

MINUTES (Revised March 07, 2003)
MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO/TEXAS WATER COMMISSION
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) AND
THE REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE WATER PROJECT
STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)

January 17, 2003

9:00 a.m.

EBID Offices

530 South Melendres

Las Cruces, New Mexico

Welcome

Gary Esslinger opened the meeting and welcomed those present to the Elephant Butte Irrigation District. A copy of the sign-in sheet is attached as **Exhibit "A"**. Those members attending from the Commission's MAC/SC were as follows:

Michael P. Fahy – EPWU, for Ed Archuleta

Gary Esslinger – EBID

Gene Paulk – City of Las Cruces

Tony Tarquin – UTEP

Jerry Leyendecker – Dona Ana County

Karl Wood – NMSU

Dr. Ari Michelsen – Texas A&M

Conrad Keyes – PdNWC

Doug Echlin – IBWC

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from MAC/SC Meeting on 10/15/02 (MAC/SC).

Mr. Esslinger asked whether all MAC members had reviewed the MAC minutes from the last meeting and whether they had any suggested changes. Tom Bahr noted an error in the October 15, 2002 MAC minutes. On page 2, last paragraph, the statement in the first sentence is attributed to the wrong person. Ed Fierro will make this correction.

**II. Progress Report by the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC)
(Ed Kosak, Watershed Council Coordinator)**

- Concerning the Database/GIS Project, the Project Committee made a determination to make surface water the focus of the Project initially. There have been discussions with the City of Las Cruces and EBID about providing data for this project.
- The Council has been fortunate to obtain a 90 day extension on its World Wildlife Fund grant. This extension was requested because more time will be needed to adapt the Council's outreach materials in order to make them more effective and better suited for the intended audience. Several of the Council's documents have been translated and these are available on the Council's website. Hopefully, by the end of February, there should be a final printing of the Council's brochure.
- There have been two meetings hosted by Brian Hanson on the Council's proposed Biological Management Plan (BMP) – one in Albuquerque and one in Las Cruces. The purpose of these meetings was to develop the concept of the BMP and obtain feedback from interested parties. Mr. Hanson stressed the need for participation by other agencies and organizations, particularly the irrigation districts, in this process.
- The Council now has a website on a New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NMWRRI) server. A demonstration of this website will be given later this morning. The Watershed Council is now registered as a watershed organization with the EPA. Mr. Kosak

thanked Valerie Provencio of EPWU for discovering this registration process and providing this information to him.

- Final revisions are being made to the Council's business plan. Also, Valerie Provencio will be giving a presentation on January 22nd entitled "Paso del Norte Watershed Council – A Cooperative Approach to Regional Watershed Management" at the AWWA Source Water Protection Conference in Albuquerque.
- The next meeting of the Watershed Council is scheduled for Friday, February 7th at the IBWC offices located at 4171 N. Mesa in El Paso.

Ari Michelsen advised that Ed Kosak will be departing the Watershed Council effective February 3rd. He thanked Mr. Kosak for all of his efforts and contributions on behalf of the Watershed Council.

III. Progress Report of the Coordinated Database Project (Chris Brown, NMSU/Bobby Creel, NMWRRI)

Chris Brown updated the MAC on the latest Coordinated Database/GIS Project activities. In the last several months since the last report to the Commission, they have had several technical meetings to finalize the work plan and prioritize the data that would be targeted for initial inclusion on the website. This work led to a decision to assign a higher priority to acquiring surface water data as opposed to groundwater data. The efforts over the past few months have been focused on identifying the surface water data that may be available to the project. Mr. Brown acknowledged some earlier input that John Burkstaller had given the Project Committee advising against pursuing formal data sharing agreements or MOUs with data providers. Mr. Burkstaller had suggested proceeding with informal agreements instead, and Mr. Brown, after some initial skepticism, has now realized that this is the most efficient method to pursue.

