

MINUTES
Paso del Norte Watershed Council Executive Committee
March 9, 2006 10:30 a.m.
Texas A & M Center – El Paso, Texas

Executive Committee Members attending:

Sue Watts, Chair
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer
Zhuping Sheng- TAMU
Kevin Bixby - SWEC

Members / Others attending:

Mike Fahy - EPWU
Mike Landis-USBR
Tim Smith-Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
Bobby Creel-NMWRRI
Conrad Keyes – Corps. of Engineers Consultant
Inga Groff – League of Women Voters
Joe Groff- Chihuahua Desert Wildlife Rescue
Dr. O'Brien – Consultant Corps of Engineers
Ed Hamlyn- UTEP
Chuck Kooshiam – City of El Paso
Steve Smullen- IBWC
Cynthia Campo – WWF
Irene Tejeda-PDNWSC

1. Convene meeting.
 - Meeting called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Sue Watts, Chair after the presentation by Dr. Jim O'Brien regarding the FLO-2D model at the end of the New Mexico – Texas Water Commission meeting.
2. Introductions
 - Those present introduced themselves.
3. Council Activities

Steve Smullen (IBWC)

- IBWC is developing a scope of work to have the Corps further define the restoration alternatives. IBWC is looking at hydrology, hydraulics and alternate plans.
- Scope of work includes a series of (3 or 4) workshops and we (IBWC) are planning on having a mediator /facilitator.
- When the scope of work is finalized it will be sent out for review and comments. An MOU with EBID is being drafted.
- Question posed to Mr. Smullen: Is the Bureau working with EBID?
- No one was aware of USBR working with EBID other than on safe harbor agreement.

- Dr. Jim O'Brien's report is on the website but it does not include the maps.
 - There are also hard copies available of the report. Dataset - is a three volume set.

Questions posed:

- is a license and/or software necessary to access the model?
- is it possible to provide the model publicly by ACOE?

Sue Watts: Tech committee to look into possibility of making model accessible, report on it next meeting

Update on Grant 319

Jennifer and Julie went to Albuquerque January 24- NMED.

- The meeting was to confirm that we (WSC) were selected as the group to develop watershed restoration action strategy for the stretch of the Rio Grande from Percha Dam to New Mexico/Texas border.
- Next step was to develop a work plan, which is now complete. The budget has already been developed as well.
- Some stakeholders were invited, EBID was unable to make the meeting. The group is working on getting more input on the work plan.
- One of the goals is to develop the WRAS document and get additional stakeholder input. The target is to define impairments in this stretch and rectify the problem. The grant requires stakeholder input, compiling information, data and identify gaps.

Action: Hire a consultant to help with identifying and communicating with new stakeholders and holding stakeholder meetings

Action: Hire a consultant to write WRAS.

Action: Hire a coordinator who will be contacting the consultants and stakeholders.

NMDA is the fiscal agent and Julie Maitland will take the lead on the grant.

- Funding begins July – June 2007. Funding is only available for 12 months. A request for a no-cost extension of 6 months (total 18 months) will be made.
- Expansion of section 1 of work plan for 319 is needed.
 - In regards to work plan 319, Dr. Michelsen stated it is important to provide background and the role of the watershed council. One of the points made at the Texas/New Mexico Commission is it does not clearly identify a leader and who had identified the impairment.
 - Questions posed to Dr Michelsen: Was it in the 303D list and was that the reason for targeting that impairment? Comment: Identify the source of the problem and start to address the problem. Dr. Michelsen stated that it is implied that the Watershed Council has initiated the impairment in this stretch of the river and this must be clarified.

Dr. Zhing reports on behalf of Technical Committee on FLO-2D Model.

Conrad Keyes announced Upper Rio Grande comment period is being extended to April 20th the next URGWOM exchange meeting is on March 17th.

Other activities of potential interest:

Next week desalination conference in El Paso at the Marriott

Rio Grande Basin Initiative- March 26 available on web

American Water Resources Association Symposium – Houston May 8-11 GIS

University Councils and Water Resources – Santa Fe July 18-20- Theme increasing freshwater supplies

Ed Hamlyn announced visitors from Israel (some Israeli delegation) from March 26-30: focus of delegation is restoration initiatives for the Jordan River.

Linea Terranum conference between- UTEP , NMSU and UACJ- information available on web

4. Approval of minutes from last meeting. Motion to accept, second approved. Minutes are approved.

5. Treasurer's report
 - o Dr. Michelsen circulated the treasurer's report (see attached)
 - o Organization support from EPWU has ended February 28, 2006 reallocations among categories and a new laptop was purchased for the program.
 - o USBOR funding will provide support for the Council administration and continuing projects. Dr. Zhing is handling several of the other projects for the council Challenge 2025 grant. There is concern for the departure of Mike Fahy-EPWU who provides support on these grants. Mike all your efforts are appreciated.
 - o NMDA – Fiscal agent for Grant 319 discussion with officers how to provide organizational support for the Watershed Council.

6. Other Business
 - Kevin Bixby – State Parks is beginning to work on Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park access road and has been approved to make visitor center on wetland.
 - Wetland Project: We will have EBID water rights on 3 acres if approved.

 - Meetings of the New Mexico – Texas Water Commission with the Rio Grande Citizens Forum of IBWC. There is discussion about trying to consolidate some of these meetings. The Citizens Forum meetings are set three months in advance. This is an idea and we need to see what can be done. Dr. Michelsen stated one of the big challenges is overlap of some of these groups and each group has their own set of underlying missions and how each group continues. Is their language to include Mexico and how to consolidate efforts.

7. Next meeting: Friday, May 19, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. Library Reading Room - UTEP
Ed Hamlyn will look into the Watershed Council having their meeting after the Texas/New Mexico Commission .

8. Adjourned: 1:15 p.m.