

RESOLUTION NO. 02-18

**A RESOLUTION OF THE
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY
ADOPTING A COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY as follows:

WHEREAS, The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) was formed through a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement for the purpose of forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to manage the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin and to implement Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements, including the development of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP); and,

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the SGMA, prior to initiating the development of a GSP, IWVGA shall make available a written statement describing the manner in which interested parties may participate in the development and implementation of the GSP (Water Code § 10727.8(a)); and,

WHEREAS, the IWVGA Board has created a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) which provides representation to all types of water users in the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin on policy matters of the Board associated with SGMA (including the GSP); and,

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Water Code sections 10727.8(a), 10723.2, and Cal. Code Regs. § 354.10(a), the IWVGA PAC has prepared a Communication and Engagement Plan to encourage public and agency participation in GSP development and implementation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority that the Communication and Engagement Plan is hereby adopted.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED, by the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority this **19th** day of **April**, 2018.

SIGNED: 

President of the Board of Directors

ATTEST: 

Communication and Engagement Plan
Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority
Policy Advisory Committee
April 19, 2018

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Chairperson - Donna Thomas, Eastern Kern County Resource CD
Secretary - Renee West-Lusk, Residential Customers of Public Water Agency
Rodney Stiefvater, Large Agriculture
Edward Imsand, Large Agriculture
Patricia Quist, Small Agriculture
David Janiec, Business Interests
Carol Wilson, Business Interests
Nick Panzer, Residential Customers of Public Water Agency
West Katzenstein, Domestic Well Owner
Lyle Fisher, Domestic Well Owner
Steve Godard, Wholesaler Industrial User
Tim Carroll, Inyokern Community Services District

NON VOTING MEMBERS:

Don Zdeba, Indian Wells Valley Water District
Ryan Klausch, Bureau of Land Management
John Kersey, Department of the Navy
Lorelei Oviatt, Kern County Planning and Natural Resources

**Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority Policy Advisory Committee
COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines a COMMUNICATION and ENGAGEMENT PLAN to encourage public and agency participation in Groundwater Sustainability Plan development and implementation.

COMMUNICATION

Each stakeholder and agency must have an opportunity to understand the magnitude of the groundwater overdraft problem and how that problem could affect the stakeholders.

ENGAGEMENT

Each stakeholder and agency must have an opportunity to understand the process for participation in developing a plan to solve the overdraft problem.

Authority: Water Code Secs 10727.8 (a) and 10723.2 and Reg. Sec. 354.10(a)

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater basin is located east of the southern Sierra Nevada Range in southern California with an area of approximately 382,000 acres underlying portions of Inyo, Kern, and San Bernardino Counties. The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater basin is identified by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as Basin 6-54 in Bulletin No. 118. The Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin is classified as a "medium priority" basin pursuant to the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin is also classified as a "critically overdrafted" basin in Bulletin No. 118 interim update (2016), prepared by the DWR. As required by SGMA, all Bulletin No. 118 basins designated as "high" or "medium priority" and "critically overdrafted" shall be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) by January 31, 2020, including the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin.

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY FORMATION AND PROJECT PROPONENTS

In July 2016, the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) was formed through a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement for the purpose of forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to manage the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin and to implement SGMA requirements, including the development of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSP). The IWVGA consists of the following voting member agencies:

1. City of Ridgecrest (a public agency)
2. Indian Wells Valley Water District (a California Special District)
3. County of Kern (a public agency)
4. County of Inyo (a public agency)
5. County of San Bernardino (a public agency)

along with the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management and the United States Navy, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake as non-voting associate members.

The IWVGA conducts regular Board meetings (on a monthly basis) to support the development of the GSP for the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin to present information concerning the GSP, and to receive input from the public attending the meetings. The IWVGA has specific authorities with additional and full powers granted by SGMA upon approval of the GSP by the State of California. The IWVGA has created a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which meets on a monthly basis and will assist in the development of the GSP. In addition, the IWVGA Board has created a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) which meets on a monthly basis and provides representation to all types of water users in the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin on policy matters of the Board associated with SGMA (including the GSP). Through these committees and other means the public will be engaged to provide input to the GSP. Throughout the development of the GSP, the IWVGA Board will receive input from the TAC, PAC, and the public, including input regarding the key Work Plan tasks which are identified and presented in the sections below.

According to Article 5.7 of the "Bylaws of the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority" (Bylaws), dated May 18, 2017, the voting members of the PAC include water users from the following:

- 2 representatives from Large Agriculture
- 1 representative from Small Agriculture
- 2 representatives from Business Interests
- 2 representatives from Domestic Well Owners
- 2 representatives from residential customers of a public agency water supplier
- 1 representative from Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District
- 1 representative from Wholesaler and Industrial User
- At least 1 representative from Disadvantaged Communities

One representative each from the Indian Wells Valley Water District, the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management – Ridgecrest Field Office , and the United States Navy, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and Director of Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department are also included as non-voting PAC members.

