

# **Paso del Norte Watershed Council Annual Meeting Minutes**

**University of Texas at El Paso  
Undergraduate Learning Center, Rm. 342  
El Paso, Texas 79968  
September 28, 2002, 2:00PM – 4:00 PM**

Chair **B** Conrad G. Keyes, Jr.

Conrad Keyes called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM. Members present were: Sue Watts, Jim Stefanov, Inga Groff, Zhuping Sheng, Christopher Brown, Bobby Creel, Conrad Keyes, Joe Groff, Dan Santantonio, Brian Hanson, Valerie Provencio, Mike Landis, Gail Stockton, Glenn Brown, Keith Landreth.

- 1) August 16, 2002 Executive Meeting Minutes Summary by Ed Kosak – Meeting Summary approved with no additional changes.
- 2) Reports and updates:
  - A) Program Coordinators Work In Progress: Ed Kosak provided a brief summary of coordinator's activities and efforts such as; a Quarterly Financial Report, a 501 (c) (3) – non-profit report, and a brief Wetlands project update. Copies of the Program Coordinator's Work In Progress, financial report, and non-profit report are provided as separate attachments.
  - B) Christopher Brown provided some perspective on the work of the watershed council based on his experience working in the San Pedro watershed on the Arizona state line. Many people working with the Watershed Council, including Chris, are extremely impressed with the progress that has been made.

An agreement between the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC), TAMU, NMSU, the Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI), and El Paso Water Utilities can provide generous potential cost-share funding for a future US Army Corps proposal. The project originally commenced on September 1, 2002. Several meetings and conference calls have been conducted between the participating entities. Preliminary work involves Internet searches for existing databases that are similar in function and operation by virtue of project information. The types of dataset information will be available soon. The goal was to develop the architecture to form a viable database structure. Presently, there is water quality data, initially available at NMSU from the Upper Rio Grande Water Operations Model (URGWOM), Texas

A&M, and other local players. The next step will be to compile documentation to present to the entire Coordinated Database technical committee of the Watershed Council. Lastly, a small-scale warehouse could reside on a server donated as a cost share through NMSU. There are similar projects done by a company called Photon located in San Diego. The question is: what can be provided easily to accomplish our goals? Also, how will maps previously developed be used? Bobby Creel will provide the server, data storage, and his time in the project. John Kennedy will contribute project time as cost share as well. Christopher Brown is conducting the preliminary research. Bobby Creel, John Kennedy, and Zhuping Sheng are identifying and analyzing datasets to determine an effective structure. Eventually, the map produced from the gained datasets could be used as a portal. A photograph of the Paso del Norte region could be used to assist the user in locating desired information. Essentially, this project would include sufficient map data to make it viable. Although technical challenges exist, the goal is to merge the map together with the data to provide important information. The over all objective is to build a prototype that is posted and functional on the web site through the server at WRRRI which provides the ability for the average Internet user to access needed data. The long-term outcome is to use the concept in conjunction with other organizations' projects to further benefit all entities. Currently, there is a search for other sources of funding to assist with the technical design from other interested entities such as Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) and El Paso Water Improvement District #1 (EPWID # 1). The draft work plan has been revised to fit the requirements set-forth as they focus on expansion of the PdN WC Coordinated Database.

Conrad Keyes requested that a motion be made to allow for the review and approval of the USACE proposal via e-mail. The hope is to combine the needs/requirements of USACE with those of what URGWOM and URGWOPS will gain information by linking their sites to the PdN WC web site. This would allow the timely exchange of comments and suggestions via e-mail prior to final approval for submission of proposal. Conrad requested a motion be made to proceed with the proposal concept. A motion was made by Dan Santantonio, and second by Jim Stefanov. The motion passed unanimously.

Jim Stefanov pointed out that the USACE 2003 budget is not a 50% cost share. There is \$ 300,000 available for 729 projects, which can be used as 100% federal dollars. This funding is required to be used for planning types of studies (research) and there is no cost share involved. The awards total \$300,000 shared jointly between Albuquerque, Forth Worth and Galveston. Each would likely receive \$100,000. The funding is already available to assist with the technical design and according to Ray Russo (Forth Worth District) the expenditures for FY 2003 will determine how to use FY 2004 funding. Outreach programs will likely be utilized to gain an understanding of what the stakeholders are interested in and the best way to utilize the 2004 funding.

C) Sue Watts stated that there is not a need to request an extension of the RiverNetwork Watershed Assistance Grant at his time. There isn't enough money in

grant to extend the salary for more than 12 months. The World Wildlife Fund currently has funding for translation and publication costs through 2002.

