

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

January 16, 2019

A Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of Vista Irrigation District was held on Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at the offices of the District, 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, California.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

President MacKenzie called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Directors present: Miller, Vásquez, Dorey, Sanchez, and MacKenzie.

Directors absent: None.

Staff present: Brett Hodgkiss, General Manager; Lisa Soto, Secretary of the Board; Don Smith, Director of Water Resources; Randy Whitmann, Director of Engineering; Frank Wolinski, Director of Operations and Field Services; Marlene Kelleher, Director of Administration; and Ramee Ogilvie, Administrative Assistant. General Counsel David Cosgrove was also present.

Other attendees: Gus Yates, Todd Groundwater; Trey Driscoll, Dudek & Associates; Angela Morrow, City of Escondido; Bill McWethy, Pacific Hospitality Group; Doug Roff, AECOM; and Doug Gillingham, Gillingham Water. Special Counsel John Carter was also present.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Director Sanchez led the pledge of allegiance.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

19-01-11a	<i>Upon motion by Director Dorey, seconded by Director Miller and unanimously carried (5 ayes: Miller, Vásquez, Dorey, Sanchez, and MacKenzie), the Board of Directors approved the agenda as presented.</i>
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**5. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

No public comments were presented on items not appearing on the agenda.

**6. WARNER VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN ASSESSMENT**

Director of Water Resources Don Smith explained that the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was passed into law in 2014. Since that time, the District has been exploring how SGMA may affect our groundwater management activities. The Board held a workshop in 2015 to discuss SGMA and decided to refresh its analysis of the Warner Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin), including the accounting, physics and hydrology of the Basin. Mr. Smith stated that many good proposals were received for this study; however, two proposals, one from Todd Groundwater (Todd) and one from Dudek & Associates (Dudek) stood above the rest. At District staff's suggestion, Todd and Dudek teamed up for the project with

Todd being responsible for the development of the groundwater model and Dudek being responsible for analyzing SGMA issues and assisting with interactions with the County of San Diego (County). Mr. Smith introduced the consultants, Trey Driscoll of Dudek and Gus Yates of Todd.

Mr. Driscoll presented the Basin SGMA process assessment via a PowerPoint presentation (attached hereto as Exhibit A). Backup General Counsel David Cosgrove provided clarification regarding the fact that the District is not listed as an eligible entity for becoming a Groundwater Service Agency (GSA) for the Warner Valley Groundwater Basin by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). Mr. Cosgrove stated that by virtue of the fact that the Vista Irrigation District is a local agency as defined by Water Code 10721(n) and overlies a groundwater basin, it is an eligible entity for becoming a GSA. He commented that the fact that DWR had not listed the District as eligible to form a GSA for the Warner Basin may be an oversight.

Gus Yates of Todd Groundwater presented the Basin groundwater flow model in the second half of the PowerPoint presentation. He explained the purpose of the model, how it was developed and calibrated, and he reviewed some of the questions that were applied to the model. Mr. Yates noted that the Basin and Lake Henshaw together do a very good job of capturing nearly all of the water produced by the watershed. Using the model, opportunities for increasing yield through increased pumping by the District and by the Warner Springs Ranch were tested, assuming actual rainfall as measured in the period 1939 through 2016. Mr. Yates commented that the dry period of 1945-1977 is the most challenging recent drought period of record, and forms the basis for estimating the future sustainable yield of the basin.

There was a discussion regarding the District's wellfield pumps, the different types and vintages, and their differing abilities to pump efficiently from lower depths. Mr. Yates suggested that a logical next step may be a wellfield performance evaluation.

Mr. Bill McWethy of Pacific Hospitality Group and the Warner Springs Ranch Resort (WSRR) addressed the Board, stating that his group has conducted its own groundwater study. He said that he would be interested in discussing with District staff long-term solutions for the management of the Basin to lower the cost of pumping. Mr. McWethy said that he has an idea that could save the WSRR and the District a great deal on the cost of pumping, and he looks forward to providing the District with his hydrology report so that the two entities can discuss his idea. President MacKenzie asked if his pumping idea will be included in his report; Mr. McWethy responded that he would share his ideas with District staff.

Mr. McWethy stated that the WSRR groundwater study is currently being reviewed by the County of San Diego and once released, he would be happy to share the information with the District. Upon conclusion of his comments, Mr. McWethy thanked the Board. President MacKenzie requested that once WSRR's report is released that staff provide a summary of the report for the Board.

Mr. Smith said that the District plans to evaluate wellfield performance and look for ways, including well rehabilitation, well spacing and well design, to increase groundwater production in the Basin. He said that the evaluation will also look at ways to minimize evaporative loss. Mr. Smith said that staff will be working with Todd to determine the best approach and bring the matter back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

## **7. COMMENTS BY DIRECTORS**

Director Sanchez commented that items 4-12 and item 15 on page 16 of the SGMA report are all things the District should do to manage the Basin, whether it chooses to become a GSA and develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan or not. The Board agreed with Director Sanchez, acknowledging that the District already does most of the items on the list.

Director Sanchez thanked Director Dorey for sharing his institutional knowledge and historical background over the past week regarding the Basin. The Board thanked the consultants for their reports.

