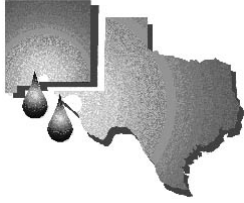


New Mexico – Texas Water Commission



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

MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO –TEXAS WATER COMMISSION

**University of Texas at El Paso
Main Library
McNeely Room
6th Floor
El Paso, TX
Telephone: (915) 594-5681
July 28, 2005
9:00 A.M.**

Professor Tony Tarquin of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) welcomed everyone and Mike Fahy of EPWU chaired the meeting. A copy of the sign-in-sheet is attached as “**Exhibit A.**” Those Commission members attending the meeting were as follows:

Karl Wood – NMSU WRI
Tony Tarquin – UTEP
Michael Fahy – EPWU
Henry Magallanez - EBID
Ari Michelsen-TAMU
Gene Paulk for Jorge Garcia – CLC

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2005 Commission Meeting (Commission Members)

Mike asked if anyone had comments on the May 19, 2005 Commission meeting minutes. Karl moved to accept the minutes as written and Henry seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed and accepted unanimously by the Commission.

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

Nancy Hanks announced that Council activities since the last Commission meeting had included the regular meeting of the PdNWC on June 3 and a presentation to the PdNWC at TAMU by Lisa Gonzalez of the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC) on July 25. Agenda items covered at the June 3 meeting of the PdNWC included a technical presentation on the North Valley Regional Water and Wastewater Project by Cesar Ramos of Souder-Miller and Mariano Martinez of Dona Ana Mutual Domestic, a description of the proposed IBWC-EBID

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El Paso County Water Improvement District #1

Safe Harbor proposal described further in these Commission meeting minutes, and updates on the various research and funding proposals either pending or awarded to the PdNWC. Ms. Gonzalez's slide presentation described the USGS-funded National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) program which incorporates biological and natural resource databases encompassing Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and other portions of the Gulf of Mexico. The potential was noted by the meeting attendees of the numerous opportunities for PdNWC to partner with HARC on this project, including linking the existing components of the PDNWC GIS Coordinated Database (CDB), as well as the proposed biological resources database planned by the PdNWC Biological Working Group.

Nancy also announced that several members of the PdNWC participated in the July 14 meeting of URGWOM at the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) in Albuquerque and that the start-up for Phase III of the COE portion of the CDB Program was scheduled for September. Nancy related that improvements to the PdNWC Web Site now included the translation into Spanish, links to all of the Stakeholder websites, and a short course on Watershed Science 101. Ari indicated that TAMU had signed the COE contract for Phase III of the CDB valued at \$ 110,000.00, and that he, Nancy and Mike had met to discuss alternatives for the Program Coordinator's salary. Some of the existing Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) funds could be used to fund Nancy's salary after the EPWU funds are depleted in September. Woody Irving expressed his concurrence with this request.

III. Update on Project Allocation for 2005 Irrigation Season and Very Early Forecast for 2006 (Bert Cortez, USBR)

Bert passed out the set of graphs and water allocation projection tables attached as "**Exhibit B**". The first page shows that precipitation is currently approximately 100% of average in most basins of the Rio Grande Project. Elephant Butte Reservoir (EB) storage is now at 500,000 AF with releases now running at 2300 cfs. The latest flow past San Marcial, at 300 cfs, has fallen off from the high earlier in the year of 5,000 cfs. The bad news is that there are indications that the drought may be returning as noted by the lack of rainfall in July. He estimated that the total release in 2005 will equal 665,000 AF. The storage in EB is expected to fall below 400,000 AF in August, which will mean that the upstream reservoirs cannot store more water. The USBR is monitoring conditions daily.

As of July 28, the official allocation is still only 98% of a full supply due to the lower than expected delivery efficiencies. Ari asked if there were identified causes for the lowered efficiencies, and Bert responded that USBR is working with the USGS on the likely current interactions between surface and ground water. Henry of EBID noted that his district is experiencing high ground water well pumping among their customers. Bert announced that USBR expects to declare a full allocation by mid August, and that a full allocation is also expected for 2006, unless runoff falls below 50% of average next year. He anticipates that the last release will be during the first or second week of October for 2005.

