolute error (MAE) is 20.8 feet (ft)—more than twice the MAE in the NMA (9.8 ft) and CMA (9.7 ft)—with residuals reaching as large as 86.3 ft and a positive mean error indicating a systematic bias toward overestimating groundwater levels (Figure 1). While these residuals likely reflect multiple factors, including unrealistic aquifer parameterization (see Specific Comment 2), the addition of continuously recorded pressure transducer data to the monitoring network—collected primarily since 2015—has enriched the observed record and revealed confined aquifer responses that are not captured by the model (Figures 2–5). These responses manifest as significant transient drawdowns due to pumping, indicative of aquifer confinement, and represent a flow dynamic that the model appears unable to reproduce.

Specific Comment 2: Aquifer parameters, particularly in the SMA, are outside of expected value ranges (Faunt and others, 2015; Figures 6–9):

- Specific storage values in the SMA are unrealistically low, with minimum values on the order of 10^{-10} and 10^{-9} 1/ft (Figure 9)—three to four orders of magnitude below the physically realistic range (on the order of 10^{-6} 1/ft) expected for a sedimentary aquifer system.
- Vertical anisotropy (ratio of horizontal to vertical hydraulic conductivity; HK/VK) is less than one across much of the SMA and parts of the CMA, particularly in Layers 2 and 3 (Figure 8), implying preferential vertical over lateral flow under equivalent hydraulic gradients. This is inconsistent with a sedimentary system where interbedded fine-grained materials resist vertical flux and coarse deposits facilitate lateral flux.

These unrealistic parameters may limit the model's ability to represent: (1) the lateral extent of pumping-induced drawdown, (2) the influence of lateral pumping transfers between wells, and (3) subsurface flux exchange between management areas (see Specific Comment 3).

Specific Comment 3: Historical groundwater overdraft, particularly in the NMA (Figure 13), has reversed the natural north-to-central subsurface flow gradient: while natural conditions supported net flow from the NMA into the CMA on the order of 5,000 AF/yr, the present-day altered flow regime shows net flow directed from the CMA into the NMA (Figure 11, top). Projected baseline scenarios indicate this gradient will recover under sustainable management, restoring net subsurface flow toward the CMA and the GDE—a potentially significant source of groundwater availability for the CMA and the mesquite bosque (Figure 12). Similarly, the BVHM suggests that under natural conditions, flow moved from the CMA into the SMA, though in much smaller volumes (on the order of a few hundred AF/yr; Figure 11, bottom). Under more recent, developed flow conditions, this gradient has reversed. Unrealistic aquifer parameterization in the SMA (see Specific Comment 2) may limit the model's ability to accurately represent this flux exchange.

Specific Comment 4: Potential GDEs and their associated groundwater use are potentially underestimated by the BVHM. A recent report by the University of California Irvine (Fiore, Brigham, and The GDE Collaborative Team, 2025) identifies approximately 1,850 acres of potential mesquite bosque

GDE near the Borrego Sink, where observed groundwater depths range from 22 to 134 ft bgs—within the documented rooting depth range for mesquite species (39–175 ft bgs). The documented rooting depth of mesquite confirms that mesquite bosque trees are capable of accessing groundwater at current observed depths in the Subbasin.

The BVHM represents the mesquite bosque as having rooting depths of approximately 22.9 ft bgs. The model simulates an average of approximately 68.6 ft of water table decline underlying the mesquite bosque from WY 1945–2022 (Figure 13), dropping the average depth to water in the GDE area to approximately 81.1 ft bgs in WY 2022 (Figure 14). Over the same period, BVHM-simulated ET declined from approximately 8,000 AF/yr in the predevelopment period (~1945) to only 26 AF/yr in WY 2022 in the area containing the mesquite bosque[1]. The reduction in simulated ET is consistent with the significant water table decline in the area.

As a preliminary sensitivity analysis, we simulated deepening the model's phreatophyte rooting depth to 45.9 ft (double the original) and 120 ft bgs. These changes to simulated rooting depth increased the simulated GDE ET in WY 2022 to approximately 73 and 508 AF/yr, respectively[1] (Figure 15). The deep rooting scenario (120 ft) extends beneath the WY2022 average depth to water (81.1 ft) and produces relatively modest simulated ET—less than might be expected given that roots would theoretically reach groundwater throughout most of the GDE area. This may reflect spatial variability in depth to water across the GDE footprint (many individual cells may have depth to water exceeding even the deepest rooting depth scenario), limitations of the FMP's ET extinction function, or broader model structural issues discussed in Specific Comments 1–3. Comparing these simulated ET values to measured ET reported by the UCI study may help inform rooting depth assumptions, though resolving the full discrepancy may require broader model improvements. (Note: in this comment letter, BVHM-simulated GDE ET values are derived from farm package recharge outflow computed via ZoneBudget for the GDE zone depicted in Figure 10. Creating a dedicated water balance subregion in the FMP package for the mesquite bosque could provide more rigorous accounting of groundwater ET fluxes, though the magnitude of this uncertainty is likely secondary to the structural limitations noted above.)

Specific Comment 5: In addition to simulating a relatively shallow rooting depth for the mesquite bosque, tamarisk, which is often used as a windbreak in the Borrego Valley, appears to not be represented as phreatophytes in the BVHM, as indicated by the phreatophyte land use cells in the model coinciding with the mesquite bosque footprint mapped by UCI (Figure 16), rather than being distributed across the broader basin where tamarisk is known to occur.

Specific Comment 6: We recommend updating the model engine for the BVHM to the most recent version of MODFLOW-OWHM (v2.2.0). This model version is expected to be supported by model developer Dr. Scott Boyce (previously at USGS, presently at University of California, Davis). In addition, this model update would allow multiple land use classes to be represented in a single model cell, which may facilitate representing tamarisk which may be closely distributed amongst other land use types, and may otherwise pose a challenge considering the relatively coarse (2,000 ft by 2,000 ft) lateral grid cell discretization.

[1] ET from the mesquite bosque is approximated using ZoneBudget (farm package recharge outflow) for the GDE zone depicted in Figure 10, derived from the outer boundary of the mesquite bosque as mapped by Fiore, Brigham, and The GDE Collaborative Team (2025).

References

Faunt, C.C., Stamos, C.L., Flint, L.E., Wright, M.T., Burgess, M.K., Sneed, M., Brandt, J., Martin, P., and Coes, A.L., 2015, Hydrogeology, hydrologic effects of development, and simulation of groundwater flow in the Borrego Valley, San Diego County, California: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2015–5150, 154 p., https://doi.org/10.3133/sir20155150.

Fiore, N., Brigham, L., The GDE Collaborative Team (2025). GDE Identification and Monitoring Program Report and Recommendations, Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE) Identification, Assessment, and Monitoring Program for the Borrego Springs Subbasin. Data available at: https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.c59zw3rm8

Attachment A

Referenced Figures

RE: Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model High-level Review

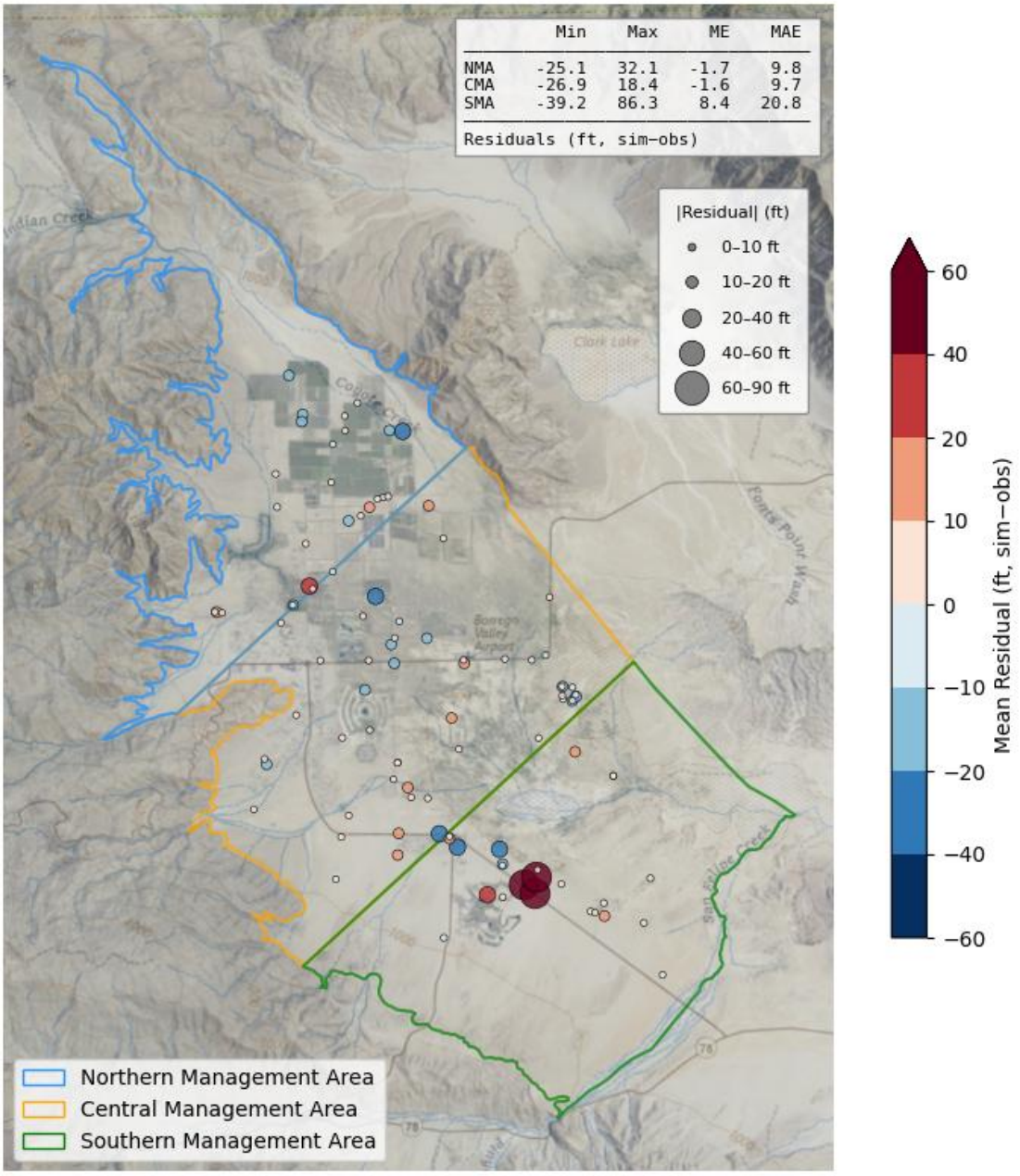


Figure 1. Spatial distribution of mean groundwater level residuals (simulated minus observed, in feet) at observation wells in the Borrego Valley, by management area. Circle size indicates the magnitude of the absolute residual; circle color indicates the sign and magnitude of the mean residual (red = simulated exceeds observed; blue = observed exceeds simulated). Summary statistics by management area are inset (ME = mean error; MAE = mean absolute error). The SMA exhibits substantially larger residuals (MAE = 20.8 ft; maximum = 86.3 ft) compared to the NMA and CMA (MAE ≈ 9.8 ft and 9.7 ft, respectively), likely driven by the model's failure to represent transient drawdown responses that are indicative of confined aquifer conditions. A positive mean error in the SMA (ME = 8.4 ft) indicates the model systematically overestimates groundwater levels in the SMA.

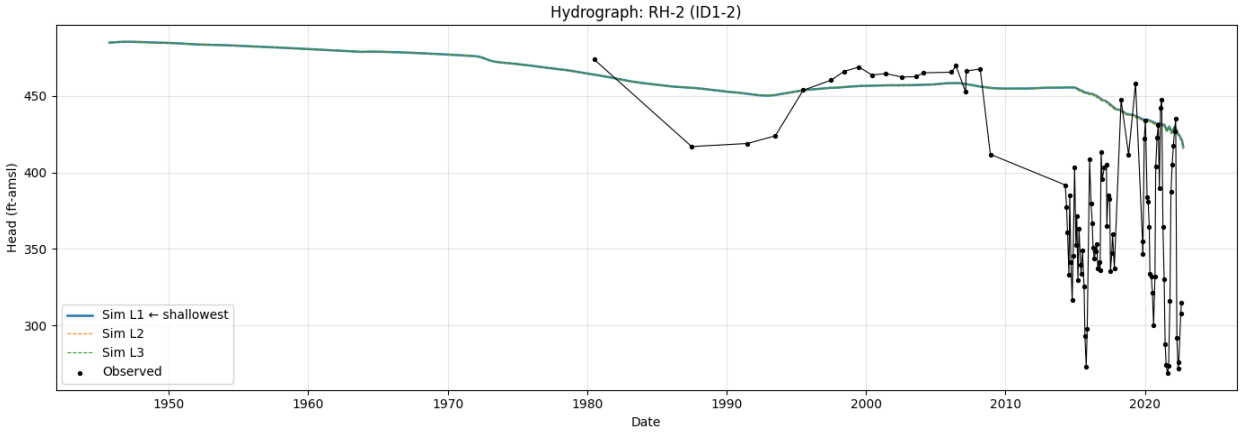


Figure 2. Simulated (Layers 1–3) and observed monthly average groundwater levels at well RH-2 (ID1-2) in the Southern Management Area.

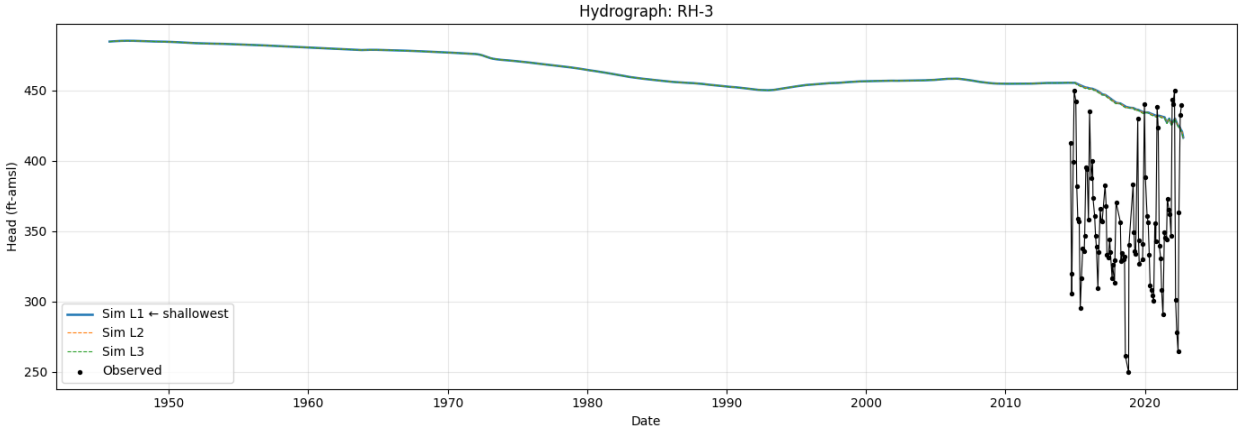


Figure 3. Simulated (Layers 1–3) and observed monthly average groundwater levels at well RH-3 in the Southern Management Area.

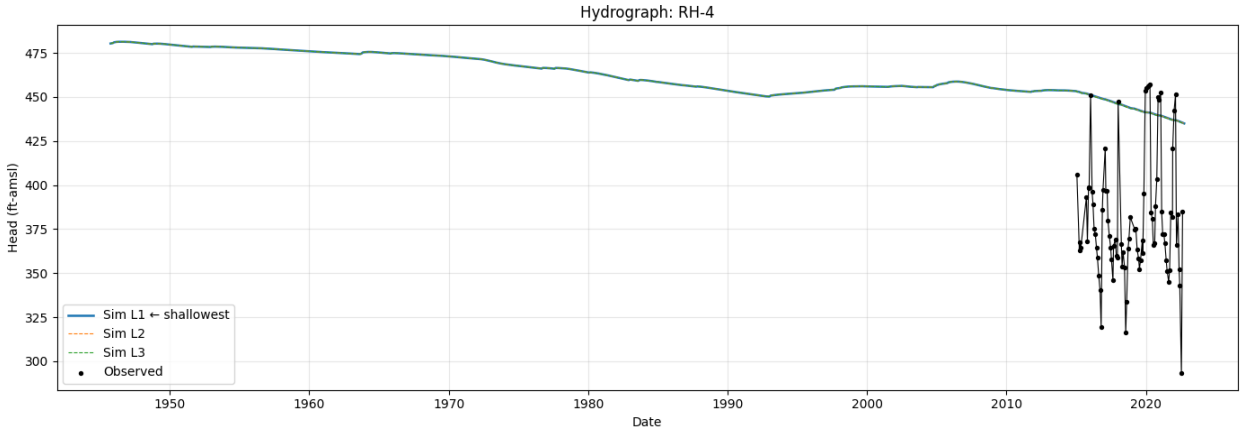


Figure 4. Simulated (Layers 1–3) and observed monthly average groundwater levels at well RH-4 in the Southern Management Area.

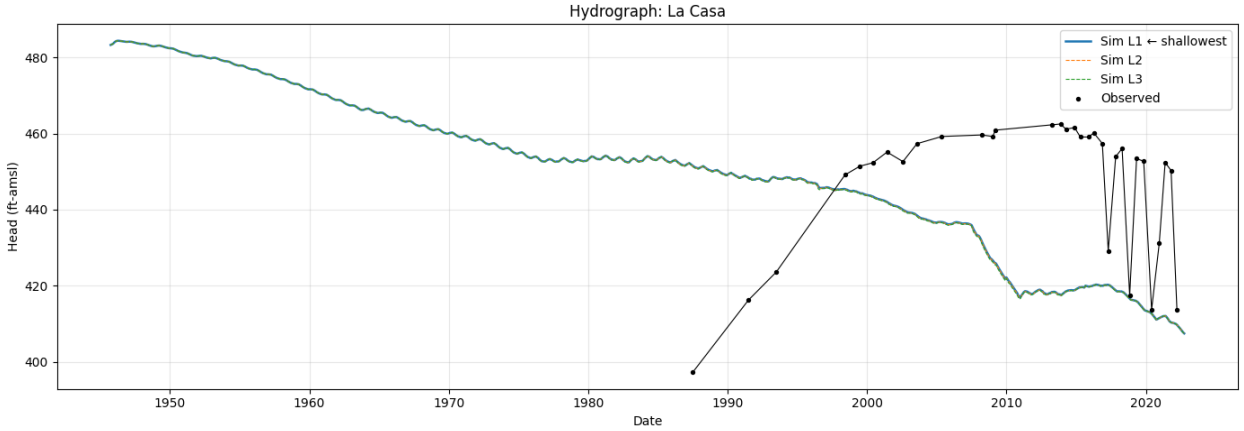


Figure 5. Simulated (Layers 1–3) and observed monthly average groundwater levels at the La Casa well in the Southern Management Area.

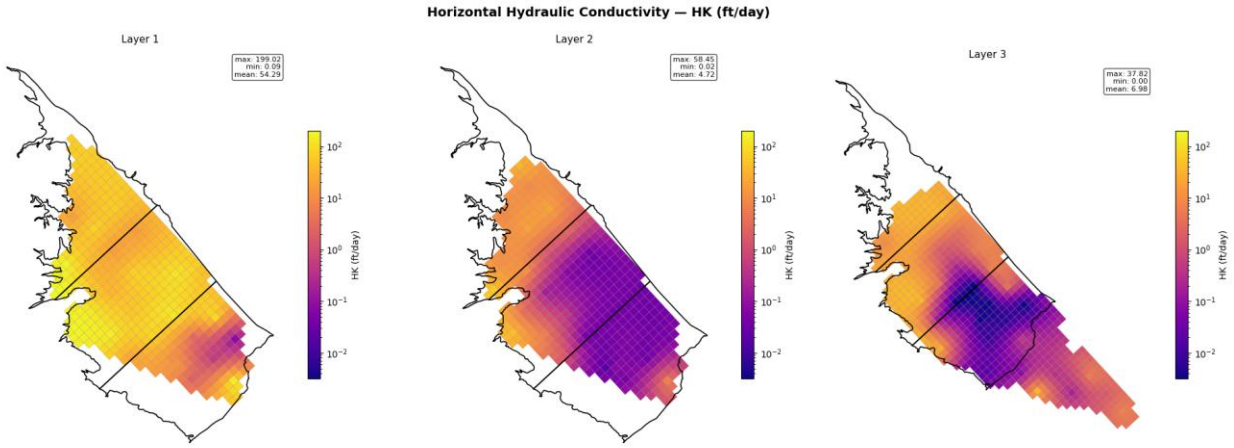


Figure 6. Spatial distribution of horizontal hydraulic conductivity (HK, ft/day) across model Layers 1–3 simulated by BVHM.

