



Paso del Norte Watershed Council Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19 Pandemic

23 September 2020

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- 1) Introductions & Determination of Quorum of PdNWC EC members – Keyes

- 2) Updates to July 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Humberson

- 3) Approval or Adjustment of Agenda – Keyes

- 4) Discussions of the PdNWC Work Plan (Announcements and Suggested Work Items):
 - a. Technical Committee – Libbin & Gaglio
 - b. Environmental Committee – Grijalva & Torell
 - c. Website Committee – Brown & Verdecchia
 - d. Executive Committee – Keyes & Sorg

- 5) Discussion and Approval of new EC members.

- 6) PdNWC Annual Meeting - Keyes

- a. Items to be Updated by Secretary and Chair in October 2020 – Keyes and Humberson

- b. Items to be Announced by Secretary and Chair in November 2020 – Keyes and Humberson

- c. Updates to By-laws – Humberson

- 7) Adjournment

Officers:

Chair

Conrad Keyes, Jr

Retired, NMSU and USIBWC

Assistant Chair

Gill Sorg

City of Las Cruces

Treasurer

Girisha Ganjegunte

Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at El Paso

Secretary

Delbert Humberson

Executive Committee

Member Organizations:

City of Las Cruces

High Desert Native Plants, LLC

Sierra Club

New Mexico State University, Department of Geography

Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission

Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología

Other Federal, State, and Local involved agencies with PdNWC

Other Private Citizens

Paso del Norte Watershed Council
Texas A&M AgriLife Research
1380 A&M Circle
El Paso, TX 79927-5020

Website: www.pdnwc.org

Attendees

Via Zoom:

- Christopher Brown – New Mexico State University (NMSU)
- Davena Crosley – New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)
- Leslie Grijalva – U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC)
- Delbert Humberson - USIBWC
- Conrad Keyes – New Mexico State University (ret.)
- Saurav Kumar - Texas A&M Agrilife (TAMU)
- Connie Maxwell – New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (MWRRRI)
- Jerry Melendez – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
- Luzma Nava – Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT)
- Zhuping Sheng – Private Citizen
- Gill Sorg – City of Las Cruces
- Liz Verdecchia – USIBWC

1) Introductions & Determination of Quorum of PdNWC EC members – Keyes

Quorum was achieved with the following 8 members of the EC:

- Christopher Brown
- Conrad Keyes
- Saurav Kumar
- Connie Maxwell
- Luzma Nava
- Zhuping Sheng
- Gill Sorg
- Liz Verdecchia

2) Updates to July 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Humberson

No updates were proposed for the July 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

3) Approval or adjustment of Agenda – Keyes

A motion was approved to add *Discussion and Approval of new EC members* to the agenda.

4) Discussions of the PdNWC Work Plan (Announcements and Suggested Work Items):

a. Technical Committee – Libbin & Gaglio

Technical committee was not present to provide updates.

b. Environmental Committee – Grijalva & Torell

Connie Maxwell provided an update from the August 2020 Stormwater Coalition meeting regarding recently approved grants for four related projects in the PdNWC area.

- The first project was for the FY 2019 Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant by USBR. This is a two year grant for up to \$100,000 (\$50,000 per year). The goals of the project are to:

- Extend the group's organizational development, increase collaborator development and community outreach.
- Develop a community-based comprehensive watershed plan and assemble a diverse task force to develop plans.
- Prioritize project designs for the region.

The team carrying out the project consists of the Stormwater Coalition as the recipient with the Jornada Resource Conservation and Development Council as the fiscal agent. NMWRRI is a subrecipient and project manager, Doña Ana County Flood Commission and Elephant Butte Irrigation District are core team members, and Alamosa Land Institute is developing the priority project designs.

