



SUBMITTED MINUTES

Paso del Norte Watershed Council Executive Committee
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
1380 A&M Circle, El Paso, Texas 79927
915-859-9111
July 20, 2007
9:00 AM

Sue Watts, Chair
Jennifer Montoya, Secretary

Julie Maitland, Assistant Chair
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

1. Convene meeting and welcome (Watts): 9:20

2. Introduction of attendees (all):

Sue Watts, TTU, Chair,
Ari Michelsen, TAMU-TAES,
Treasurer
Jennifer Montoya, WWF, Secretary
Hilary Brinegar, NMDA
Chris Brown, NMSU
Woody Irving, BOR
Brian Hanson, USFWS
Conrad Keyes, Consultant
Zhuping Sheng, TAMU-TAES
Amy Alesh, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
Michael Mecke, TAMU-TWRI

Mike Fies, ACE
Girisha Ganjegunte, TAMU-TAES
Chris Canavan, NMED
Abe Franklin, NMED
Gilbert Anaya, USIBWC
Hector Garza, USGS
Jim Stefanov, USGS
Carlos Rincon, USEPA
Inga Groff, LWV
Joe Groff, CDWR
Mike Landis, BOR
Mike Fahy, EPWU

3. Approval of minutes from June 1, 2007 (all): Approval of Minutes from February 1, April 9 and June 1 meetings.

4. Added agenda item: Mike Fies, Army Corps of Engineers- **Memorandum of Understanding: Continued Development of the Upper Rio Grande Water Operations Model (URGWOM) for Enhanced System Management.** Model has been developed, now it is being enhanced. Corps would like to reenergize people into an enhancement phase with site specific studies. The intent is to make the model accurate, and have stakeholders actively participate in the decision making process. MOU needs to be circulated to entire Council for input into the Technical Committee. *Sue Watts to circulate MOU in its current form.* Meeting on MOU on August 9, Thursday.

5. **Information session about 319(h)/WRAS process.** Example from the San Juan watershed (Abe Franklin, NMED). An hour presentation on the Total Maximum

Daily Load (TMDL) monitoring and Quality Assurance Project Plan processes in a watershed in northwest New Mexico. Chris Canavan says that this relates to next steps for studying some of the pollutant sources in the Rio Grande. Ari provided two handouts, one on Protecting Our Water: Tracking Sources of Bacterial Contamination produced by Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and another, a newsletter from Texas Water Resources Institute.

- **319(h) grant update** (Julie, Hilary). Stakeholder meeting was held on Best Management Practices on June 18. *Hilary has updated the 319 fact sheet and passed out copies and will have Bobby Creel post it on the website.* 319 subcommittee hopes to begin the editing phase of WRAS in August. No draft chapters have been submitted by consultants, though.
- *Sue to be the lead on following through with getting a proposal submitted through the 319 (h) group for funding for a Phase II, which would not be funded until July 2008.*

6. Revision of 2007-2009 Business/Work Plan

- Overall discussion of Strategic Plan wording. Council agrees that updating the Plan will reflect the current direction of the Council. Several changes were made (Strategic Plan updates included in this minutes package). Chris Brown moved that we accept the changes as amended. Conrad Keyes 2nd the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- *Sue will update the Work Plan based on today's discussions on the Strategic Plan and is asking the Technical and Biological Subcommittees to meet again and update the Work Plan even further to reflect all current and proposed activities for the coming two years.*

7. Treasurer's report (Ari). Budget as of 7/20/07. All existing funds except USBR Council support program expire by September 30, 2007. Bureau may have additional funding and the scope of work and funding by USACE to continue work on the coordinated database and GIS and modeling is under development . *Jennifer volunteers to phone a few New Mexico Foundations, and Meadows and Paso del Norte Health Foundation, and El Paso Community Foundation for the idea of joint sponsorship for the PDNWC Coordinator until July 2008 when we would hope that the second phase of 319 projects could support the salary of that person.* Ari has a new project with Texas Water Development Board to look at BMPs in the Far West Texas Regional Planning Group plan.

8. Updates

- WWF (Jennifer): Environmental Flows Workshop in Mexico a success and WWF hopes to replicate it in the US in the future, after the State of Texas launches the program authorized in its Environmental Flows legislation. WWF Chihuahua office is working on groundwater/surface water interactions on the Rio San Pedro in partnership with UT Austin and NHI in the Physical Assessment project. Will be assessing subbasin water budget after implementation of water efficiency measures on farms.

- Canalization EIS (Gilbert): Review of FLO-2D model presented last Friday at stakeholder meeting. Environmental Assessment for levee raising in Rectification- no comments from PDNWC members. Gilbert will provide update to Council at next meeting about TCEQ's position on 303d impairments in the Rio Grande.
- Climate Change Impacts to Rio Grande workshop authorized in Texas Legislature and to be conducted by Texas Water Development Board.
- US/Mexico Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Act Bill passed through Congress, USGS, Water Resources Institutes of NM, AZ and TX are partners in the assessment.

9. New business

- EPA Good Neighbor Environmental Board will be meeting in Las Cruces in October. Chris and Jennifer are on the local organizing committee and will seek an opportunity for the Council to report to the Board on some of its activities. The 11th report is on Natural Hazards on the Border, including flooding.
- Rio Grande Citizens Forum Next Meeting is Thursday August 9, 2007 at IBWC in El Paso. 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- USFWS working with Border Patrol. Washington staff meeting regularly to discuss impacts of security work on species. USFWS drafting guidelines for species management.
- Storing water runoff for fighting fire example provided from McDonald Observatory.

10. Date and Location of next meeting:

September 21st, 9 a.m. New Mexico Department of Agriculture Main Building on the corner of Espina and Greggs (*not* Julie or Hilary's office in Genesis Center).