

**From:** [Radke, Bill](#)  
**To:** [Harden, Tasha](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] San Bernadino Ranch Water Options  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 1:37:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [Cover Letter SBNWR2019.pdf](#)  
[Attachment2 SBNWR Legal 151019.pdf](#)  
[Attachment1 151019 SBNWR Drawdown.pdf](#)

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FYI

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**From:** Baca, Joaquin <Joaquin\_Baca@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2019 6:24 AM  
**To:** Radke, Bill <bill\_radke@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Reagan, Steve <steve\_reagan@fws.gov>; Fernandez, Juliette <juliette\_fernandez@fws.gov>; McIntyre, Julie <julie\_mcintyre@fws.gov>; Richardson, Scott <scott\_richardson@fws.gov>; Harden, Tasha <Tasha\_Harden@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] San Bernadino Ranch Water Options

Morning Bill,

Please see the attached final versions. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you

On Fri, Oct 11, 2019 at 11:05 AM Radke, Bill <[bill\\_radke@fws.gov](mailto:bill_radke@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi Steve;

The DHS border infrastructure construction is ongoing and hitting San Bernardino NWR in a major negative way. Although FWS has informed DHS on multiple occasions that their planned (now ongoing) withdrawal of groundwater will impact refuge wells and wetlands, they are awaiting our "Hydrology Report" before they potentially alter any of their plans. I explained to Joaquin Baca (FWS DWR) that we needed the "hydrology" report as soon as possible, but no later than the end of September to meet DHS requests for our data. Because we have not yet produced that report, DHS has been pumping from a well located 1.6 miles west of the refuge for the past one and a half months (total volume pumped is about 2 million gallons so far). DHS contractors also just drilled a new well about 4 miles west of the refuge last week. I learned yesterday that DHS contractors are planning on drilling a third well just east of the refuge within the next week or two. All of these wells are being drilled into the deep aquifer that supports artesian flow on the refuge. It is crucial that the "hydrology" report is completed in a final form and provided to DHS or we will continue to lose the water that supports the refuge.

Another ramification of the DHS infrastructure project is that the owners of Slaughter Ranch (FWS has a conservation easement on their property, located immediately adjacent to the refuge) are concerned that the DHS water withdrawal will dry up their domestic water source (they are correct in that assumption). Please see their attached email requesting to drill a new well on their "easement-protected" property, which will solve their domestic use problem and further deplete and complicate any species recovery efforts on the refuge. The threat of groundwater depletion at San Bernardino NWR has gone from "concerning" to

"dire emergency." Anything you can do at your end to urge our Division of Water Resources to complete the report and move it through the DOI Solicitor's Office would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your help, Bill Radke

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Alan Finks** <(b) (6)>  
Date: Fri, Oct 11, 2019 at 8:52 AM  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] San Bernadino Ranch Water Options  
To: Radke, Bill <[bill\\_radke@fws.gov](mailto:bill_radke@fws.gov)>

Bill,

I am mailing the following letter to your office today. Please respond as quickly as possible, because I don't know how much time we have. Thanks, Alan

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Mr. William Radke  
US Fish & Wildlife Service  
Refuge Manager  
San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge  
P.O. Box 3509 7628 North Hwy. 191  
Douglas, Arizona 85608

Dear Bill,

Thank you again for your email of September 18 regarding new border infrastructure impacts on the Slaughter Ranch.

The board members of the Johnson Foundation are concerned that the pumping of water you describe from the aquifers in the San Bernardino Valley will adversely affect the artesian springs under the Slaughter Ranch Museum.

We anticipate a time in the near future that these springs will fail as a direct result of the pumping of millions of gallons of water from the aquifer. Should these springs fail, even temporarily, the Slaughter Ranch will immediately be unable to provide water for our staff, our visitors, and our animals. This is an untenable situation.

The Johnson Foundation has been a good steward of the land, the water, and the endangered species on our property for over 38 years. We have never drilled any wells on the property because of legitimate Fish & Wildlife concerns that such wells might adversely effect the natural water flow.

With a well less than a mile away from the house pond about to pump tens or hundreds of thousands of gallons of water daily from the ground, this concern seems irrelevant. The few hundreds of gallons per day that we might need for our uses pale in comparison.

Therefore, we, the Johnson Foundation and the Slaughter Ranch Museum formally request the permission and the blessing of the US Fish and Wildlife department, and the San

Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge in particular to dig a well for our personal use on our property up on the hill to the West of the Main Ranch House.

A professional will be hired to determine the ideal spot.

Yours Truly,

Alan Finks  
President, Johnson Foundation

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William R. Radke; Project Leader  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Buenos Aires, Leslie Canyon, & San Bernardino NWRs  
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