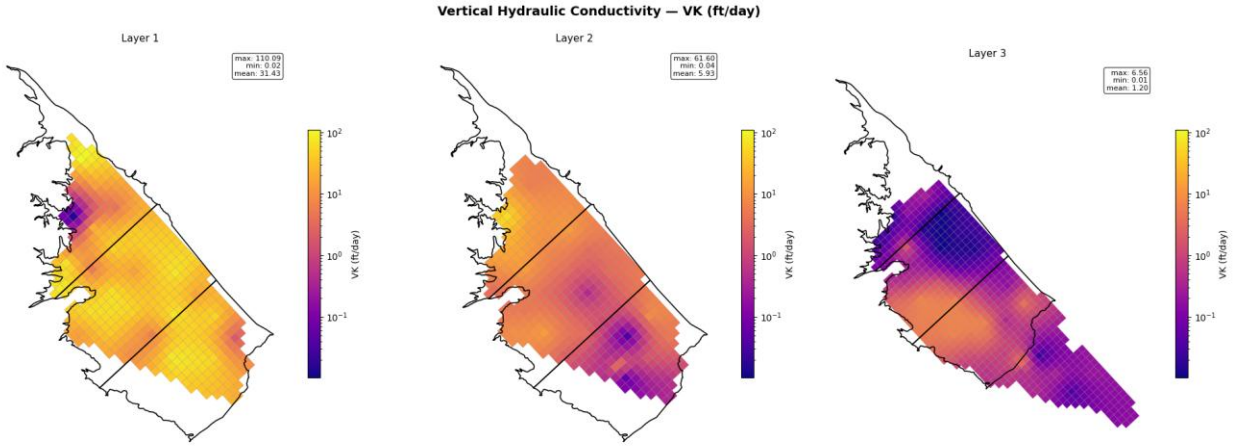


Figure 7. Spatial distribution of vertical hydraulic conductivity (VK, ft/day) across model Layers 1–3 simulated by BVHM.

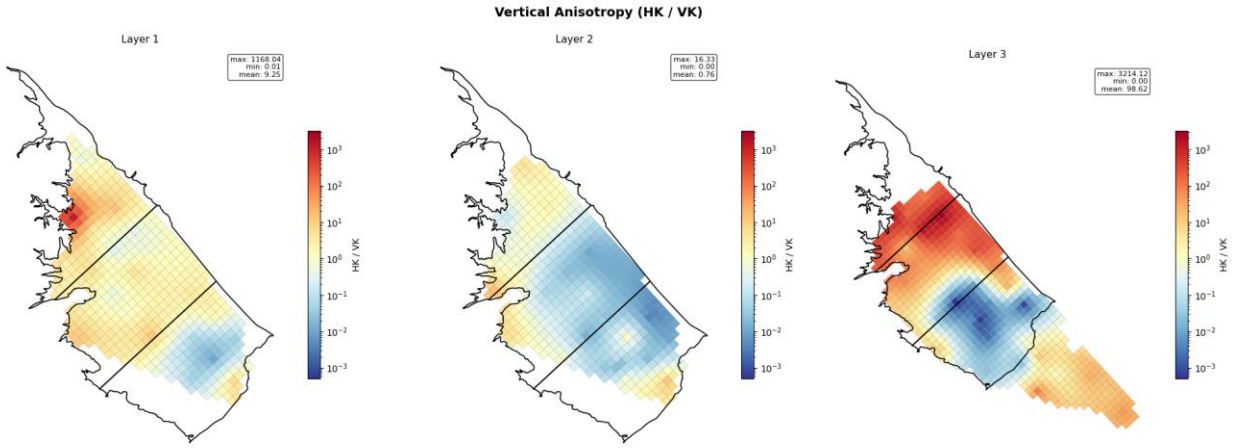


Figure 8. Spatial distribution of vertical anisotropy (HK/VK) across model Layers 1–3 as simulated by BVHM. Values less than one (blue) indicate VK exceeds HK, implying preferential vertical over lateral flow — a pattern inconsistent with expected sedimentary aquifer behavior and concentrated in the SMA across model layers.

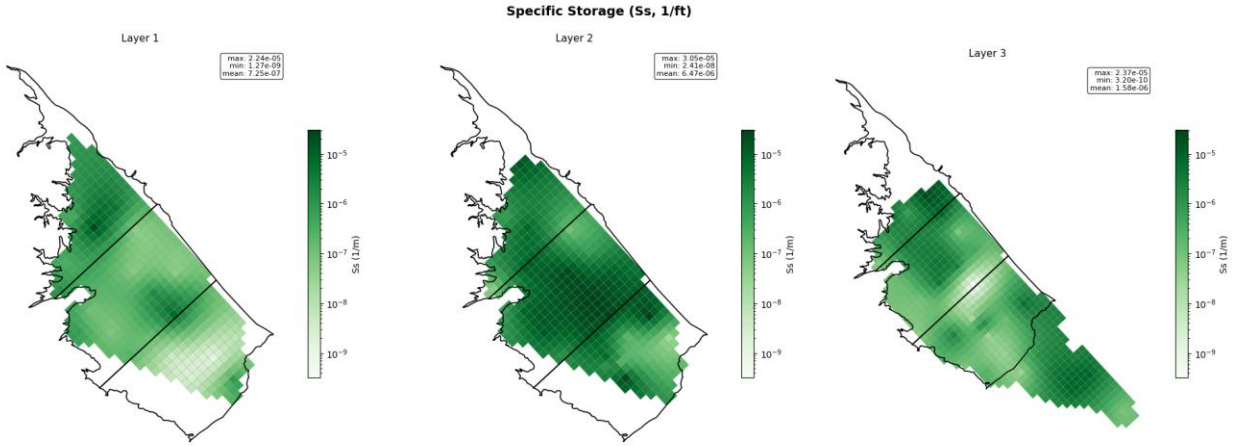


Figure 9. Spatial distribution of specific storage (S_s, 1/ft) across model Layers 1–3 as simulated by BVHM. Minimum values in the SMA are on the order of 10^{-9} and 10^{-10} 1/ft, well below expectations for a sedimentary aquifer system (on the order of 10^{-6} 1/ft).

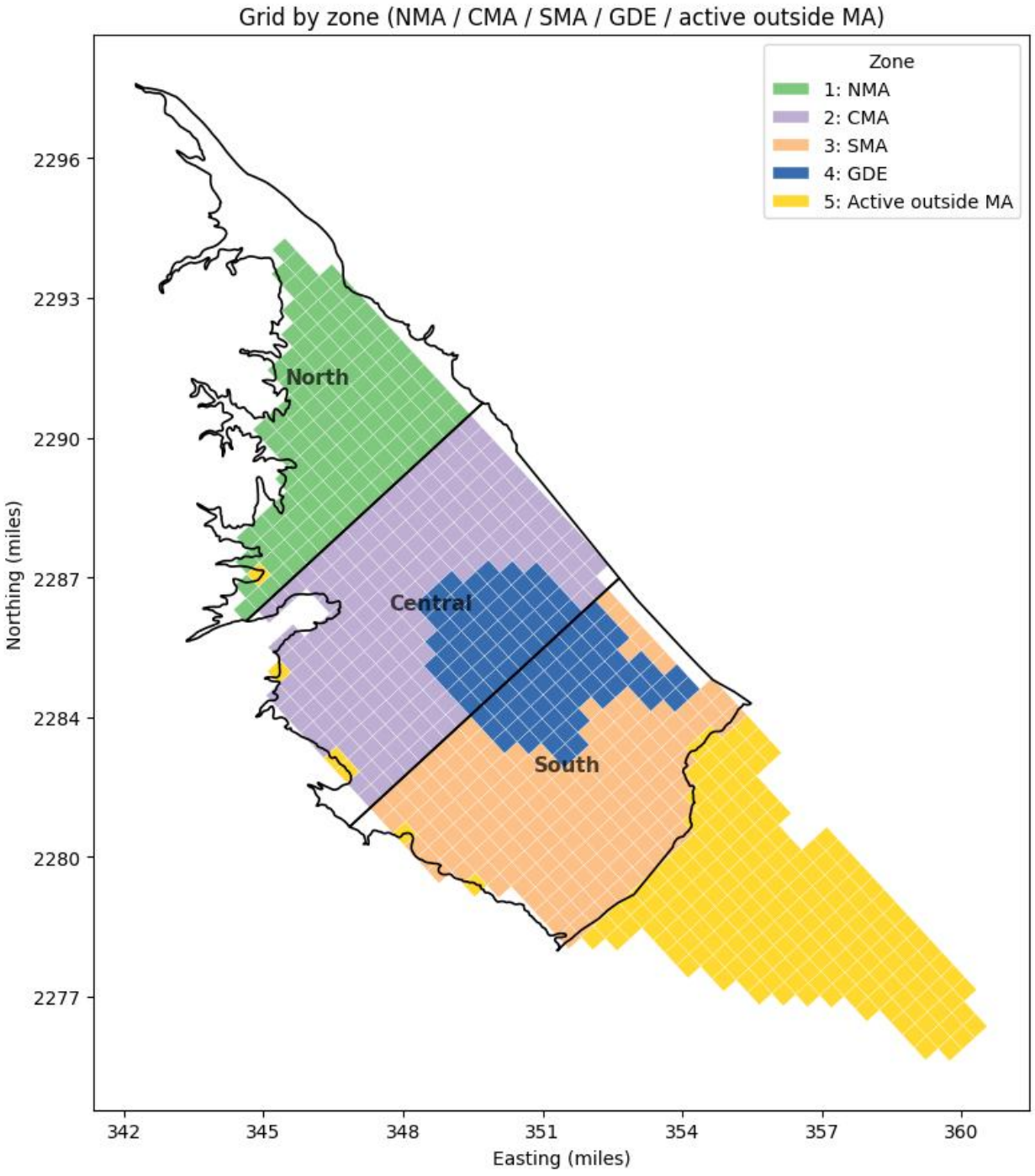


Figure 10. Model grid zones used for zone budget analysis, delineating the Northern Management Area (NMA), Central Management Area (CMA), Southern Management Area (SMA), groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE), and active cells outside the management areas.

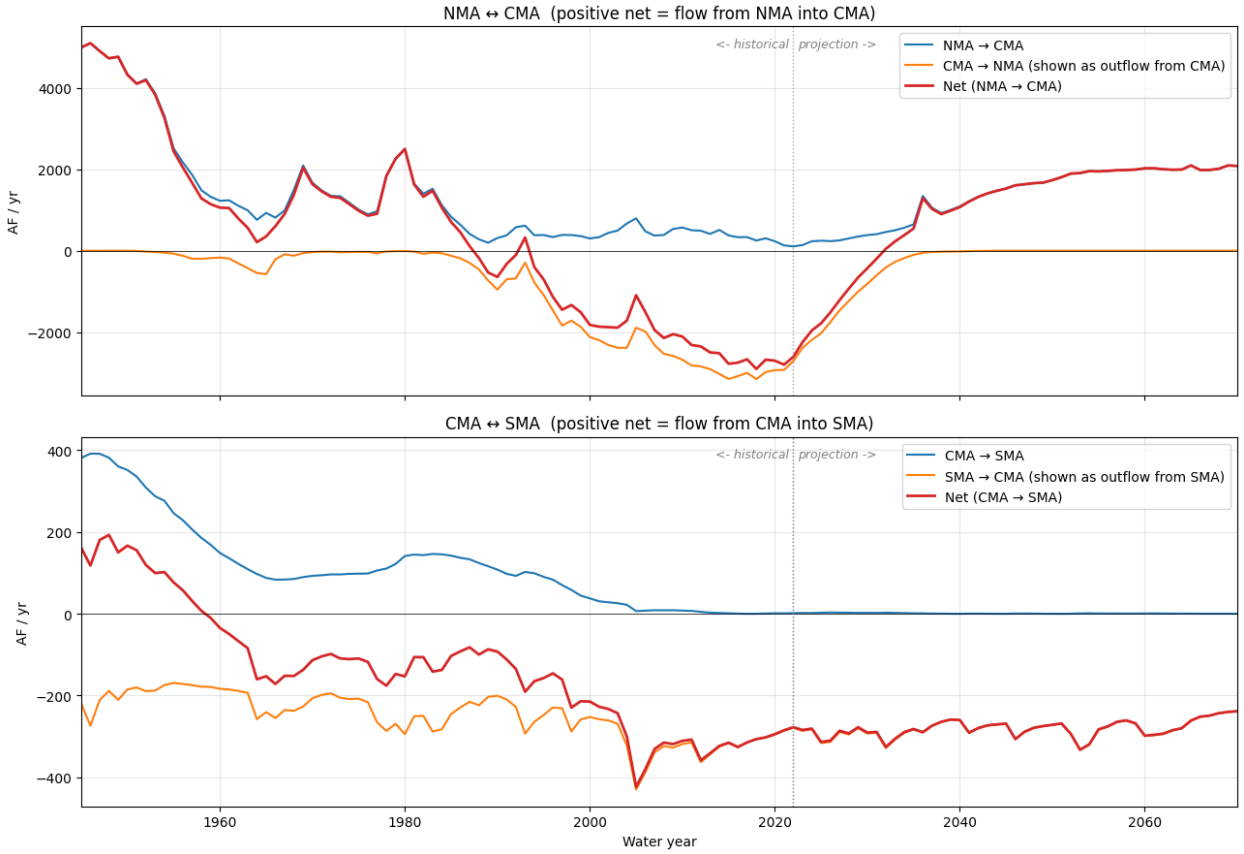


Figure 11. Simulated annual subsurface flux exchange between management areas (AF/yr) over the historical and projected periods. Each panel shows bidirectional flow (blue and orange lines) and the net exchange (red line); the orange line is plotted as negative to show outflow from the receiving area. (Top) NMA↔CMA: net flow was historically directed from the NMA into the CMA but has reversed under overdraft conditions, with projections indicating recovery toward net north-to-central flow under sustainable management. (Bottom) CMA↔SMA: exchanges are small relative to NMA↔CMA (order of a few hundred AF/yr). Historically, net flow was directed from the CMA into the SMA, but has shifted toward a net SMA-to-CMA direction under current conditions. Unlike the NMA↔CMA exchange, this reversal does not appear to recover under projected sustainable management scenarios.

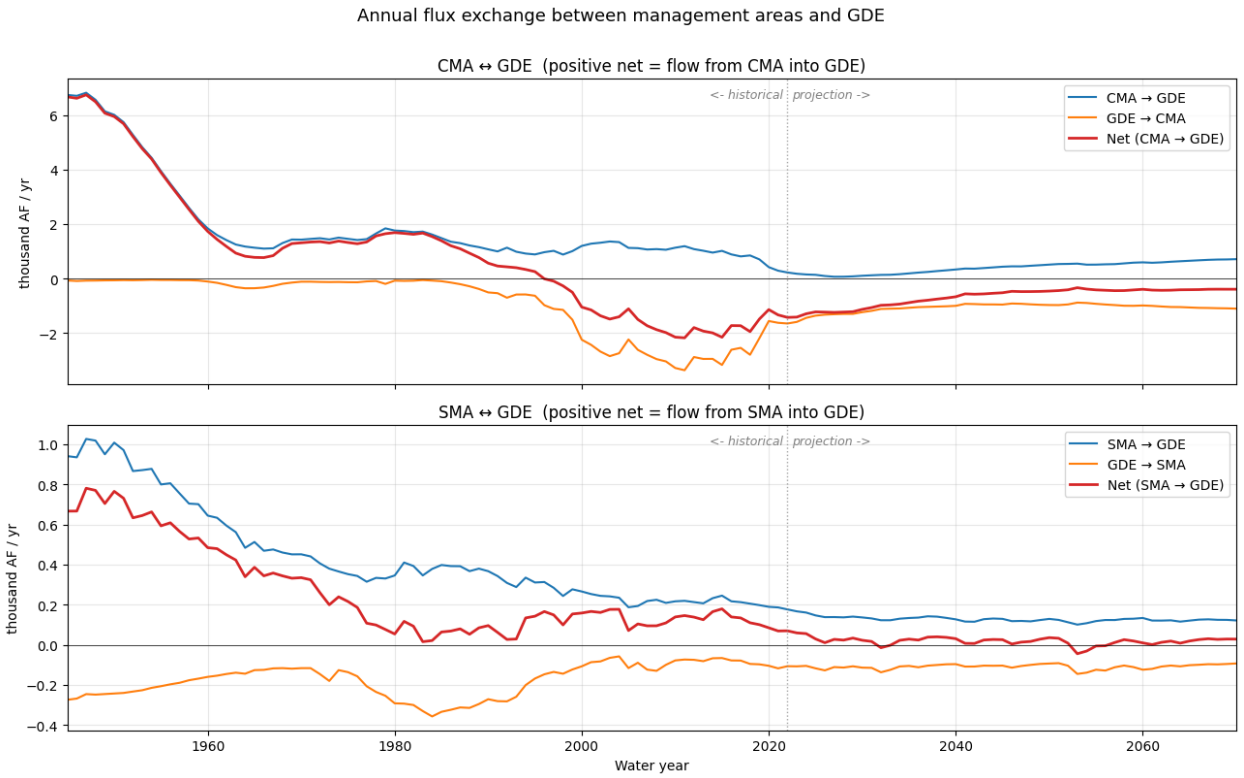


Figure 12. Simulated annual subsurface flux exchange between management areas and the GDE zone (thousand AF/yr) over the historical and projected periods. Each panel shows bidirectional flow (blue and orange lines) and the net exchange (red line); positive net values indicate flow into the GDE. (Top) CMA↔GDE: simulated net flux into the GDE from the CMA has declined substantially from predevelopment levels (~7,000 AF/yr) and reversed under overdraft, with only partial recovery projected. (Bottom) SMA↔GDE: simulated net flux from the SMA into the GDE has similarly declined from predevelopment levels (~1,000 AF/yr) and approaches zero under both current and projected conditions.

