

Whoa! Time to ORGANIZE To Save our Water Rights With Sanity!

*By Lorry Wagner
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Last evening an attempt was made by the Indian Wells Valley Water Authority and the Indian Wells Valley Water District to conduct a workshop meeting with those of us who attended for purposes of bringing forth enlightenment, history and information focused on any water-shortage problem in Indian Wells Valley to these first two groups from a much wider perspective. I personally attended in order to share my many years of living on my private property with my private well to help this group widen their basic foundation of knowledge to bring forth complete understanding of this subject instead of just smidgeons from a handful of people who have never had the full experience on this subject as so many of us in this valley who have had much more...in my case over 50 years of actual hands-on time which includes pulling reinstalling pump, replacing pressure pumps, keeping track of water levels/gpm production and everything else that keeps the faucet in the house running water..

Oh, my! I would venture to say that the two factions organizing this meeting were shocked, as were many of us attending, at the numbers of people who arrived. The Inyokern Senior Citizens Center exploded in more ways than one! I was not able to count the folks that attended, but there had to be at least over 200 folks there. The inside was literally packed to standing room only and many more people were left standing outside because they could not get in.

Order was called by the head table and the presentation from IWVWA and IWVWD began with the predictable “this is why we are charged to do this,” and “we have a 2020 deadline to get it done” which basically said “Sacramento told us we had to do this or they would step in and do it for us.” We have all hear this “justification” before and most of us know that we the people have to stop this kind of over-reaching politics or we will no longer be living in an America under our United States Constitution.

I had been prepared to present to the people in charge as this meeting was called to order some “rules” by which we the people could conduct our input, requiring balance and respect from the front table, not domination from one side. In other words, in-depth and very informative exchanges from both the front table and we the attendees, who own the private wells, including the water rights. I never got that chance. I was waiting for the front table to start the meeting by telling us “their” rules of how this meeting would be conducted which is the usual way to start a meeting like this and that never happened. Instead, there was an immediate launch from the front table of “Sacramento passed the regulation mandating...” plus the above described, “we are using more water than is being replaced in our water table” and “we will be imposing a fee on the usage of water pumped in all wells exempting the base (because it is Federal land), BLM (but, of course they have no wells anyway) and those wells providing very limited water usage, not the exact words they spoke, but in essence this is what was said. Unfortunately, there was no explanation regarding the Ridgecrest residents on IWVWD water that when IWVWD has this fee imposed on them, that fee will be passed on via water bills to every resident on city water. Since I was standing against the wall I could not record word-for-word using my shorthand! Well, folks, what we heard is not what is needed. The floor must be open to INPUT from the attendees.

There was muttering going on objecting to much of that above beginning of the presentation but it was when they got to the subject of a man-dated fee to be charged for water pumped from our private wells that an eruption arose...perhaps explosion is a better description! The people inside could not really hear much with the shouting of some inside and the people outside could not hear anything at all. A few of us tried to interject important opposing views or add important information to balance what we know was either incorrect, only partial, limited or misunderstood information from the two organizations, but everyone was either talking or shouting at once and communication was impossible. I finally managed to thread my way through the masses on the floor up to the head table and personally addressed one of the gentlemen (I “think” it was the manager of IWVWD, but not sure) and at least was able to communicate to him that we needed to set up any such meeting like this with rules requiring organized, mandatory equal presentation from BOTH sides instead of one-sided input. The answer to me was “we plan to open this floor to questions from the audience.” This answer alerted me to the fact that we-the-people have lots of work to do to organize not only ourselves into a group that can function with dignity and quiet input but also organize the tremendous amount of information each of us has accumulated throughout our years to presentable form and then meet with these politically set-up entities to meld reality into this illegal man-date from Sacramento. Thus, ANY THOUGHT BY EITHER/OR THE IWVWD AND/OR IWVWA OF IMPOSING ANY FEES MUST GO ON HOLD until exchange of reality can be accomplished. STOP THE FEE MOVEMENT...we can move forward in a better

way. At that point I handed him a copy of the rules I had intended to share with the front table at the beginning of the meeting, but did not have that opportunity to do so.

Within a few minutes it was obvious this meeting was not going to work for a variety of reasons. I started circulating the floor as best I could...this place was packed as I mentioned above with standing room only...and spoke to several people indicating it was very obvious to me that *we the people* needed to organize ourselves and bring this group together and then come to a meeting with our input planned and organized so that we can inter-relate same in a quiet and presentable manner. I had brought with me a few copies of those rules for the attendees and what I had planned to share at the start of the meeting. Thus, I did pass them out and asked people to help me organize all these enthusiastic people who are very worried about their private water plus this valley's water-table under current political address suggesting we must create a workable group of these people so that we could accomplish positive movement. The people to whom I was able to speak agreed with me, but there was no way I could reach the large turnout. That was an impressive number of people coming out to last night's meeting and how we can reach them all and start this movement will be a challenge. But, we have to try!

This June 7 meeting was cancelled but will be rescheduled where this number of attendees can be accommodated. Time, date and place will be announced. We do not have much time to get organized for this rescheduled meeting. If we all work together, I believe we can put together a good start.

Let's do it, folks. Let's jump in and create a positive, correct and workable movement which must be controlled by *we the people* including our control of those government entities all the way up to Sacramento! Otherwise, we will lose our America that was created by our forefathers. Under our Constitution of the United States of America our forefathers and following generations created the greatest nation in the history of the world including the creation of guaranteeing of our freedom and it has now been passed down to us, today, to make sure America continues as this great nation including the protection of our precious freedoms.

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