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Bylaws of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council

ARTICLE ONE *Authority*

The Paso del Norte Watershed Council (Council) is an advisory body to the New Mexico-Texas Water Commission (Commission), formally recognized by a resolution adopted by the Commission during its meeting of October 13, 2000. The Council may also seek authority and/or address issues under the purview of bodies other than the Commission and outside the scope of the El Paso/Las Cruces Regional Sustainable Water Project.

ARTICLE TWO *Statement of Purpose*

The purpose of the Council is to investigate, develop, and recommend options for watershed planning and management and to explore methods by which water-related resources can best be balanced to benefit the Rio Grande ecosystem and the interests of all watershed stakeholders. The Council will focus on the Paso del Norte Watershed (Watershed), defined as the Rio Grande basin between Elephant Butte Dam/Reservoir in southern New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Hudspeth County, Texas.

ARTICLE THREE *Objectives*

The Council will provide an open and inclusive forum for stakeholders who want to establish and maintain a healthy Watershed.

Due to the complexity of interests and jurisdictions in the Watershed, there is a need for a coordinated system to facilitate communication and promote cooperation for the purpose of balancing the needs of all stakeholders. The Council will provide such a system for exchanging data and other information pertinent to Watershed management.

The objectives of the Council are as follows:

- (1) Under the direction of the New Mexico-Texas Water Commission, the Council shall serve in an advisory capacity regarding the selection, planning and implementation of environmental enhancements and mitigations associated with the El Paso-Las Cruces Regional Sustainable Water Project.
- (2) The Council shall recommend policies for cooperation, coordination and the sharing of information concerning planning and management activities of projects affecting the Paso del Norte watershed.

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ARTICLE FOUR *Membership*

Section 1. *Councilors.* Membership in the Council will be open to all individuals and organizations that support the purposes and objectives of the Council. The Council will seek representation from municipalities, water agencies, researchers, educators, businesses, volunteer organizations, and concerned citizens. An organization or individual may become a member by submitting a letter of interest.

ARTICLE FIVE *Administration*

Section 1. *Executive Committee.* The Council will elect, from its membership, an Executive Committee (EC) consisting of not more than twenty (20) individuals. The composition of the EC should equitably represent the stakeholders of the watershed and the membership of the Council.

Section 2. *Term of Membership.* Any individual elected to serve on the EC shall serve for a period of at least one (1) year. An election shall be held annually during which time the Council will elect members of the EC for the forthcoming year(s). The terms of members shall be staggered such that experienced councilors are present every year. No term limits shall restrict individuals from continuing to serve on the EC.

Section 3. *Officers.* The Executive Committee will select its officers during its first meeting following its election by the Council. Officers shall serve for one year, or until a successor is elected. Officers may be re-elected to serve for additional terms. The following three offices are hereby created:

Committee Chair: The Committee Chair will develop an agenda for meetings of both the Council and its Executive Committee, and shall preside at said meetings. The Committee Chair will also serve as a non-voting member of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) of the Commission.

Assistant Chair: The Assistant Committee Chair will assume the responsibilities of the Committee Chair whenever he or she is absent or otherwise unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities.

Secretary: The Secretary shall maintain minutes of the meetings of the Council and its EC, and shall act as a parliamentarian during said meetings. (A coordinator for the Council, hired pursuant to Article Six, Section 1(c), may act as parliamentarian at the discretion of the EC).

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ARTICLE SIX *General Role and Activities*

Section 1. *Executive Committee Responsibilities.* The EC, acting on behalf of the overall Council, shall have the power to:

- (a) seek technical advisory services and arrange funding as approved by the Commission and/or other funding agencies,
- (b) create sub-committees and delegate responsibilities, and
- (c) hire and supervise administrative support.

Section 2. *Working Committees.* The EC may create such working committees as are necessary to further its objectives. Membership in working committees shall be open to all members of the Council.

Section 3. *Role Reserved to the Overall Council.* Watershed issues and projects shall be presented and discussed during a meeting of the overall Council before any formal recommendations are submitted to the Commission or other body. Recommendations submitted shall be those of the overall Council.

ARTICLE SEVEN *Meetings*

Section 1: *Open Meetings.* The Council shall endeavor to conduct all its meetings openly and encourage the broadest practical awareness and discussion of issues by all affected parties. In order to promote and facilitate the participation of stakeholders, no official meeting of the Council shall be conducted outside of the Watershed. Venues for all meetings of the Council shall be physically accessible to persons who are mobility-impaired.

Section 2. *Quorum.* For the purposes of conducting business, a quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the EC members.

Section 3. *Frequency.* The Council shall hold meetings at least twice annually. Meetings may be called more frequently if required.

Section 4. *Minutes and Record-keeping.* The minutes of the Council shall be public record.

ARTICLE EIGHT *Amendments*

These bylaws may be amended by a vote of a two-thirds majority of the members of the Executive Committee of the Council, provided copies of the proposed amendment have first been disseminated to all members of the Council, and a period of not less than thirty (30) days has elapsed since the date the amended text was provided to the membership.