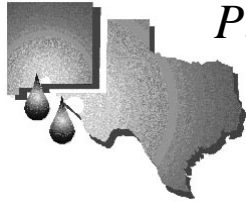


# New Mexico – Texas Water Commission



*Public Entities in Partnership for Sustainable Water Resources*

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## MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO – TEXAS WATER COMMISSION

**Texas A&M Research & Extension Center  
1380 A&M Circle  
El Paso, Texas 79927  
January 6, 2005**

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### Welcome

Ari Michelsen 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  
Tony Tarquin – UTEP  
Henry Magallanez - EBID  
Ari Michelsen – TX A&M  
Mike Fahy – EPWU  
Sue Padilla - DAC  
Tanya Trujillo – City of Las Cruces

### **I. Review and Approval of Minutes from December 3, 2004 Commission Meeting (Commission Members)**

Mr. Ari Michelsen asked if anyone had comments on the December 3, 2004 Commission meeting minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was passed and the minutes were accepted unanimously by the Commission.

### **II. Progress Update of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC) (Sue Watts, PdNWC Chair)**

Sue Watts announced that at the next meeting, scheduled for January 7, the Council, will be

- 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

endorsing a letter for the Challenge Grant and will be providing an update on the Business Plans from the three working groups defined in the revised Strategic Plan.

Sue and Nancy Hanks have been concentrating on fund raising. Their main effort is directed at Border 2012. This is an EPA sponsored event and there are work groups defined in this program to address areas such as environmental, health, and water topics. Sue explained that each work group can set their priorities for the proposals that they choose to submit. The Council Executive Committee would like to see support from EPA for the Watershed Council and for the Paso del Norte Water Task Force. The Watershed Council will be responding to this RFP. Mike Fahy asked if these were subject based studies, and if there could be funding for the Council Coordinator. Sue replied that there will be institutional support. They will be focusing on requesting administrative funding for the program coordinator.

Ari Michelsen mentioned the NRCS Grant Program and says it has potential for administrative support to the Watershed Council, because parts of these funds are for organizational planning.

### **III. Review of Funding and Financial Report of the PdNWS (Ari Michelsen, TAMU)**

Ari provided a comprehensive budget sheet delineating all of the grants the Watershed Council has received historically (**Attached as Exhibit "B"**). Ari explained that the top portion of the budget sheet shows current grants and the bottom portions are the fund allocations, expenditures and balances. Ari explained that the balances are actually somewhat over-stated because of accounting delays. There is actually less money than what is shown because of the lag time of approximately 30 days in reported expenditures.

Ari pointed out that for the EPWU organizational support component, a no-cost extension request will be submitted and will be possible because of additional funding available for Nancy Hanks through other grant programs including the Grey Water BuRec Reuse Program, and the Far West Texas Planning group work. In addition, there are allocations which have not been spent for such items as translation of publications. Ari realizes that salary support for the Coordinator is important at this point and anticipates a four month extension at this time.

Conrad Keyes pointed out that Phase II of the Corp of Engineers (COE) Coordinated Database Program ends this fiscal year in September of 2005. The COE is working on the 2006 budget and notes that this budget will be much less than the 2005 budget. The COE only received one million dollars for the 2005 budget for URGWOM. The budget estimate for 2006 is only ½ million dollars. Conrad requested letters of support, particularly from the NM-TX Water Commission. Ari asked if the letters of support should go to the respective state Congressmen from the Commission, since the program is of interest to the group. Mike volunteered to write the letters of support. A motion was made to have Mike draft the letters. The motion was carried unanimously by the Commission.

Conrad informed the audience that Gail Stockton will be retiring at the end of January and that April Sanders will be taking her place. April has been with the COE for three or four

years, and was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife project manager on several environmental impact statements.