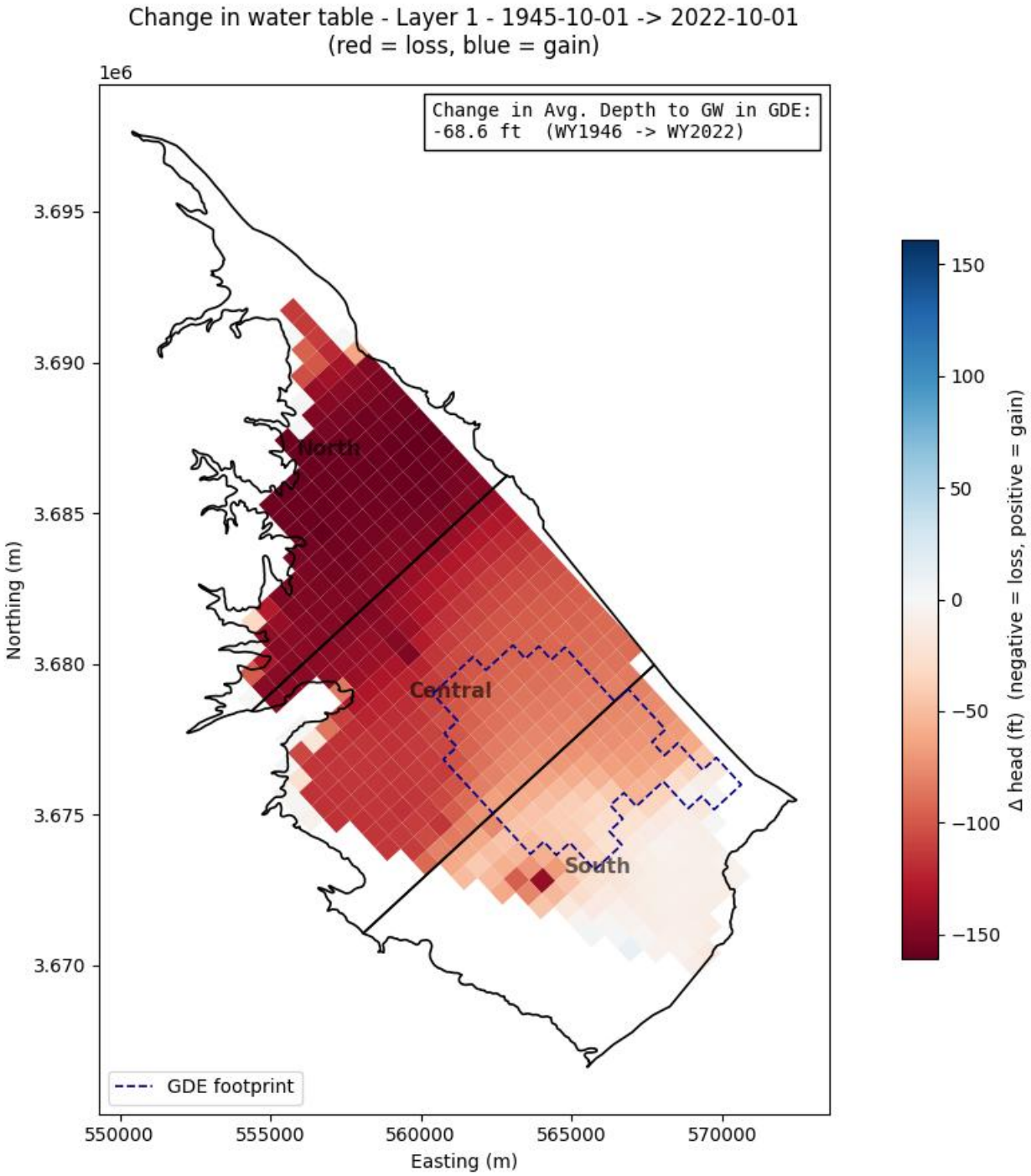


Figure 13. Simulated change in groundwater level (ft) in model Layer 1 between October 1945 and October 2022. Declines are basin-wide, with the largest losses concentrated in the NMA (exceeding 150 ft in some areas). Within the GDE footprint, the average simulated water table decline is 68.6 ft over this period.

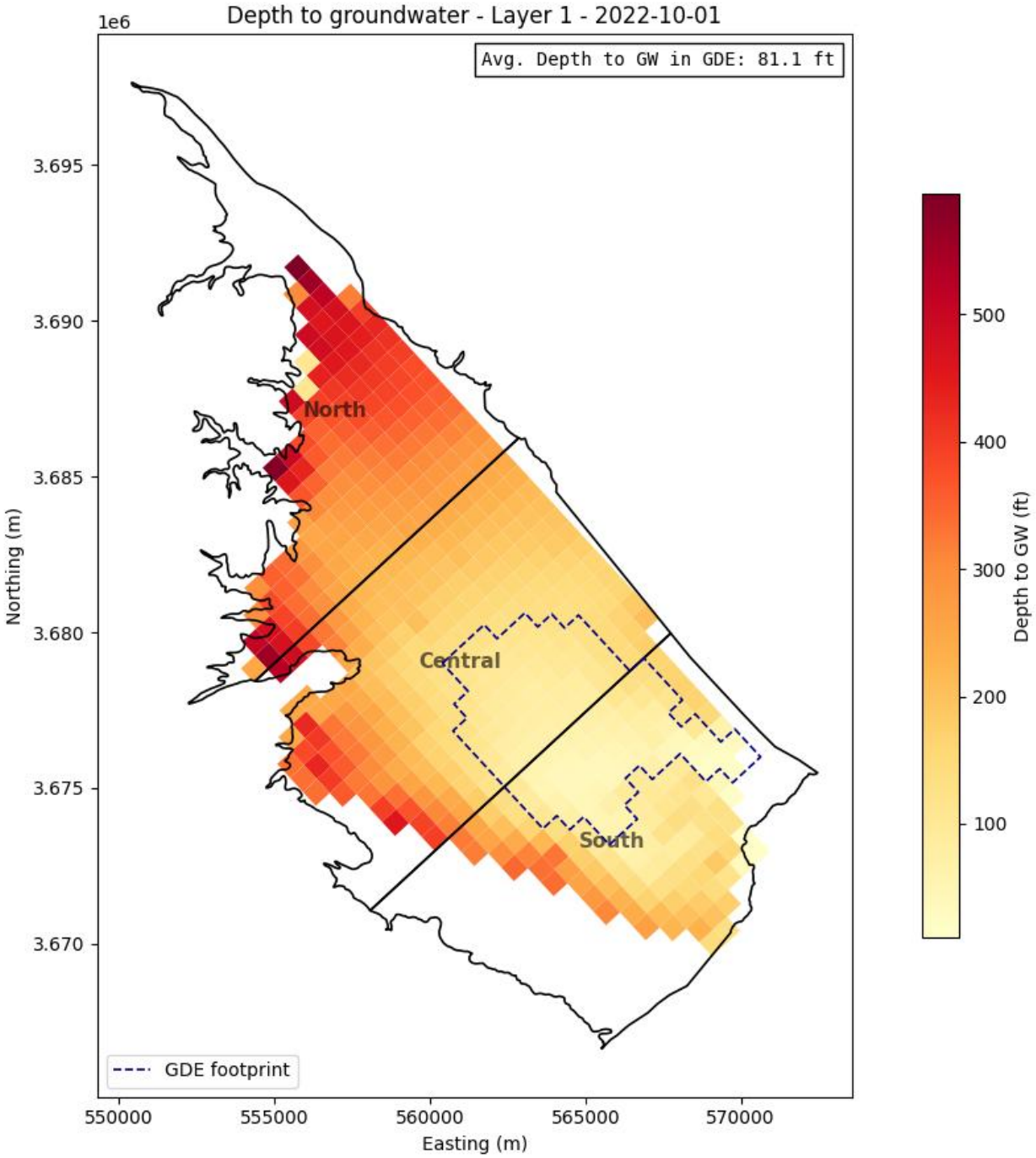


Figure 14. Simulated depth to groundwater (ft) in model Layer 1 as of October 1, 2022. The GDE footprint (dashed blue outline) overlies an area with an average simulated depth to groundwater of 81.1 ft bgs, which exceeds the rooting depth currently represented in the BVHM (~22.9 ft bgs) yet is above the deepest possible rooting depths reported by Fiore, Brigham, and The GDE Collaborative Team (2025).

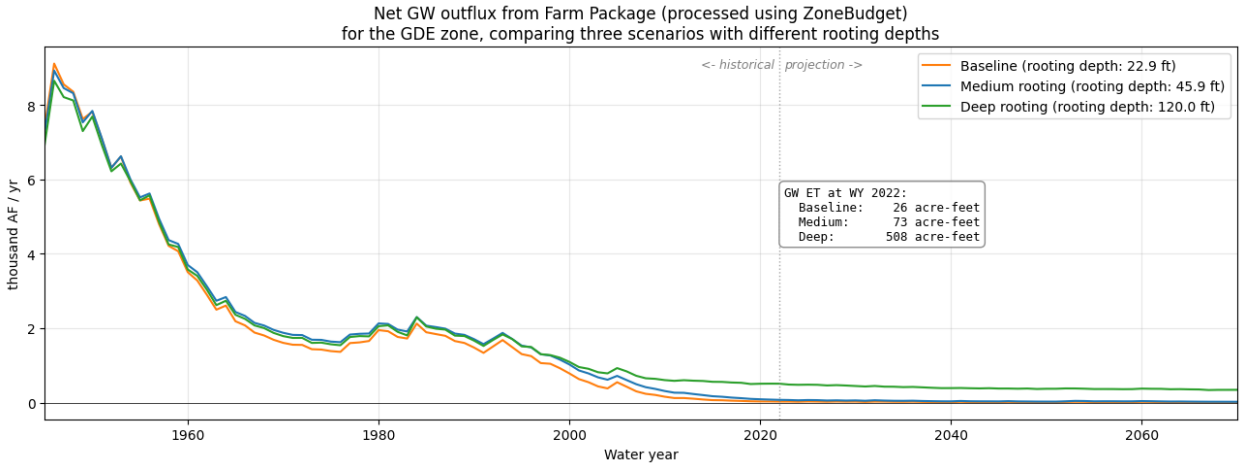


Figure 15. Net groundwater outflows from the Farm Package for the GDE zone (depicted in Figure 10), extracted using ZoneBudget, for three rooting depth scenarios. This represents an approximation of GDE groundwater use. Deepening the simulated rooting depth from 22.9 ft (baseline) to 45.9 ft (medium) and 120.0 ft (deep) increases simulated ET in WY 2022 from 26 to 73 and 508 acre-feet, respectively — all substantially below the predevelopment (~1945) value of approximately 8,000 acre-feet per year.

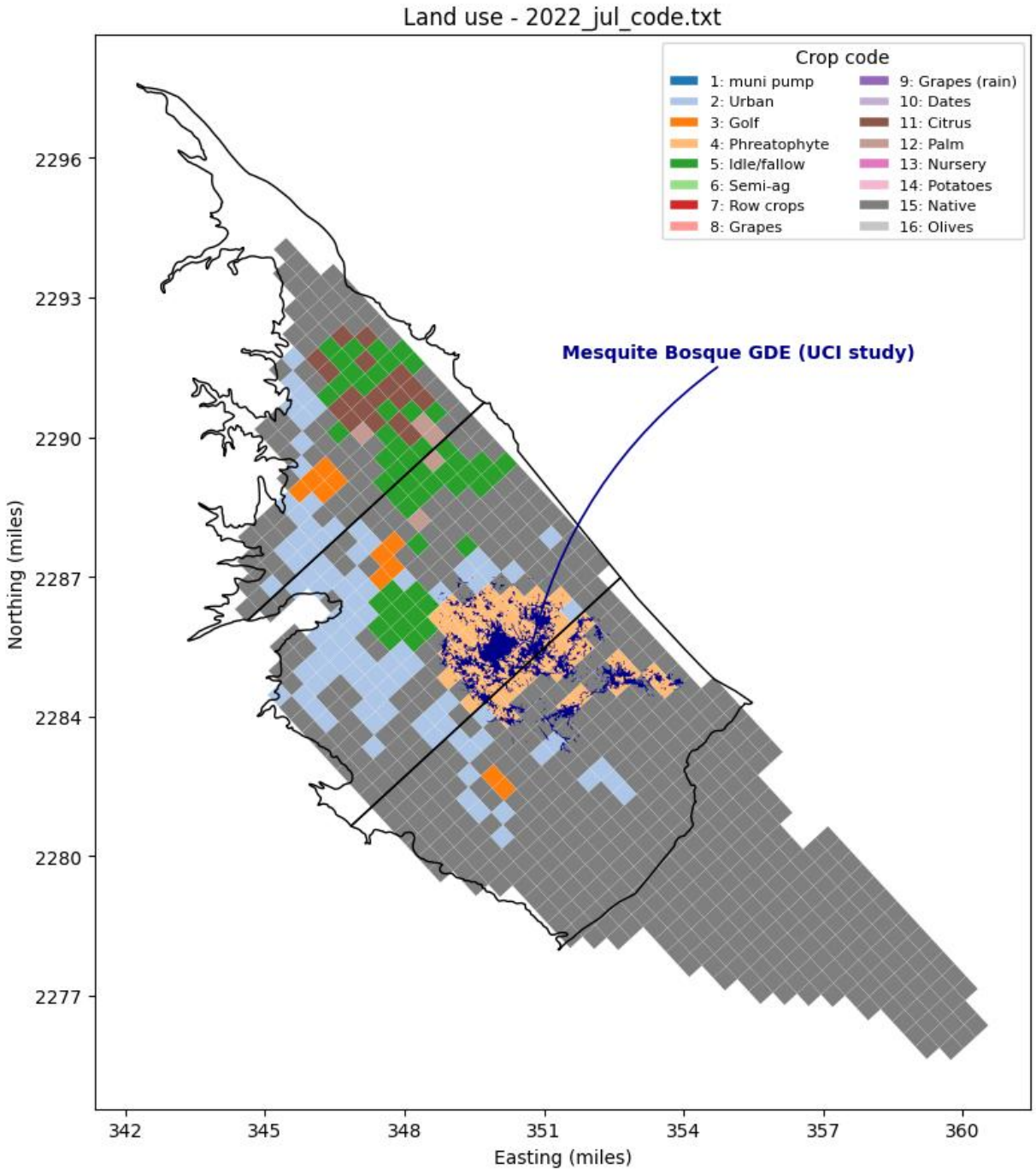


Figure 16. Simulated land use classification in the BVHM for July 2022. The phreatophyte land use class (orange) is spatially coincident with the mesquite bosque GDE footprint mapped by Fiore, Brigham, and The GDE Collaborative Team (2025; shown in dark blue), suggesting the phreatophyte class represents the bosque rather than a basin-wide distribution of phreatophytic vegetation. Tamarisk, which is distributed more broadly across the valley as a windbreak, does not appear as an explicit phreatophyte land use class in the model.

High-Level Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model Review

Presented to Borrego Water District

May 15, 2026

Presented by Yara Pasner, PhD
Trey Driscoll, PG, CHG
Marisa Earll

INTERA

Presentation Contents

1. Key Takeaways
2. Subsurface Exchanges Between Management Areas / GDE
3. Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model Re-evaluation
4. GDE Representation
5. Model Engine Update
6. Recommendations

INTERA

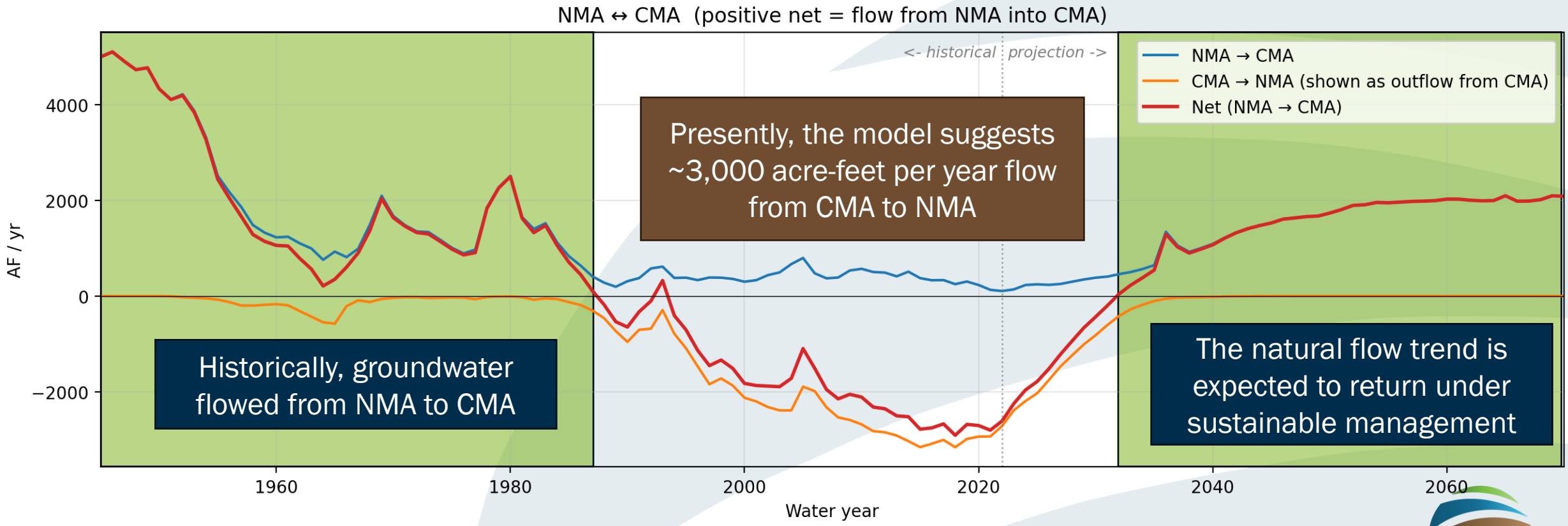
Key Takeaways

- Updating BVHM **hydrogeologic conceptual representation** would likely improve simulation of subsurface flow exchanges & pumping impacts

- The model may **underestimate water demands from GDEs** (groundwater dependent ecosystems)

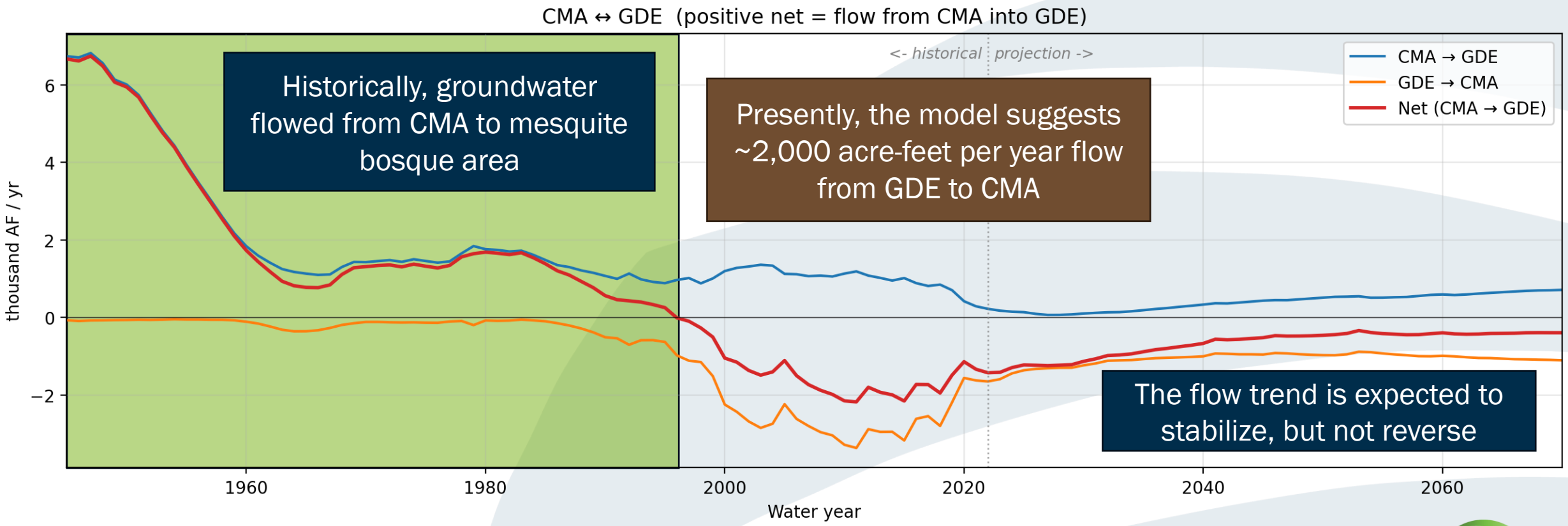
Subsurface Groundwater Exchanges

Flow from NMA into CMA may be a **key component** of future groundwater availability



Subsurface Groundwater Exchanges

Flow from CMA into mesquite bosque region may be a **key component** to supporting GDE