According to Article 5.12 of the Bylaws, the TAC shall be comprised of individuals representing PAC members, PAC membership categories, and the interests of basin landowners and water users. PAC members may nominate a TAC member for their respective membership category.

During the formation of the IWVGA, a comprehensive listing of interested parties (including name, email, and phone number) was developed. The listing includes local community residents (including Disadvantaged Communities, Severely Disadvantaged Communities, and Economically Distressed Areas), businesses, large and small-scale agriculture, domestic well owners, academic institutions, relevant state and local agencies, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and community organizations. This listing of over 150 stakeholders includes representatives from all types of water users within the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin and was used during the 17-month long GSA formation process for notification of public meetings, notifications, and updates related to discussions on the SGMA. This stakeholders listing will continue to be updated and used during the development of the GSP.

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

The Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin resources are currently not sustainably managed. Overdraft conditions have existed since the 1960s as a result of groundwater pumping exceeding the sustainable yield. Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), ~~and~~ Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) and the large number of shallow domestic water wells overlying the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin are particularly susceptible to adverse effects resulting from chronic lowering of groundwater levels-accordingly, mitigating the chronic lowering of groundwater levels through implementing the GSP is an urgent requirement. As a result of these conditions, and with the purpose of complying with SGMA regulations and DWR standards and guidance, the purpose of the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin GSP Work Plan was established:

Purpose: Develop a Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SMGA) compliant Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that provides sustainable management strategies that culminate in the absence of undesirable and unsustainable groundwater conditions within 20 years in order to provide long-term sustainable groundwater management that provides a viable future for the basin.

GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Desired outcomes include, making use of local knowledge, creating improved outcomes, building trust, reducing conflict, increasing credibility, building partnerships, promoting stakeholder buy-in and broader public awareness, understanding, knowledge, and support for all voices and perspectives.
- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

- Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all.
- Public participation provides all with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to all how their input affected the decision.
- Plan for economic development and growth while protecting private property rights, water rights and health and safety.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- The guiding principles of the Communication and Engagement plan are:
 - Commitment to open communication,
 - Inclusivity, and respect for all views
 - Assurances of two-way communication
 - Being clear about the process and the details of the problem.
 - Individualizing contact to provide communication with every resident, landowner and business owner to the extent possible and the creation of meaningful opportunities for feedback.
- Enhance understanding and inform the public about water, ~~and~~ groundwater resources, uses and water balance in the Indian Wells Valley and the purpose and need for the GSP.
- Engage a diverse group of interested parties and stakeholders and promote informed community feedback throughout the GSP preparation and implementation process.
- Engage entities and groups that may be instrumental in supporting, influencing and implementing a potential broad array of options and solutions developed under the plan that may contribute together to the goal of reaching groundwater sustainability in the IWV Basin.
- Coordinate communication and involvement between the GSA (Board, Advisory Committees and staff) and other local agencies (including other GSAs) elected and appointed officials and the general public.
- Utilize the Policy Advisory Committee to facilitate a comprehensive public engagement process.
- Employ a variety of outreach methods that make public participation easy and accessible. Hold meetings at times and locations that encourage broad participation.
- Respond to public concerns and provide accurate and up-to-date information.
- Manage the community engagement program in a manner that provides a maximum value to the public and an efficient use of GSA and local agency resources.
- Giving stakeholders an opportunity to understand
 - The quantitative details of the imbalance between current groundwater recharge and groundwater uses (that imbalance being the GSA’s overriding challenge)

- The specific manner in which they may help develop a plan to create balance
- Clear explanations of how the plan could affect all uses and users of groundwater in the basin.

PRESENTATION AND COMMUNICATION CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

- A. Use of unfamiliar technical language and terminology
- B. Lack of attendance
- C. Access for non-English language users, hearing impaired and ADA compliance
- D. Lack of access to internet and reference materials
- E. Engaging people with privacy concerns
- F. Non- interest in the subject and apathy
- G. Absentee and out of basin landowners
- H. Temporary employees in the basin who own homes
- I. Emphasizing the seriousness of the basin condition without being alarmist

OUTREACH METHODS AND NOTIFICATION

The following is guidance for the GSA staff and consultants to design the outreach plan based on the work plan milestones.