The first group of potential data providers in New Mexico that were approached consisted of EBID, the City of Las Cruces, the New Mexico State Engineer Office, the Bureau of Reclamation, IBWC, and USGS. Some of the data being targeted is not just water flow data, but also water quality data. Chris described the GIS portion of the project which Matt Rich from NMSU is working on. This work involves breaking the overall map of the watershed into smaller map tiles. The smaller tiles are larger scale maps of each region, each of which contains "hot links" features (water gauge, well, sampling point, etc.) which can be clicked-on to obtain the available data for that feature. Chris plans to present a rudimentary demonstration of this concept at the next Watershed Council and MAC meetings. He went on to further describe how the map system will work. Chris closed by stating that he is confident that they will have an operational website by May, with further work focusing on adding more data.

Gary Esslinger asked about the size and number of tiles that would be used. Mr. Brown replied that he estimated there would be 15 tiles centered more or less along the Rio Grande between Elephant Butte Dam and Ft. Quitman. The size of each tile will depend on the type and number of features to be located in each tile. For example, when an area with a high density of city wells is included in a tile, the size of the tile showing those features may need to be smaller to allow for designation and selection of the closely spaced features.

Zhuping Sheng discussed the contacts he has made with potential Texas data providers. Mr. Sheng advised he had contacted the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1, IBWC, El Paso Water Utilities, and the TWDB and TNRIS. He also plans to contact the Hudspeth County Water Control and Improvement District. EPWU has water quality information related to their water and wastewater treatment plants. Some of this data is in electronic format, but is not available on any website. IBWC has real-time flow raw data from their gauging stations on the Rio Grande which is updated hourly. However, this data has not undergone quality control. The quality control process

takes about 20 days. IBWC also has 2 water quality probes, but more are needed. IBWC has water quality data obtained under a contract with TCEQ, but this data is not available until 9 months after acquisition due to the quality control process.

Chris Brown commented that he had been very well received when approaching potential data providers. When he had a discussion about the project with Gilbert Anaya of the IBWC, they exchanged information on what each entity was doing concerning the sharing of data and they both got really excited. This project has a large amount of support from the Watershed Council and the Commission, and the project has been well received by outside agencies as well.

Ari asked Bobby Creel to provide some information on how data quality control will be handled. Mr. Creel advised that providing quality control for the data will be the responsibility of the data providers. The website will include a disclaimer to this effect, and include information on the source of the data and how it was developed. He mentioned that NMWRRI already had in its possession all of the data acquired by Boyle Engineering and Parson Engineering for the Sustainable Water Project EIS, so all of this data can be made available online provided this same data is not already available online somewhere else (to avoid duplication). Zhuping mentioned that he had talked to Wayne Treers from Reclamation and that Wayne had told him that the Bureau had finished digitizing their data, but that they hadn't completed quality control on this data. Ari mentioned that the Watershed Council had applied for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) funding of the project. It appears the COE may be able to provide funding of approximately \$50,000, but this funding has not been finalized yet.

IV. – Discussion / Demonstration of New Mexico-Texas Water Commission Website (Bobby Creel, NMWRRI)

Bobby Creel demonstrated the Water Commission's new prototype website using a live link to the website currently being hosted on NMWRRI's website. He thanked Ed Fierro of EPWU for providing electronic files of all of the MAC meeting minutes and exhibits from the last 3 years, although only the 2002 minutes are currently available on the website. These Minutes have now been posted on the website as Adobe Acrobat pdf files. He suggested that the Commission consider getting the website its own internet protocol (IP) address in the future instead of hosting it off NMWRRI's website. The website address is <http://wri.nmsu.edu/nmtxwc/>. This address must be typed in, since it is not available as a menu option from the WRI web page.