Subsurface Groundwater Exchanges

Consequence

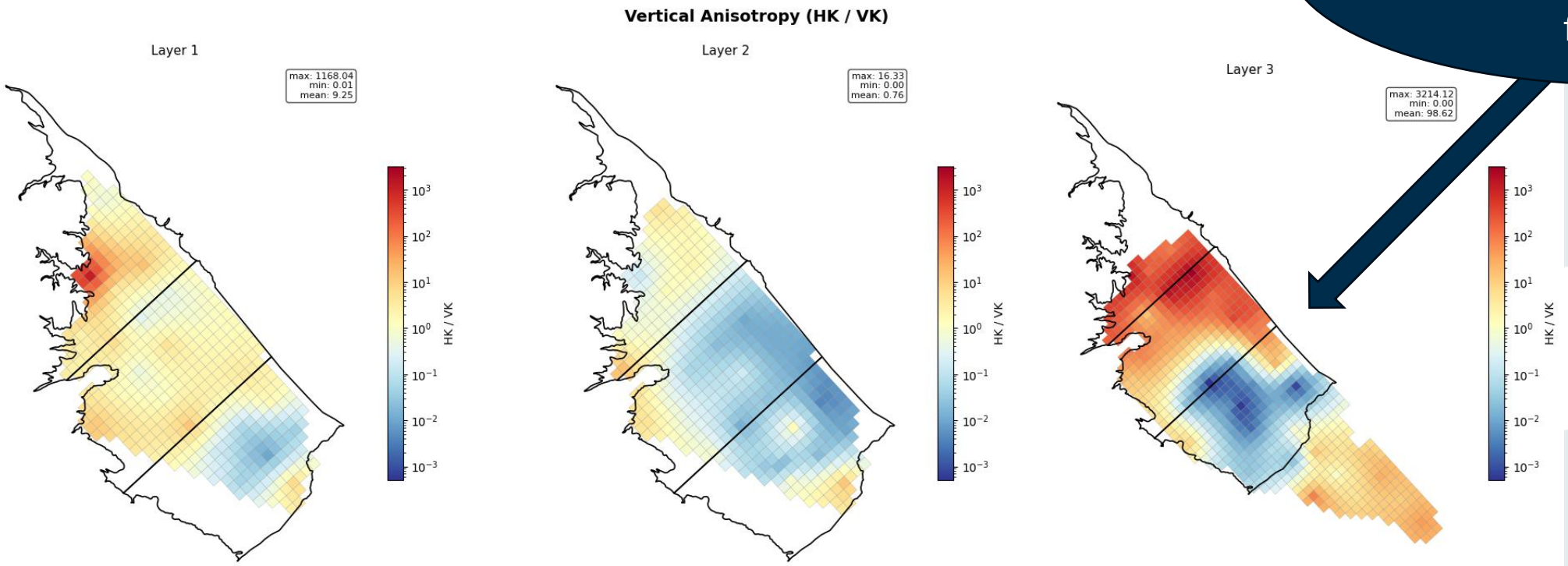
- If pumping moved northward, that might slow recovery of natural flow conditions & reduce groundwater availability in CMA and GDEs

Hydrogeologic Model Evaluation

BVHM simulates unrealistic aquifer parameters, particularly in CMA & SMA

Groundwater has propensity to flow vertically instead of laterally

- Unrealistic since clay impedes vertical flow



Areas in blue show where groundwater has freedom to move vertically more than is feasible

INTERA

Hydrogeologic Model Evaluation

BVHM simulates unrealistic aquifer parameters, particularly in CMA & SMA

Groundwater has propensity to flow vertically instead of laterally

- Unrealistic since clay impedes vertical flow

Consequences

- Subsurface groundwater exchange in CMA & SMA is uncertain
- May underestimate how far away pumping impacts reach

INTERA

Hydrogeologic Model Evaluation

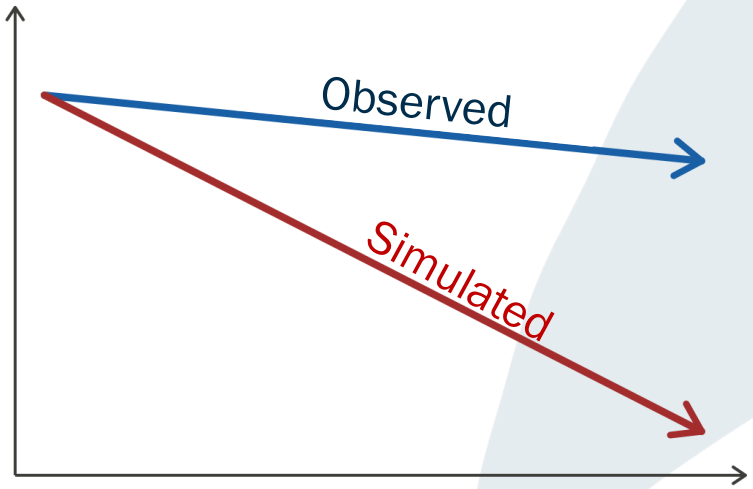
BVHM simulates unrealistic aquifer parameters, particularly in CMA & SMA

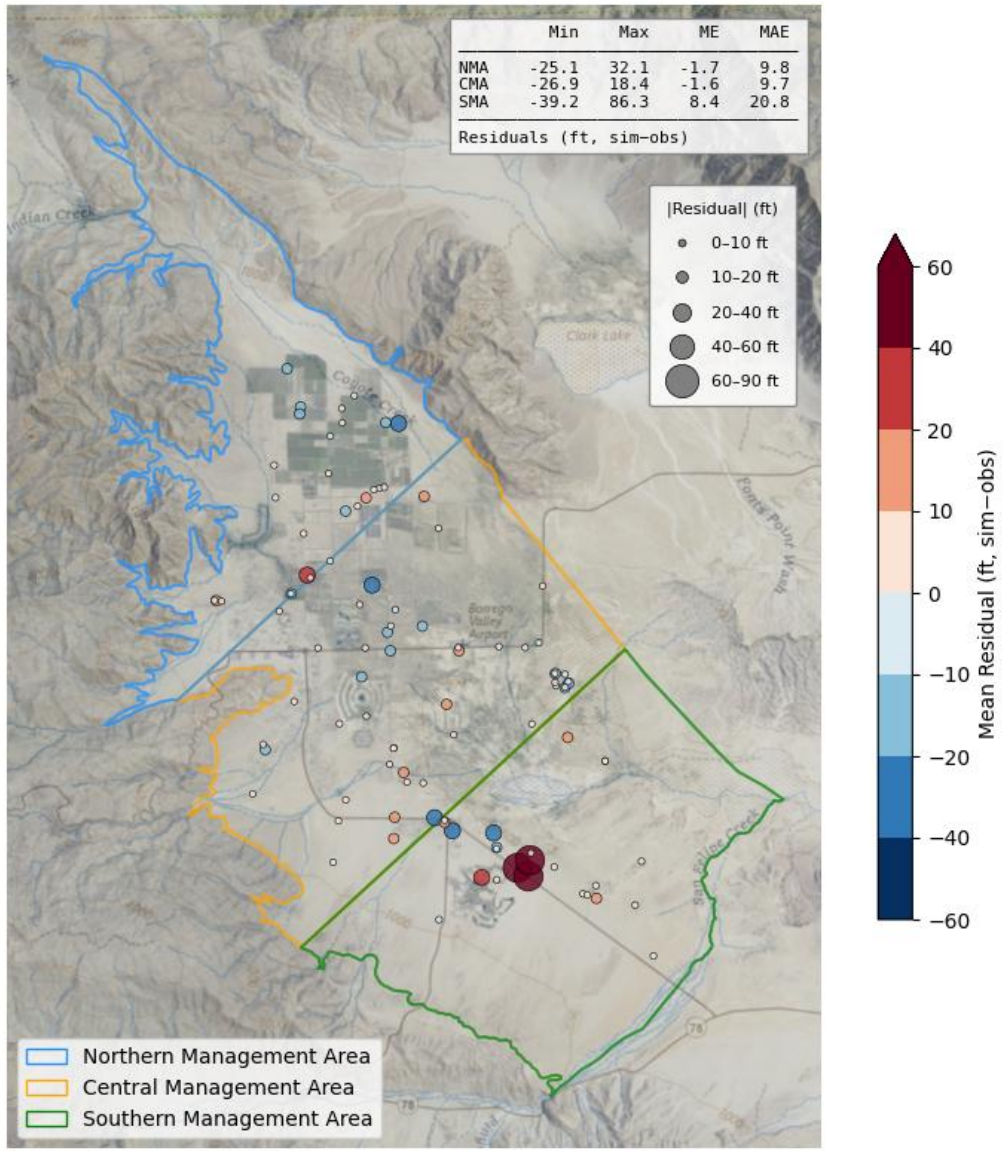
Storage values are too low:

- We expect values on the order of 10^{-6} 1/ft
- We see values approaching 10^{-9} 1/ft in some areas

Consequence:

- Big model errors
- Overestimated long-term decline in water levels





Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

BVHM may underestimate GDE water use

Documented rooting depths for mesquite species:

39 to 175 feet

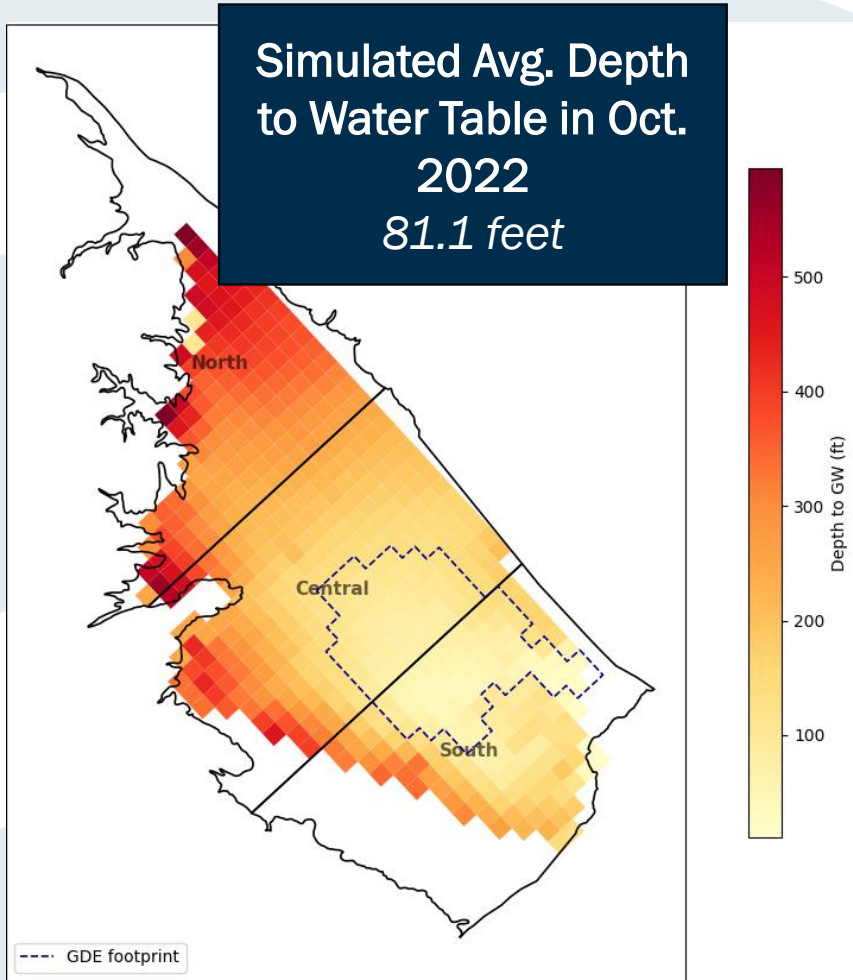
BVHM simulated rooting depth:

22.9 feet

Consequence

- Model simulates minimal water use in mesquite bosque region because the simulated water table is deeper than the simulated rooting depth

But more is going on than shallow rooting depths…



Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

BVHM may underestimate GDE water use

Baseline simulated mesquite bosque water use:

WY 1950: ~8,000 acre-feet per year

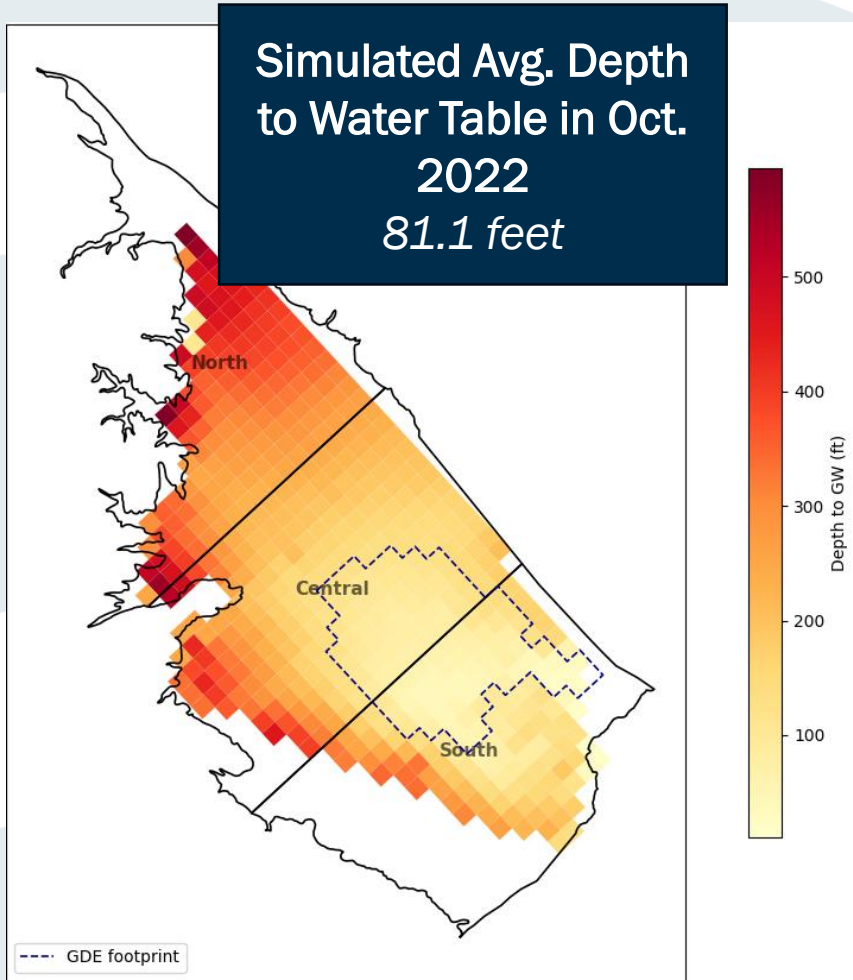
WY 2022: 26 acre-feet per year

Deeper simulated rooting depths (120 ft deep)

WY 2022: 508 acre-feet per year

Take-away

- Simulating deeper rooting depths didn't make as much of a difference as expected
- Further exploration & comparison against UC Irvine study of estimated GDE transpiration is needed



Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

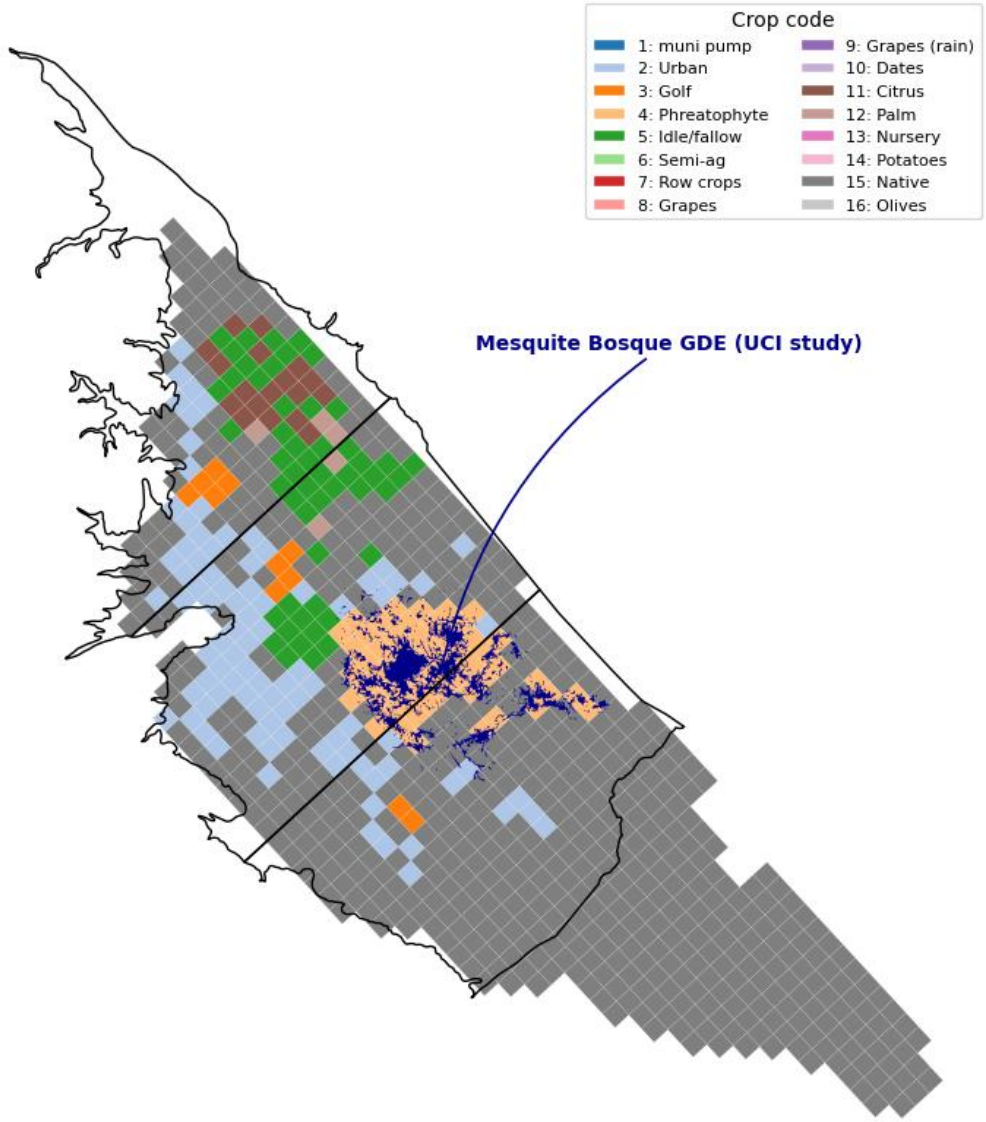
BVHM may underestimate GDE water use

Key GDE simulated in model appears to be mesquite bosque

- Phreatophyte land use class in BVHM corresponds with UC Irvine study

What about tamarisk?

- Often used as a windbreak
- Expected to be more distributed throughout the basin



Model Engine Update

Recommend we update to the new MODFLOW OWHM (v2.2.0)

What is a model engine?

- The tool we dump our data into!
- Presently we use the first version of MODFLOW One-Water Hydrologic Flow Model

Why should we update it?

- Can represent multiple land uses in the same cell
  - May make it easier to incorporate tamarisk into the model as explicit land use class
- Continued support & development
  - Dr. Scott Boyce at UC Davis (previously USGS)

INTERA

Recommendations

- Update hydrogeologic conceptual model to better represent the effect of pumping and subsurface flow exchanges
- Compare simulated mesquite bosque transpiration to UC Irvine study
- Explicitly simulate tamarisk groundwater use
- Update model engine to the new MODFLOW OWHM v2.2.0

To: Andy Malone, Samantha Adams, Lauren Salberg, West Yost
Borrego Watermaster Directors
Technical Advisory Committee Members
Environmental Working Group Members

Re: Full Text of Public Comments for May 20, 2026 WM Meeting now as Public Correspondence for Special Board Meeting on June 3, 2026

Date: May 26, 2026

The Watermaster's process for evaluating the UCI GDE Study has increasingly raised serious concerns regarding the Watermaster's scientific integrity, procedural fairness, and fiscal stewardship.

At issue is not merely whether the mesquite bosque around the Borrego Sink qualifies as a groundwater dependent ecosystem ("GDE"), but whether this Board is conducting a fair and objective review of the best available scientific information before it.

To date, the process has reflected a troubling pattern: information supporting the UCI Study has been minimized or excluded, while critiques of the study have been amplified, regardless of whether those critiques were subsequently answered by the UCI research team. This troubling pattern is exemplified by the following:

1. **This Board has refused to acknowledge — much less incorporate — the UCI team's written responses to every critique raised against the study.**

The UCI researchers responded in writing, with scientific references and technical explanation, to every question, concern, and critique aimed at the GDE Study and Report.

Yet those responses do not appear in either the final Technical Consultant Recommendation Report or the final TAC/EWG Recommendation Report. Supposedly the diligent reader with access to a computer and reading a digital copy of these Recommendation Reports could find this information in a zip file footnote, but these responses to critiques are not to be found in the formal final reports, nor do they appear to inform the final reports.

