

Meeting Summary

Watershed Council Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

February 21, 2002, 2:00pm – El Paso Water Utilities Main Office

Attendees:

Sue Watts, Ari Michelsen, Zhuping Sheng, Doug Echlin, Inga Groff, Joe Groff, Ed Fierro, Christopher Brown, Julie Maitland, Brian Hanson, Antonio Flores, Jim Stefanov, Raed Aldouri, Gilbert Anaya, Keith Landreth, Marylin Taylor, Rosemary Staley, Jose Granillo, Carlos Rincon

Chair Conrad Keyes could not be at this meeting. Sue Watts chaired the meeting in his absence.

1. January 22 , 2002 Meeting Summary (sent by email) approval – Ed Fierro

Ed distributed e-mail copies of the final February 22 Meeting Summary on February 15th with all comments to date included. No one had additional changes or additions and the minutes were approved as written.

2. Council Membership – Ed Fierro received no requests for membership. Sue had a request by three individuals who asked to be added to the e-mail distribution list, plus a few others that been dropped but that she thought should be added because they have been active in the past. Sue had e-mailed these addresses to Ed. Ed said he would make sure they were added to the e-mail distribution.

3. Coordinator Position – Ari Michelsen has received 32 applications for this position. He will have copies of the applications to the selection committee members - Ari, Ed, Sue, and Conrad. Each member of the selection committee will be asked to submit a list of their top 3 or 4 candidate to Ari. After the committee agrees on the top candidates, Ari will then arrange for interviews with same. The cost of the ad placed in the Las Cruces Sun News was \$170. An ad was also to be placed in the Colorado High Country News.

4. World Wildlife Fund Grant (Sue Watts) – The grant application will be forwarded to WWF headquarters. This grant application is for funding translation costs and printing costs of educational materials, including postage costs. The grant application is for \$5,750. If awarded, the grant funds must be utilized by December 31st, 2002. Ari Michelsen mentioned that the USBR is interested in contributing some funds to the Watershed Council, with no cost sharing necessary. The proposal for this funding is currently being drafted by USBR.

5. Coordinated Database Committee report (Ed Fierro, Chris Brown, Raed Aldouri) – Ed Fierro distributed copies of the February 19th Coordinated Database Committee (Committee) meeting summary and of Raed's budget proposal for the setting up the website. The budget covers the first year only. Raed will ask UTEP administration to lower the overhead rate to 15%. The budget sheet was forwarded to John Burkstaller for review. Also, the Committee will draft a standard MOU for execution with entities who agree to share their data. The Committee is in favor of Srini's proposal to use the data replication method for data access from remote servers. Chris Brown explained the advantages of using data replication vs. the transparent portal method as explained in the 2/19 Coordinated Database meeting summary. The Committee also agreed

that when potential participating agencies are contacted about the types of data they have available, that the inquiries should specifically refer to water flow and water quality data.

Raed gave a description of the server hardware he envisions will be needed, based on use of the data replication method. He anticipates purchasing a server with a 600 gigabyte hard drive, and adding additional storage capacity as more data is acquired using SAND arrays. Entities providing the data will be responsible for providing QA/QC of their data. Chris suggested that a disclaimer be included on the website advising users of this fact and also that the website assumes no liability for the accuracy of the data. Ari suggested that the Coordinated Database website also provide links to the websites providing data so that users can get information on the data quality and accuracy from each source. Also, the data sharing MOU should also contain the liability disclaimer previously mentioned.

Chris brought out the issue of continued funding for the project after the first year. As far as additional hardware, the SAND arrays will cost \$4,000 ~ \$10,000 depending on capacity, although these will not be required until a few year after project inception. A part-time position will also be required to operate and maintain the server and website. Raed estimated that annual personnel costs will be in the \$35,000 to \$50,000 range. Ari suggested that publication costs, estimated at \$2,000, also be included in the project cost proposal. These publication costs are for disseminating information about the website to the public and to potential users. Ari also suggested TAMU and UTEP use 0% pass-through rate on indirect costs charged to the project.

Jim Stefanov suggested that a White Paper be drafted to state the Database Project's scope and purpose for distribution to the public. Ed Fierro agreed to draft this White Paper. Brian Hanson asked if the Coordinated Database Project website would be a separate website than the one established for the Watershed Council. Jim Stefanov replied in the affirmative.

6. External Coordination (Chris Brown) – Chris mentioned that Hewlett Foundation Mapa Project, and stated that this project could be used a template by the Coordinated Database Project. He added that the people from the Hewlett Foundation were happy to see the Watershed Council and Coordinated Database Project go forward. Chris also mentioned his communication with Mike Fahy of EPWU concerning a possible joint MAC/SC and PdN Water Task Force (Task Force) meeting in March, and said that Mike Fahy was not aware of any such joint March meeting. Carlos Rincon stated that Task Force would have a number of its members at the next MAC/SC meeting and had an agenda item to provide comments on its activities, so it will be somewhat of a joint meeting in this sense. A Far West Texas Regional Planning Group meeting will take place that same afternoon in El Paso. The idea of organizing a regional workshop comprised of representatives from groups doing GIS project was discussed. The purpose of the workshop would be to disseminate information about each group's GIS efforts and coordinate the work on their projects if possible. This could be one possible project that could be considered by the Task Force.

7. IBWC's Canalization Project (Doug Echlin) – The EIS consultant has submitted drafts of Chapters 1 and 2 for comments. These two chapters cover the Purpose and Need of the project and the Description of Alternatives. IBWC is preparing a comments letter to the consultant. Once the consultant incorporates the comments, IBWC will send copies of the of these chapters

to the Cooperating Agencies. IBWC is planning to meet with the irrigation districts to update them on the alternatives. The schedule calls for the EIS to be finalized and the ROD signed in the fall of this year.

8. NM/TX MAC/SC meeting on March 14th – The next MAC/SC meeting is scheduled for March 14th at the Las Cruces City Utilities building. Conrad will not be able to make the meetings, so Ari and Sue will give updates on Watershed Council activities. Julie Maitland advised that Kevin Bixby had not yet drafted a letter to Ken Maxie of the USBR to request his attendance at a future Council meeting.

9. Strategic Plan (Brian Hanson, Sue Watts) - Sue handed out a 2 page Draft Strategic Plan (SP) with contains descriptions of Councils Mission, Goals, and Objectives. The Council discussed the SP item by item and suggested some changes.

A discussion arose concerning prioritizing of the Goals and Objectives in the SP. Doug Echlin thought that the Council should establish criteria for prioritizing objectives and for measuring success under each. Brian Hanson cautioned the Council about prioritizing objectives and resulting projects because the Council could easily exclude some worthwhile projects unintentionally. Ed Fierro thought that measuring success could be done as part of the Councils annual report summarizing its activities – what was accomplished vs. what the objectives were for that year.

After extensive discussion, major changes suggested included re-arranging and re-wording some of the objectives listed into a smaller number of main objectives, and making other related objectives sub-objectives of the main objectives. The Council also recommended that the phrase “..and provide recommendations” be added at the end of the first goal “Provide watershed planning and management.” Various other wording changes to some objectives and a few additional objectives were suggested. Sue will make suggested changes agreed to by the Council and will distribute a second draft.

10. Next Meeting Date - Prior to setting the next meeting date, a motion was made and seconded to proceed with the Data Coordination Project as amended by the Database Coordination Committee. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, April 5th. 1:30pm, in Las Cruces. Julie Maitland will confirm the location at NMED offices.