Mr. Creel explained and demonstrated each of the menu buttons on the left side of the homepage. He demonstrated that the "Projects" page currently has only the Executive Summary of the Sustainable Water Project Draft EIS, and that the "Library" page contains the MAC Minutes and Exhibits. Gary Esslinger asked what criteria was used to determine whether a document is listed in the "Library" page or in the "Projects" page. Mr. Creel replied that he wasn't sure. He added that the web page is just a prototype at this point, and that possibly "Library" and "Projects" should be combined. That's why he was giving this demo, to obtain feedback from the MAC on how to set up the web page. Mr. Esslinger stated that his idea was that the "Projects" page should contain projects that the Commission was currently working on, and that the "Library" page should contain completed projects, including the SWP EIS. Mr. Creel agreed and suggested that the "Projects" page list task order activities associated with a project, and that any deliverable be included in and be linked to the "Library" page. Mr. Creel also showed the links to other websites, and welcomed any suggestions on other links. Tom Bahr asked how the MAC felt about including contact information on the Commission members. Mr. Creel replied that the "Members" page had the member agencies listed, but that he could include names and contact information for the MAC members. No one had any objections to this idea.

Mr. Esslinger asked how the Commission felt about passing a resolution to accept the website and to endorse its continued development. The Commission agreed this was a good idea and passed a motion to this effect.

The costs associated with the website were discussed. Mr. Creel explained that currently the Commission and Watershed Council websites are being maintained in a cooperative manner by NMWRRRI as prototype websites at no cost to the Commission. However, if in the future the Commission wants its own IP address and server for its website, then it will need to contribute funding to purchase a web server and to have someone maintain and update the website. Mr. Creel added that for now he would appreciate any help from anyone on the Commission that would like to help manage or maintain the website, or contribute ideas to develop it. He suggested that the Commission appoint a committee for this purpose. Mr. Creel also explained the backup and security measures used on all of NMWRRRI's web servers. Mike Fahy suggested that an agenda item be added for the next meeting to discuss the Committee concept.

V. Update on Rio Grande Project 2003 Water Supply and Water Allocation Process (Wayne Treers, BuRec)

Mr. Treers passed out two handouts for his presentation (a copy of the first handout is attached as **Exhibit "B"**). He opened by stating that this was the first year in 25 years that Rio Grande Project users were being faced with less than a full supply. This puts the water users in an interesting position of having to make some hard choices concerning how to efficiently meet their demands with a limited water supply.

On the first handout, Mr. Treers reviewed the snow water equivalent and precipitation vs. time graphs. In the southern Colorado portion of the watershed (Upper Rio Grande and Rio Chama Basins), from which the Project receives most of its runoff, snow pack is running at about 70% of normal and total precipitation is running at about 78% of normal. Although this may not sound very good, it is better than last year's figure of 42% of normal. The Upper Rio Grande and Rio Chama Basins contribute about 75% of the total runoff volume. Roughly 15% comes from the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range Basin and about 10% from the Jemez River Basin. Ed Fierro suggested that these percentages be shown on future versions of these graphs, and Mr. Treers agreed to do so.

Tom Bahr asked what percentage of the snow pack normally occurs by this time of the year. Mr. Treers replied that most of the snow pack accumulation occurs between now and early April, particularly in the southern Colorado portion.

Mr. Treers presented the Spring runoff forecasts. The Rio Grande at San Marcial forecast is 370,000 AF, or 65% of the 30 year average. He noted that the soil moisture conditions in early winter, prior to the freezing of the ground and subsequent accumulation of snow, was fairly low due to a lack of precipitation. This condition is similar to last year's. This means that some of the snow pack will be absorbed into the soil during snowmelt, leading to a decreased runoff. Based in part on this information, the NRCS has reported on its website that in order for the Project to get 100% of normal (unregulated) runoff conditions in the upper part of the basin this year, it will be necessary to get a much higher than normal snow pack condition, probably at least 125% of normal. In combination, these conditions contribute to the 65% of normal (unregulated) runoff forecast at the San Marcial gauge. This is still better than last year's forecast, which was running at 42% of normal and then worsened as the year progressed, ending up at 11% of normal. Mr. Treers noted that this drought has been in effect over the last several years. For example, over the last 7 years, 6 of those years have had below normal runoffs.

