

IWVWD DIRECTORS ATTEND WORKSHOP, ASSESS PRIORITIES

No matter where you are in the world these days, stories about water issues flood the media. Whether you live in Madras, India, Beijing, China or Ridgecrest, California, ensuring adequate, safe and affordable water supplies for future generations, especially in the arid and semi-arid regions of the globe, takes vision, research, appropriate financing, long-range planning and prioritizing.

The Indian Wells Valley Water District Board members are aware of the complexity and seriousness of water issues here in the Valley. So, at least once each year, they join their management staff for a day-long public Workshop with an eye to developing a consensus regarding priorities and action plans for the current year and foreseeable future. This year's Workshop took place on January 23 at Water District offices.

Facilitator Charles Beesley, a special district consultant and former water agency CEO, helped the Directors identify concerns and create action plans for solutions as they moved through an ambitious agenda. A wide range of topics was examined during this meeting, chief among them water conservation and the role of the General Manager in securing future alternate water sources.

When it came to water conservation, the Board continued to express support of and interest in Water District programs currently in place. For example, Directors specifically mentioned water education for Valley students, Xeriscape Workshops; civic presentations; the continuous District sponsored free distributions of water efficient informational guides as well as gadgets like efficient shower heads and faucet aerators; and the ongoing drafting of an outdoor water conservation ordinance for new development in conjunction with the City of Ridgecrest.

The Board concluded that increasing wide-spread involvement would be a key factor in affecting water conservation beliefs and habits in the coming years. They therefore authorized the establishment of a Citizens' Advisory Committee to assist with the drafting of the city's new outdoor water conservation ordinance and pledged to continue to pursue same with a goal of seeing the measure completed by September of 2008. One of the results of this cooperative effort is intended to be a more unified community view about outdoor water conservation. The Board also underscored its support for the speedy development of the in-progress groundwater flow model and the conclusions of Dr. Randy Bassett's report on the AB303 grant funded water source sampling and analysis throughout the basin. They resolved to release the complete report to the community when finalized.

Over the past decade, alternate water sources have become an even more vital part of the District's vision. This position echoes that of many other municipalities, regions and water purveyors across the United States and around the world who find themselves dealing with water challenges and concerns unprecedented in written history.

The IWWWD only pumps about 29 percent of the total water consumed in the Valley per year, according to a report compiled by the IWW Cooperative Ground Water Management Group. Yet District Directors are seriously concerned about the future water needs of all Ridgecrest residents, whether they are served by the Water District or not. To that end, the Directors have authorized me to devote more time and energy to foregoing better working relationships with water-related organizations outside the Valley – like the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the Kern County Water Agency. I have also been encouraged to explore water banking and/or exchange possibilities with these entities. Of course, finding and securing alternate water sources is one main tenet of the District Water Supply Enhancement General Plan and the Directors believe mutually beneficial arrangements have the best odds of succeeding.

As you can see, the IWWWD Directors and staff keep the present and future welfare of all the residents in this Valley as a high priority. If you ever have a question or concern about your water, I encourage you to contact District offices at (760) 375-5086. We are here to serve you.