IV. Progress on the Three Linked Challenge Grant Projects (EPWU,EBID, City of Las Cruces)

Bert Cortez related that all three awardees should be receiving their contracts from USBR any day now for their respective Water 2025 projects. Mike announced that he is finalizing the subcontracts with TAMU and EBID for the EPWU project. Robert Maxwell of the USBR NEPA staff in Albuquerque has completed the field surveys for all three projects and now just

needs to complete the reports. The Commission members discussed possible locations for the USBR award ceremony with Commissioner John Keys, and Burn Lake appeared to take priority because it is a visually recognizable feature and the site of one of the three projects. Mike agreed to update the existing brochure describing the three linked projects for review at the next Commission meeting. It can then be posted to the Commission and PdNWC web pages. There was also discussion of posting the descriptive presentation slides from the June 3 Water Task Force meeting to the respective web pages. Conrad requested that the notice of the upcoming USBR awards ceremony also be posted.

Karl asked the Commission members to identify possible proposal topics for the next release of Challenge Grant RFP's, although there may not be funding for Fiscal Year 2006. Henry suggested expansion of the current drain and river monitoring and CDB Project to include a larger, GIS-Based Water Inventory and Delivery System to facilitate instantaneous measurements to improve delivery efficiencies and facilitate water marketing. Ari commented on the need for Riverware - URGWOM to also accommodate this concept, and Bert Cortez stated that the New Mexico State Engineer would probably cooperate as well. These components would provide for a strong proposal. Karl indicated the need to have EP#1 participate on the next proposal. Conrad asked about the possibility of including Mexico and some of the smaller communities in Dona Ana County.

V. Description of IBWC Canalization Project, Safe Harbor Concept for Irrigation Water and Southwest Willow Fly-Catcher (Henry Magallanez, EBID)

Henry explained that Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) submitted a proposal to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) in conjunction with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Environmental Defense (ED) to prepare a Safe Harbor agreement to extend the Safe Harbor concept to include irrigation water on a parity basis with wildlife. The purpose of this proposal to IBWC is to provide the assurances for the delivery of EBID's raw water to their customers necessary for the Stakeholders to move forward with the completion of the NEPA process for the IBWC Canalization Project. Representatives of EBID, ED and WWF met with IBWC in June to propose this concept, and IBWC Commissioner Duran committed verbally to encumber the approximately \$ 500,000 worth of funds for the study and to prepare the needed documents. Mike related that IBWC would announce at the August 4 meeting of the IBWC Citizens' Forum that the IBWC Programmatic EIS project is being suspended.

VI. Update on December 8, 9 Summit of the Multi-State Salinity Coalition (MSSC) in Albuquerque (Mike Fahy, EPWU)

Copies of the "Save the Date" notice for the upcoming Fourth Annual Salinity and Desalination Summit of the MSSC were distributed and a copy is attached as "**Exhibit C**". Mike announced that EPWU will be assuming a larger role for the MSSC now that Mr. Archuleta has been elected as the Chairman for 2005/2006. The next Annual Summit meeting will be in Albuquerque, NM on December 8 and 9, 2005, and several representatives of the Commission will be participating as either speakers or moderators. The final Summit program will be distributed to the public in early September and all the representatives of the Commission are invited to attend. The hotel hosting the event is being taken private by the owner and will become a New Mexico Heritage Hotel rather than a Sheraton Hotel before the Summit. The Commission members then discussed various individuals who should be considered for

invitations to participate as speakers due to their positions or knowledge of salinity and desalination topics.

VII. Other Business- Description of Improved Web Site for PdNWC (Nancy Hanks, PdNWC Coordinator)

Nancy offered to provide a live demonstration of the improved web site at the next Commission meeting.

Karl related that the proposed Transboundary Aquifer Initiative passed the U.S. Senate for authorization and must now pass the House of Representatives. This legislation is known as SB-214 and HB-469, and is co-sponsored by Texas' Congressman, Silvestre Reyes. Ari announced several new, published reports covering such topics as security for agricultural waters and water allocations, plus an upcoming call for papers by the National Water Research Institute (NWRI) for a conference entitled "Increasing Fresh Water Supplies".

VIII. Next Meeting/Location/Topics

The next meeting will be held on September 15, 2005 at NMWRRI. Possible topics for the next agenda include an update on the conclusion of the Phase II CDB Project for the COE, review of the updated Commission brochure describing the three USBR-approved Water 2025 Challenge Grants to post to the Commission and PdNWC web pages, and a demonstration of the improved PdNWC web site. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.