

Agenda

Executive Committee

Paso del Norte Watershed Council

International Boundary and Water Commission
4171 N. Mesa, Building C, 1st Floor Conference Room
El Paso, Texas 79902

10:00 am Friday, February 7, 2003

Chair Bby Sue Watts for Conrad Keyes

1. January 9, 2003 Meeting Minutes approval

Sue Watts opened the meeting and asked if anyone had comments on the January 9, 2003 meeting minutes. No one had comments. The meeting minutes were approved, as written, by consensus.

2. Update on Council Funding Status

WWF Grant Extension - Ari Michelsen advised that Ed Kosak has resigned effective February 3^d. The position was advertised in the El Paso Times and in the Las Cruces Sun News a couple of weeks ago. Ari passed out the budget sheets showing the status of the Council funding. The handout shows that total funding to date, amounts expended to date, and remaining balances. Ari stated that the Council has received an extension of the expenditure deadline for the RiverNetwork and WWF grants. However, another extension will be required for the WWF grant.

Ari stated that he had a meeting with Nick Costanzo, EPWU Assistant General Manager, to discuss the Council's accomplishments to date and to ask about the possibility of continued EPWU funding of the Council. Mr. Costanzo was very supportive of the Council and indicated that EPWU would likely provide funding for another year. Mr. Costanzo requested that Ari submit a list of the Council's objectives for next year when he submits the new Cooperative Agreement for the second year funding. Mr. Costanzo also suggested that the Council consider raising the salary of the new Council Coordinator if necessary to hire a better qualified candidate. Bobby Creel suggested that he place the ad on the Council's web page. Everyone agreed this was a good idea. Ari mentioned that in the interim, Ed Fierro and Valerie Provencio have agreed to temporarily take over some of the administrative functions of the Coordinator.

Ari handed out an update on the EPA Watershed Initiative (Initiative) Program. EPA is awaiting the passage of the appropriation for the Initiative program prior to proceeding with scoring of the Initiative applications. Once the funding is approved, EPA has estimated it will take about two weeks to announce the awards. The Senate version of the omnibus bill cut the appropriations for the Initiative from \$21 million to \$10 million. The House version let the funding stay at \$21 million. Beth Bardwell from the WWF advised that she had met with the NMSEO last week and advised that they were very supportive of the Council's application for funding from the Initiative.

Ari handed out the latest version of the Council's informational brochure, which were printed in both English and Spanish. The Council's Bylaws and Strategic Plan have also been translated to Spanish. Ari advised that Valerie and Lori Miller had met with Ed Kosak to discuss the status of the brochure. The brochure has been approved by the Council except for the logo. Any other recommended changes need to go to Ed Fierro/Valerie ASAP. Therefore, the final logo needs to be approved by the Council before the brochures go to final printing. A discussion on the logo followed.

3. Paso del Norte Watershed Council logo discussion

Chris Brown showed a slide of the logo in both the color and black & white versions. A lengthy discussion followed concerning suggested changes to the logo. After the discussion, the Council agreed by unanimous vote to approve the logo with the following changes:

- * Remove the term “Cities” from the bottom text of the logo.
- * Change the background color from light blue to a light green.
- * Change the order of the words in the bottom text to “Environment – Communities – Agriculture”
- * Expand the name of the river to “Rio Grande – Rio Bravo”
- * Make the bottom border a “wave” design instead of a straight line
- * Experiment with different fonts to make the logo more attractive. Chris Brown will select the appropriate fonts

Bobby Creel stated that the Council could apply for its own domain name for the website, instead of having it reside within NMWRRRI's domain. He suggested that someone, possibly Bob Gray from UTEP, look into this. Ed Hamlyn agreed to ask Bob Gray to do so. Valerie advised that she had a new map to replace the existing map on page 2 of the brochure. She will e-mail the picture file to Ari.

4. COE Coordinated Database funding, Council signing of URGWOM MOU

Ari stated that the U.S. Corp of Engineers (COE) has committed verbally to provide an initial \$50,000 of funding for the Coordinated Database Project (Project). He added that the COE also expects to provide continued funding for the Project. However, the COE needs a mechanism to provide this funding. The mechanism required is for the Council to sign the URGWOM MOU. Sue Watts passed out copies of the MOU. Julie Maitland of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) made a motion for the Council's Executive Committee (EC) to authorize Sue Watts, as Co-chair of the Council, to sign the MOU.

This most efficient funding route was determined by the Gail Stockton of the COE to be through Reclamation. Mike Landis stated that Reclamation had no problems participating in the funding process provided that Reclamation does not have to officially sign on as a participant. A discussion followed concerning the political sensitivities that may arise as the COE connection to the project becomes more apparent. Chris Brown stated that Gary Esslinger is aware of the Project and that Mr. Esslinger is comfortable working with the Council to provide their data for the Project. He added that he would be glad to present the demo he presented here to EBID's Board if so requested. Mike Landis expressed his concern that many people perceive URGWOM to be a “model for the minnow”, i.e. as a tool to justify more water for the minnow. Bobby and Julie disagreed. Bobby stated that he thinks most people see the model as a better system to manage the river and as a tool which allows for the use of a more adaptive management approach in order to better accommodate water users. Ari stated that the Project is not only for use by the COE. The COE connection is only one of several applications that will arise from the Project.