Mr. Treers reviewed the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook, dated January 16th, obtained from the NOAA website. The main change from the previous map handed out at the last MAC meeting is that the solid green area, labeled as “Drought likely to improve, impacts ease”, has actually moved closer to Colorado. The state line with Colorado is still in a transition zone, with part of this region in the “Drought ongoing, some improvement” zone. The NRCS 90 day forecast for February through April is showing 0 to 5% above normal precipitation levels for the southern Colorado portion of the basin. In the northern New Mexico, they are showing 10% above normal. The NRCS is still considering the El Nino effect, but so far El Nino has not translated into higher than normal precipitation levels. The NRCS first of the month forecast actually comes out about 7 days later, at which time Mr. Treers re-evaluates his projections. He also noted that the NRCS will start providing mid-month forecasts, at least until April, and Reclamation will also provide mid-month projections based on these forecasts.

Mr. Treers next reviewed the second handout (copy attached as **Exhibit “C”**). The Rio Grande Reservoir Operations water supply outlook, based on a 50% (285,000 AF) regulated runoff forecast at San Marcial, shows a projected release of 510,000 AF in 2003 and a corresponding Elephant Butte Reservoir end of year content of 325,000 AF. Mr. Treers noted a couple of factors that contribute to the difference between the unregulated forecast of 65% of normal (370,000 AF) and the regulated forecast of 50% of normal (285,000 AF). The first is that Reclamation will likely store about 25,000 AF of water in El Vado Reservoir for “Prior and Paramount” water rights for the Pueblos. The rest of the water has to be bypassed this year due to Article 7 of the Rio Grande Compact. The other adjustment that will have to be made is diversions by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD). The Article 7 of the Compact does not specify that MRGCD cannot divert any water during drought conditions. Mr. Treers examined the historic records of MRGCD diversions to determine what they looked like during past drought years. He found that in 1978, following a 50% runoff year in 1977, the MRGCD’s diversions had definitely been above average. Therefore, he expects that as long as water is going down through the middle valley, that MRGCD will divert as much water as they can, since they will probably not be able to store any water in upstream reservoirs. To account for this, Mr. Treers has deducted another 60,000 AF from the unregulated forecast to obtain the final regulated forecast of 285,000 AF.

Concerning relinquishment of credits, indications from a meeting that Wayne Treers had with the Engineer Advisors back in December are that Colorado is looking at not relinquishing any of their credits. New Mexico was non-committal, probably because they did not have a State Engineer or a chair of their Interstate Stream Commission at that time. The second page of the handout shows the credit accounting assuming, under a worst case scenario, no relinquishment of credits. The estimated credits to the end of December, 2002, are 241,180 AF for New Mexico and 37,448 AF for Colorado. Also, the quantity of Albuquerque’s San Juan Chama water being stored in the reservoir is 8,159 AF. The total of these three amounts is the water that Reclamation cannot currently allocate to Texas users. As of this morning, this leaves about 116,000 AF of usable water for Texas.

The third page of the handout shows the initial allocations to the two Districts and Mexico under the end of November and end of December, 2002 projections. These projections are for 8.03% and 10.40% of a full supply, respectively. The fourth page of the handout shows projected supply allocations under several runoff and credit relinquishment scenarios. Reclamation is not anticipating a full supply this year. Using the 50% runoff scenario, with no relinquishment of credits, yields an estimated supply allocation of 53.2% of average by the end of June, and 69.0% of average by the end of September. Assuming some or all of the credits are relinquished, the 50% scenario results in supply projections of 70.6% and 85.3% or normal respectively. Mr. Treers stated that at some point prior to the end of the irrigation season, the Districts are going to have to decide what the final allotment will be. This discussion will probably occur after July 1st.

