

DRAFT

Paso del Norte Watershed Council

July 31, 2001 Meeting Summary

Meeting notes by agenda item:

1.) Recruiting of additional Executive Committee members (Jim Stefanov)

Still seeking representation from irrigation districts and additional representation from academia. No progress since last meeting.

2.) Watershed Assistance Grant proposal (Sue Watts)

WAG Proposal went out July 20 with a request for just under \$30,000 to support a coordinator half time for 12 months. Primary duties would be to work with Executive Committee to develop long-range strategic plan and shorter range business plan. Would also develop fact sheets and other educational / outreach materials.

3.) Update on WRDA Section 729 and 206 funding sources (Jim Stefanov)

729 funds: About \$300,000 available in FY-02. There will be a roundtable meeting convened by the Corps of Engineers in El Paso on Sept 5 to discuss projects in the basin. Funding in the next couple of years may be substantially greater than this year.

206 funds: This is a standing authority for restoration of aquatic habitats. Funding normally used for reconnaissance studies and feasibility studies rather than actual restoration work. Max of \$5million.

4.) Update on EPA 319 funding (Mike Landis / Gilbert Anaya)

319 funds: Federal funds funneled through state agencies for CWA non-point pollution. Would probably need to coordinate through state agencies to apply for funds. EPA Region 6 had approximately \$2M for this program in 1999. Carlos Rincon suggests that we make a formal proposal to Greg Pederson for funding or a staff person from Texas Water Development Board.

5.) Potential for USBR funding support (Mike Landis)

Public Law 106-576: Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Resources Conservation and Improvement Act of 2000 (USBR authority). Originally designated for irrigation districts below Amistad, but El Paso and Hudspeth Counties included. No appropriation yet, but should be \$2 million.

6.) Discuss letter to EPWU regarding support for Watershed Council

Letter not drafted.

7.) Update on restoration plan being prepared by Tetra Tech

Kevin Bixby not present for this update.

8.) Update on Canalization Project EIS (Doug Echlin)

EIS workshop held and comments collected for technical reports.

- a. Aquatic and terrestrial habitat reports are final
- b. In-house river management plan complete
- c. Have letter from SWEC-they will draft modified preferred alternative
- d. Draft EIS to be released Dec 2001; Expect record of decision April, 2002.

9.) Database Management in the Watershed (Conrad Keyes)

Council could participate in database management project associated with URGWOM. At this stage, the operations model, which includes irrigation and flood control deliveries above Elephant Butte Reservoir, is ready. It also includes the flood control deliveries out Caballo Reservoir. The water accounting model and planning models are under development. It will take \$5-6 million per year to set up required hydrologic databases from all agencies involved with URGWOM data in the future, including the lower portion of the URGWOM. (a copy of the proposed SOW provided as handout)

10.) Source Water Protection for the Rio Grande Project (Conrad Keyes)

Proposed Council participation in the Coordinated Rio Grande Project Source Water Protection Measurements Project. Corps is interested in funding such projects via 729 funding and EPA might be interested using the 319 funding. (copy of SOW provided as handout)

11.) Other business

Stefanov stated that the Council should be prepared to consider nominations for permanent officers at the next Council meeting.

12.) Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for the first week of October, 2001.

ATTENDEES:

- Steve Bowser — USBR
- Mike Landis — USBR
- *Inga Groff — League of Women Voters
- Joe Groff — Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue
- *Keith Landreth — Fort Bliss
- Gilbert Anaya — USIBWC
- Edd Fifer — EPCWID#1
- Zhuping Sheng — TAMU
- *Ed Fierro — EPWU
- *Rosemary Staley — City of El Paso-Planning
- *Tony Garcia — USDA-NRCS

- *Brian Hanson — USFWS
- Carlos Rincon — Environmental Defense
- Christopher Brown — NMSU
- *John Sprowl — UTEP
- *Jim Stefanov — USIBWC
- *Conrad Keyes — EWRI of ASCE

*Indicates member of Executive Committee

Executive Committee Members Absent:
Kevin Bixby — SWEC

Daniel Borunda —USIBWC
Jorge Castillo — TNRCC-Border Affairs
Marylin Taylor — Fort Bliss
*Sue Watts — UTEP
Karla M. Valdez Trejo — Environmental Defense

Julie Maitland —NM Dept of Ag.
Ed Hamlyn — Public
Ari Michelsen — TAMU