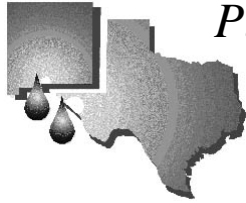


New Mexico – Texas Water Commission



Public Entities in Partnership for Sustainable Water Resources

Water Resources Research Institute, Dept. 3167
New Mexico State University, Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
Phone: (505) 646-4337
FAX: (505) 646-6418

El Paso Water Utilities
Public Service Board
P.O. Box 511
El Paso, TX 79961
Phone: (915) 594-5501
FAX: (915) 594-5699

Minutes

MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO-TEXAS WATER COMMISSION

**Dona Ana County Court House
“Old Court House”
251 W. Amador
Las Cruces, NM**

**May 7th, 2004
9 A.M.**

Welcome

Karl Wood welcomed everyone and chaired the meeting. Mr. Archuleta attended the meeting as well. A copy of the sign-in sheet is attached as **“Exhibit “A”**. Those members of the Commission attending were as follows:

Dr Ari Michelsen – Texas A&M
Tony Tarquin – UTEP
Ed Archuleta – EPWU
Sue Padilla – Dona Ana County (DAC)

Karl Wood – NMSU-WRRI
Gary Esslinger – EBID
Armando Cordero - DAC
Mike Fahy - EPWU

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from December 18, 2003, Commission Meeting

Mr. Wood asked if anyone had comments on the February 19, 2004 Commission meeting minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

II. Progress Report by the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC) (Nancy Hanks, Watershed Council Coordinator).

Nancy Hanks updated the Commission on the latest activities of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC). She informed that the Council had met on April 30th at the NM Department of Agriculture, and the following topics were discussed;

- ♦ There was discussion on the nature and content of the Council’s comments on public environmental impact documents.
- ♦ The Council has begun the process of updating the business plans, strategic plans and revising the

bylaws.

- ♦ The Council is beginning to work on a grant proposal to EPA for the Collaborative Science & Technology Network for Sustainability, which is due on May 21st.
- ♦ Gean Atkins visited the Watershed Council and invited them to attend the next meeting of the Jornada Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council. This council was established under the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) based in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.
- ♦ Nancy announced that Dan Santantonio and Marylin Taylor will be stepping down from the Executive Council.
- ♦ Announcement of Border 2012 Border Grant awards is still pending.

III. Discussion of PdNWC Format for Responding to Environmental Issues Open to Public Comment (Commission Members).

Karl questioned Mike Fahy on how this got on the agenda. Mike referred to the meeting of the watershed council held on Friday, April 30th. At the meeting, they discussed the letter sent by the council commenting on IBWC's DEIS Canalization Project, and the responding letter from Gary Esslinger. Members discussed:

- The types of projects to which the council should respond.
- The Possibility of adding a disclaimer to letters of this type.
- Allowing more time for Council members to review comments.

Mr. Fahy summarized by asking for guidance and direction for the Watershed Council from the Commission.

Karl asked Julie Maitland if she or Sue Watts had any comments. Julie responded by saying they did not have enough response or review time for the Council to appraise the entire document adequately. Karl noted that the issue is whether the Council represents the TX-NM Water Commission and whether the Council has the authority to make these kinds of comments. Chris Brown responded that in his opinion the comments made by the Council are strictly those of the Council. Karl stated that in his view the Watershed Council is a subset of the TX-NM Water Commission, and that the two entities cannot be separated. Sue Watts responded by saying that one function of the Watershed Council is to recommend policies as written in the bylaws, and quoted the following language from the Council's Statement of Purpose: "The Council shall recommend policies for cooperation, coordination and the sharing of information concerning planning and management activities of projects affecting the Watershed". Karl advised that, if this is the case, then the Statement of Purpose should be changed. Sue disagreed. Chris agreed with Sue and stated that the Council had submitted comments in response to a request for comments from IBWC on a Draft EIS.

Gary Esslinger noted the presence of the word "coordination" in the quote cited by Sue Watts,

and suggested that the Watershed Council coordinate more with the Commission. Karl observed that the Watershed Council represents the NM-TX Watershed Commission, and that when it comes to reviewing Environment Impact Statements for scientific credibility, the Council provides a tremendous service. However, the Council should communicate their intent to the Commission. He conceded that the timeframe for submitting comments had been very short, and added that the Watershed Council does a remarkable job otherwise.