Ari mentioned that the Watershed Council will be addressing the topic of the Paso del Norte-GIS Mapa (PdNMapa) at the January 7, PdNWC meeting. This is a group of government and other agencies and organizations involved in GIS mapping in the region. There will be an actual charter signing in March, and Ari recommended that the Watershed Council join in submitting a response to the official invitation for membership. There was a brief discussion on the properties and responsibilities of PdNMapa and it was decided that the Commission members will be provided with copies of the sample charter and membership resolution material.

#### **IV. Discussion and Comments on Draft Water 2025 Challenge Grant Proposals by EBID, EPWU and City of Las Cruces (CLC); (Commission Members):**

##### **A. Review of Organization of EPWU/PdNWC/EBID Proposal (Mike Fahy, EPWU).**

Mike provided a brief power point presentation (**Attached as Exhibit “C”**) describing the three Commission agencies’ proposals to the Challenge Grant program. He displayed each agency’s proposed title and the primary focus of their respective proposals.

- EBID will submit a proposal entitled “Flow Metering and Data Collection,” with their focus being on the flow measurements at EBID’s canals and turnouts.
- The City of Las Cruces (CLC) will provide a proposal entitled “Burn Lake Regulating Reservoir: Reclaiming Water for Conservation and Recreation” with a focus on utilizing Burn Lake as regulating reservoir and for capturing storm flows.
- EPWU’s proposal title will be “Installation of River and Drain Instrumentation Stations to Monitor Flow and Water Quality and Internet Data Sharing” Their emphasis will be on real-time flow and TDS measurement of drain and river flows, plus sharing of historic and real-time water flow/water quality data through an ArcIMS website hosted by the PdNWC. EBID is also a partner in this proposal.

Next, Mike displayed the current budget breakdown for the EPWU/EBID/PdNWC proposal by cash, funding and in-kind services. The total combined, in-kind and cash project funding from EPWU, EBID, TX A&M, NMSU, BuRec and PdNWC is \$356,226. Mike provided a map delineating the locations of new Drain Flow/TDS measurement sites included in the proposal.

Mike then updated the Commission on the EPWU Challenge Grant work schedule, task including an estimated award start and ending date. Ari informed the Commission that Mike has been the lead in the coordination effort between the three proposals and asked Mike about the status of the support letters. Mike related that the Commission support letters have been signed by Mr. Archuleta and Karl Wood. Mike will provide originals

and/or copies of the respective Commission support letters to EPWU, CLC and EBID as needed to submit with their proposals to the BuRec. (**The Commission support letters are attached as Exhibit “D”**). Mike explained that the Watershed Council will be signing their support letters the next day. EBID and TAMU-College Station will also be sending financial support letters. Mike asked Tanya Trujillo whether CLC would sign a reciprocal letter of support. Catherine Mathews said that she would look into this.

**B. TAMU Role as Prime Contractor to EPWU (Zhuping Sheng, TAMU)**

Zhuping informed the Commission that TX A&M is providing technical assistance and acting as a fiscal agent to receive funds from EPWU and BuRec, and to distribute these funds to NMSU-NMWRRI and PdNWC as prescribed in the proposed budget. If successful, TX A&M will receive \$35,000 in cash from EPWU and \$85,000 in cash from the BuRec. TX A&M will provide \$25,000 worth of in-kind services including the PdNWC component. NMSU will be providing \$18,000 worth of in-kind contributions. TAMU will also provide project management for the NMSU and PdNWC portions.

**C. Summary of Support Services for GIS-Coordinated Database (Bobby Creel, NMWRRI)**

Bobby Creel related to the audience that at the last COE/Coordinated Database meeting, the COE had offered to provide a substantial amount of data that they had acquired through a contractor. This data could be made available to the Commission for use by the members of the Council. Bobby acquired an external disc drive to take to Albuquerque, and now has the data on their system at NMSU. The information includes digital orthophotography which will be available on line. There are 3,540 aerials (photographs) covering the Rio Grande drainage in Colorado, all of New Mexico, and quite a bit of Far West Texas. Bobby is also working on a generalized index map which will be presented in more detail at Coordinated Database Project Meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM at EPWU. The coverage also includes selected portions of Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and Kansas.

