

**MINUTES**  
**Executive Committee, Paso del Norte Watershed Council Meeting**  
**2:00pm, Monday, August 30, 2004**  
**6<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, Rio Grande Conference of Governments**  
**1100 N. Stanton, El Paso, TX 79902**

In Attendance: Sue Watts, Chair Valerie Provencio, Secretary

Tim Darden, New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
Mike Fahy, El Paso Water Utilities  
Ed Fierro, El Paso Water Utilities  
Inga Groff, League of Women Voters  
Joe Groff, Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue  
Conrad Keyes, Consultant  
Jennifer Montoya, World Wildlife Fund  
Carlos Rincón, Environmental Defense  
Ruben Saldana, Texas A&M Cooperative Extension  
Zhuping Sheng, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas A&M University  
John Sproul, UTEP/CERM

**1. Convening the Meeting**

Sue Watts convened the meeting at 2:01 pm. Nancy Hanks was absent due to illness. Valerie Provencio recorded the minutes.

**2. Introductions**

Joe Groff introduced Ruben Saldana, County Director from Texas Cooperative Extension in El Paso. Ruben was welcomed by the Council and rounds of personal introductions were made.

**3. Approval of Minutes for the July 12, 2004, Executive Committee Meeting**

Sue Watts asked for a motion to approve the minutes from July 12, 2004. The motion was made and seconded and approved. There were a few changes requested by Mike Fahy. Page 3, section 8, paragraph 4, second sentence had a small typo. There was a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections and it was approved. [Note: Since there was not a quorum of the Executive Committee at this meeting, the July 12, 2004, minutes will be resubmitted for a vote of approval at the next meeting.]

**4. Change of Venue for Demonstration of Coordinated Database/GIS for Congressionals on September 10, 2004.**

Mike Fahy informed the Council that Ed Archuleta prefers that the PdNWC Technical Committee submit a Challenge Grant to the US Bureau of Reclamation under its Water 2025 Program rather than a proposal to Congress regarding the next phase of the Coordinated Database/GIS Project. Mike explained that Mr. Archuleta requested a draft of the Challenge Grant proposal be submitted to the NM-Texas Water Commission before its next meeting [September 24, 2004].

Conrad thought that the NM-TX Water Commission had already viewed a demonstration of the Coordinated Database/GIS, as presented by Zhuping Sheng and Chris Brown. Mike replied the Commission had seen a demonstration at the last Commission meeting on August 20. Zhuping Sheng added that only a few people had seen the announcement for the upcoming demonstration slated for September 10. Sue Watts would like to find out if the invitation letters have gone out, and she would also like to have the September 10 demonstration to the Congressional staffers postponed. [The letters had not gone out and the meeting was postponed.]

## **5. Letter from City of Las Cruces Regarding a Replacement for Dan Sanantonio**

Sue stated that the Council had sent a letter to the City of Las Cruces requesting a replacement for Dan Sanantonio on the Council. She received a letter from Maryann Ustick, Acting City Manager, stating that the City's staff is busy on other issues and the city is short staffed, and not able to appoint a replacement. She advised keeping Jorge Garcia, Utility Director, and Tanya Trujillo, Water Rights Technical Engineer, on the mailing list. Tim Darden informed the Council that he spoke to Joshua Rosenblatt, City of Las Cruces Water Conservation Coordinator, and that Mr. Rosenblatt seemed to be interested in joining the Watershed Council. Sue will forward a letter to Tim stating there is an opening on the Council, and then Tim will pass it along to Mr. Rosenblatt.

There was brief discussion about voting on the bylaws, and it was decided to table that item until the next meeting when Nancy is back. Jennifer asked who will replace Jim Stefanov as an IBWC representative on the Council. Conrad informed Jennifer that she needs to write a letter to IBWC directed to the Commissioner, or perhaps Berna Olague, Principal Engineer. Gilbert Anaya was also mentioned as a possible candidate.

## **6. Reports from Working Groups re: Goals for Council Business Work Plans**

Jennifer discussed the Biological Management Plan. She said that Biological Support Working Group had met twice by conference call and she distributed notes from these calls. During the August 5 conference call, the committee reviewed the Integrated Watershed Management Plan proposal and decided on Program "C." (Hereafter "Program C" will be known as the Biological Management Plan.) Program "C" includes six tasks previously listed plus a new seventh task. The seventh task is a GIS inventory of the current conditions along the river, including all current restoration activities in the historic floodplain. During the August 23 conference call, the group created a comprehensive plan of six stand-alone proposals for each task. Included in the handout is a table with the next steps listed by priority, difficulty, and who volunteered. Mike Fahy mentioned that the work from the Biological Resources Report from the Sustainable Water Project would be a good reference for this work. Jennifer added that they are still organizing their timeline.