Concerning relinquishment of credits, Mr. Treers advised that there were two periods in the historic record with conditions similar to this year (i.e., Project storage below 400,000 AF and with New Mexico or Colorado in a credit situation). In both cases, each state relinquished sizable credits in large chunks over two years (Colorado in 1946 and 1947 and New Mexico in 1977 and 1978). These relinquishments usually occurred during the spring and summer months. Reclamation's best guess right now is that there will be no relinquishment of credits this year, but that there will likely be one next year (2004). However, one factor to consider is that there may be political pressure brought to bear on Colorado and New Mexico by water users to store water this year in anticipation of continued drought next year. This could lead to some credit relinquishment this year. There is also one year left in the agreement which authorizes storage of water for the Silvery Minnow in Jemez Canyon and Abiqui reservoirs. This may also add some subtle pressure for the State of New Mexico to store water for this purpose. Bert Cortez noted that Texas does not have to accept a relinquishment of credits by the upstream states, in which case Colorado and New Mexico would still not be able to store water. Mr. Treers suggested that one reason Texas may not want to accept a relinquishment of credit is because they may want to keep the quantity of usable water below 400,000 AF. If usable water increases above 400,000 AF due to acceptance of a credit, then Colorado or New Mexico would be able to store water without further credit relinquishments. However, Mr. Treers does not anticipate that, under the 50% runoff scenario, usable storage will go above 400,000 AF even with a relinquishment of credits.

Dave Brosman of EPWU requested that Reclamation add a projection for the end of May. Also, Mr. Brosman asked a question concerning Reclamation's end of May allocation which led to a discussion of how the District would schedule their releases this year. Gary Esslinger explained that EBID projected the release of water in blocks, and not a continuous release. The only block release they can forecast right now is one starting on March 1st and continuing for three weeks, after which they would cut off their orders. The reason behind this is that EBID normally uses about 55,000 AF of their allotment in the month of March, and currently Reclamation's allocation to EBID is only 50,000 AF, so they would be out of water anyway if this allocation didn't increase. Later releases would be based on the monthly Reclamation forecasts, so if he were to estimate the timing of the second block release, it would probably be for the latter part of April or first part of May, and probably for another 3 week time period. By that time, the final runoff forecast will be available and most of the runoff will already have occurred. If the forecast at that time is for the final supply allocation to be, say 2 AF/acre, then EBID would continue to call for releases through the remaining summer months. However, if it does not appear at that time that additional runoff will be available, then EBID will probably not have another release until July, if at all.

Mr. Esslinger explained that one problem he is having is getting all the farmers to commit to ordering water during the first block in March. There are some farmers who do not want to order water during that first block release. His fear is that he won't have enough water left to release when they do need the water later in the summer – for example, pecan farmers would need it in August. Most of the big farmers right now are set up to pump groundwater, and they would prefer to irrigate early in the season with well water, and leave the surface water for the end of the season. Vegetable farmers, on the other hand, prefer to use the surface water first, because it has lower TDS, and the use their well water near the end of the season. Mr. Esslinger added that he understands that EPCWID#1 is planning to schedule their first block of water on a schedule similar to EBID's. Wayne Treers agreed and added that, at the IBWC's Citizens Forum last Monday, Edd Fifer had said something very similar to what Mr. Esslinger had said concerning the initial block of water deliveries.

