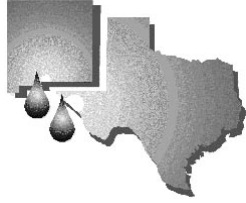


New Mexico – Texas Water Commission



Public Entities in Partnership for Sustainable Water Resources

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MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO –TEXAS WATER COMMISSION

New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NMWRRI)

New Mexico State University

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September 15, 2005

9:00 A.M.

Professor Karl Wood of NMWRRI welcomed everyone and 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-WRRI	Tony Tarquin – UTEP
Ed Archuleta- EPWU	Michael Fahy – EPWU
Gary Esslinger – EBID	Ari Michelsen-TAMU
Gene Paulk – CLC	Sue Padilla – Dona Ana County

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from July 28, 2005 Commission Meeting (Commission Members)

Karl asked if anyone had comments on the July 28, 2005 Commission meeting minutes. Karl moved to accept the minutes as written and Mr. Archuleta seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed and accepted unanimously by the Commission. Because Mr. Archuleta had to leave the meeting early due to conflicting meeting schedules, the agenda items were not necessarily discussed in the same order as the agenda.

II. Progress Update of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (Julie Maitland, PdNWC Co-Chair)

Julie introduced the main topic under this agenda item, which was the New Mexico 319 funding available to agencies responding successfully to the RFP from the NM Department of the

Environment (NMED). The proposals were due to NMED on 9/16/05, and NMED would provide funds to the selected agencies to develop watershed groups and evaluate methods to improve river water quality in terms of sediment and bacteriological reductions. Julie related that the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) offered to act as fiscal agent for this proposal and that she and Sue Watts were reviewing comments now from the PdNWC members. The RFP called for the development of a Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS), which would outline the recommended approach to induce water quality improvements. Approximately two million dollars is available statewide in NM for this program for all of the designated watersheds, and the draft proposal prepared by the PdNWC requested approximately \$ 126,000 from NM, with approximately \$ 135,000 coming from the PdNWC members in terms of both cash and in-kind services. Julie explained that this program would provide an opportunity to encourage more representatives from the agricultural community to participate in the activities of the PdNWC, as part of this PdNWC project, or as part of other, similar projects.

Karl expressed his concern with the “rough” condition of the draft proposal and Bobby mentioned that NMWRRRI may not even be able to participate in the proposal review, due to their involvement on an NMED project selection committee. Mr. Archuleta asked whether this project would lead to downstream improvements in Rio Grande water quality, if properly executed. Karl responded that this possible result was still uncertain, as defined in the draft proposal, and that a lot would depend on the direction and commitment defined in the WRAS.

Karl recommended that the NM-TX Water Commission not approve the proposal as written and Mr. Archuleta related his concern that the Commission should not support proposals that are not well defined. The participants at the meeting then proceeded to discuss the responsibilities of the PdNWC as defined in the by-laws with respect to requesting Commission review of proposals of this nature, and the general precedent set by asking the PdNWC to report to the Commission as an agenda item at each Commission meeting. Conrad added that the conclusions from this WRAS study would still have to comply with the TMDL requirements by the NM Water Quality Control Commission and the conditions established on the New Mexico 303d water quality list.

Tony concluded this part of the meeting by asking whether there was a means to allow the proposal to be submitted to NMED, and still provide for input from the Commission members at a later date, should the proposal be submitted. The Commission members then agreed, with some degree of reservation, to approve submittal of the proposal by the 9/16 due date, with the condition that the Commission Members would still review and comment on the final contract award and scope of work - in the event that the proposal is accepted by NMED.

III. Discussion of the PdNWC Program Coordinator Vacancy and Alternatives (Ari Michelsen, TAMU)

Ari initiated this topic by relating the sources of funding available to pay a replacement Coordinator, the qualifications desired, the advantages and disadvantages of hiring a part-time versus a full time coordinator, and the possible office locations for housing this individual. Possible office locations include TAMU, the Rio Grande Council of Governments, CERM or a

New Mexico location. The direct and indirect rate structure of the host agency would also impact the longevity of the limited available funding. Ari related the known qualifications and possible availability of Irene Tejeda who is known by many members of the PdNWC through her position with the Paso del Norte Water Task Force which is funded by the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC). Karl recommended that the PdNWC move very soon on hiring Irene for this position.

