



Minutes

ANNUAL MEETING
Paso del Norte Watershed Council
Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum
Las Cruces, NM
December 7, 2007 9:00 AM

Sue Watts, Chair
Jennifer Montoya, Secretary

Julie Maitland, Assistant Chair
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

In attendance:

Peter Bennett, City of Las Cruces Public Works
Mark Dubbin, City of Las Cruces Public Works
Mike Mecke TWRI- Texas Cooperative Extension
Steve Harris- Rio Grande Restoration
Chris Brown-New Mexico State University Dept. of Geography
Kevin Hanson- New Mexico State Parks
Susan Brantley-Rio Grande Restoration
Inga Groff-League of Women Voters El Paso
Joe Groff-Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue
Mary Sanchez-Natural Resources Conservation Service Dona Ana County
Woody Irving-Bureau of Reclamation El Paso Office
Mike Landis-Bureau of Reclamation El Paso Office
Bobby Creel- New Mexico State University Water Resources Research Institute
Vanessa Loughheed- University of Texas El Paso Dept. of Biology
Marissa Chavez- Texas A&M Research Station at El Paso
Mike Fies-Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District
Girisha Ganjengunte-Texas A&M Research Station at El Paso
Erin Ward- New Mexico State University Water Resources Research Institute
Rob Hogan- TX Cooperative Extension Fort Stockton
Sue Watts-Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
Julie Maitland- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
Jennifer Montoya-World Wildlife Fund

1. Convene meeting and welcome (Watts): Breakfast sponsored by WWF at 9 a.m.. Meeting convenes at 9:20.
2. Introduction of attendees (all)
3. Approval of minutes from Sept 20, 2007 (all): Jennifer described difficulties she had with her computer and believes that last meeting's minutes were lost.
4. Update on Forgotten River River Reach of the Rio Grande Report (Steve Harris): Steve provided a summary of conservation efforts for the stretch of river from Fort

Quitman to Presidio, TX leading up to the Texas Council on Environmental Quality and Environmental Defense sponsored Section 729 Report now in draft form. The report, produced by the Albuquerque Office of the Army Corps of Engineers, is not officially a planning document but is a report that will provide recommendations to the sponsors. Nearly 40,000 acres of salt cedar dominate the 200 mile stretch of river. Among the challenges for restoring ecosystem health are: Invasive Species, Streamflow, Sediment, Soil Salinity, Water Quality, Leadership, Political Support, and Cost. Among the recommendations are: To implement Adaptive Management, Rehabilitate the Channel, Introduce Biocontrol, Water Management, and Engage Universities to use this stretch of river as a laboratory.

Conrad Keyes made a motion that we expand the area of geographic interest described in our bylaws to include the Rio Grande ecosystem all the way to the confluence of the Rio Conchos. The Motion was passed.

Center for Space Research at UT did a lot of aerial mapping, characterizing the vegetation and other baseline data. NRCS is going to fly again in the spring of '08. How are we going to integrate the new data? PDNWC might play a role.

Actions: The PDNWC Website, Brochure, and Information Sheets will need to be updated to reflect this change.

5. WRAS update (Julie Maitland): NM Environment Department is satisfied with the 319(h) document we have written so far. The RFP for Phase II funding has not been released yet, but we will apply when it is released and ask for funds to complete the tasks outlined in our original proposal and to finalize the WRAS document. The 319(h) subcommittee will finish the WRAS by December 21st. An overview of the WRAS was provided. Next steps in the process are to expand the knowledge of the water quality impairment and complete originally proposed goals. Chris Brown made a motion to authorize the 319(h) subcommittee to develop a Phase II proposal in the event the RFP is announced in early January. Motion Passes unanimously.

Need help on clarifying following discussion- Mike Landis discusses treating the salt intrusion going into the Rio Grande. Funding for this may be forthcoming.

6. 319 grant update (Hilary): Out sick today. Julie covered this in her presentation.
7. Treasurer's report (Ari): Report provided by Marissa Chavez.
8. Other business
 - Elections; Six outgoing executive committee members: Kevin Bixby (SWEC), Joe Groff (Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue), Brian Hanson (USFWS), Zhuping Sheng (TAES), Steve Smullen (IBWC), Conrad Keyes (consultant to USACOE).

New Candidates for Executive Committee:

Rob Hogan- Now with Texas Cooperative Extension in Fort Stockton, recently from Arkansas. A Farm and Ranch Management economist. Originally from the panhandle of Texas.

Erin Ward- NMSU WRRRI. A founder of SCERP. Engaged in science-based research issues on the US/ Mexico border. Currently nominated as President of the Border Trade Alliance.

Peter Bennett-City of Las Cruces Public Works. Works in stormwater management and pollution prevention, flood control and arroyo preservation.

Nominated for re-election:

Zhuping Sheng

Brian Hanson

Joe Groff

(Steve Smullen and Kevin Bixby did not indicate whether they or someone else from their organization would like to continue on the Executive Committee.

These seats will be voted on at a future meeting.)

Joe, Erin, Peter, Rob, Brian, and Zhuping were all elected.

Chris moved to close the annual meeting temporarily (Conrad seconded) in order to convene the Executive committee for election of officers. Chris Brown was nominated to be Chair; Sue Watts agreed to be asst/co-chair. Both were elected. Julie will continue as chair of the 319(h) subcommittee and PI of the 319(h) grant. The Executive Session then closed and we resumed the annual meeting.

9. Date and location of next meeting- January 14, 2008 1 p.m. at the Bureau of Reclamation office in El Paso (10737 Gateway West)

For those coming on I-10 heading East, take the Lomaland Exit and circle back on the north side of the highway to take Gateway back to the West (Gateway being the frontage road).

10. Announcements:

Mike Fies- Technical Team meeting. The URGWOM 5 year plan is a living document and already changing. They are preparing more detailed work plans to better schedule some of their tasks. Additions to the plan- Congressional interest in funding stochastic hydrology. Water quality is now going to be part of URGWOM. Aquifer storage being looked at as well as managed aquifer recharge.

Bobby Creel-Lower Rio Grande Water Users Organization funded a study, recon level, on aquifer storage. WRRRI to do some brackish water assessment of deep ground aquifer west of Albuquerque.