Why? On what basis are these responses excluded from the final reports?

How can this Board claim to be conducting a serious scientific review while excluding the actual responses of the researchers whose work is being criticized?

A credible scientific process does not simply collect criticisms and stop there. It also considers the responses to those criticisms.

Instead, the Watermaster appears to have created a process in which critiques are elevated while responses are effectively buried.

That is not scientific rigor.

2. **The Watermaster has disregarded the written opinion of a majority of its own TAC/EWG participants.**

Six of the ten unique, prequalified, and duly appointed TAC/EWG members submitted a signed written statement concluding that:

1. the UCI Report constitutes Best Available Science; and
2. the mesquite bosque qualifies as a groundwater dependent ecosystem.

These opinions were submitted by individuals specifically selected by the Watermaster to participate in the technical review process.

Yet the existence and substance of this majority opinion appears nowhere in the final TAC/EWG Recommendation Report.

The issue here is not whether the Board agrees with these experts. The issue is whether the Board can credibly claim to be conducting a balanced technical review while excluding the majority position of its own technical advisory participants from the record and discussion.

3. **The review process changed midstream in a manner that prevented consideration of the TAC/EWG majority position.**

In November 2025, the Technical Consultant established the Scope of Work for the review of the UCI GDE Report. Task #6 of this Scope of Work explicitly noted that TAC/EWG members would have an opportunity in April 2026 to provide "additional feedback" for inclusion in the final TAC/EWG Recommendation Report.

Consistent with that process, on April 8, 2026, a member of the EWG submitted to the Technical Consultant and Watermaster staff a document signed by six TAC/EWG members affirming that the UCI report represented Best Available Science and that the mesquite bosque is a GDE.

However, at the April 15th meeting of the Watermaster, the Technical Consultant requested Board "guidance" regarding whether those submissions should be considered.

Directors Smith and Bilyk advised that the statements should be disregarded, in part because the Technical Consultant implied this information was only available to him via this author's Public Correspondence. The Technical Consultant failed to mention he had also received the identical information from a member of the EWG. Directors Smith and Bilyk also opined the statements

should be disregarded because the Watermaster and staff have insufficient time to review the material. Interested readers may listen to this guidance provided by Directors Smith and Bilyk on the recording of the April 15, 2026 meeting of the Watermaster between 3 hours 43 minutes and 3 hours51 minutes.

This rationale for excluding the majority opinion is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the entirety of this majority opinion is 108 words long and was submitted within the previously established review timeline.

Moreover, the Technical Consultant had for months represented to TAC/EWG participants that April feedback would be accepted and incorporated into the final recommendation process. That published timeline appears again today in Table 1 on page 27 of 134 of the Watermaster Board Packet.

Director Jorgensen objected to excluding the opinions of these six reviewers and submitted the document a second time, but they nevertheless still remain absent from the final report.

This sequence of events creates the appearance that procedural rules were altered only after it became clear that a majority of TAC/EWG participants supported the UCI conclusions.

That appearance undermines confidence in the integrity of this review process.

4. **The Watermaster appears poised to disregard input from The Nature Conservancy despite its statewide scientific collaboration with DWR on GDE issues.**

The May 6, 2026 Public Correspondence submitted by The Nature Conservancy deserves serious consideration. This letter affirms the UCI GDE Study and Report is the best available science regarding the mesquite bosque and that the mesquite bosque is a groundwater dependent ecosystem as defined by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014.

The Nature Conservancy is not merely an advocacy organization. It is a recognized scientific and conservation institution that collaborates extensively with the California Department of Water Resources on groundwater dependent ecosystem issues throughout the state. I anticipate there will be no mention of this letter in today's discussion except perhaps to note it is merely Public Correspondence from an advocacy organization. (There was no discussion of this letter at the May 20, 2026 meeting of the Watermaster.)

The Watermaster Board's refusal to engage in meaningful discussion of this correspondence further reinforces the perception that only information supporting a predetermined outcome is being given weight in this process.

5. **Serious concerns now exist regarding fiscal stewardship due to a conflict of interest of the Technical Consultant.**

To date, approximately $45,000 has been budgeted and spent on the Technical Consultant's review process of the UCI GDE Study, yet the process has only produced increasing procedural

controversy while delaying clear resolution of the underlying issue. In fact, the Technical Consultant now proposes to spend another $35,000 to create a plan to develop a study that would take us back to where we were four years ago studying “potential GDE’s.”

At a minimum, the Board should carefully consider whether the current process is advancing scientific understanding or instead generating unnecessary cost, confusion, and erosion of public trust.

At this point, the central question before the Board is larger than the UCI Study itself. The question is whether the Watermaster intends to conduct an objective review guided by science, transparency, and fairness — or whether the process has become one designed primarily to justify disregarding conclusions the Board does not wish to accept.

Sincerely yours,

J. David Garmon, M.D.
President, TCDC

JDG: ms

230 West Palm St., San Diego, CA 92103
Phone 858 535-9121 Fax 858 535-9156

Borrego Springs Watermaster
Board of Directors Meeting
June 3, 2026
AGENDA ITEM III.A

To: Board of Directors

From: Samantha Adams, Executive Director

Date: May 29, 2026

Subject: Consideration of Approval of Changes to the 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update

✓ **Recommended Action**	☐ **Provide Direction to Staff**	☐ **Information and Discussion**
☐ **Fiscal Impact**	☐ **Cost Estimate: $**	

Recommended Actions

1) Approve the recommended changes to the 5-Year Assessment Report based on public feedback, as described herein.

2) Direct Staff to prepare the draft final 5-Year Assessment of the Groundwater Management Plan and 2026 Groundwater Management Plan Update for publication by June 12, 2026, incorporating any approved changes per (1) above.

3) Direct Staff to send notice to the Parties on June 12, 2026 of the Watermaster Board's intent to consider approval to amend the Judgment to replace the current Exhibit 1 (2020 GMP) with the 2026 GMP Update at its June 24, 2026 Board meeting.

Fiscal Impact: None. The work is included in the approved, amended budget for WY 2026.

Regulatory Context

The Borrego Springs Subbasin (Basin) is managed under a court-approved Stipulated Judgment and Groundwater Management Plan (GMP), which together constitute the Physical Solution for achieving sustainable groundwater management under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) as an Alternative Plan. The 2020 GMP is incorporated in the Judgment as Exhibit 1. As such, any changes to the GMP require an amendment to the Judgment to replace Exhibit 1 with an updated GMP.

On June 25, 2021, the Watermaster submitted the Judgment and GMP to the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) as an Alternative Plan under SGMA. On February 25, 2025, DWR approved the Borrego Springs Alternative Plan. All Alternative Plans, including any changes made thereto, must be resubmitted to the DWR for re-evaluation every five years.

In its approval of the Alternative Plan, the DWR provided seven recommended corrective actions (RCAs) for Watermaster consideration, with the intent of enhancing the approach to achieve sustainability. The approval also provided a due date of June 25, 2026 for resubmission of the Alternative Plan and completion of the first "periodic evaluation", what has been referred to by Watermaster as the 5-Year Assessment of the GMP.

Agenda Item Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to (1) present the recommended revisions to the draft *Five-Year Assessment of the Judgment and Groundwater Management Plan for the Borrego Springs Subbasin* (5-Year Assessment Report) and draft *2026 Update to the* Groundwater *Management Plan for the Borrego Springs Subbasin* (2026 GMP Update), based on public feedback and (2) receive direction to prepare the draft final reports for consideration of approval for submission to the Court and DWR on June 24, 2025.

5-Year Assessment and GMP Update Process

Over the past year and a half, the Watermaster has been working to perform the 5-Year Assessment and update the 2020 GMP, as appropriate. This assessment and reporting effort involved evaluating current Basin conditions, incorporating new monitoring data and model projections into management considerations, evaluating the effectiveness of the management actions defined in the Judgment and GMP, and addressing DWR's RCAs. The process included facilitating Board, TAC, and stakeholder input through monthly workshops, all of which were open to the public.

The work has culminated in the preparation of two documents for submittal to the Court and DWR:

- **5-Year Assessment Report**, which evaluates Basin conditions, implementation progress, progress toward the Sustainability Goal, and describes responses to the DWR's RCAs. Additionally, the 5-Year Assessment Report explains all the proposed updates to the GMP. The reporting period covered in the report is through September 30, 2025.
- **2026 GMP Update**, which incorporates Board-approved revisions to the 2020 GMP. All changes to the 2020 GMP are shown in redline text.

Administrative draft reports were published on March 11, 2026 for Board input and feedback. Watermaster staff hosted a Special Board Workshop on March 17 and 18 (open to the public) to provide the Board with an overview of the draft reports and solicit verbal feedback. Board members were then given time to submit any additional written comments. At its April 15, 2026 Board meeting, Staff presented recommended edits to the reports based on comments received from the Board members and the Board approved the incorporation of Staff's recommended edits.

Public review drafts of the two reports, inclusive of Board-approved edits, were published on April 24, 2026, commencing a 30-day public comment period. The public draft reports are available at the link

provided via footnote.[1] Watermaster held a virtual public information session on April 30, 2026[2] to provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and submit comments on the draft reports.

The public comment period closed on May 26, 2026. One comment letter was received and is available at the link provided via footnote.[3]

Public Comments on the 5-Year Assessment and 2026 GMP Update Reports

During the April 30, 2026 public information session, the public submitted comments verbally and through the GoToMeeting chat feature. Additionally, as noted above, Watermaster received one written comment letter during the comment period.

Attachment A to this memo documents the comments received during the April 30th public information session and the 53-page comment letter. Nearly all public comments, including the written comment letter, were related to the UCI Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Study Report. Generally, the comments focused on:

- Concern that the results of the UCI GDE Study Report are not documented in the draft reports
- Concern that exclusion of the UCI Study would delay Watermaster action on the report information until the next five-year assessment
- Recommendations to include GDE-related data from the UCI Study Report and reassess sustainability conclusions accordingly

Other minor feedback was focused on:

- The ability of Watermaster to address the public comments in the short time between the close of the public comment period and the approval of the final reports
- Concern about the use of the BHVM given uncertainty in the model results in some areas of the Basin
- Interest in how climate change was considered in the 5-Year Assessment
- Interest in the implication of potential future reductions of wells in the monitoring program with respect to the Watermaster's ability to understand water quality conditions

Proposed Responses to Public Comments Received on the Draft Reports

Based on public comments received, no changes to the 2026 GMP Update are recommended. Staff recommends the following revisions to the 5-Year Assessment Report**:**

[1] The public draft reports are available at: https://westyost-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/p/lsalberg/IgB2aqkHZu2ITbBAABbjKoaTAUws3HeftRqIiq_q5pVCh2k?e=P6HwnK

[2] The April 30th meeting recording and presentation are posted on the Watermaster's website at: https://borregospringswatermaster.com/stakeholder-outreach/

[3] Available at: https://borregospringswatermaster.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/20260526_KickligherH_2026-GMP-Comments.pdf

- Expand the discussion in *Chapter 2.2.5 – Environmental Working Group* to summarize the conclusions and recommendations contained in the UCI GDE Study Report that will be reviewed by Watermaster in accordance with its policy on Best Available Science.
- Add a new subsection to *Chapter 1 – Regulatory Background and Assessment Objectives* to summarize the workshop/outreach process and timeline that was followed to prepare the draft reports. This change is intended to address concerns about meaningful consideration of public comments.
- Add a new Appendix D documenting public comments received and Watermaster responses. Attachment A to this memo is the proposed Appendix D. Because of the similarity of comments across commentors, responses have been organized by topic rather than responding individually to each comment.

Staff is requesting Board direction to: 1) prepare and publish the draft final reports in consideration of the recommended changes listed above and, 2) provide email notice to the Parties and interested stakeholders of the Watermaster's intent to consider approval of amending the Judgment to replace the current Exhibit 1 (2020 GMP) with the 2026 GMP Update at its June 24, 2026 meeting.

Next Steps

Upon direction, the next steps to complete the draft final 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update are to:

- Compile the final 2026 GMP Update PDF document.
- Incorporate the Board-approved changes in the 5-Year Assessment Report.
- Prepare Table ES-2 of the 5-Year Assessment Report. Table ES-2 provides the DWR-required crosswalk mapping of the Alternative Plan (e.g. the Judgment and 2026 GMP Update) to the requirements of a GSP. The crosswalk was originally prepared in June 2021 for the original Court-approved Alternative Plan to DWR. The updated crosswalk will only have minor updates to the page numbers of the 2026 GMP Update. This is the final step to finalize the report because Table ES-2 must include ***exact*** page references to a compiled PDF document of the Judgment and all of its exhibits, which includes the 2026 GMP Update as Exhibit 1.

If the Board approves the recommended actions, the schedule to complete and submit the 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update is as follows:

- **June 12, 2026:**
    - Publish Draft Final Reports
    - Email notice of intent to consider amending the Judgment to replace Exhibit 1 with the 2026 GMP Update
- **June 24, 2026** - Special Board meeting to:
    - Consider approval of the 2026 GMP Update and 5-Year Assessment Report
    - Consider approval to amend the Judgment to replace Exhibit 1 with the 2026 GMP Update

- Direct staff to submit the reports to the DWR and file with the Court
- Direct Legal Counsel to file a Motion with the Court to Amend the Judgment, with notice to all Parties, and schedule a hearing with the Court as soon as a Court date is available.

- **June 25, 2026**
  - Submit the final 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update to DWR
  - Legal Counsel files Motion to amend the Judgment

Enclosures

Attachment A. Response to Public Comments (draft Appendix D of 5-Year Assessment Report)

Appendix D
Response to Public Comments on the Draft 5-Year GMP Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update

Attachment A. Response to Public Comments on the Draft 5-Year GMP Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update

Watermaster received and responded to comments on the April 24, 2026 public review drafts of *the 5-Year Assessment of the Groundwater Management Plan for the Borrego Springs Subbasin* (5-Year Assessment Report) and the *2026 Update to the Groundwater Management Plan for the Borrego Springs Groundwater Subbasin* (2026 GMP Update). The following comments were received:

- **Comments received during the April 30, 2026 Public Information Session.** Watermaster Staff held a virtual public information session on the 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update on April 30, 2026 from 1:30 – 3:15 pm.[1] The meeting followed the release of the public drafts of the two reports on April 24, 2026. The release of the public drafts commenced a 30-day public comment period in which the Watermaster accepted written comments for consideration prior to (1) adopting the reports for submittal to the DWR by June 25, 2026, and (2) amending the Judgment to replace Exhibit 1, the 2020 GMP, with the 2026 GMP Update.

  The public information session included a presentation by Watermaster Staff that summarized the GMP assessment and update process, key findings from the work performed, and the updates made to the GMP. In total, 21 people attended the meeting. The public asked questions and made comments throughout the presentation verbally and via the chat feature on the GoTo Meeting platform.

- **Written comments from Holly Smit Kickligher[2] received on May 26, 2026**

Due to similarity of the feedback across commentors, responses have been organized by topic rather than responding individually to each comment. Written comments, as-received in the GoTo Meeting message feature during the April 30, 2026 Public Information Session, are listed for each topic.

Comments on the UCI GDE Study Report

Comments from the Public Information Session: The majority of public questions and comments received during the public comment period were related to the University of California (UCI) Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Study Report that was published in May 2025. Several members of the public raised concerns that the results of the UCI GDE Study Report are not presented in the draft document, emphasized the importance of incorporating the results from the UCI GDE Study Report in the draft reports, and expressed concern that delaying action until the next five-year assessment would result in further impacts to the Basin.

The specific comments and questions received during the April 30th Public Information Session on the topic of the UCI GDE Study Report included:

[1] Meeting materials are available on the Watermaster's website at: https://borregospringswatermaster.com/stakeholder-outreach/

[2] Available at: https://borregospringswatermaster.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/20260526_KickligherH_2026-GMP-Comments.pdf

- "Where in the 5 Year Assessment Report, and the proposed Update to the Groundwater Management Plan, are presented the results of the UC Irvine research on the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem drawing on the aquifer in the Borrego Subbasin?"
- "Even if considered preliminary, the GDE results need to be cited, along with how the plan might need to change before the next 5 year review, based on the ongoing severe damage and Undesirable effects to the extensive mesquite bosque that forms the foundation of the local ecosystems. SGMA seeks to arrest ecosystem decline; waiting another 5 years is unacceptable. How can we implement a process change to get field measurement results considered and acted on before further irreparable and Undesirable effects under SGMA's mandate?"
- "It is my understanding that the GDE for the Subbasin was presented before September 2025. Why is not included? We lose five years before it can addressed if not included."
- "What about any potential CEQA impacts from harming the ecosystem by increasing the SY when the GDE studies were trickling in all throughout 5 years. Its akin to asking hostages to hold out 5 years without water."
- "I concur with Holly's comments [comment listed above]. By now the declining mesquite bosque GDE identified in the UC Irvine research should definitely be included within the map and current discussion under SIGMA requirements. Another 5 year delay -- with data in hand -- is unacceptable because such a delay may cause irreparable damage to the GDE. Please act to prevent further delay re: the identified GDE ASAP."
- "You need to put the GDE numbers into the report to address GDEs. If we take some of the GDE numbers into account, our numbers aren't real. I want this addressed in this report because I don't see this as waiting until later. It changes the picture when you consider the numbers from the GDE. Report. This report shows a glowing story but the GDE Study Report is showing a different story."
- "We *may* be on track to required sustainability... unless the likely validity of the new GDE results in additional groundwater that must be allocated under SGMA to the survival and recovery of the GDE (mesquite bosque)... Another reason to expedite acceptance of the new GDE results."
- "I concur with the last speaker... The long term reduction in groundwater actually raises the urgency of acknowledging -- at this juncture, not months or a year into the future -- that the mesquite bosque GDE should get an urgent seat at the adjudication table. That, in turn, needs to be immediately factored into the current reports."

Comments from Ms. Kickligher's letter: Additionally, the core theme of the May 26, 2026 53-page comment letter from Ms. Kickligher was related to the UCI GDE Study. The commenter believes the Mesquite Bosque near the Borrego Sink should be treated as an existing or likely GDE/beneficial user of groundwater and that the 2026 GMP Update and 5-Year Assessment Report do not adequately evaluate, disclose, or respond to the UCI study before increasing the Sustainable Yield and finalizing the reports. The commenter asks Watermaster to add more analysis now, rather than deferring GDE-related decisions to a future assessment cycle. The following summarizes[3] the comments on this topic:

[3] This is a summarization based on understanding of the letter.