- The second project is the Rincon Arroyo Watershed Stabilization Project. It's an NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations Program, and Doña Ana County is the sponsor with their Flood Commission leading the project. Partners include EBID, Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District, and NMWRRI. Funding includes \$450,000 to NRCS consultant for planning that the NRCS hopes to complete in two years. This phase of the project aims to create a watershed plan, and a goal for the sponsor and partners is that the plan addresses the root cause of flooding, vegetation loss in the uplands and associated sediment transport that impacts downstream riparian areas.
- The third project is sponsored by the New Mexico Environment Department's watershed implementation grant with Clean Water Act Section 319 funds. The proposal was titled Rincon Arroyo Watershed Stabilization Project to reduce E. coli loading to the Rio Grande. This is a three year grant, with \$397,052 coming from NMED with a \$264,701 match. The goal is to implement a watershed restoration plan with the primary objective of reducing sediment transport and mobilization of E. coli to impaired reaches of the Rio Grande through small-scale and low impact restoration practices. The team consists of NMWRRI as the project lead, and the Doña Ana County Flood Commission as the long-term manager. Other partners include Elephant Butte Irrigation District, Bureau of Land Management, and the Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District.
- The fourth project is funded under the Reclamation Drought Response Program. This is a two year project with up to \$300,000 funding from Reclamation with a required 50% match. The goal is to increase the reliability of water supplies through infrastructure improvements through stormwater capture and aquifer recharge. EBID is the recipient and project lead with NMWRRI developing the decision support tool.

Leslie Grijalva informed PdNWC that the Texas Clean Rivers Program puts out an annual report, and that the 2021 report will be focusing on our reach of the Rio Grande. She hopes to have a draft out by December.

Gill Sorg alerted the group that he has proposed a new watershed management program to the Las Cruces City Council, and that the proposal will support USIBWC to construct a wetland and work with the city to develop improved vegetation management practices in the floodplain.

Finally, Liz stated that IBWC will have a revised draft of their aquatic habitat and environmental assessment by the end of October for public review (UPDATE – the draft is now expected in December).

c. Website Committee – Brown & Verdecchia

Chris Brown informed PdNWC that NMSU continues to be the website host. There have been intermittent service interruptions that cause the site to go down occasionally, and NMSU is working on the issue. Meanwhile, edits are still being performed. In the future, Katie Goetz will be the new point of contact for funneling web updates to Chris Brown. Liz Verdecchia will speak with Katie to confirm if Katie is interested in being the Website Committee co-chair.

d. Executive Committee – Keyes & Sorg

Conrad presented the updated membership list, but there were changes to the committees and executive positions that needed to be approved by vote. During this discussion, it was asked if vote by email is an option since quorum may not be achieved during a PdNWC meeting. Article 8 of the bylaws allows for email voting, so this is a viable option for future votes.

5) Discussion and Approval of new EC Members

Motion was made and approved to appoint Gill Sorg as Assistant Chair.

Motion was made and approved to appoint Girisha Ganjegunte as Treasurer.

Motion was made and approved to appoint Mike Gaglio as co-chair of the Technical committee.

Motion was made and approved to appoint Jerry Melendez to the Technical Committee.

Motion was made and approved to appoint Zhuping Sheng to the Technical Committee.

Motion was made and approved to appoint Greg Torell as Co-chair of the Environmental Committee.

Motion was made and approved to appoint Mike Landis to the Environmental Committee.

Motion was made and approved to pre-appoint Katie Goetz as the web committee co-chair if she accepts.

6) PdNWC Annual Meeting - Keyes

a. Items to be Updated by Secretary and Chair in October 2020 – Keyes and Humberson

Conrad Keyes and Delbert Humberson will try to solidify the positions in the executive committee and the other three committees.

The doodle poll for the early December Annual Meeting was mentioned, and Delbert Humberson will amend the poll to include the afternoons at 1:30 pm on Tuesday (December 1, 2020) and Thursday (December 3, 2020).

At the next meeting, Connie Maxwell will provide an update on funded projects. PdNWC will also need to update the officer's terms and select another chair. Conrad Keyes's tenure as chair is set to expire in 2020.

b. Items to be Announced by Secretary and Chair in November 2020 – Keyes and Humberson

This topic was covered during discussion of the previous topic.

c. Updates to By-laws – Humberson

It was mentioned that any proposed changes to the bylaws must be submitted by November 1st to allow sufficient time for review before the annual meeting.

7) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.