After the discussion, the Council EC voted unanimously to authorize Sue Watts to sign the URGWOM MOU. Sue Watts proceeded to sign the original MOU. Julie Maitland will hand deliver the original MOU to Gail Stockton during a trip to Albuquerque. A copy will be sent to Ari for the Council's files and another copy will be sent to Mike Landis.

Jim Stefanov advised of an abstract he submitted for a Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference to be held in Spokane Washington on July 28th through 30th. He handed out copies of the abstract. The abstract, which was accepted for presentation, is for developing a paper to describe the formation and activities of the Council. He now needs to develop the paper and asked that anyone

interested in being a co-author contact him. Ed Fierro advised that Jim was free to use as a template a similar paper presented by Valerie at the AWWA Source Protection Conference. Ed Fierro will e-mail Jim a copy of the paper.

5. Proposed Biological Management Plan Update

Julie advised that Jeff Steinborn from Senator Bingaman's office told her that the Senator's Washington D.C. staffers have committed to providing federal funds for the Council to fund the preparation of the BMP. Sue Watts passed out copies of the Problem Statement and Proposal for the BMP and briefly reviewed the contents. Beth Bardwell advised that the WWF was also interested in the development of a BMP for this region.

4. Coordinated Database GIS Program report

Chris Brown presented a real-time demonstration of the prototype web page for the Coordinated Database Project. The website address is <http://mapper.nmsu.edu/website/pdnwc/viewer.htm>. He has on the web page the regional map of the entire watershed with the river outlined on each side by a parallel red border. This map layer was imported from the Hewlett GIS project. This river outline is broken into segments with labels for each segment. Double clicking on a segment label brings up a separate "tile" for that segment. This tile is simply a static map tile that has several icons inside, with different icon shapes representing a gauge or sampling point from different data sources (i.e. USGS, EBID, IBWC). Chris demonstrated how clicking on an icon activates a link to the agencies website which has data for that gauge or sampling point. Depending on the icon selected, with some links you may need to do perform additional steps to get to the data for the selected point. Currently, the prototype website has no data archived locally in the host computer – all data is accessed from links to other sites.

5. Discussion on status of Business Plan

Sue Watts passed out copies of the Council's FY 2002~2004 Business Plan. She reviewed the objectives in the plan. Sue pointed out that the Council has taken action to fulfill most of the objectives. One objective where work needs to be initiated is the one that calls for identifying and showcasing an existing watershed project and encouraging others to do likewise. Also, Sue stated that the Council needs to get more exposure with the Texas Congressional delegation. Most of the exposure to date has been with the New Mexico delegation. Specifically, the Council needs to develop a relationship with Congressman Reyes' office. She recommended that the Council consider forming an outreach committee for this purpose. Ari suggested that a new objective be added which calls for the continued development of Cooperative Agreements with EPWU. Also, he recommended adding the preparation of progress reports which are to be submitted to the funding entities.

Ari mentioned a request for proposals that came out recently from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America. The proposals must be community based projects that focus on environmental monitoring and assessment related to human health. The proposals are due March 31st. An application form, a list of previous grants and the NAFEC funding guidelines may be found on the CEC web site <<http://www.cec.org>> under the heading "Grants for Environmental Cooperation." However, Ari advised that entities submitting proposals must be not-for-profit nongovernmental organizations that have 501(3)(c) status, so the Council would not qualify. Carlos Rincon advised that the Council can qualify if its fiscal agent has the 501(3)(c) status. Ari replied that this was discussed previously but was dropped due to the accounting costs associated with obtaining 501(3)(c) status for the Council.

6. Report on AWWA Watershed Council Presentation

Valerie Provencio advised that the AWWA Source Water Protection Conference held in January had people from a number of different countries in attendance. She added that, after her presentation, people in the audience were amazed at how much progress the Council had made to date and had asked questions concerning how the Council was set up. They also inquired as to how the Council managed to obtain the participation of so many professionals. Overall, her presentation was received with great enthusiasm. Valerie showed the Council the binder containing the papers presented at the Conference. Ed Fierro mentioned that this material would be an excellent resource for the new Coordinator, because it contains good examples of watershed management projects and related research.

7. Other Business

Carlos Rincon advised the Council about the need to investigate bi-national funding opportunities and to obtain more participation from Mexican entities. Julie, Chris, and Carlos had a discussion concerning possible entities that could be asked to participate in the Council. The following entities were identified:

- * Alfredo Granados from the Universidad Autonoma de Juarez
- * National Institute for Agricultural Research and Livestock
- * JMAS and CNA
- * IMIP (Instituto Municipal de Investigacion y Planeacion)

Carlos mentioned that he will be attending a Juarez Strategic Planning meeting where he can contact representatives from some of these entities for possible participation in Council meetings. Mike Landis cautioned that he believes that the national political climate doesn't favor bi-national cooperation. Carlos was encouraged to contact potential Mexican partners and invite to attend our meetings.

Ari mentioned that there will be a meeting on the Forgotten River next Wednesday at TAMU.

8. Schedule next meeting - The next meeting was scheduled for 10:00 am Friday, March 28th. The tentative location is the NMDA in Las Cruces. Julie will confirm the location.