D) Brian Hanson shared orally the contents of the Letter of Interest from Donald Caccamise, Department Head of the Fish and Wildlife Science, College of Agriculture and Home Economics at NMSU. In his letter, Mr. Caccamise stated that he has recently become aware of the Paso del Norte Rio Bosque Initiative on the Rio Grande. He understands that the Initiative extends from Elephant Butte to Fort Quitman, Texas. Although he is unaware of the details, given the geography and current mandates in natural resource management, it may be considered appropriate for the Fish and Wildlife Department at NMSU to be closely associated with the Initiative.

Brian added that a baseline for biological management is needed along this 217-mile stretch of the Middle Rio Grande similar to the Bosque Biological Management Plan in the Albuquerque area. This project was organized by Senator Pete Domenici who requested that agencies involved with the biological plan provide the "man-hours" to put the plan together in conjunction with universities. The existing report discusses the current physical environment including water and soil issues. Senator Domenici also obtained funding for a full time coordinator located at the Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Initially, \$500,000 is allocated for the use of the agencies so they could play a proactive role in improving the environment. Parallels exist in goals between this project and those of the Watershed Council. Work includes research, active management, and public education. Brian commented that it is fairly obvious that Senator Domenici strongly supports funding this project. Brian also strongly suggests that the Watershed Council seek support for a similar project. Unfortunately, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a government agency and his office cannot approach congress to request funding. Brian further suggested that the Watershed Council participate jointly with UTEP and NMSU.

Conrad Keyes remarked that the members of Congress would have to agree to such a proposal. Presently, does such support exist? Conrad added that it is possible that even some present members of the Executive Committee might have a conflict in supporting these measures? Potential partners to construct a four to five page Scope of Work could include NMSU, UTEP, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the International Boundary and Water Commission.

### 3) Meeting Discussions:

A) Conrad Keyes stated that the New Mexico Governor and the Secretary of New Mexico Natural Resources would both be willing to review the Watershed Initiative proposal. The deadline for submission to the EPA is November 21, 2002.

B) Conrad Keyes requested that all Executive Committee (EC) members continue to provide suggestions for new sources of grant funding for the Watershed Council, i.e., federal and state entities, and foundations, sponsorship, or even donations.

Jim Stefanov stated that the IBWC does not possess the authority to allocate any funding for the purpose of grant support. Different circumstances exist with the International Joint Commission particularly on the U.S.-Canadian border. A rather large grant funded scientific program is utilized there because they have been given authorization to do so. Jim recommended that those not working for the federal government approach members of their local congressional delegation.

A question was posed by Christopher Brown regarding the “nature” of the authority behind differences? Jim explained that the authority originates from Congress. Difficulty exists because the IBWC is granted authority on the Canadian side of North America due to the unique nature of projects along the Great Lakes.

C) Bobby Creel informed the Executive Committee that his office is currently awaiting materials to insert into appropriate locations within the website. Bobby explained the general out lay of ideas including, potential presentation of links, and various components such as technical data, projects, etc.

D) Ed Kosak reported that the brochure provided for the events of the annual meeting are available as a first-run printing prototype consisting of 500 copies. The total cost of typesetting, printing and folding came to \$500. Ed requested final comments and suggestions from the EC prior to translation and to final printing of the brochure that is to occur before December 31, 2002, which is the deadline for expending funds available for translation and publication through the World Wildlife Fund. Ed also requested that EC members also forward file suitable photos for the brochure.

Sue Watts provide a brief explanation for ideas behind the brochure logo design. The three droplet-like symbols below the Paso del Norte Watershed Council name represent the three major stakeholders; environmental, urban, and agricultural. Sue reminded the EC that the brochure is under final revision and that the initial 500 copies were merely a first cut to serve as a means to edit and revise. Members were encouraged to recommend changes before the next printing.

Bobby Creel offered to work on modifying the brochure’s map and improving the over all quality of the brochure. He also offered the services of a technician to continue to refine the brochure. Technicians at NMSU have the equipment and experience to produce a more professional quality product.

Conrad Keyes indicated that the Business Plan needs to be reviewed and revised. The topic will be re-scheduled to be discussed in more detail as a future Executive Committee meeting agenda item.

E) Conrad Keyes went over the details of the 2002-2003 Election Ballot. Conrad requested nominations from the floor. Sue Watts nominated Glenn Brown (a private citizen of the community). The nomination was approved. Conrad also requested that the Executive Committee entertain the motion to accept all the current 17

Executive Committee members currently on the ballot. Motion was second by Christopher Brown and it passed unanimously.

- 4) Next Meeting will be October 29, 2002 at the new Southwestern Environmental Center located at 275 North Downtown Mall, in Las Cruces. Directions will be included with agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 PM