Dave Brosman stated that if EPWU doesn't get water by the end of May, he will have problems meeting demand. He expects demand to be at about 160 mgd by the end of May and 175 mgd by the end of June. The firm well capacity that he can be assured will be available on a consistent basis is 135 mgd, even though EPWU may be able to produce 140 mgd for short time periods or even 150

mgd for one day or so. Lack of surface water during the summer months may create problems, such as meeting fire demands, which is a serious concern. He anticipates he can meet city demand with well water alone until the end of April, but after that EPWU will be in a deficit situation. Mr. Brosman advised that he may take a small quantity of water in March to get the ponds full and get the plants started, but that he wanted to save most of his water for the months of June, July, and August, when demand is heaviest. Pulsing the river in the middle of the summer could be disastrous for EPWU. Therefore, he is hoping that he can get a reasonably continuous flow of water during the summer months. Mr. Treers stated that he understood what Mr. Brosman was saying. However, he added that this was the first year in 24 years that they were having to depend entirely on inflows to Elephant Butte Reservoir to meet water demands. Bert Cortez advised that the best that Reclamation could do is give more frequent updates. Mr. Treers stated that he could start doing a projection for the end of May, as requested by Mr. Brosman, and would also start giving mid-month projections starting in February.

Mr. Esslinger also stated he understood Dave Brosman's concerns, and added that he was facing the same issues with EBID farmers. He has a Board that is divided on whether to try to schedule a continuous flow using smaller releases, or whether to pulse the releases into larger blocks of water. There have been arguments made for both sides, but he believes that in the first round of discussions, the pulsing scenario has won out, at least for the March release.

Dave Brosman asked Wayne Treers what the NRCS was projecting concerning precipitation levels for this year. Mr. Treers replied that they were projecting average precipitation and temperature levels for the year, with equal chances of having a wetter or dryer than average year. The only change from that projection is for above average precipitation from now until about April. Bert Cortez advised that Reclamation is meeting monthly with the Compact Commission Engineer Advisors to update the credit computations on a monthly basis, so that if Colorado or New Mexico relinquish credits during the year, they can be made available to Texas as soon as possible.

Ari Michelsen asked Gary Esslinger if EBID's farmers were planning to change the type of crops they grow in response to the potential drought situation. Mr. Esslinger replied that they didn't foresee a significant change in cropping patterns. He expects the amount of Alfalfa planted to remain at about 20,000 acres and pecans at 22,000 acres. The main change he expects to see is farmers planting more cotton in place of corn. He added that he expects that approximately forty percent of the well water pumped will be transferred to other farmers who don't have wells. Overall, he expects about 60% of the water used this year will be groundwater, and for the cropping pattern not to change that much. He has been very conservative in what they have told their farmers and has advised them to expect less than one foot of surface water this year.

Conrad Keyes asked how low Reclamation can allow for storage in Elephant Butte reservoir to fall assuming all credits are relinquished. Mr. Treers replied that the only water they can't release is the 8,150 AF of San Juan Chama water stored in the recreation pool space. The recreation pool is authorized at 50,000 AF, but that is only a space authorization which need not be filled with water. Reclamation has been advising local recreational interests that water storage could potentially go as low as 8,150 AF. Bert Cortez reiterated that they are giving water users a full range of possibilities on water allocation, but can only allocate a single quantity of water which is guaranteed to be available. Reclamation cannot guarantee and allocation more water than what is already in storage based on probabilities. Also, Mr. Cortez advised that they have recently noticed a trend of increased TDS in the water from the reservoir. As a result, Reclamation will start providing water quality data for water stored in the reservoir on a regular basis.

Wayne Treers advised that Mexico has not yet sent a letter requesting their delivery schedule for this year, probably because of ongoing negotiations on the 1944 Treaty. There is a slight probability that

Mexico's Rio Grande Project allocation may be cut-off this year. However, regardless of whether or not this occurs, Reclamation has to hold Mexico's allocation in the reservoir until the end of the year. Also, in response to a question by Zhuping Sheng's of TAMU, Mr. Trees stated that he does not expect the expanded use of groundwater to change the pattern and volume of return flows this year.

VI. Presentation on the Status of Elephant Butter Reservoir Pilot Channel Work (BuRec)

Ms. Christi Smith, Reclamation's Project Manager for the temporary pilot channel project, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the pilot channel work (copy attached as **Exhibit "D"**).

