



Draft Minutes

Annual Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC)

27 February, 2009 8:30 AM
NMDA, Main Conference Room
3190 S. Espina, NMSU campus

Christopher Brown, Chair
Jennifer Montoya, Secretary

Sue Watts, Vice Chair
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

Present:

Ari Michelsen-TX Agrilife Research
Bobby Creel-NMWRRI
Zhuping Sheng- TX Agrilife Research
Christopher Brown-NMSU
Conrad Keyes, Jr.-NMSU Emeritus
Kevin Bixby-SWEC
Barbara Kauffman-Rio Grande COG
Sue Watts-TTUHSC

Girisha Ganjunte- TX Agrilife Research
Peter Bennett-City of LC
Hilary Brinegar-NMDA
Julie Maitland-NMDA
Vanessa Lougheed-UTEP
Erin Ward-NMWRRI
Daniel Borunda-USIBWC
Ed Hamlyn-UTEP

1-Meeting of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council called to order by Chris Brown, chair

2-Approval of the agenda –Approved without amendment

3-Election of Executive Committee members-Chris Brown read a description from the bylaws of the differences between a member of the Council and a member of the Executive Committee. Ari distributed a letter of interest for prospective and existing Council members to fill out. This will provide up to date contact information for all. There are 6 current EC members whose terms are expiring but who are willing to serve again if elected: Jennifer Montoya, Hilary Brinegar, Ari Michelsen, Julie Maitland, Juan Flores, and Sue Watts. It was moved and seconded to accept this slate of nominees. Motion passed unanimously. Nominations were taken to fill vacant positions on the EC; these were Conrad Keyes and Barbara Kauffman. It was moved and seconded to accept these nominees. Motion passed unanimously. Brian Hanson has expressed interest in continuing his participation in the Council, as an individual. His affiliation will change since he no longer works for the USFWS. Hilary Brinegar will obtain updated contact information. The Council will ask Rob Hogan to step down from his position on the EC as he has been unable to attend any EC meetings over the last year. However, the Council does wish for him to continue as a member of the Council. There are 1 or 2 remaining positions on the EC and the Council will strive to get an NGO rep for them, hopefully someone from the Frontera Land Alliance (Mike Gaglio or Kevin Von Finger) and perhaps WWF (Mark Griggs).

4-Adjournment of the PdNWC general meeting and call to order of Executive Committee meeting, Chris Brown chair.

5-Approval of minutes from past meetings (Sept 08, Nov 08, Jan 09)-all of these need further editing. Conrad Keyes will make edits himself and everyone else can also send edits to him. Once the minutes are accurate, they will be distributed to the EC members for approval by email.

6-Election of officers for Executive Committee-Chris Brown and Jennifer Montoya wish to step down as officers. Nominations for officers were: Conrad Keyes, chair; Hilary Brinegar, asst chair; Ari Michelsen, treasurer; Sue Watts, secretary. A motion to close nominations was made, seconded, and approved unanimously. Motion to elect those nominated and willing to serve was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

7-EC meeting closed and WC general meeting rejoined with Conrad Keyes presiding as newly elected chair of the EC.

8- Treasurers Report: Ari: There is a new contract pending with the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for \$90,000. There will be a subcontract of approximately \$52,000 for NMWRRI. The funding for COE Mod 5 is all encumbered although it still appears on the spreadsheet pending invoices. Note: The focus for URGWOM COE work is moving away from the Rio Grande below Elephant Butte with the intent that the hydrologic modeling for this section will be taken up by the Bureau of Reclamation. We understand there is funding in the USBR budget for this and they have been attending the URGWOM meetings.

Hilary Brinegar and Julie Maitland will provide a financial report on the 319 project at the next meeting. Although the WRAS hasn't been officially accepted by the USEPA this was a publicly funded project, so the draft will be posted on the WC website. NMED (New Mexico Environment Dept) expects an RFP for new 319 funding to be released in the spring, so Julie will call a meeting of the Clean Water subcommittee to start drafting a proposal. A sheet was circulated so those interested could sign-up. Anyone not at the meeting may also participate—Contact Julie Maitland or Hilary Brinegar.

Kevin Bixby said he had heard there might be watershed funding in the federal omnibus lands bill. He will follow-up with staffers in Senator Bingaman's office to get more information.

9-Announcements: Erin Ward invited submissions for a new peer-reviewed journal being published by NMWRRI called Journal of Transboundary Water Resources. She will send out an electronic flyer describing the journal and its target audience and she asks us to disseminate the information to our colleagues who might be interested.

Hilary passed out a notice for the Community/Citizen Watershed Group meeting in ABQ on March 26. She is planning to attend and will provide a report at the next meeting. She will also make sure the PdNWC is listed on the NMED website as a NM watershed group.

The next RG Citizens' Forum meeting will be March 3 at the IBWC offices in El Paso.

10-Future Directions for WC-The strategic plan will be reviewed at the next EC meeting with the objective of incorporating some of the ideas voiced at the last few meetings. Sue Watts will make sure there are copies at the next meeting.

An invitation has been extended to Aimee Roberson with the Fish and Wildlife Service to provide information on the 10-J experimental population of Rio Grande silvery minnow release in the Big Bend area. She has expressed interest in doing this.

Kevin and Sue will draft a letter reminding USIBWC and EPWU about the provisions in the ROD for the Sustainable Water Project which stipulates provision of 2% of project funds being designated for mitigation/enhancement projects for the river. USIBWC will be getting federal stimulus funds which may involve applicable projects. EPWU is also expected to receive \$50 million or more for water supply and wastewater treatment.

The Council may have opportunity to comment on Phase 2 of the border fence. DHS had an environmental waiver for Phase 1 and may not have as much freedom for Phase 2. Kevin will try to line up a speaker for our next meeting who could provide more information about this issue. Daniel Borunda provided information about USIBWC's activities in the Presidio area for levee rehab and how USDHS plans to extend the height to meet their own goals.

11-Upcoming meetings- Rio Grande Compact meeting, Mar 31 in El Paso at the EPWU Desal Complex; Rio Grande Salinity Coalition, Mar 31 at the same location; Saltcedar Biocontrol meeting, El Paso, April 1&2

12-Location and date of next meeting: Monday April 6 (changed due to conflict with meeting room availability), 9:30 AM, IBWC, El Paso