Regarding the Technical Support Working Group, Zhuping related the results of group's conference calls. He updated the Council on a list of five objectives, which include water quality issues of salinity management techniques, natural resource information, drought awareness issues, input to sponsors of activities that affect the Watershed, recommendations for watershed planning, and modeling tools for watershed planning and management. These tasks were discussed in detail, possible funding sources were identified, a timeline was set, and project leaders were appointed. Mike advised that Ed Archuleta and Ari suggested using the Colorado River Salinity Management program as a case study for salinity management under "ID" in the Task list. Mike also suggested installing additional TDS/data probes under "C." Sue questioned how many of these tasks can they accomplish. Zhuping replied that some of the agencies are working on some of these projects already. Zhuping added that the priorities were also set for each task.

Sue reported on the Educational Support Working Group, which had two conference calls. They identified sector groups to target for membership and for project participation. These groups included the agricultural community, politicians, NGOS, the public, and Council members. The goals include obtaining input from farmers on watershed issues and encouraging them to attend Council meetings, creating alliances among watershed stakeholders, and educating the public in water quality issues. Messages, methods, and actions were carefully drawn out and lists of contact people were selected. Potential funding sources included the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, Border 2012 program, Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), and eventually the Watershed Council's 2 percent funding. The second conference call was not documented at this time, as Nancy was not available to supply the notes. Mike asked how they were going to improve relations with the agricultural community and Sue informed him that they will try to work with Ruben Saldana and see if he could join in on the committee meetings and provide ideas and concerns. Conrad wanted to know what other agriculture groups there are other than the extension service. The Farm Bureau and some Producer Groups were mentioned by Sue. Conrad suggested contacting people from the Citizen's Forum of the IBWC. Jennifer will forward two other group contact names. Conrad added that congressional staffers may want to link to our website for their congressional newsletters. He also mentioned the Rio Grande Council of Governments as a contact, and Mike added that part of the regular

grant application process is routed through the Council of Governments. Sue mentioned that no order of priority has been set up for the Education group as of yet.

Mike suggested having a draft of the business plan to present at the next Commission meeting. Sue stated the Council would like to review that internally before that time, adding that perhaps this could be ready by the October Commission meeting.

### **7. Past Meetings Attended**

Zhuping, Jennifer, Chris Brown, Ari, Gail Stockton, and Bert Cortez, among others, went to Portland, Oregon, to attend the annual meeting of the University Council of Water Resources. Mike Fahy and Conrad attended the quarterly Multi State Salinity Coalition meeting in Oakland, California. Mike provided information at the meeting about the Concentrate Management Conference that EPWU is sponsoring in October at the El Paso Marriott. Conrad talked about the Desalination Technical Committee of ASCE/EWRI.

### **8. News Regarding Upcoming Meetings:**

- Riverware Session training will be in Boulder, Colorado, from September 21 -24.
- URGWOM and UGRWOP Steering Committees will meet October 14th in Albuquerque at the USCOE.
- NM-TX Water Commission will meet at the Las Cruces Council Chambers, September 24 at 9 a.m.
- The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual New Mexico Water Conference, Water Desalination and Reuse Strategies for New Mexico, will meet at the Ruidoso Convention Center, September 21-22.
- Building Healthy Communities and Partnerships 9th Annual New Mexico Environmental Health Conference, The Premier Southwest Regional Environmental Health Conference will meet at the Historic Sheraton Old Town Hotel in Albuquerque, on October 18-20.
- The New Mexico Drought Summit 2004 will meet on September 27-28, at the UNM Continuing Education in Albuquerque.

### **9. Date and Location of the next Executive Meeting**

The next Executive Meeting of the Watershed Council will be Wednesday, October 6, 2004, at NMDA Conference Room in Las Cruces from 2-4 p.m.

### **10. Other Business**

There was a brief conversation regarding whether the Council will comment on the URGWOM EIS. If so, Mike recommended that the Council allow sufficient lead time for full comment letter review by the full Council.

Mike asked about the deadlines for delivery of the draft business plans from the three working groups. Sue stated that these will be discussed at the October 6 Council meeting.

### **11. Adjournment**

Sue asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 pm.