The pilot channel project is divided into two segments. The first segment is designated as the "2000 Channel" and the second segment is designated as the "2002 Channel". The designation represent the year that each segment was started. Ms. Smith gave details on the cross-sectional dimensions and length of each segment. She also gave the current completion status of the 2000 Channel. The 2000 Channel segment has been completed through its full length in the first pass, although only a portion of it has been excavated to the design width. Work continues on excavating the remaining width for portions of this channel in a second pass. The 2002 Channel will be excavated before the spring runoff starts and is an additional segment that was required because of the continued receding of the reservoir. It will be narrower and deeper than the 2000 Channel. The work on the 2002 Channel was contracted with the State of New Mexico, and New Mexico is contracting out this work. Reclamation is currently re-evaluating its design for the channel and is looking at increasing the capacity of the 2002 Channel by incorporating a compound section which is designed for efficiently carrying both high and low flows. Reclamation is also looking at increasing the capacity of the San Marcial railroad bridge.

One of the biggest problems they have had on the project in the past is the down-time of their excavation equipment. They have now implemented an equipment maintenance program and obtained backup equipment, so they have been able to maintain very low downtime since the program was implemented. Ms. Smith described the environmental features included in the channel design which were included as part of their negotiations with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (F&W). These features have been modified over to time resolve problems with breaching of the channel which occurred as a result of including these design features.

After the presentation someone asked whether the excavation work had resulted in the removal of any salt cedar. Ms. Smith replied that no live salt cedar had been removed intentionally during the excavation. Ari Michelsen asked about the water savings that can be attributed to the excavation of the pilot channel. Ms. Smith answered that this was a difficult question to answer, but that they estimate the water savings to be anywhere from 6,000 to 50,000 AF per year. Gary Esslinger asked who had designed the channel and whether F&W had had input into the design. Ms. Smith replied that Reclamation had designed the channel and that F&W had input into the design. Mr. Esslinger asked why F&W had been consulted on the design. Ms. Smith answered that it was because of the Silvery Minnow. Mr. Esslinger asked whether the pilot channel could be considered Silvery Minnow habitat. Ms. Smith replied in the affirmative, but added that they had not seen any Silvery Minnow in the pilot channel up to now. Mr. Esslinger asked whether the Southwest Willow Flycatcher (Flycatcher) was a factor in the design of the channel. Ms. Smith replied that it was not. Mr. Esslinger then asked whether anyone had done a study to determine the potential for Flycatcher nest site habitat to develop in the area where they were doing the channel work. Bert Cortez replied that they were looking at it right now. He added that the current nesting sites that have developed so far have occurred above the water-line of the full reservoir. The work being done to determine sites for salt cedar control also takes into account methods to insure that the Flycatchers stay in their current habitat. Ms. Smith added that they are looking at building some ground water ponds that will support

Flycatcher habitat, and that the sites being considered for these ponds are located above the full reservoir water-line to discourage development of new habitat below this waterline.

VII. Other Business

Gary Esslinger informed the group about the selection of Mr. John DeAntonio as the New Mexico State Engineer and of Mr. Estevan Lopez as the director of the Interstate Stream Commission. Mr. Esslinger followed with a discussion of the selection process used in connection with Mr. DeAntonio's appointment and provided some background on Mr. DeAntonio's qualifications and experience.

VIII. Schedule Next Meeting/Location

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:00 am, February 21st at the EPWU Boardroom. Five agenda items were suggested for the next meeting:

- 1) Allocation forecast update by Reclamation.
- 2) Presentation on EBID's Drought Management Plan by Gary Esslinger.
- 3) Update on activities of Watershed Council.
- 4) Update on the Watershed Council's Coordinated Database/GIS Project., including demonstration of the Project's "hot-link" feature by Chris Brown, NMSU.
- 5) Discussion on establishing a Committee to assist with updating and maintenance of the Commission's website.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.