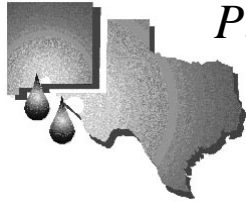


New Mexico – Texas Water Commission



Public Entities in Partnership for Sustainable Water Resources

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MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO – TEXAS WATER COMMISSION

El Paso Water Utilities

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October 29, 2004

8:30 A.M.

Welcome

Michael Fahy welcomed everyone and chaired the meeting. A copy of the sign-in-sheet is attached as “**Exhibit “A”**”. Those members attending the meeting were as follows:

Karl Wood – NMSU-WRRI
Gary Esslinger - EBID
Ari Michelsen – TX A&M
Tony Tarquin - UTEP
Mike Fahy - EPWU
Tanya Trujillo – City of Las Cruces

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from September 24, 2004, Commission Meeting (Commission Members)

Mike asked if anyone had comments on the September 24, 2004 Commission meeting minutes. Nancy Hanks and Tony Tarquin had a few minor comments regarding corrections to the minutes. Valerie agreed to change the minutes as prescribed, after which the Commission approved the minutes unanimously.

II. and III. Update on PdNWC Passage of New Bylaws and Strategic Plan and Progress & Update of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC) (Sue Watts Watershed Council Chair)

Sue Watts updated the Commission in place of Nancy Hanks, who was unable to attend. She informed the Commission of the latest activities of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC) for the months of September and October. She stated that the Council members have been working on revising the Bylaws, the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan. At the last Council meeting on October 6, the Bylaws and Strategic Plan were approved by the Council. They were essentially unchanged from the versions that were distributed to the Commission members at the September 24, Commission meeting.

Ms. Watts advised that the Council focus is currently on the Business Plan. The Council had simplified the Strategic Plan and added long range goals. The Strategic plan contains four overall goals that are being addressed by three different working groups the Technical, Educational, and Biological Working Groups. These groups are currently setting up timelines and specific objectives. Sue briefly explained the goals of each working group and stated that the business plan is a work in progress. The Technical group's objectives are to investigate water quality issues and salinity control and salinity management techniques, continue the Coordinated Database/GIS Project and seek additional funding from sources other than El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU). The Biological Group is gathering biological data to characterize the state of the ecosystem along the river. One main goal of the Biological Working Group is to incorporate a biological data layer into the Coordinated Database/GIS Project. The Biological Group would like to identify human impacts affecting the watershed. Sue added that they are still working through these goals and that it is a long term effort. Next, Sue informed the Commission of the Educational Group's focus. They are attempting to provide outreach to the agricultural community and identify the best way to communicate with that community. In addition, the Council decided that the drought information should be distributed by the Educational Committee.

Sue informed the Commission that the Watershed Council will conduct their annual meeting on November 22nd at the Great American Land and Cattle Co. in Vinton, Texas at 11:30 am. The meeting is open to the public.

Karl asked Sue whether the Council could provide an updated list identifying the members of each of the three working groups. Sue replied she would take care of his request. Tony asked if developing a Biological Survey is a goal or is something that has already been started. Sue replied that the Biological Working Group has set up a long term goal to accomplish this. However, they are not planning on doing new surveys, but rather are looking at compiling existing data.

Mike asked Karl, Gary and Ari if they knew of representatives from the agricultural communities which might be willing to work with the Council. They offered the following possible contacts:

- El Paso Public Service Board • Elephant Butte Irrigation District • Texas A&M Agricultural Center •
- City of Las Cruces • New Mexico State University • Dona Ana County • University of Texas at El Paso
- El Paso County Water Improvement District #1

- Agriculture High school Classes within each school district
- FFA (Future Farmers of America) Programs in High Schools
- 4-H Programs
- Farm Bureau of New Mexico– Phil Arnold is the President
- New Agricultural Education Program at the TAMU: - Extension Service in Anthony – Ruben Saldana
- Ysleta School District – Mrs. Chuy Reyes is on the YISD Board and has expressed interest in bringing agriculture into their school programs
- Ari commented that the Agricultural Extension Departments at Texas A&M and NMSU is a key contact within each state, and that NRCS should also be contacted

Mike Fahy was interested in distributing a draft of the Business Plan for the Technical Working Group and asked Sue if it could be reviewed at the next NM-TX Commission meeting. Sue complied.

IV. Summary of the URGWOM-Riverware Training in Albuquerque (Zhuping Sheng, TAMU) and New Mexico Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Plan (Phil King, NMSU)

Zhuping updated the commission by describing the origin and features of the Upper Rio Grande Water Operations Model (URGWOM) and identified the federal agencies that are participating in developing URGWOM (**Exhibit “B”**). These six agencies, USBR, USFWS, USGS, BIA, IBWC, & USACE are responsible for developing a unified operations model to aid water managers. Zhuping briefly went over the technical review process and the model documentation, including recent developments and upgrades. He provided information on the URGWOM water operation and planning models and examples of running simulations using the model. Additionally, Zhuping presented a short demonstration of RiverWare, which is the modeling software used for URGWOM. He discussed the requirements, methods, and other examples of RiverWare simulations. In conclusion, Zhuping reviewed the RiverWare Modeling Objectives presented at the URGWOM meeting which, Zhuping attended in Albuquerque on the 14th of October, 2004.