Appendix D
Response to Comments on the Draft Water Year 2025 Annual Report

- Add discussion of the Mesquite Bosque as a potential GDE and potentially sensitive beneficial user of groundwater in the South Management Area
- Add the completed TAC/EWG review of the UCI GDE Study into both reports and include TAC/EWG recommendations as potential new or developing PMAs for the next five-year period
- Revise the reports to reflect the outcome of the May 2026 “best available science” review
- Revise Sections 2.2.5, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6 of the 5-Year GMP Assessment Report to summarize the findings and updates from the UCI GDE Study Report
- Revise Sustainable Management Criteria discussions to address possible GDE impacts
- Revise PMA discussions to evaluate whether existing PMAs are adequate if the Mesquite Bosque is confirmed as a GDE
- Re-evaluate or reconsider the increase in Sustainable Yield from 5,700 AFY to 7,952 AFY based on the findings from the UCI GDE Study Report
- Add an explanation about whether the review of the UCI GDE Study Report as “best available science” can be completed before finalizing the 5-year assessment report process and submitting the reports to DWR
- Include discussion of whether perched groundwater use still qualifies as groundwater dependence under SGMA definitions for GDEs
- Add discussion of environmental compliance obligations in relation to PMAs and GDEs, such as: CEQA, ESA, Clean Water Act, County biological ordinances and MSCP
- Add discussion of potential water quality impacts affecting the Mesquite Bosque, including salinity, agricultural chemicals, golf course chemicals, sewage contamination, and naturally concentrated constituents
- Explain if the Watermaster and/or the BWD can ask for an extension from DWR so that a GDE analysis can be added to the report “before another 5 years goes”
- Revise all 7 DWR RCAs to include an analysis of potential future beneficial users, including GDEs
- Clarify the timeline for the Watermaster’s review of the UCI GDE Study Report
- Add analysis of who would be responsible for mitigation and remediation if impacts to GDEs are identified
- Revise the reports to explain implications for the Mesquite Bosque based on the model uncertainty in the South Management Area
- Add a summary of the public meetings from 2020–2026 where GDE information was discussed or presented
- Add a legible topographic/location map showing Ram’s Hill, the Borrego Sink, the Mesquite Bosque, and mapped phreatophytes and GDEs
- Provide clearer explanation of any alleged flaws in the UCI GDE Study Report rather than simply rejecting the conclusions
- Include explanation of how Watermaster Staff and the TAC reviewed the UCI GDE Study Report and what additional work or remedies are recommended

Appendix D
Response to Comments on the Draft Water Year 2025 Annual Report

Global Response to Feedback Related to the UCI GDE Study Report: As explained during the public meeting, and in the draft reports, the 5-Year Assessment Report documents the activities, analyses, and assessments of management activities that were completed during the reporting period, which extends from water year (WY) 2021 through WY 2025 (October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2025). The UCI GDE Study Report was published in May 2025 and the process to undertake an independent review of the scientific findings and conclusions began in August 2025 and is on track to reach a conclusion by the end of WY 2026. Given that the process was underway during WY 2026 and drafts of the 5-Year Assessment Report and GMP Update needed to be completed by March 2026, it was not possible to document the Watermaster's findings in the 5-Year Assessment Report, nor determine what changes, if any, need to be made to its management plan. By the end of the 5-Year Assessment reporting period (September 30, 2025), the Watermaster was still in the process of defining a process and schedule to evaluate the UCI GDE Study Report.

Since the end of the 5-year Assessment reporting period (September 2025), the following work has occurred:

- From August to October 2025, Watermaster solicited and reviewed proposals to perform the independent review of the UCI GDE Study Report in accordance with its policy on "best available science" and to determine if the study can be relied on to develop management actions or policy.
- In November 2025, Watermaster selected a scope of work, schedule, and budget for the Watermaster's Technical Consultant to perform the review, with input from the TAC and EWG.
- From November 2025 to May 2026 (as of this writing), the Technical Consultant implemented the scope of work to review the UCI GDE Study Report, including:
    - Solicited review and feedback from the TAC and EWG on the UCI GDE Study Report.
    - Technical Consultant performed a detailed review of the UCI GDE Study Report and documented initial findings in a draft Recommendation Report.
    - Held joint TAC/EWG meetings to discuss the TAC/EWG review of the UCI GDE Study Report and the Technical Consultant's draft Recommendation Report
    - Prepared the draft TAC/EWG Recommendation Report to the Board
    - Held a joint TAC/EWG meeting to review the draft-final TAC/EWG Recommendation Report
    - Prepared the final Technical Consultant Recommendation Report and the final TAC/EWG Recommendation Report
- In May 2026, the Technical Consultant presented the final Recommendation Reports to the Board, including recommendations for next steps. During its May meeting, the Board:
    - Directed Legal Counsel to prepare a memorandum that evaluates whether the Watermaster's existing management and proposed enhanced monitoring program satisfy SGMA requirements regarding Basins with potential GDEs.
    - Formed a subcommittee to solicit interest from private landowners within the Mesquite Bosque on the potential to irrigate the trees with supplemental water while the Watermaster continues to investigate this topic.

As shown above, most of the technical review and follow-on work associated with the UCI GDE Study Report occurred in WY 2026, which is outside the reporting period covered by the 5-Year Assessment Report and the 2026 GMP Update. The draft reports accurately characterize the status of the UCI GDE Study Report during the reporting period and do not include information that had not yet been developed or adopted by the Watermaster as of September 30, 2025, consistent with DWR guidelines. The purpose of the 5-Year Assessment Report is to document conditions, analyses, and management actions completed during the reporting period, rather than to predetermine future management decisions that remain under evaluation.

The public comments on this subject make the assumption that because the UCI GDE Study Report findings, and the work performed by Watermaster in WY 2026, are not documented in the 5-Year Assessment Report or the 2026 GMP Update, that no action can be taken by the Watermaster to adapt its management plan until the next 5-Year Assessment and GMP update. This is an incorrect assumption, and as demonstrated with the list of actions above, the Watermaster continues to perform its review and will take appropriate action based on the full conclusions of its review process. Completion of these regulatory compliance reports does not preclude the Watermaster from taking any action to adapt its management plan should new data or information indicate it would be appropriate to do so. Action can be considered and taken by the Watermaster at any time, so long as the action is in accordance with the provisions of the Judgment.

It should be noted that Section 2.2.5 does identify the UCI GDE Study Report as the subject of discussion with the EWG. It also describes the process being undertaken by the Watermaster to review the report in accordance with its policy on Best Available Science, to determine if the report can be relied upon to take action or make policy decisions. The UCI GDE Study Report is also referenced in Chapter 5 as new information under review by the Watermaster.

Based on public comments, Section 2.2.5 of the 5-Year Assessment Report was updated to summarize the conclusions and recommendations in the UCI GDE Study Report.

Comments on the Groundwater Monitoring Program

Comment from Public Information Session:

- “In last meeting there was discussion of reducing the number of wells in the GW monitoring program. I know some thought there were potentially close wells which might duplicate data but also it seemed a budget concern. Can you address this while you are discussing the program now. Thanks”

Response: A response to this comment was provided during the Public Information Session describing that the reports accurately characterize the Watermaster’s Groundwater Monitoring Network during the reporting period (in WY 2021 through 2025) and going into WY 2026. It was emphasized that any changes to the monitoring network would be done to eliminate redundancies and achieve cost efficiencies without compromising the ability to characterize basin wide groundwater quality conditions. No revisions were made to the draft reports based on this comment.

Appendix D
Response to Comments on the Draft Water Year 2025 Annual Report

Comments on the Public Review Process

Comment from Public Information Session:

- "How can you adequately take into account comments that come in over 30 days and take them seriously in 12 days?"

Comment from Ms. Kickligher's letter:

- "We are very taken aback by the timeline to final this draft 2026 GMP in 12 days after receiving public comment during a 30 review period. This shows a lack of consideration may be planned to thoroughly address any significant issues which may be brought out through public review."

Response: The Watermaster's consideration of public comments on the content of the draft reports occurred over an extended period of time through the report development process and input and feedback was not limited to the period between the close of the public review period (May 26, 2026) and Board consideration of the reports (June 3, 2026). Preparation of the 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update occurred over approximately 18 months and included Board workshops, TAC meetings, EWG meetings, and public information sessions, all of which were publicly noticed and open to the public to make comments, which were considered in the preparation of the draft reports. It was through this process that Watermaster felt confident in the ability to be responsive to written comments received on the public review drafts.

Dedicated meetings to obtain public input included multiple Stakeholder Open Houses on technical topics addressed in the draft reports to provide additional opportunities for public input, including:

- October 15, 2025 – Sustainable Management Criteria for groundwater level, groundwater in storage, and groundwater quality
- March 19, 2025
    - Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands Project
    - Groundwater Monitoring, Reporting, and Management Project
- November 7, 2024 – Redetermination of the 2025 Sustainable Yield

To provide readers' clarity on the overall process and timeline associated with preparation and review of the 5-Year Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update, a new subsection was added to *Chapter 1 – Regulatory Background and Assessment Objectives* of the 5-Year Assessment Report. The new subsection describes the report development process, including timeline and topics of Board workshops, TAC/EWG meetings, and opportunities for public review and participation.

Comments on Sustainable Yield and Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model

Comments from Public Information Session:

- "Perhaps, I missed it, but where are predictions of future rainfall contained, which I would expect to include changes in climate models?"
- "What led to the sustainable yield going up by over 20%?"

- "Wasn't there some anomalies in the modeling data brought up in some of the meetings last year? Have those all been resolved and not affect the accuracy of the new SY?"

Response: Answers to these questions were provided verbally during the Public Information Session and included:

- Information on how future changes in climate were considered in assessing the future ability to achieve sustainability are documented in Section 8.2.1 of the 5-Year Assessment Report. In summary, future Basin conditions in an extended dry period from WY 2023 through 2040 were evaluated to determine the increased chance of observing undesirable outcomes, such as exceedance of minimum thresholds or chronic lowering of groundwater levels.
- The increase in the 2025 Sustainable Yield compared to the 2020 Sustainable Yield is driven by updates and improvements to the BVHM, which resulted in an increase in simulated inflows and a decrease in the simulated outflows. These changes to inflows and outflows resulted from several improvements to the BVHM completed as part of the 5-step scope of work to redetermine the Sustainable Yield, such as: i) correcting model errors in Task 3, ii) recalibrating the Farm Process and the BVHM using monitoring data in Task 4, and iii) updating the time period to calculate return flows in Task 5. A summary of the changes to the water budget terms are documented in Chapter 6 of the 5-Year Assessment Report and more information on the updates made to the BVHM is documented in the technical memorandum available on the Watermaster's website at: https://borregospringswatermaster.com/technical-advisory-committee-meetings/
- Yes, model discrepancies remain in the BVHM and have been reviewed and discussed by the TAC and the Board. All groundwater models contain inherent uncertainty because they are simplifications of complex hydrologic systems. The BVHM was extended, updated, and recalibrated using the best available information at the time of the analysis. Chapter 6.3.3 of the 5-Year Assessment Report describes the model discrepancies, limitations, and uncertainty in the 2022 BVHM. Consistent with SGMA's adaptive management framework and the Judgment-required periodic re-evaluation of the Sustainable Yield, the Watermaster will continue monitoring Basin conditions and using best available information to improve its understanding of the Basin water budget.

No revisions were made to the draft reports because the questions received were primarily clarifying questions on information already presented in the reports. The information requested in the comments is either already included in the draft reports or described in supporting technical documentation, which is linked and/or referenced in the draft reports.

Other Miscellaneous Comments

Comments from Ms. Kickligher's letter:

- Clarify where each DWR RCA is addressed in the 2026 GMP Update and add clearer RCA cross-references throughout the 5-Year GMP Assessment Report because "these RCAs appear to be incompletely addressed in the 2026 GMP."
- Create a figure list in the table of contents of the 2026 GMP Update similar to the 5-Year Assessment Report

Appendix D
Response to Comments on the Draft Water Year 2025 Annual Report

- Add SMC to the abbreviation list in the 2026 GMP Update and remove it's duplication in the 5-Year Assessment Report

Responses:

- No changes were made to the existing cross references in the 5-Year Assessment Report. The report already includes extensive cross-referencing throughout the document, including:
    - The Executive Summary, which summarizes each RCA and the resulting revisions in the 2026 GMP Update.
    - Table ES-1, which provides a crosswalk identifying where SGMA requirements and RCA responses are addressed in the reports.
    - Chapter 3, which is organized by individual RCA and identifies where revisions or updates were made in the 2026 GMP Update based on the response to the RCA. This information is within the chapter text and in the Chapter's summary table.
    - Each chapter of the 2026 GMP Update includes introductory text and a summary tables identifying updates made to the GMP through the 5-Year Assessment process, including updates based on responses to the RCAs. Collectively, these cross-references provide a clear framework for locating and understanding how each RCA was evaluated and addressed in the 5-Year Assessment Report and GMP Update.
- A list of figures is provided in the Table of Contents in the 2026 GMP Update, similar to the 5-Year Assessment Report. No revisions were made to the draft report based on this comment.
- SMC will be added to the acronym list in the 2026 GMP Update and the duplicate entry will be removed from the acronym list in the 5-Year Assessment Report.

Borrego Springs Watermaster
Board of Directors Meeting
June 3, 2026
AGENDA ITEM III.B

To: Board of Directors

From: Samantha Adams, Executive Director

Date: May 29, 2026

Subject: Consideration of Approval of the WY 2027 Budget

✓ **Recommended Action**	☐ **Provide Direction to Staff**	☐ **Information and Discussion**
✓ **Fiscal Impact**	✓ **Cost Estimate: $557,110**	

Recommended Action

Approve the recommended Water Year (WY) 2027 Budget (with modifications, as needed) **OR** recommend changes to be brought back for consideration of approval at the June 24, 2026 Special Board meeting. ***The Judgment requires a supermajority vote (4 of 5 Board members) to establish the budget.***

Approval of the WY 2027 Budget as recommended herein includes approval of the following:

- An Overproduction Penalty Assessment Rate of $500 per acre-foot
- WY 2027 Pumping Assessment of $625,000
- Total operating expenditure in the amount of $557,110
- West Yost Contract Amendment No. 16 to replace Exhibit A with the Statement of Work No. 9 for WY 2027, replace Exhibit B with West Yost's revised billing rate schedule, and extend the contract expiration to December 31, 2027 (one year extension)

Fiscal Impact:

- The enclosed WY 2027 budget presents the revenues, expenditures, and cash reserves for WY 2027, and a projection period of WY 2028 through 2031. The budget is shown in its entirety in the enclosed Table 1. **The Projection for WY 2028 through WY 2031 is for informational and planning purposes only** and should not be interpreted as a commitment to perform work at the level of the projected expenditures, or to require the projected pumping assessments, beyond that set for WY 2027.
- The WY 2027 budget includes **expenditures of $557,110**. The WY 2027 **revenues of $636,442** will be funded by pumping assessments and payment on pass-through expenses.
- The expenditures for West Yost services include an average 4 percent increase to staff billing rates. West Yost's Director of Operations – Planning, Chuck Greely, has confirmed that the Rate Schedule for WY 2027 incorporated into this amendment reflects West Yost's standard

billing rates, and that the rates set forth therein are what other clients pay for comparable professional services.

Judgment Context

- Judgment Section IV.E.3 provides for a process and schedule for developing the Watermaster's annual budget and establishing assessments to fund it by July 1st of each year. The Judgment requires a supermajority vote (4 of 5 Board members) to establish (or change) a budget.
- Judgment Section III.F requires the Watermaster to obtain TAC input and recommendations on the technical scope of work and budget for Sustainable Yield work. Section III.F.9 requires that "By January 1, 2025, the Watermaster will also determine a scope of work and budget for further technical work through September 30, 2029."
    - At its December 2024 Board meeting, the Board approved the initial scope of work and budget to redetermine the Sustainable Yield by January 1, 2030 based on recommendations from the TAC, and reaffirmed the path forward at its May 20, 2026 meeting.
- Judgment Section III.G.4 requires the Watermaster to establish an Overproduction Penalty Assessment, which will be no less than $500 per acre-foot. Establishment of the Overproduction Penalty Assessment rate is also a supermajority subject matter.

Agenda Item Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present the final WY 2027 scope of work and budget based on input from the May 20, 2026 Board meeting and ask the Board for consideration of approval of the budget as presented herein. An additional Special Board meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2026 if more time is needed to reach Board approval of a budget for WY 2027.

Related Actions and Direction

- At its April 2026 meeting, the Board provided Staff with input on the scope of work for WY 2027. The feedback was particularly focused on reducing the scope of work to achieve cost savings and reduce the Pumping Assessment.
- At its May 2026 meeting, the Board provided feedback on the detailed draft agenda presented in the agenda package. The main points of feedback for finalization of the budget included:
    - The Pumping Assessment may not be sufficient to provide for an unencumbered cash reserve that is equal to nine months of operating expenses. Based on Staff's explanation of the current method applied in the financial model, the projected cash balance includes encumbered funds (e.g. funds not actually available for unplanned expenses). It would be appropriate to update the model and determine the assessment level needed provided that the cash reserve projections are calculated on an accrual basis and are truly reflective of unencumbered reserves.

- The Board selected a scope of services for the 2030 Redetermination of Sustainable Yield that excluded the task of evaluating the hydrogeologic conceptual model of the Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model (BVHM).
- The Board selected to defer budgeting a specific scope of work for the next steps related to monitoring and analysis of the Mesquite Bosque. The Board first wants to complete the legal counsel review of the sufficiency of the current management plan and proposed monitoring efforts, and if sufficient, directly implement monitoring without the need for a work plan. The budget should remain at the committed level of $20,000 and can be amended at a later time, if needed.

Scope of Work and Budget for WY 2027

Table 1 summarizes the draft line-item operating budget, including revenues, expenditures, and reserves for WY 2027 and the projected budgets in these categories for WYs 2028 through 2031. The table also shows the approved, amended WY 2026 Budget and the projected actual WY 2026 year-end balances for each category. The budget will be adjusted based on Board feedback and presented again at the June 24, 2026 Special Board Meeting, if needed. The tables include:

- **Revenues**. This section shows all sources of revenue collected by the Watermaster.
- **Expenditures.** This section shows the expenditures by category and line-item. The categories are Administrative Services, Legal Services, Technical/Engineering Services, Environmental Working Group, and Services to Parties with Manual-Read Meters
- **Cash Reserves.** This section summarizes the projected cash reserve balances and targets based on the monthly financial model, which has been updated to reflect accounting for expenditures on an accrual basis and provide an unencumbered reserve projection. The reserve targets represent the average unencumbered reserve needed during the year to maintain a balance equal to nine months of operating expenses, per the Watermaster's reserve policy. For each WY, the table shows the beginning cash reserves, the average reserve target for the year, the minimum month-end reserve balance projected during the year, the average month-end reserve balance over the year, and the variance of the average month-end reserve balance from the desired average reserve balance. It also shows the average number of months of operating costs maintained during the year.

The following changes were applied to the Draft budget presented in May:

- The Pumping Assessment was increased from $600,000 to $625,000 (for WY 2027 and the projection period) to maintain an unencumbered cash reserve equal to nine months operating expenses. The following table compares the average number of months of operating reserves from WY 2027 through 2031 for the prior and revised Pumping Assessment level:

Assessment ($)	Average Number of Months of Operating Reserve Maintained During the WY when Cash Reserves are Projected on an Accrual Basis				
	WY 2027	WY 2028	WY 2029	WY 2030	WY 2031
$625,000 (recommended)	10.9	10.1	9.1	9.1	8.4
$600,000 (May Estimate)	10.7	9.4	8.0	7.4	6.36

As shown in the table, an annual Pumping Assessment of $600,000 would not be enough to maintain the desired level of unencumbered reserves after WY 2028, thus an annual Pumping Assessment of $625,000 is recommended.

- Applied the "Option B" scope of work for tasks to advance the 2030 Redetermination of Sustainable Yield in WY 2027 through 2029. This scope excludes the task to evaluate the HCM, per Board direction.
- Reduced the EWG budget to $20,000 total.

All other elements of the line-item scope of work and budget presented in May, including scope of work assumptions, remain the same.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Board approval of the WY 2027 Budget as presented herein. As a reminder, approval requires supermajority vote of the Board and includes establishing:

- An Overproduction Penalty Assessment Rate of $500 per acre-foot
- A WY 2027 Pumping Assessment of $625,000
- Total operating expenditure in the amount of $557,110

The Board can also approve the WY 2027 Budget with any recommended changes to Table 1. If additional edits are needed, the Board could defer approval to the June 24th Special Meeting.

Upon approval of the Budget, the Board can also update its professional services agreement with West Yost so they can perform the services included in the approved WY 2027 Budget. To reduce future meeting agend items, the draft *AMENDMENT NO. 16 TO THAT AGREEMENT ENTITLED "BORREGO SPRINGS WATERMASTER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT"* is included for consideration of approval with the WY 2027 Budget. Amendment No. 16 includes:

- Revised *Exhibit A - Statement of Work No. 9*, set to be effective October 1, 2026. The Statement of Work defines the exact line-item scope of work and budget included in the recommended WY 2027 budget, including all assumptions applied in developing the budget.

- Revised *Exhibit B – Billing Rate Schedule*, set to be effective October 1, 2026. The schedule for WY 2027 reflects an average four percent increase to staff billing rates. West Yost's Director of Operations – Planning, Chuck Greely, has confirmed that the WY 2027 Rate Schedule reflects West Yost's standard billing rates, and that the rates set forth therein are what other clients pay for comparable professional services.
- A one-year extension to the term of the Agreement to December 31, 2027.

