

**MINUTES**  
**Executive Committee, Paso del Norte Watershed Council Meeting**  
**2:00pm, Monday, July 12, 2004**  
**New Mexico Department of Agriculture, New Mexico State University**  
**Las Cruces, New Mexico**

In Attendance: Sue Watts, Chair Julie Maitland, Assistant Chair  
Valerie Provencio, Secretary Ari Michelsen, Treasurer  
Nancy Hanks, Program Coordinator

Kevin Bixby, Southwest Environmental Center  
Christopher Brown, Department of Geography, New Mexico State University  
Mike Fahy, El Paso Water Utilities  
Ed Fierro, El Paso Water Utilities  
Inga Groff, League of Women Voters  
Joe Groff, Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue  
Brian Hanson, U. S. Fish and Wildlife  
Conrad Keyes, Consultant  
Keith Landreth, Ft. Bliss, Directorate of the Environment  
Jennifer Montoya, World Wildlife Fund  
Carlos Rincón, Environmental Defense  
Lori Rivera, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo  
Zhuping Sheng, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas A&M University  
Rosemary Staley, City of El Paso  
Beatriz Vera, Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Basin Coalition

**1. Convene Meeting**

Sue Watts convened the meeting at 2:10 pm.

**2. Approval of Minutes from April 30, 2004**

Carlos Rincon moved to approve the minutes from June 1 and 14, 2004, as written. Jennifer Montoya seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**3. Council Activities**

Nancy reported that the Council activities since the last meeting had been the revisions to the by-laws, strategic plan, and business/work plan, all of which was described in the minutes from June.

**4. Discussion of Updated By-Laws, Business Plan, and Strategic Plan**

The Executive Committee reviewed the revised by-laws and discussed the option of rewording Article 5, Section 3, to allow proxies to attend and vote in lieu of Executive Committee members. After an extended discussion it was pointed out that Article 8, Section 3 allowed "alternates." The Committee determined that Article 5, Section 3 should be reworded to allow alternates as well. Article 5, Section 5 was changed to require only quarterly reports from the Treasurer. Article 7, Section 2 was clarified to define a quorum for a meeting as a simple majority. Julie Maitland suggested that each word, "shall," in the by-laws be changed to "will." The Committee agreed with that and the change was made. Later in the meeting, Conrad suggested that Article 9 be reworded to clarify the Council's intent to allow members to revise the by-laws without another 30-day review period; Article 9 was reworded.

Regarding the strategic plan, there was a discussion about the objectives under Goal B, to "support restoration and enhancement projects in the Watershed." It was determined that the first objective under that goal should be to "create and prioritize recommendations for Watershed restoration and enhancement." An additional change to Goal B was to reword the new Objective 2

to read “related to the El Paso-Las Cruces Regional Sustainable Water Project” (instead of “proposed by”).

There was an extended discussion regarding the actions proposed in the revised business/work plan. Conrad Keyes suggested that subcommittees be formed around each broad goal, A through D, and that those subcommittees create the actions to achieve those goals. The Committee agreed that this was a good approach and set up the following work groups:

- Working Group for Technical Support for Watershed Planning and Management, working towards Goal A, “Promote watershed planning and management and provide recommendations” (e. g., salinity, monitoring, database/GIS, modeling): Ping and Chris, co-chairs, with Conrad, Mike Fahy, Ed Fierro, Alfredo, Ari, Jim, and Ed Hamlyn.
- Working Group for Biological Support for Watershed Health, working towards Goal B, “Support restoration and projects in the Watershed”: Jennifer and Kevin, co-chairs, with Julie, Tim, Brian, Rosemary, Carlos, Keith, Miguel, and Mike Landis.
- Working Group for Education/Outreach/Communication, working towards Goal C, “Facilitate communication among stakeholders and within the Council,” and Goal D, “Provide education and outreach to the public and to Council members” (including outreach to agriculture): Beatriz and Sue, co-chairs, with Inga, Valerie, Julie, Tim, Jennifer, and Carlos.

Each group is to prepare a short-term work plan including:

1. a listing of priorities if possible;
2. funding strategies;
3. timelines (short- and long-term for 2004-2006); and
4. who is responsible for what.

