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Serving the Indian Wells Valley since 1926

State approves groundwater plan

By Jessica Weston
For the Daily Independent

The Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin has been approved by the California Department of Water Resources.

The plan was submitted to DWR in January 2020, and IWV Water District General Manager Don Zdeba received word of the approval Thursday.

The approval was based on findings that the plan "satisfies the objectives of the

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and substantially complies with the GSP Regulations," according to the approval letter to Zdeba dated Jan. 13, 2022.

The attachment also recommends corrective actions DWR "believes will enhance the GSP and facilitate future evaluation by the Department."

Groundwater authorities are required to evaluate their sustainability plans in writing every five years or if the plan is amended.

DWR will also evaluate ap-

proved plans at least every five years, with the first review initiated no later than January 2025.

"I am relieved that they [DWR] issued their opinion," Zdeba said. It has been a long time coming. Everybody has been anticipating it, and we will go through it and move forward following the recommendations."

Hall: 'I am not surprised at all but I am absolutely happy'

As of press time Thursday,

no one had fully read, much less digested, the 45-page findings document. Those who worked on the plan, however, were clearly happy about the news.

"I wasn't really expecting it today. My first thoughts were I was really pleased with the outcome," said Mayor Pro Tem Scott Hayman, who sits on the groundwater authority.

"I think it's very good news. I think it's very good news for the GA. I think it's very good news for the residents of the valley," he added.

Hayman said the approval

reflects the efforts of everyone who contributed to the GSP.

"A lot of hard work has gone into this over the last several years. It's a big success for everyone involved," he said.

"We have some of the brightest minds working on it. I have always been optimistic, but cautiously optimistic. I am just very pleased and relieved this is the outcome."

"It's great news, but anti-climactic because it's exactly what we expected," said

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See more on the IWVWD's adjudication filing on Page A2



These Snow Geese were in no hurry to yield the right of way to passing cars along this city street Wednesday morning.

DARLA A. BAKER/THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

Snow geese are in no hurry to cross the road

By Darla A. Baker
The Daily Independent

For as long as I can remember, people have asked, "Why did the chicken cross the road?"

The answer to this age-old question is unsure, but I do know one thing.

The migrating flocks of snow geese

that visit the valley each winter were crossing this city road early Wednesday morning in search of water found drizzling down the roadside curbs.

The geese first arrived to the area in October, and generally numbers around 2,000 each winter season, according to the local Audubon Society.

This flock numbered a few doz-

en and spent time grazing in the lush grass that still grows in front of homes on Lilac Circle.

Migrating south from the Arctic Circle each year, the geese can fly up to 500 to 600 miles per day.

They are typically found grazing at parks around town until March before traveling to their breeding ground.

Restrict flow or shut off delinquent accounts?

By Michael Smit
For the Daily Independent

The Indian Wells Valley Water District is drafting a policy which would allow them to place flow restrictors on the properties of customers with overdue payments, rather than shutting off their water completely.

The Water District board of directors discussed the policy at their monthly board meeting on Monday. No vote was taken on the topic, but discussion indicated the board's interest in seeing Water District staff draft a policy so they could review and potentially approve it.

Water District general manager Don Zdeba said, "Right now, if someone is delinquent on their payment, they're locked off. There's no other option if they don't enter a payment plan. Of course, payment plans are always an option."

"A flow restrictor could offer a temporary lifeline to people to give them a little extra time," Zdeba said.

He explained that the Water District board previously discussed policy on flow restrictors over the summer, and is coming back to the topic now because the California moratorium on water shut offs ended on Dec. 31, 2021.

According to comments from Water District staff at the meeting, there are currently 323 accounts who have

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Supervisor Phillip Peters looks ahead in the new year

By Darla A. Baker
The Daily Independent

Now that the new year is upon us, The Daily Independent sat down with Kern County Supervisor Phillip Peters to discuss his vision for District 1, which encompasses the city of Ridgecrest. In addition, Supervisor Peters discussed what he feels are some of our biggest challenges we are facing as a community.

"We definitely had some challenges this year," said Peters Wednesday afternoon. "The ongoing COVID thing has certainly been a big challenge for us. However, we have done a good job responding to it, I think."

Peters said that some of the challenges presented by the

pandemic has been balancing what is best for the people and what the people need.

Said Peters, "We don't want to be overly restrictive, but we want to make sure the community is safe."

Currently, Peters said that the county has administered approximately 1 million vaccinations to citizens.

"It has been a huge undertaking by public health. It takes a lot of money, and a lot of man hours. They have done a really good job responding to the needs."

Slow growth

Peters said that the county is also experiencing a slow growth period over the last year over year.

"It has been pretty stagnant," he said concerning revenue. This includes a 9% growth in property taxes, compared to other cities in California that are experiencing double-digit growths.

Although the growth in property taxes is not increasing, Peters said the price of goods continues to increase.

"We are already trying to take care of the budget that we have. Unfortunately, this continues to get harder; however, I think we are on pretty solid footing for the year."

Peters said that the County Administrative Office has done a good job at maintaining fiscal accountability.

"From a fiscal perspective,

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First District Supervisor Phillip Peters shared his vision for 2022.

DARLA A. BAKER/THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

Weather: Mostly sunny

Today: 66/39 Tomorrow: 62/36

Full Forecast Record

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Obituaries Sports

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