Next Steps

Once the WY 2027 Budget is approved, Staff will:

- Publish the WY 2026 budget no later than July 1, 2026 and send notice to the Parties of its adoption
- Report to the Board if any challenges to the Budget are noticed to Watermaster by July 31, 2026

Enclosures

Table 1 - Borrego Springs Watermaster Budget for Water Year 2027 and Four-Year Budget Projection through Water Year 2031

Amendment No. 16 to the West Yost Agreement for Professional Services, including:

Exhibit A – Statement of Work No. 9

Exhibit B – WY 2027 Billing Rate Schedule

Table 1. Borrego Springs Watermaster Budget for Water Year 2027 and Four-Year Budget Projection through Water Year 2031

Revenues, Expenditures, and Reserves	Actual WY 2025	Amended Budget WY 2026	Projected WY 2026	WY 2027 Budget	Projected Budget[1] WY 2028	WY 2029	WY 2030	WY 2031	Notes
Revenues	**$ 1,256,474**	**$ 361,020**	**$ 360,544**	**$ 636,442**	**$ 636,989**	**$ 637,506**	**$ 638,046**	**$ 638,610**	
Pumping Assessments[2]	$ 338,532	$ 350,000	$ 350,049	$ 625,000	$ 625,000	$ 625,000	$ 625,000	$ 625,000	
Bad Debt (assumed non-payment on Assessments)	$ -	$ (1,000)	$ -	$ (1,000)	$ (1,000)	$ (1,000)	$ (1,000)	$ (1,000)	
Overproduction Penalty Assessments	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Revenues Collected for Pass-Through Expenses	$ 16,713	$ 12,020	$ 10,495	$ 12,442	$ 12,989	$ 13,506	$ 14,046	$ 14,610	
DWR Prop 68 Grant Reimbursements	$ 901,228	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Total Expenditures	**$ 1,449,651**	**$ 773,259**	**$ 736,688**	**$ 557,110**	**$ 631,018**	**$ 714,853**	**$ 639,172**	**$ 650,241**	
Administrative Services	**$ 422,961**	**$ 301,671**	**$ 291,201**	**$ 226,142**	**$ 237,172**	**$ 245,879**	**$ 254,923**	**$ 264,316**	
Watermaster Staff Admin Services	***$ 291,199***	***$ 237,254***	***$ 239,994***	***$ 186,434***	***$ 195,756***	***$ 203,094***	***$ 210,717***	***$ 218,639***	
Board Meetings	*$ 108,657*	*$ 104,752*	*$ 107,253*	*$ 73,560*	*$ 77,238*	*$ 80,714*	*$ 84,346*	*$ 88,141*	*2027 30% savings = 6 meetings (5 virtual; 1 in-person)*
Technical Advisory Committee Meetings	*$ 53,445*	*$ 32,950*	*$ 30,774*	*$ 18,315*	*$ 19,231*	*$ 20,096*	*$ 21,000*	*$ 21,945*	*2027 48% savings = 2 meetings (both virtual)*
Court Hearings	*$ 679*	*$ 1,512*	*$ 1,512*	*$ 1,152*	*$ 1,210*	*$ 1,264*	*$ 1,321*	*$ 1,380*	
Stakeholder Outreach/Workshops	*$ 11,976*	*$ 12,846*	*$ 12,846*	*$ 8,581*	*$ 9,010*	*$ 9,280*	*$ 9,559*	*$ 9,846*	*2027 33% savings = public outreach via media (no meetings)*
Administration and Management	*$ 79,855*	*$ 85,194*	*$ 87,609*	*$ 84,826*	*$ 89,067*	*$ 91,739*	*$ 94,491*	*$ 97,326*	
Prop 68 Project Admin and Grant Reporting	*$ 36,587*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	
Other Administrative or Vendor Services	***$ 124,760***	***$ 64,417***	***$ 50,881***	***$ 38,208***	***$ 39,916***	***$ 41,285***	***$ 42,705***	***$ 44,177***	
Financial Audit	*$ 8,098*	*$ 8,812*	*$ 8,537*	*$ 9,064*	*$ 9,340*	*$ 9,807*	*$ 10,297*	*$ 10,812*	
Insurance	*$ 44,420*	*$ 48,142*	*$ 41,149*	*$ 28,644*	*$ 30,076*	*$ 30,978*	*$ 31,908*	*$ 32,865*	*2027 41% savings = approved reduced premium*
Misc. Expenses	*$ 131*	*$ 2,000*	*$ 150*	*$ 500*	*$ 500*	*$ 500*	*$ 500*	*$ 500*	*2027 75% savings = reflection of actual potential costs*
Meter Accuracy Testing Vendors	*$ 14,430*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	
Interest on Vendor Terms During Prop 68 Grant Period	*$ 57,681*	*$ 5,463*	*$ 1,045*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	
Pass-Through Expenses	***$ 7,002***	***$ -***	***$ 326***	***$ 1,500***	***$ 1,500***	***$ 1,500***	***$ 1,500***	***$ 1,500***	
Reimbursement to BWD for GSP	*$ 5*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	
Requestor Funded Request for Information	*$ 6,996*	*$ -*	*$ 326*	*$ 1,500*	*$ 1,500*	*$ 1,500*	*$ 1,500*	*$ 1,500*	*Pass through: Collect retainer up-front*
Well Permit Application Processing	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*Pass through: Approach and pass through cost TBD*
Legal Services	**$ 98,000**	**$ 110,000**	**$ 100,000**	**$ 63,500**	**$ 65,405**	**$ 67,367**	**$ 69,388**	**$ 71,470**	**2027 42% savings = Reduced number of meetings**

Table 1. Borrego Springs Watermaster Budget for Water Year 2027 and Four-Year Budget Projection through Water Year 2031

Revenues, Expenditures, and Reserves	Actual WY 2025	Amended Budget WY 2026	Projected WY 2026	WY 2027 Budget	Projected Budget[1] WY 2028	WY 2029	WY 2030	WY 2031	Notes
Technical/Engineering Services	**$ 683,746**	**$ 311,928**	**$ 297,678**	**$ 236,526**	**$ 296,952**	**$ 369,601**	**$ 282,316**	**$ 281,344**	
Routine Annual Technical Consultant Services	***$ 204,220***	***$ 224,870***	***$ 210,620***	***$ 209,764***	***$ 220,252***	***$ 230,163***	***$ 240,521***	***$ 251,344***	
Coordinate/Implement meter reading program	*$ 27,179*	*$ 33,584*	*$ 27,363*	*$ 30,084*	*$ 31,588*	*$ 33,010*	*$ 34,495*	*$ 36,047*	
Groundwater Monitoring Program	*$ 97,468*	*$ 116,969*	*$ 113,950*	*$ 119,742*	*$ 125,729*	*$ 131,387*	*$ 137,299*	*$ 143,478*	
Data Management and Data Reporting	*$ 14,628*	*$ 12,276*	*$ 12,276*	*$ 12,850*	*$ 13,493*	*$ 14,100*	*$ 14,734*	*$ 15,397*	
Annual Report to the Court and DWR	*$ 51,553*	*$ 51,221*	*$ 46,370*	*$ 35,727*	*$ 37,513*	*$ 39,201*	*$ 40,966*	*$ 42,809*	*30% savings = Eliminate non-required information*
As-needed technical services	*$ 13,392*	*$ 10,820*	*$ 10,662*	*$ 11,361*	*$ 11,929*	*$ 12,466*	*$ 13,027*	*$ 13,613*	
Technical Consultant Services - Non-Routine	***$ 479,526***	***$ 87,058***	***$ 87,058***	***$ 26,762***	***$ 76,700***	***$ 139,438***	***$ 41,795***	***$ 30,000***	
Address Inactive Wells via Abandonment/Conversion	*$ 222,406*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	
5-Year Assessment and Update of the GMP (includes addressing DWR RCAs)	*$ 156,826*	*$ 71,316*	*$ 71,316*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ 5,000*	*$ 25,000*	*$ 30,000*	*Next assessment and GMP Update due June 2031*
Develop Scope and Budget for future SY Updates	*$ 15,444*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ 16,795*	*$ -*	
Technical Work to Support SY Updates	*$ 84,851*	*$ 15,742*	*$ 15,742*	*$ 26,762*	*$ 76,700*	*$ 134,438*	*$ -*	*$ -*	***Scope excludes analysis of HCM per Board direction***
Environmental Working Group	**$ 236,063**	**$ 37,640**	**$ 37,640**	**$ 20,000**	**$ 20,000**	**$ 20,000**	**$ 20,000**	**$ 20,000**	
Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands	*$ 225,118*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ 6,552*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*For EWG to complete recommendation based on study*
Ad Hoc Requests and EWG Meetings	*$ 10,946*	*$ 37,640*	*$ 37,640*	*$ 13,448*	*$ 20,000*	*$ 20,000*	*$ 20,000*	*$ 20,000*	*TC recommended scope for workplan*
Services to Parties with Manual Read Meters	**$ 8,880**	**$ 12,020**	**$ 10,169**	**$ 10,942**	**$ 11,489**	**$ 12,006**	**$ 12,546**	**$ 13,110**	**2027 9% savings = BWD reading meters & 2x per year**
Cash Reserves[3]									
Beginning Cash Reserves	**$ 839,254**	**$ 560,559**		**$ 492,066**	**$ 568,567**	**$ 609,238**	**$ 555,992**	**$ 480,035**	
Year-End Cash Reserve Balance	**$ 560,559**	**$ 620,506**	**$ 492,066**	**$ 568,567**	**$ 609,238**	**$ 555,992**	**$ 480,035**	**$ 429,029**	
Average Reserve to Maintain Target Balance Equal to 9 Months of Operating Expenses		***$ 586,804***		***$ 437,094***	***$ 498,301***	***$ 516,652***	***$ 479,077***	***$ 498,653***	
Minimum Month-End Reserve Balance		*$ 620,506*		*$ 427,816*	*$ 489,782*	*$ 443,251*	*$ 384,433*	*$ 370,432*	
Average Month-End Reserve Balance		*$ 778,375*		*$ 527,857*	*$ 555,877*	*$ 519,169*	*$ 480,069*	*$ 465,677*	
Average No. Months of Operating Costs				***10.9***	***10.1***	***9.1***	***9.1***	***8.40***	
Average Variance from Desired Reserve		*$ 191,571*		*$ 90,762*	*$ 57,576*	*$ 2,517*	*$ 992*	*$ (32,977)*	

Notes

1 -- Line-items in blue highlight show tasks where changes in scope have been implemented to reduce costs.

2 -- Assessment set at constant value needed from WY 2027 through WY 2031 to maintain target reserve balance through WY 2031.

3 -- Cash Reserve projections are developed with the financial model prepared by Watermaster Staff. In WY 2025 and prior, the projection was based on expected timing of receipt of payment of Watermaster assessments and timing of payments to vendors. Based on feedback from the Board Treasurer, going forward it is more appropriate to reflect the cash balance based on the timing expenses are accrued and not the timing of payment. This will provide that the effective cash reserve represents unencumbered dollars.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 TO THAT AGREEMENT ENTITLED "BORREGO SPRINGS WATERMASTER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT"

A. RECITALS.

1. The Agreement was made and entered into as of August 13, 2020 by and between the Borrego Springs Watermaster, a Court Agent established by the entry of Judgment in Borrego Springs Water District v. All Persons, San Diego County Superior Court Case No. 37-2020-00006 776-CU-TT-CTL ("Watermaster" hereinafter) and Wildermuth Environmental, Inc. The Agreement concerns the provision of professional services to Watermaster by an Executive Director, a Technical Consultant, and all support staff necessary to discharge the functions and responsibilities of the Watermaster delineated in the above-referenced Judgment.

2. The rights and obligations to Wildermuth Environmental, Inc. specified in the Agreement have been assigned to West Yost & Associates, Inc. with the consent of the Watermaster, effective on February 5, 2021.

3. The Agreement heretofore has been amended fifteen (15) times.

4. As amended, the Agreement expires on December 31, 2026, Exhibit A defines the current approved scope of work -- *Amended Statement of Work No. 8* (as amended April 15, 2026), and Exhibit B defines the schedule of West Yost billing rates.

B. AMENDMENT NO. 16.

1. At its **<< DATE >>** Board meeting, the Watermaster approved a budget for Water Year (WY) 2027. The WY 2027 Budget includes **<< $BUDGET >>** of expenditures for the administrative and technical tasks that are to be performed by West Yost in accordance with its role to provide Executive Director and Technical Consultant services from October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027.

2. Effective October 1, 2026, the enclosed *Statement of Work No. 9* and the associated **<< $BUDGET >>** budget for Water Year 2027 shall replace the existing *Exhibit A - Amended Statement of Work No. 8* of the above-referenced Agreement. *Statement of Work No. 9* defines the scope of services and line-item budget for work to be performed by West Yost between October 1, 2026 and September 30, 2027 and is defined in accordance with the Board-Approved budget for WY 2027.

3. Effective October 1, 2026, Paragraph 2(a) and the associated Exhibit B of the Agreement is amended to provide that the Watermaster shall pay for the Services in Exhibit A in accordance with the attached West Yost WY 2027 billing rate schedule. This billing rate schedule reflects West Yost's annual rate increase, which was assumed in the development of the WY 2027 Budget.

4. West Yost's Director of Operations – Planning, Chuck Greely, has confirmed that the Rate Schedule for WY 2027 incorporated into this amendment reflects West Yost's standard

billing rates, and that the rates set forth therein are what other clients pay for comparable professional services.

5. The expiration date of the term of the Agreement stated in Paragraph 4 of the Agreement is extended from December 31, 2026 to and including December 31, 2027 – a one-year extension.

6. Except as specifically amended hereby, the Agreement, as previously amended by Amendments 1 through 15, and each and every term thereof shall remain in full force and effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this Amendment No. 16 as of the date stated below.

BORREGO SPRINGS WATERMASTER

By: _____
Tyler Bilyk,
Chairperson of the Board

WEST YOST

By: _____
Charles Duncan,
President

Dated: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By: _____
James L. Markman,
Watermaster General Counsel

Statement of Work No. 9 (SOW No. 9): West Yost Administrative and Technical Services for the Borrego Springs Watermaster – Water Year 2027

***Approved:* << TBD >>**

The following describes the statement of work (SOW) No. 9 for West Yost administrative and technical services for Water Year (WY) 2027: October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027. On <<**DATE**>>, the Watermaster Board approved the WY 2027 Budget, which included expenditures for West Yost to perform its Executive Director and Technical Consultant services. The attached Exhibit 1 provides the line-item cost detail for each task and sub-task in SOW No. 9, including labor hours, subconsultant costs, and other direct charges associated with the performance of work. The total budget for SOW No. 9 is <<**$447,385 (to be updated based on final Board approval>>** and is broken into the following major Tasks:

Task 1 – Meetings and Court Hearings

Task 2 – Watermaster Administration and Management

Task 3 – Engineering and Technical Services

Task 4 – Environmental Working Group

Task 5 – Services Reimbursed by Parties with Manual-read Meters

Task 6 – Respond to Requests for Information (Requestor-Funded)

Task 7 – Process Applications for New Well Construction (Requestor-Funded)

The tasks and subtasks are described below in accordance with the scope and assumptions presented in the WY 2027 budget. Watermaster Staff will not perform any work outside the scope and assumptions described in SOW No. 9 without prior written authorization from the Board Chair, following direction from the Board in a meeting direction such additional work be performed. All additional work requiring a budget amendment will not proceed without a Board-approved budget amendment.

Task Descriptions

<< ALL BUDGET NUMBERS WILL BE UPDATED BASED ON FINAL BOARD APPROVAL>>

Task 1 – Meetings and Court Hearings. This task is to conduct or participate in Watermaster process meetings. This work includes coordinating with the Board Chair, subcommittees, legal counsel, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members; preparing the agenda and meeting packages; preparing presentation materials; conducting the meetings; preparing minutes; and performing certain Board-approved follow-on actions. There are four sub-tasks, by meeting type. ***Budget: $101,608***

1.1 Board Meetings. ***Budget: $73,560*** It is assumed that six meetings will be held, each being approximately 3-hours long to discuss up to four business items, in addition to standard meeting items. One meeting is planned to occur in-person in Borrego Springs, and five meetings will be held virtually. It is assumed that the Executive Director will meet with legal counsel and the Chairperson (or other Sub Committees) ahead of and between meetings to maintain momentum and align expectations.

1.2 Technical Advisory Committee Meetings. ***Budget: $18,315*** It is assumed that two virtual TAC meetings will be conducted, each meeting being 2-hours long to discuss up to three topics. No

Statement of Work No. 9 (SOW No. 9): West Yost Administrative and Technical Services for the Borrego Springs Watermaster – Water Year 2027

***Approved:* << TBD >>**

additional items will be handled via email other than brief follow-up requests for input following meetings.

1.3 Court Hearings. ***Budget: $1,152*** As needed support to Legal Counsel for Court hearings on status updates will be provided upon request.

1.4 Stakeholder Outreach. ***Budget: $8,581*** Stakeholder Outreach activities will be focused on providing communication efforts related to Watermaster activities, such as the preparation and publication of newspaper articles, press releases, and radio advertisements. All content will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Board prior to publication.

Task 2 – Watermaster Administration and Management. The Executive Director will organize, oversee, and/or perform the administrative and management aspects of operating the Watermaster and administering the Judgment, Rules and Regulations, and Groundwater Management Plan (GMP). This includes eight subtasks. ***Budget: $84,826.***

2.1 Prepare the Watermaster annual budget. ***Budget: $13,006*** Prepare a draft administrative and technical budget for WY 2028 by May 2027 and finalize the budget for approval by June 30, 2027.

2.2 Insurance, accounting, and financial services. ***Budget: $22,194*** Obtain and maintain insurance policies (e.g., liability insurance); maintain a bank account; prepare and issue assessment and other invoices for services rendered; prepare bi-monthly financials timed to Board meetings; oversee the annual audit, manage vendor accounts, and perform other as-requested accounting and financial services.

2.3 Management of Watermaster records, documents, and website. ***Budget: $5,634*** Maintain a catalog of the reference documents, official correspondence, and Watermaster files and records, and store a copy of all records available for public access pursuant to the Rules and Regulations. Staff will also host and maintain the Watermaster website, including: posting notices, determinations, requests, objections, reports, and meeting materials pursuant to the Judgment. Staff will ensure confidential data is maintained accordingly.

2.4 Respond to and track public information requests. ***Budget: $2,802*** This includes timely response to requests for data and information from the general public. All requests will be responded to and tracked in a manner consistent with any policies adopted by the Watermaster. This also includes maintaining an active list of stakeholders interested in receiving notifications regarding Watermaster activities. Requests for data or detailed information will be charged to the Requestor and tracked under Task 6.

2.5 As-needed support to the BPA Parties. ***Budget: $12,516*** This task is to provide routine support to BPA parties in compliance with the Judgment and Rules & Regulations. Watermaster staff will be available to support the Parties, as needed and within reason, to ensure they understand the Judgment requirements, such as the metering program, payment of assessments, water rights accounting, and fallowing standards. This also includes maintaining an active list of names and

addresses of all Parties. Any significant requests for support will be taken to the Board in a manner consistent with any policies adopted by the Watermaster. Any detailed data requests will be performed in accordance with Resolution 20-04 (or any superseding Resolution), including requiring Requestor to fund data requests in excess of limits imposed in the Resolution. Requests for data or detailed information in excess of the limit will be charged to the Requestor and tracked under Task 6.

2.6 As-needed administration of the terms of the Judgment, Rules & Regulations, and Groundwater Management Plan. ***Budget: $12,516*** This includes any other as-needed performance of non-routine services to implement the Watermaster guidance documents.

2.7 Other general administration and project managements tasks. ***Budget: $16,158*** This includes, but is not limited to, managing staff and consultants, tracking task schedules and progress, and tracking/reporting budget progress.

Task 3 – Engineering and Technical Services. The objective of this task is for the Technical Consulting team to perform the routine and non-routine technical services required by the Judgment, Rules and Regulations, and GMP for WY 2027. This includes ten subtasks. ***Budget: $236,526.***

3.1 Coordinate and implement the meter reading program. ***Budget: $30,084*** This includes:

- 3.1a – Performance and review of the required meter calibration and accuracy tests. The data will be reviewed for accuracy and QA/QC, recorded, and any delinquencies reported back to the BPA Party to be cured.
- 3.1b – Monthly collection and processing of meter read data. The data will be reviewed for accuracy and QA/QC, recorded, and used to compute monthly pumping volumes. This task ***does not*** include work to coordinate and perform meter reading services at manual-read meters. That work is directly paid for by the BPA Parties with manual-read meters and tracked under Task 5.