The first draft of each plan should be sent to Nancy by August 25 to be included in the agenda for the next Executive Committee meeting. To assist in convening these groups, Nancy was asked to send a list of Council members and their email addresses to each subcommittee co-chair and to send out the working version of the business/work plan, sorted by goals.

Zhuping Sheng moved to distribute the by-laws to the Council as a whole, starting the 30-day comment period. After that, at the next meeting, the Executive Committee will vote on the by-laws. Carlos Rincon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to do so. Beatriz Vera moved to accept the new strategic plan, as revised (in Section B) in this meeting. Carlos seconded, and the vote was unanimous to do so.

#### **5. Progress of the Coordinated Database/GIS**

Ping reported that the Technical Committee had met to view a demonstration of the working version of the revised database/GIS, which can be found at the following web site:

<http://river.nmsu.edu/website/pdnwc>. Chris and Matt Rich are still working on eliminating some glitches in the GIS. The Technical Committee plans a demonstration for congressional staffers in September. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers contract has been signed. The URGWOM RiverWare demonstration in Albuquerque will be on October 14, 2004. Conrad asked that a folder be added to the Council’s web site to hold the list of action items from Technical Committee meetings.

## **6. Council**

Nancy reported that the Council was a partner in a \$20,000 grey water reuse project funded by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, \$1400 of which was assigned for her salary. The Council is also partner in a proposal to the EPA, \$3000 of which is assigned for her salary. [The proposal is not yet funded.]

## **7. Budget Report**

There was no budget report.

## **8. Past Meetings Attended**

Jennifer asked Brian about the Collaborative Rio Grande federal group that Congressman Reyes convenes once a year. He said they met a few months ago, but no one knew what the outcome was. Jennifer will try to follow up on this.

Nancy reported that she had been part of a conference call with Adele Cardenas de Malott, the EPA's Rio Grande "River Navigator" who is trying to track two legislative water work groups, one under Representative Reyes and the other under Representative Bonilla. Nancy also reported that she had attended the ground-breaking for the new desalination plant in Alamogordo. She also attended a meeting at TXDOT regarding the construction of river trails in El Paso from Fonseca to Yarborough Street. Rosemary added that construction should begin in August 2005 and that this meeting was a preliminary meeting regarding this project. She said the EIS had already been completed.

Conrad attended a July 8 meeting of the URGWOM Steering Committee and URGWOPS Interdisciplinary NEPA Team. They have a preliminary EIS that will soon be sent to all the organizations involved for review.

Brian Hanson reported that the Middle Rio Grande ESA Collaborative Program had learned that Congress is anticipating higher local cost shares in order to qualify for federal funding. Rosemary reported that the City Council of El Paso has set up a Water Conservation Advisory Board and it has had two meetings. Kevin reported that he had attended three IBWC Stakeholder meetings and he suggested that the Council host some future stakeholder meeting.

## **9. Upcoming Meetings that will be Attended**

Nancy announced that there would be a meeting of Groundwork on July 14 regarding brownfields in El Paso. On July 28 there will be a meeting of the Border 2012 Task Force in Las Cruces. That night the IBWC Citizen's Forum will be held in El Paso. On August 10, the WRI Water Symposium will be held in Socorro. The annual NM Water Conference will be held September 21-22 in Ruidoso. There will be a symposium in Phoenix, AZ, on September 19-22, 2004, sponsored by the WaterReuse Association.

Carlos reported that the Secretary of the Environment will be in Juarez on September 9 to investigate methods of storm water management. Kevin reported that there would be a meeting tomorrow evening in Dona Ana regarding the water treatment facility there. Bea reported that PBS will be airing a documentary tomorrow night on water markets.

The next URGWOM Technical Review Committee meeting has been postponed from August 12 to October 13-14, when it will be held in conjunction with URGWOM Phase II testing set up and RiverWare brief training.

## **10. Date and Location of the next Executive Committee Meeting**

The next Executive Committee meeting is set for Monday, August 30 at 2:00 pm at the 6<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, Rio Grande Council of Governments, 1100 N. Stanton, El Paso, TX 79902.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Hanks