**8. COMMENTS BY GENERAL MANAGER**

Mr. Hodgkiss informed the Board that that establishing a Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (and funding it in a manner akin to the method described in SB 623) was made an official part of the State's budget. He noted that the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and its member agencies are continuing to watch this matter closely. He added that there will be a joint hearing on February 6 of the Assembly Committees for Water, Parks and Wildlife, and Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials, and the Budget Subcommittee on Resources and Transportation to discuss Safe and Affordable Drinking Water.

Mr. Hodgkiss informed the Board that the District will be replacing the deteriorating slate surface outside both entrances of the headquarters lobby. He said that the project will take place over the course of the next month, and the natural slate will be replaced with non-slip porcelain tile.

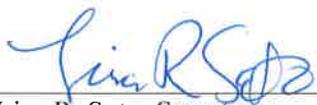
Mr. Cosgrove stated that on January 22 the State Water Resources Control Board is going to conduct a workshop on the new regulations related to California wetlands and that Jeremy Jungreis of Rutan & Tucker will be involved in the presentation on behalf of Orange County Water District. He stated that the goal is to obtain an exemption for preexisting groundwater recharge facilities, canals, etc. from additional permitting requirements. He added that he will be watching this matter as it progresses and will report back to the Board on any new developments.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, at 10:04 a.m. President MacKenzie adjourned the meeting.

  
Jo MacKenzie, President

ATTEST:

  
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Lisa R. Soto, Secretary  
Board of Directors  
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT



**STAFF REPORT**

**Board Meeting Date:** January 16, 2019  
**Reviewed By:** Don Smith  
**Approved By:** Brett Hodgkiss

**SUBJECT:** WARNER VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN ASSESSMENT

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive and file Warner Valley Groundwater Basin – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Process Assessment and Warner Valley Basin Groundwater Flow Model Development and Calibration.

**PRIOR BOARD ACTION:** On June 29, 2015, the Board conducted a workshop on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA) and authorized staff to perform further investigations regarding future management of groundwater resources.

On June 21, 2017, the Board authorized the General Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with Todd Groundwater, Inc., to provide groundwater assessment and consultation services per their joint proposal with Dudek.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Not to exceed \$227,392; \$80,042 (35.2%) will be reimbursed by the City of Escondido under the terms of the Local Entities’ Agreement. The District’s net cost is estimated not to exceed \$147,350.

**SUMMARY:** The groundwater assessment performed by Todd Groundwater, Inc., in conjunction with Dudek, included outlining data needs, procedures, likely costs, potential benefits and other considerations to help the District evaluate the possibility of forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Basin under SGMA; reviewing previous hydrogeological studies of the Warner Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) and updating, compiling and analyzing hydrogeological and groundwater pumping data to estimate the sustainable yield of the Basin; and assessing the hydrologic connectivity and independent sustainable yield of that portion of the Basin underlying the Warner Springs Ranch Resort. Representatives from Todd Groundwater Inc. and Dudek are present to review their assessment of SGMA as it pertains to the District’s operations in the Warner Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) as well as the development and findings of the numerical groundwater model of the Basin.

**DETAILED REPORT:** As a very low priority groundwater basin, SGMA does not require the formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) or the preparation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Basin. The cost of forming a GSA is estimated at \$90,000, and the cost of preparing a GSP is estimated at between \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. Additionally, there will be unknown ongoing administrative, monitoring and reporting costs associated with these efforts.

The chief advantage of implementing SGMA in the Basin is an increased level of certainty with respect to future groundwater production for the District. However, significant uncertainties exist with respect to involvement by the County of San Diego (County), the evaluation of groundwater dependent ecosystems, and the administrative overhead related to the effort. At this time, staff believes that the District’s interest in protecting groundwater production within the Basin is best served by participating in the County’s project review and approval process for development plans within the Basin and not pursuing implementation of SGMA.

A numeric groundwater model of the Basin has been prepared to assess the sustainable yield of the Basin; the potential effect of proposed development on the District’s groundwater production; the potential for increasing the yield of the Local Water System; and the possible effects of climate change on Basin yield. The findings of this effort suggest that, for the drought and recovery period 1945 through 1986, groundwater yields of up to 9,125 acre-feet per year (afy) could have been supported while allowing full recovery of the groundwater basin (compared to the 7,600 afy of actual pumping by the District over that period).

Modeling the interaction of pumping within the Warner Springs Ranch Resort (WSRR) with pumping by the District shows that an increase in consumptive use within the WSRR area caused an equal decrease in the conjunctive use yield available to the District. The limiting factor for sustainable yield available to WSRR during the drought of record was not storage recovery, but limited storage due to the relatively shallow groundwater basin near WSRR. The model showed that WSRR consumptive use could successfully be increased to 1,100 afy (as compared to an historical use of 400 to 600 afy). Groundwater use associated with the proposed WSRR project is uncertain at this time.

The primary opportunities for increasing the District's yield of Local Water depend on increasing the capacity of the wellfield to pump over a wider range of groundwater depths, thereby increasing total water available during periods of drought; and increasing the ability of the wellfield to peak its production during the summer delivery period, thereby reducing evaporative losses in Lake Henshaw. The ability to achieve these objectives will require an evaluation of existing water production infrastructure and the design and construction of new wellfield facilities.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Warner Valley Groundwater Basin – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Process Assessment
2. Warner Valley Basin Groundwater Flow Model Development and Calibration