Karl asked whether the model was only extended to Elephant Butte Reservoir. Zhuping replied that it will eventually go all the way to Ft Quitman. Ari asked whether Phil King is working directly on URGWOM. Gary replied that EBID is working with them, but he was not sure if Phil was involved. Ari wanted to know if the ASCE database grant provided training for Zhuping and Phil. Zhuping replied that Phil did not attend the training, but he, Chris Brown and one of his students did attend. Zhuping informed the Commission that on December 15-17, there will be an URGWOM training session offered at NMSU and that the NM-TX Water Commission and the Paso del Norte Watershed Council members will be invited. Karl asked whether Ari’s group (TX A&M) would be charged with extending URGWOM from Elephant Butte south to Fort Quitman. Zhuping replied that the Army

Corps of Engineers (COE) will be developing the southern portion of the model within that reach for flood control purposes only. Karl wanted to know why the Corps does not have permission at the present time, to extend the model down to Ft. Quitman. Ari said it was an authority issue, and that Phil and Zhuping are proposing to operate the model independently below Elephant Butte.

Next, Phil King provided a PowerPoint presentation (**Exhibit C**) for an update on the New Mexico Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Plan (LRGRWP). This is the Region 11 component of the New Mexico State Water Plan. He gave a brief background on the LRGRWP and credited Bobby Creel, Steve Hernandez and Kathy Watson as being essential in developing the plan. He described the study area - Dona Ana County and parts of Sierra County within the boundaries of the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, and the portion of the Hueco Bolson within Otero County. He displayed a diagram of the Rio Grande hydrology and its inflows and outflows from 1938 – 2000 and presented a pie chart showing the current and future uses and demands as outlined in the LRGRWP. Phil said that the plan takes into account conjunctive surface water and ground water systems and explained that it is essentially impossible to separate the two. Phil stated that an assumption adhered to in developing the water plan is that there will be no new water supplies and the river will be kept “whole” with respect to water rights. The Region 11 report can be reviewed on-line at <http://wrrri.nmsu.edu.lrgwou>.

V. Update on Proposed Joint Challenge Grant Application to the Bureau of Reclamation (Michael P. Fahy, EPWU)

Mike provided an update on the Bureau of Reclamation Water 2025 Challenge Grant Proposal and passed out handouts of the presentation slides which he had presented at the previous meeting. Gary and Mike discussed the two different approaches presented to BuRec, concerning whether to submit proposals combined as a group as one single large project, versus submitting separate proposals. The response from the BuRec was that separate proposals be submitted, but to cross-reference them so that when the reviewers read them they can see that they are all actually linked together. Karl asked why it was being done this way. Mike informed him that BuRec had advised him that during the Year 2004 program, BuRec did not fund any single project over the \$300,000 proposal cap. Apparently the BuRec representatives felt they would have more flexibility in the selection process if they could mix and match the individual proposals. There was additional discussion concerning the merits of submitting a joint proposal versus submitting separate proposals.

Karl asked how many individual but “linked” proposals were being considered from our region and Mike informed him there were three: City of Las Cruces, EBID, and EPWU with the Watershed Council. Ari asked about EP#1’s role with respect to submitting a proposal. Zhuping replied that EP#1 would not be participating in the linked proposal and that their proposal will be for a canal lining project and additional flow monitoring stations. Tanya asked whether the Challenge Grants would be awarded as a lump sum. Ari responded that BuRec will make awards for projects ranging up to two years in duration. All of the Year 2005 awards will likely be made at the same time. The Commission agreed to send a letter of endorsement for the linked proposals and requested that Mike Fahy draft the letter. Mike suggested having the proposal linkage flagged on the front page of each proposal in some

fashion announcing that the proposals are “linked” for the three applicants.

Mike Fahy will work on organizing the support letters and the resolutions and coordinate with the other applicants and the Watershed Council members.

VI. Web Page Preview of New EBID/EPWU Conductivity (TDS) Probes at Several Stateline River and Drain Locations.

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

VII. Business:

- Update on the Region 11 Portion of the New Mexico State Water Plan. This update is described in detail in the Previous Section III of these minutes

Karl also related to the Commission that the Lower Rio Grande Water Users Organization met with the Interstate Stream Commission and that Phil King and Steve Hernandez made presentations.

- Temporary E-Mail Solution for Member Contacts on Commission Web Page

Valerie updated the Commission on the current solution to the Commission web page contact page. She stated that all outside e-mails to the “Contact Us” page will be e-mailed directly to her, and that she will forward the messages to the appropriate agencies after she reviews them.

Ari announced a call for papers for the 2005 Annual Conference for The National Institutes for Water Resources. The deadline is December 1, 2004

Mike announced that Tony Tarquin, Karl Wood and Mr. Archuleta will be making presentations at the Multi-State Salinity Coalition (MSSC) Annual Salinity Summit in Las Vegas on the December 13 and 14, 2004. Conrad Keyes has arranged for a funding proposal meeting of the new ASCE/EWRI Committee on Concentrate Disposal Guidelines.

Gary Esslinger suggested a presentation for the next Commission Meeting on the Pecan Orchard Evapotranspiration study in the Mesilla Valley

VIII. Schedule Next Meeting/Location

The next Commission meeting will at 9 A.M. at EBID on December 3, 2004. Suggested topics include:

- Review of the Draft Business Plan for the Technical Working Group (PdNWC)
- Update on the Agency Resolutions, Endorsements letter and status of draft Challenge Grant proposals

- Early BuRec Forecast of 2005 Irrigation Season Runoff and Allocation
- Preview of EBID Web Page Access to New EBID/EPWU Conductivity Data at River and Drain Locations