**D. Description of “User Needs Assessment” for Coordinated Database (Chris Brown, NMSU) (attached as Exhibit “E”)**

Chris Brown related the importance of a “User Need Assessment” as part of the Challenge Grant proposal. He explained that the overall goal of the Coordinated Database is to approximate a “one-stop-shop” for regional water resources data, which would allow users to gather information on a web-based delivery system. Chris emphasized the development of a distribution list for the survey, and an on-line tool that will serve sample data and gather input from the survey respondents. Chris hopes that the outcome of the User Assessment will lead to improved website and enhanced query functions and data protocols, on-lone help utilities and other enhancements. Chris recognizes that individuals not experienced with ArcIMS could have difficulty assessing data with the current format.

Ari introduced Carlos Duarte representing IBWC. He is assuming the former responsibilities of Doug Echlin.

#### **E. Summary of Proposed New Gage and Probe Locations (Henry Magallanez, EBID)**

Henry announced that EBID's grant submittal is nearly unchanged from 2004. One exception is that more monitoring of ground water wells is proposed for 2005. The State of New Mexico has established a new order stating that all wells will be metered by March of 2006. Domestic wells are exempt. Presently there are 375 discharges of groundwater wells into EBID's canals. EBID will require monitoring of such discharges in order to effectively manage the conjunctive use of surface and ground waters within their delivery system.

Ari asked Henry what EBID is doing to help individual farmers. Henry replied that they are trying to secure funds through the Interstate Stream Commission and to standardize, as much as possible, their telemetry for data collection and system operations. EBID has recommended establishment of a junior water master and utilizing some of EBID's staff for monitoring efforts to minimize the cost duplications. The State Engineers is considering EBID's suggestions.

Ari understood that a few years ago only a small portion of the wells actually had monitoring equipment. Henry said the meter ordinance came into effect on September 3, 2004 and the farmers have to comply by March 2006.

#### **V. Update on Challenge Grant Applications by EBID and CLC (Gary Esslinger, EBID/Cathy Mathews, CLC)**

The status of EBIS's grant submittal is described in the previous sections. Cathy Mathews of CLC, announced that their proposal will be presented at their City Council meeting on January 18, 2005. She expects that after that meeting, they can write their letters of support to the other Commission members. The intent of the CLC proposal is to bring water to Burn Lake and improve water quality for irrigation and to improve the fishing habitat. There was an extended conversation on the uses of Burn Lake and the environmental enhancements available at Burn Lake.

#### **VI. Discussion of Respective Agency Resolutions and letters of Support/Endorsement for Challenge Grant Proposals (Commission Members)**

Ari asked Mike if he had anything else to add on the letters of resolution and Mike responded that he would provide copies of the Commission letters that Mr. Archuleta and Karl signed.

#### **VII. Other Business**

Ari announced several meetings in the area including the Law of the Rio Grande Conference in Albuquerque on January 27 and 28, 2005, the SB-2-Far West Texas Planning Group meeting on January 21, and the 100 year anniversary celebration of the BuRec. IBWC will be holding a public scoping meeting on the Programmatic EIS on January 11<sup>th</sup> in El Paso, followed by a Las Cruces meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup>

### **VIII. Next Meeting/Location/Discussion Topics**

The next meeting will be held on February 17, 2005 in the Don Ana County Courthouse in Las Cruces.

Ari suggested that the following items be included on the next Commission meeting agenda:

- Watershed Council's decision on PdNMapa participation
- U.S. RuRec report on Runoff conditions and the current Allocation Forecast
- Summary of Congressional Grant Funds received by EPWU
- Brief report on the Joint Desalination Project EIS
- Presentation on the National Science Foundation RFP for New, Large Scale Technology Development in Hydrology; Including GIS Applications.
- A Brief update by IBWC on major components of their Programmatic EIS.