The following are methods that should be used beyond legal notifications:

- Individual mailings and newsletters
- Website updates and potential use of social media
- Public notices and display advertisements in newspapers
- Focused workshops
- Speaker Bureau for any organizations requesting presentation. The * indicates those organizations recommended for proactive contact. The bureau should include appointed people by the Board to accept and generate speaker engagement requests and have focused messages and the ability to answer questions.
- Evening GSA Board meetings to discuss milestone recommendations or any tax or regulations
- Hard copy materials along with CD should be placed in County libraries

Guidelines for Workshops:

- Provide a meeting venue large enough to accommodate expected attendance
- Night meetings preferred but focused workshop with a specific organization should be at the time preferred by the organization.
- Anticipate any request for translation and utilize headphone translation equipment if possible.
- Make materials available on the website either in advance or after the workshop.

- Make a clear explanation in any notice to the nature of workshop (Informational only or possible decision made based on public comments).

Notification List (contact names and phone numbers provided under separate cover)

Any mailing of information should include all organizations and contacts on this list. Any persons or organizations that wish to be added to the list should be directed to contact the JPA staff and they should be added to the list for the next notification mailing. Once established people and organizations should not be dropped from the list unless the mailing is returned as undeliverable or they specifically ask to be removed. The * indicates these organizations recommended for proactive contact.

Service Organizations

American Legion*
 BPO Elks Lodge*
 Desert Area Resources and Training (DART)
 Exchange Club*
 Fleet & Family Support Center
 Friends of the Fair, Inc.
 Fraternal Order - Eagles*
 Historical Society/Upper Mojave Desert*
 IWV Optimist Club*
 Kiwanis International*
 Knights of Columbus*
 Lions Club*
 Masonic Lodge
 Oasis Garden Club of IWV*
 Rotary Club of China Lake*
 Salvation Army
 United Way of IWV
 VFW*
 Women's Center – High Desert, Inc.

Business and Advocacy Groups

Agricultural Property Owners Association – IWV
 American Pistachio Growers
 China Lake Alliance
 China Lake Museum Foundation
 California Rural Water Association (CRWA)
 Democratic Club of IWV*
 Domestic Wells Owners Association – IWV
 Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance – GAVEA
 Indian Wells Valley Economic Development Corporation
 Inyokern Airport District
 Inyokern Chamber of Commerce*

Kern County Farm Bureau
Kern Economic Development Corporation
Maturango Museum
NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association*)
Ridgecrest Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (RACVB)
RC Republican Women, Federated*
Ridgecrest Area Association of Realtors*
Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce*
Ridgecrest Regional Hospital
Ridgecrest United
Searles Valley Minerals
Trona Chamber of Commerce*

Schools and Religious Organizations

Adventist Christian School
Balas Montessori School
Calvary Christian School
Cerro Coso Community College
Heritage Montessori School
Immanuel Christian School
Liberty Christian School
Mountain View Christian Academy
Pilgrim Christian
Ridgecrest Charter School
Saint Ann School
Sierra Sands Unified School District
Sierra View Christian School
Soli Deo Gloria Christian Academy
The Bridge Learning Center

Tribal Representation

Cherokee Community of Central CA
Kern Valley Indian Council
Kitanemuk & Yowlumne Tejon Indians
Monache Intertribal Association
Nuui Cunni Cultural Center, Kern River Paiute Council
Tejon Indian Tribe
Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Council
Tubatulabals of Kern County

Utilities

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Pacific Gas and Electric
Southern California Edison
Southern California Gas

Local Government

City of Ridgecrest City Council
City of Ridgecrest City Manager
City of Ridgecrest City Attorney
City of Ridgecrest Planning
City of Ridgecrest Public Works
Fremont Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Indian Wells Valley Water District
Inyokern Community Services District
Inyo County Board of Supervisors
Inyo County CAO
Inyo County Counsel
Inyo County Planning Department
Inyo County Water Department
Inyo Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Kern County Board of Supervisors
Kern County CAO
Kern County Counsel
Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
Kern County Public Health
Kern County Water Agency
San Bernardino Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino CAO
San Bernardino County Counsel
San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department
San Bernardino County Public Health
Searles Domestic Water Company

State Government

California Department of Food and Agriculture
California Department of Water Resources
California Department of Conservation
Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District

Ridgecrest

16th State Senate District (Jean Fuller)
34th State Assembly District (Vince Fong)

Trona (San Bernardino County)

16th State Senate District (Jean Fuller)
33rd State Assembly District (Jay Olbermolte)

Corner where Kern, San Bernardino and Inyo County meet

8th State Senate District (Tom Berryhill)
16th State Senate District (Jean Fuller)
26th State Assembly District (Devon Mathis)

CA Military Caucus
Governor's Office
Business & Econ Dev
Governor's Military Council
Office of Planning and Research

Federal Government

Ridgecrest
23rd Congressional District (Kevin McCarthy)

Trona (San Bernardino County)
8th Congressional District (Paul Cook)

Corner where Kern, San Bernardino and Inyo County meet
8th US Congressional District (Paul Cook)

Senator Kamala Harris

Bureau of Land Management – Ridgecrest Field Office
Department of Navy-Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA Farm Service Agency