Ari commented that communication was important and that, as Gary had stated, the timeframe for providing comments had been very short in this case. He added that the council is looking to revise the bylaws to include allowance of sufficient time for communication, as well as to provide a disclaimer for similar environmental project comments.

Ed Archuleta asked whether it would take the rest of the summer for the Council to look at the revisions to the bylaws. Nancy replied that the Council is preparing the bylaws for the next meeting and giving the Council 30 days to review the document. Mr. Archuleta asked when it will be brought to the Commission for review. Nancy responded that most likely it will be in September. Mr. Archuleta suggested that the Watershed Council look into salinity management as a new focus. He explained that salinity management would be a good topic of study for the watershed council to explore.

IV. Presentation on the Rio Grande Project 2004 Irrigation Season, Water Supply and Allocation Forecast (Wayne Treers, BuRec).

Wayne Treers provided a routine update on the water supply situation and runoff forecast. A copy of his a power point presentation is **attached as Exhibit “B”**.

Mr. Treers reviewed the snowpack and runoff levels at each of the major drainage basins for the project. He presented the spring runoff forecasts for the Rio Grande Basin and the short-term precipitation and seasonal drought outlook. Mr. Treers also discussed the reservoir inflows and storage levels, credit water status, reservoir operating plan, and the current and projected allocations for 2004. This topic closed with a discussion of revisiting the concept of Carryover Storage for Elephant Butte Reservoir. Several sources for prior reports or studies were cited for possible review and further discussion at a future Commission meeting.

V. Presentation on Futuristic Ways to Increase Water Supplies for New Mexico, from the Recent Rio Grande Basin Initiative Conference (Karl Wood, NMWRRI)

Karl Wood provided a brief power point presentation (**attached as Exhibit “C”**) on five major ways to increase water supplies by:

- Weather modification
- Interbasin transfer
- Suppress evapotranspiration – Vegetation Manipulation
- Desalination

- Water Conservation

Karl referred to cloud seeding as a possible method for inducing rain, although at the present time, there is still some disagreement among members of the scientific community about the efficacy of cloud seeding. He spoke of current plans for interbasin water transfer, and future projects including environmental impacts. Karl also addressed the types of vegetation which can live on low to moderate water consumption, and talked about desalination technology and how desalination plants are becoming less costly to operate and more international in scope.

Karl addressed water conservation and gave examples of how much water a person uses a day, and offered examples of some water saving household fixtures which could make a difference. He also discussed techniques for more efficient irrigation, and mentioned that El Paso was a national leader in water conservation.

VI. Live Demonstration of Improvements to the Commission's Web Page (Valerie Provencio, EPWU)

Valerie presented a brief demonstration of what the New Mexico-Texas Water Commission's new web page will look like. Although the web page is still under construction, she was able to provide the Commission with an idea of the modified site format and features by displaying the home page on a large screen via the internet. Ari suggested that a telephone number, e-mail address, or mailing address be included on the web page in case someone wanted to personally address members of the Commission.

VII. Other Business: Invitation to El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 to return to the Commission (Ari Michelsen, TAMU)

Ari has verbally invited El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 to return to the Commission. Mr. Reyes previously responded to Ari that he will be at the next meeting. It was suggested that the next Commission meeting be held at the District's office.

Sue Padilla was introduced. She is the Water Utilities Director for Dona Ana County and is taking the position originally held by Jerry Leyendecker.

An update on the initiative for the Trans-Boundary Groundwater Assessment, S-1957, will be heard in Committee in Washington, D.C on May 19th.

A new desalination and water resources coalition has been formed in the region. This will be formalized via an MOU among El Paso, UTEP, TX A&M, NMSU and the City of Alamogordo. They will meet today.

Ed Archuleta updated the MAC on several issues:

- EPWU has equipped 11 previously brackish wells with RO units which will deliver an additional 8 million gallons a day to El Paso. This addition is the reason why El Paso Water Utilities did not go to stage two drought restrictions in 2004.

- There will be a groundbreaking ceremony on August 9, 2004 at the new Upper Valley Water (Arsenic) Treatment Plant in Canutillo, Texas.
- There will be a conference entitled “Desalination: Managing Concentrate in the Desert” at the El Paso Marriott October 21-22, 2004 sponsored by El Paso Water Utilities, the Chamber of Commerce, Fort Bliss and the local chapter of the Council of Engineering Consultants.

VII. Schedule Next Meeting/Location

The next Commission was tentatively scheduled to be held at the **El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 (EPCWID)** on June 25, 2004 at 9am. The meeting of May 7th was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.