3.2 Implement Groundwater Monitoring Program. ***Budget: $119,742*** This task includes implementing the groundwater monitoring program in accordance with the 2023 Groundwater Monitoring Program. The monitoring program includes semi-annual field collection of groundwater-level measurements (manual and pressure transducer downloads) and groundwater-quality samples. Following each field event, the field and laboratory data will be cataloged, processed into standardized formats, reviewed for QA/QC, and uploaded to the Watermaster's data management system (DMS).

3.3 Maintain Database Management System for all groundwater, surface water, and climate data. ***Budget: $12,850*** This covers the work to report data to DWR and maintain and keep the Watermaster's DMS up-to-date including:

Statement of Work No. 9 (SOW No. 9): West Yost Administrative and Technical Services for the Borrego Springs Watermaster – Water Year 2027

Approved: << TBD >>

- Annual collection and processing of other environmental datasets relied on to manage the Basin, including precipitation, climate, surface-water quality, municipal well water quality, and others
- As-requested summary reports of data, such as the mid-year pumping report
- As-needed services to continue to build out the DMS (design custom reports, load new shapefiles, upload newly identified legacy data, build out library, etc.)
- Loading of data to the DWR's Monitoring Network Module (MNM) data portal twice per year following the fall and spring monitoring events

3.4 Prepare Combined Annual Report to Court and DWR. ***Budget: $35,727*** Prepare the draft and final WY 2026 annual report pursuant to the requirements of Section IV.E(5)(b) of the Judgment and Section 4.2.8 of the Rules and Regulations. This includes two main tasks:

- Preparation of the WY 2026 accounting of water rights, including elections of Carryover and calculation of the annual pumping assessment for each Party for WY 2027. This will be completed by the Judgment compliance date of October 31, 2026.
- The WY 2026 Annual Report will be prepared to satisfy only SGMA and Judgment requirements (i.e. any non-required information will be eliminated relative to prior reports).

3.5 As-needed technical support for implementation of the Judgment, Rules and Regulations, and Groundwater Management Plan. ***Budget: $11,361*** This includes performance of any other as-needed non-routine technical services to implement Judgment and GMP including, as-requested analysis of data or use of the Borrego Valley Hydrologic Model (BVHM).

3.6 WY 2027 Technical Work to Support the 2030 Sustainable Yield. ***Budget: $26,762*** This work involves implementing Board-approved tasks for advancing work towards completion of the 2030 Sustainable Yield update. In WY 2027, the scope of work is focused specifically on evaluating estimates of groundwater evapotranspiration (ET_{gw}) associated with the Mesquite Bosque as estimated by the BVHM and comparing model-estimates to values reported in the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Study Report to determine whether updates to the BVHM are needed to improve simulation of ET_{gw}. (The goal is NOT to match the UCI study $ET_{gw,}$ but rather to initially understand how they compare).

The work will include: (i) researching and documenting how the BVHM currently simulates ET_{gw}, (ii) delineating the Mesquite Bosque within the model domain, (iii) comparing model-estimated ET_{gw} to the results in the UCI GDE Study Report, and (iv) developing recommendations regarding potential updates to the BVHM.

Task 4 – Environmental Working Group. The objective of this task is to support Board-approved activities of the Environmental Working Group (EWG). This includes ad-hoc requests and EWG meetings, as needed to implement the work. ***Budget: $20,000.***

Statement of Work No. 9 (SOW No. 9):
West Yost Administrative and Technical Services
for the Borrego Springs Watermaster – Water Year 2027

***Approved:* **

4.1 Biological Restoration of Fallowed Farmlands. ***Budget: $6,552*** For WY 2027, Watermaster Staff recommended utilizing funding to complete the process of evaluating and developing recommendations to the Watermaster Board regarding next steps associated with the Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands Study prepared by UCI and LandIQ in WY 2025. The scope of work will include reviewing findings and recommendations of the Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands Study and coordinating with the EWG regarding potential future management actions and implementation strategies.

4.2 Follow-on Work Related to the UCI GDE Study Report. ***Budget: $13,448*** Work in this task will be defined by the Board and will not proceed until directed.

Task 5 – Services Reimbursed by Parties with Manual-read Meters. The objective of this task is to support the implementation of the meter reading program for Parties with manual-read meters, including coordination with Borrego Water District, Watermaster's contractor to perform the meter reads, and coordination with well owners during self-reporting months. Pursuant to the Judgment, this work must be funded by the Parties with manual read meters. ***Budget: $4,425.***

Task 6 – Respond to Requests for Information (Requestor-Funded). The objective of this task is to respond to requests for data and information by Parties or others as approved by the Board. All work performed under this task will be fully reimbursed by the requestor of the data. As such no budget is defined for this task. ***Budget: $0.***

Task 7 – Process Applications for New Well Construction (Requestor-Funded). The objective of this task is to process applications for new well construction. The Watermaster intends to update its reimbursement policy with respect to processing applications such that it is fully funded by applicants. As such no budget is defined for this task. ***Budget: $0.***

Exhibit 1. West Yost Labor Hours and Fee Estimate to Provide Professional Services to the Borrego Springs Watermaster: Executive Director and Technical Consultant Services for Water Year 2027

Task and Subtask Descriptions	Labor Hours and Cost													Other Direct Costs						Total Project Costs	
	Executive Director	Lead Technical Consultant	Principal Sci/Eng II	Associate Sci/Geol/Eng II	Staff Sci/Geo/Eng III	Staff Sci/Geo/Eng I/II	Field Technician	Comms/Technical Analyst	Administrative III/IV	Task Repetition Multiplier	Total Person Hours	West Yost Labor Cost		Travel	Media for Public Outreach	Field Equip-ment Rental or Purchase	Laboratory and Sub-contractors	Total Direct Costs			
												Sub-Task	Task					Sub-Task	Task	Sub-Task	Task
Task 1 - Meetings and Court Hearings													**$99,488**						**$2,120**		**$101,608**
1.1 Watermaster Board meetings													**$73,360**						**$200**		**$73,560**
a Prepare for and attend 5 Regular Board meetings (Virtual)	13	6		16						5	175	$58,000						$0		$58,000	
b Prepare for and attend 1 Regular Board meeting (In Person)	18	11		16						1	45	$15,360		$200				$200		$15,560	
1.2 Technical Advisory Committee meetings													**$18,315**						**$0**		**$18,315**
Prepare for and attend 2 TAC meetings (Virtual)	6	9		13	2					2	57	$18,315						$0		$18,315	
1.3 Court Hearings													**$1,152**						**$0**		**$1,152**
As-needed support for Court status conferences and hearings	3									1	2	$1,152						$0		$1,152	
1.4 Stakeholder Outreach													**$6,661**						**$1,920**		**$8,581**
Outreach via local news and radio	3			3				9		2	28	$6,661			$1,920			$1,920		$8,581	
Task 2 - Watermaster Administration and Management													**$84,826**						**$0**		**$84,826**
2.1 Prepare the draft and final Watermaster budget for WY 2028	24	4		4	3				3	1	38		**$13,006**					$0	**$0**		**$13,006**
2.2 Accounting and financial services	1			1					8	12	114		**$22,194**					$0	**$0**		**$22,194**
2.3 Management of Records, Documents, and Website				1					2	12	30		**$5,634**					$0	**$0**		**$5,634**
2.4 Track/respond to public communications and requests	0			1						12	9		**$2,802**					$0	**$0**		**$2,802**
2.5 As-needed support to the BPA Parties	2			1						12	36		**$12,516**					$0	**$0**		**$12,516**
2.6 As-requested admin. of the Judgment, Rules & Regs, and GMP	2			1						12	36		**$12,516**					$0	**$0**		**$12,516**
2.7 General administration and project managements tasks	1			4						12	54		**$16,158**					$0	**$0**		**$16,158**

Exhibit 1. West Yost Labor Hours and Fee Estimate to Provide Professional Services to the Borrego Springs Watermaster: Executive Director and Technical Consultant Services for Water Year 2027

Task and Subtask Descriptions	Labor Hours and Cost													Other Direct Costs						Total Project Costs	
	Executive Director	Lead Technical Consultant	Principal Sci/Eng II	Associate Sci/Geol/Eng II	Staff Sci/Geo/Eng III	Staff Sci/Geo/Eng I/II	Field Technician	Comms/Technical Analyst	Administrative III/IV	Task Repetition Multiplier	Total Person Hours	West Yost Labor Cost		Travel	Media for Public Outreach	Field Equip-ment Rental or Purchase	Laboratory and Sub-contractors	Total Direct Costs		Sub-Task	Task
												Sub-Task	Task					Sub-Task	Task		
Task 3 - Engineering and Technical Services													**$194,546**						**$41,980**		**$236,526**
3.1 Coordinate and implement meter program													**$30,084**						**$0**		**$30,084**
a Collect and review annual meter calibration/accuracy reports				2	6	8				1	16	$3,822						$0		$3,822	
b Collect, catalog monthly meter reads and calculate pumping	0			2	7					12	105	$26,262						$0		$26,262	
3.2 Implement Groundwater Monitoring Program													**$ 77,762**						**$41,980**		**$119,742**
a Semi-annual field collection of groundwater level and quality, including inspections of new sites	1	2		2	16		120		2	2	285	$47,518		$9,360		$3,050	$29,570	$41,980		$89,498	
b Process, QAQC, and load data to DMS	2	2		5	23	5				2	71	$18,061						$0		$18,061	
c Data analysis and reporting to the Board and TAC	3	3		15	7	18				1	46	$12,183						$0		$12,183	
3.3 Data Management and Data Reporting													**$12,850**						**$0**		**$12,850**
a Collection, process, and upload of other hydrologic and water quality data		1			7	20				1	28	$6,628						$0		$6,628	
b Periodic reporting of results	1			1	9					1	10	$2,603						$0		$2,603	
c MNW Compliance (load data to DWR portal)				2		6				2	15	$3,619						$0		$3,619	
3.4 Prepare WY 2026 combined Annual Report to the Court & DWR													**$35,727**						**$0**		**$35,727**
a Water Rights Accounting	12			26	3					1	40	$12,221						$0		$12,221	
b Draft and Final Annual Report	11	7		29	23	5			14	1	88	$23,507						$0		$23,507	
3.5 As-needed technical services	6	14		8		8				1	36		**$11,361**						**$0**		**$11,361**
TAC Supported Technical Work																					
3.7 WY 2027 Scope of Work to Advance 2030 SY Recalculation	2	18	6	50		12			4	1	92		**$26,762**						**$0**		**$26,762**
Task 4 - Environmental Working Group													**$20,000**						**$0**		**$20,000**
4.1 Bio. Restoration Recommendations (includes 1 meeting)	2	11			8					1	21	$6,552								$6,552	
4.2 Follow-on Work Related to UCI GDE Study Report	2	16		2	8	17			2	1	47	$13,448								$13,448	
Task 5 - Services Reimbursed by Parties with Manual-read Meters													**$4,425**						**$0**		**$4,425**
5.1 Consulting services to Parties with manual-read meters				0.25	1					12	18		**$4,425**						**$0**		**$4,425**
Task 6 - Respond to Requests for Information													**$0**						**$0**		**$0**
6.1 Respond to Requests for Information (Requestor-Funded)													**$0**						**$0**		**$0**
Task 7 - Process Applications for New Well Construction													**$0**						**$0**		**$0**
7.1 Process Applications for New Well Construction (Requestor-Funded)													**$0**						**$0**		**$0**
Task Totals	**248**	**139**	**6**	**384**	**254**	**109**	**240**	**18**	**146**		**1,235**		**$403,285**	**$9,560**	**$1,920**	**$3,050**	**$29,570**	**$44,100**		**$447,385**	

WEST YOST
Water. Engineered.

2026 - 2027 Billing Rate Schedule

(Effective October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027)

POSITIONS	LABOR CHARGES (DOLLARS PER HOUR)
ENGINEERING	
Principal/Vice President	$407
Engineer/Scientist/Geologist Manager I / II	$384 / $402
Principal Engineer/Scientist/Geologist I / II	$345 / $368
Senior Engineer/Scientist/Geologist I / II	$308 / $324
Associate Engineer/Scientist/Geologist I / II	$255 / $275
Engineer/Scientist/Geologist I / II / III	$198 / $229 / $240
Engineering Aide	$121
Field Monitoring Services	$150
Administrative I / II / III / IV	$111 / $138 / $166 / $183
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY	
Engineering Tech Manager I / II	$398 / $402
Principal Tech Specialist I / II	$366 / $379
Senior Tech Specialist I / II	$332 / $347
Senior GIS Analyst	$303
GIS Analyst	$287
Technical Specialist I / II / III / IV	$214 / $240 / $271 / $302
Technical Analyst I / II	$154 / $183
Technical Analyst Intern	$123
Cross-Connection Control Specialist I / II / III / IV	$160 / $173 / $195 / $216
CAD Manager	$242
CAD Designer I / II	$188 / $212
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT	
Senior Construction Manager	$387
Construction Manager I / II / III / IV	$230 / $246 / $260 / $330
Resident Inspector (Prevailing Wage Groups 4 / 3 / 2 / 1)	$208 / $230 / $256 / $266
Apprentice Inspector	$188
CM Administrative I / II	$100 / $135
Field Services	$266

- Hourly rates include charges for technology and communication, such as general and CAD computer software, telephone calls, routine in-house copies/prints, postage, miscellaneous supplies, and other incidental project expenses.
- Outside services, such as vendor reproductions, prints, and shipping; major West Yost reproduction efforts; as well as engineering supplies, etc., will be billed at the actual cost.
- The Federal Mileage Rate will be used for mileage charges and will be based on the Federal Mileage Rate applicable to when the mileage costs were incurred. Travel other than mileage will be billed at cost.
- Subconsultants will be billed at actual cost.
- Expert witness services, research, technical review, analysis, preparation, and meetings will be billed at 150% of standard hourly rates. Expert witness testimony and depositions will be billed at 200% of standard hourly rates.
- A finance charge of 1.5% per month (an annual rate of 18%) on the unpaid balance will be added to invoice amounts if not paid within 45 days from the date of the invoice.

WEST YOST
Water. Engineered.

2026 - 2027 Billing Rate Schedule

(Effective October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027)

Equipment Charges

EQUIPMENT	BILLING RATES
2" Purge Pump & Control Box	$300 / day
Aquacalc / Pygmy or AA Flow Meter	$28 / day
Emergency SCADA System	$35 / day
Field Vehicles (Groundwater)	$200 / day
Gas Detector	$80 / day
Generator	$60 / day
Hydrant Pressure Gauge	$10 / day
Hydrant Pressure Recorder, Impulse (Transient)	$55 / day
Hydrant Pressure Recorder, Standard	$40 / day
Low Flow Pump Back Pack	$135 / day
Low Flow Pump Controller	$200 / day
Powers Water Level Meter	$32 / day
Precision Water Level Meter 300ft	$30 / day
Precision Water Level Meter 500ft	$40 / day
Precision Water Level Meter 700ft	$45 / day
QED Sample Pro Bladder Pump	$65 / day
Skydio 2+ Drone (2 hour minimum)	$100 / hour
Storage Tank	$20 / day
Sump Pump	$24 / day
Transducer Communications Cable	$10 / day
Transducer Components (per installation)	$23 / day
Trimble GPS – Geo 7x	$220 / day
Tube Length Counter	$22 / day
Turbidity Meter	$30 / day
Turbidity Meter (2100Q Portable)	$35 / day
Vehicle (Construction Management)	$18.75 / hour
Water Flow Probe Meter	$20 / day
Water Quality Meter	$50 / day
Water Quality Multimeter	$185 / day
Well Sounder	$30 / day

Borrego Springs Watermaster
Board of Directors Meeting
June 3, 2026
AGENDA ITEM III.C

To: Board of Directors

From: Samantha Adams, Executive Director

Date: May 29, 2026

Subject: Next Steps on Requested Public Outreach Efforts

☐ **Recommended Action**	✓ **Provide Direction to Staff**	☐ **Information and Discussion**
☐ **Fiscal Impact**	☐ **Cost Estimate: $**	

Recommended Action

Provide direction to Staff on specifics of requested public outreach via media.

Fiscal Impact: This specific activity was not budgeted for in WY 2026, however there are line items with available budget to cover the effort, including "As-needed Support for Administration of the Judgment and GMP".

Background and Previously Related Actions by the Board

- At its April 2026 meeting, the Board determined it will shift its outreach strategy to focus on utilizing media to reach more people given limited participation in dedicated public outreach meetings, and that all Board, TAC, and EWG meetings are open to the public.
- At the May 2026 Board meeting, during Board member comments, it was recommended that it would be timely to do public outreach with the news of significant reductions in pumping in WY 2026, as reported in the mid-year pumping report. The Board showed interest in doing so.

Discussion

Staff is seeking Board concurrence and direction on a media outreach approach to share the information about pumping reductions. Specifically, does the Board prefer:

1. Running an advertisement in the local Borrego newspapers (Borrego Sun and/or Borrego News).
2. Preparing a press release that could be picked up by local and regional media outlets. Do you want West Yost to prepare the release?
    a. This will need to include specific contacts that can follow-up with interested media. Staff will need direction on who should serve as contact, if staff is authorized to speak on behalf of the Watermaster should they be contacted, and if not, how and where to direct inquiries.

   b. Should this include outreach to share the press-release with specific media outlets?

3. Should a Board member be assigned to review and approve the media content before publishing? It may be beneficial to create an outreach subcommittee.

Borrego Springs Watermaster
Board of Directors Meeting
June 3, 2026
AGENDA ITEM V

To: Board of Directors

From: Samantha Adams, Executive Director

Date: May 29, 2026

Subject: Establishing Agenda for June 24, 2026 Special Board Meeting

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Process

To set the June agenda, the Board will:

1. Review the initial June agenda topics planned by Staff, as listed below
2. Review the future tentative topics planned by Staff and previously requested items by Board members, as listed below
3. List out additional items that have arisen during the June 2026 Special Board meeting (such as during public comment)
4. Call on Directors to request additional items for consideration of inclusion on the June 24, 2026 or other future agenda
5. Consider motion(s) to approve the agenda (the agenda can be approved in a single motion or multiple motions to cover each item). The Agenda/items are approved by majority vote (3 of 5 directors)

Staff's Initial Agenda for the June 24, 2026 Special Meeting

The June 24, 2026 Special Meeting (held virtually) is the second of two Special Meetings held in June 2026. The June 24, 2026 Special Meeting is scheduled for 9:00am and will include all standard items of regular meetings, including: public correspondence, consent calendar (meeting minutes, financial reports, staff invoices, etc.), Staff and Chair reports, establishing the agenda for the subsequent meeting, Board member comments, listing of future meeting dates, and adjournment.

In addition to the standard items, the initial agenda planned by Staff for the June 24, 2026 meeting includes the following business items for consideration and possible action:

1. Consideration of Approval of the WY 2027 Budget *(if not approved during June 3, 2026 meeting)*
2. Consideration of Approval of the 5-Yr Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update, as follows:
    a. Finalize the 5-Yr Assessment Report and 2026 GMP Update, with any final recommended changs

b. Submit the reports to DWR by June 25, 2026
c. File a motion with the Court to amend the Judgment to replace Exhibit 1 with the 2026 GMP Update, with notice to all Parties
d. Schedule a Court hearing on the Motion, as soon as a Court Date is available

3. Technical Review of Transfers

Staff's Tentative Topics for July and August

July Agenda Topics – propose to cancel meeting if no urgent topics

August Agenda Topics

1. Review Legal Opinion on SGMA Requirements for GDEs
2. Technical Review of Transfers
3. Spring 2026 Groundwater Monitoring Results
4. WY 2026 – Q3 Budget Status Report (as of June 30, 2026)
5. WY 2027 Meeting Schedule and Priorities