

**Minutes of the PdNWC Executive Committee (EC) Meeting  
Held on 11/07/08 at the SouthWest Environmental Center (SWEC) in Las Cruces NM**

**Attendees:**

Chris Brown - NMSU  
Julie Maitland - NMDA  
Kevin Bixby - SWEC  
Girisha Ganjegunte –Texas AgriLife Research  
Ari Michelsen - Texas AgriLife Research  
Zhuping Sheng - Texas AgriLife Research  
Bobby Creel - NMWRRRI  
Daniel Borunda - USIBWC  
Gilbert Anaya - USIBWC  
Carlos Rincon - USEPA  
Roger Turner - SWEC  
Brian Hanson - USFWS  
Conrad Keyes – Consultant to USACE

Despite notices from a majority of the members that they would attend, this meeting does not have a quorum, hence this meeting will be a working meeting. The attendees will not be able to approve previous minutes or formally make any decisions.

**Introductions**

Kevin Bixby introduced his new regional organizer, Roger Turner, who hails from North Carolina. Introductions were made.

**Cooperative Data Project (CDP)**

Ping gave an update on CDP – Currently working on Phase V work, as noted in the SOW, and the technical committee leaders are now discussing a Phase VI which is in the process of being written. Marc Sidlow advised that they hope to fund \$90k for the upcoming FY, less money than we had hoped. This reflects more focus on Middle RG, and this does open the option to better link the LRG and MRG in a modeling effort. Currently working on GW objects. The PdNWC has an extension to March 2009 on Phase V, and the TC will send a draft final report around for review once the work is done. The Technical Committee leaders are also wrapping up Phase IV final report and this is now available on line. Cards with release details were passed out at the meeting. Ari also advised Allan Jones is leaving TWRI.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ari passed out the treasurer's report; \$81,000 total funds remain, about \$76,000 from USACE and \$5,000 from USBR. The MOD 6 agreement needs to be signed prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> (USACE funds). Keyes suggests signing by December 11, 2008, the date of next URGWOM steering committee meeting. Council has already approved this and the proposal will go to TAMU first through USACE and subcontract to NMSU for approvals from the relevant parties.

### **Update on Potential Funding**

Ari suggests potential congressional funding could be available through Cooperative Watershed Management Act (S. 3085).

Brian Hansen arrived and indicated this stretch of the river is an exciting opportunity for restoration activities. Brian will retire from USFWS in January 2009 and wants to continue working with the Council as an individual. Funding from fish and wildlife is available for use on private land for endangered species.

Main item on the agenda is the future direction of the Council (see below).

### **Rio Grande Project EIS, etc.**

EIS NEPA compliance holds for projects on the Rio Grande. Which acts govern this? Fish and Wildlife coordinating act and the EIS. Treatment plant development in the Canutillo area – not on IBWC property – did anyone ask whether they had to provide guidance from IBWC (sustainable water project – under \$100,000,000 – for arsenic treatment not surface water treatment and this did not trigger compliance because this was an upgrade and not a new plant – the design can also treat surface water). Peter Bennett is on the Council from CLC. Local mutual water users' associations will likely build the first surface water treatment plant. CLC has the ability through the special water users agreement to get surface water rights. Will probably build a wastewater treatment plant but the water can't be used by farmers. Use water for general reuse i.e., landscape, turf grass. Ask Mariano Martinez from Dona Ana water to come visit with the Council. Chris will talk informally with Dona Ana Mutual folks. Potential funding arena for the Council through environmental mitigation projects. ROD states that each project sponsor shall kick in their 2% for mitigation to the IBWC – what or who compels compliance?

New Mexico Texas Water Commission could be asked – IBWC and EPWU are responsible (Conrad indicates EPWU is the fiscal agent for this). Clarify the ROD and who has responsibility for what. Any individual entity that engages in a project relevant to the sustainable water project would be triggered to comply with the ROD through IBWC and the 2% requirement for environmental mitigation. This should be triggered during the design phase and ordinarily IBWC would be involved if the project affected IBWC property.

(Kevin read from the ROD) Enforcement: applicable funding and permitting agencies must comply with ROD – agency or entity providing funds responsible. Various entities should hear about these major projects (such as Lower Rio Grande Water Users Association, EBID, Water Trust Board funded projects, etc.). Funds have to be used for on-the-ground projects. Lining of the Riverside Canal.

### **Open items for future discussion**

Invite presentations from various entities to inform the Council about what they are doing.

Draft a letter from the Council to the leadership at the IBWC reminding about the ROD and the 2% mitigation, copy the Rio Grande Citizen's Forum – draw an organizational chart showing the relationship between and among the stakeholders from the ROD. CC USBR, USFWS, EPA (Border 2012) etc. Kevin will assist with letter.

How will the Obama administration change the various agencies' missions, funding, etc.?

USFWS – priority was to have all mitigation done in advance of any projects; identify a large conservation project that would serve the overall river system and the projects

Meeting to present report to stakeholders – Rio Grande collaborative project with IBWC and EBID, etc. – next meeting in LC at EBID in December 16, 2008. 30 projects have been identified – Mark Briggs will take over remotely and Beth will stay involved remotely. Wait and discuss the plan and priorities for the river restoration activities.

Border Fence issues? Brian is President of the Wildlife Foundation for New Mexico and they are getting involved in the border issues.

Conference – NMWRRI international water conference – field trip – in January (third week) – Bobby Creel will provide information. Chris is on the planning team for this conference.

Council discussed giving presentations to the CLC council and ELP city council to remind them about what we do and the obligations associated with the 2%.

Look at the business plan, strategic plan, etc, at the next meeting and finish the strategic discussion – identify people to come to meetings, leadership initiatives, etc.

Next Rio Grande Citizen's Forum is on December 4, 2008, in Las Cruces.

Ari: host RG coordinating committee in December (Congressman Reyes and Senator Bingaman) section in it for providing enhancements for the RG river and its tributaries. Meeting will take place December 2 and 3, 2008, at TAMU in ELP. Rio Grande salinity coalition with Rio Grande Compact Commissioners/Engineers, New Mexico Environment Department, USACE 25-75 funding – funding has not come forward yet – WERDA; to get report done for future funding. USGS Matt Larson said there would be funding, but Ari will find out about it at the AWRA

meeting (Ari is President-Elect of AWRA). Defenders of Wildlife meeting in ELP (Brian),  
BECC/NAD Bank

Next Council meeting in El Paso at the IBWC on January 9, 2009, at 9:00 a.m.