IV. Live Demonstration of the Updated/Improved PdNWC Web Page (Bobby Creel, NMWRRI)

Bobby provided a live demonstration of the PdNWC web page which was improved under a contract to GKG Net Inc. using funding from a grant award from IBWC to PdNWC. At this time the prior version was still operable on-line, but Bobby was given access to those revisions completed to date, in order to make the presentation. For example, the Spanish version is not yet available and the URL needs to be transferred to the updated web site. Bobby also explained that there was a password and a copyright revision that needed to be completed before the new site could be fully available. He will work with Nancy to finish these items. Everyone in the audience agreed that the new web page was more aesthetically appealing and user friendly than the prior version.

V. Brief Presentation on Summary Report for Completion of Phase II, COE Coordinated Database Project (Zhuping Sheng, TAMU and Chris Brown, NMSU)

Zhuping indicated that he had provided a more thorough summary slide presentation on this topic at the Meeting at the Corps of Engineers (COE) office in Albuquerque on 9/8, and that he would be glad to provide a similar slide presentation to the Commission at the next meeting. He provided a brief, verbal summary of Phase II including descriptions of the three major components of the project. These components include preparing input for the existing Hydrologic Model, development of the conceptual river model and establishing protocols for linking the PdNWC Coordinated database to the COE database. During Phase II, the COE also funded a QA/QC task to review that last 5 years worth of EBID flow and water quality data. The contract with COE for Phase III has been signed, and it will include modeling of the stretch of the Rio Grande from Leasburg Dam to El Paso. Chris Brown concluded this agenda item by reading favorable comments contained in a letter from the peer reviewers for the Phase II draft report for the EPWU project. The peer reviewers are from both NM and TX.

VI. Update on the Status of the Three Challenge Grant Awards, and Review of Program Update Announcement on Commission Web Page (Commission Members)

Mike announced that EPWU, EBID and the City of Las Cruces had all completed their signing of the respective contracts with USBR, and that the three agencies had all met to review field conditions with the USBR NEPA representative. The three agencies were also continuing to provide the required information for USBR to finalize the respective Categorical Exclusions to NEPA. Bobby responded that he needed to prepare a task order for TAMU to officially incorporate the NMSU component into the project for reimbursement. Mike also requested that both TAMU and EBID submit progress reports to EPWU for the first quarterly report due to

USBR, covering August and September, 2005. He then distributed draft review copies of the recent update to the informational Water 2025 Brochure prepared by EPWU. This is attached as **Exhibit "B"**. No one provided any comments to this updated version, so it will be printed for distribution and added to the Commission web page.

VII. Other Business -

The members of the Commission concurred that a proposal should be submitted to USBR in response to any RFP that may be published for Water 2025 funding in CY 2006. They also strongly suggested that EP# 1 be asked to participate in preparation of the next consecutive project proposal. The date of September 30 was mentioned as the next likely date for the USBR Commissioner to be available for a regional media event to present the large, symbolic checks for the three Water 2025 award recipients. Gary Esslinger explained that the recent, heavy rains in the northern portion of the Rio Grande Project area had displaced delivery calls from EBID's agricultural customers. It appears that EBID and EP# 1 will each leave approximately 100,000 AF upstream in Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs in 2005.

Mike distributed copies of the form (attached as **Exhibit "C"**) from the Multi-State Salinity Coalition (MSSC) describing the upcoming Summit in Albuquerque on December 8 and 9, and requesting sponsorship funds for the event. Mr. Archuleta related that the Summit was moved to Albuquerque for 2005, at the invitation of NM Senator Pete Domenici, who was a keynote speaker during the 2004 Summit. Mr. Archuleta is the MSSC Chairman for 2005/2006, and he requested that all members of the Commission assist in promoting and encouraging attendance at this important event. Both Mr. Archuleta and Mike Fahy will be making presentations, and Karl Wood will be announcing one of the keynote speakers. The full program will be available for review by October 1.

VIII. Next Meeting/Location/Topics

The next meeting will be held on October 27, 2005 at TAMU. Topics mentioned for possible discussion included updates on the selection by NMED of awards for the New Mexico 319 Program Funding, an update on the runoff and probable Rio Grande Project allocation for 2006 by USBR, and a status update on the condition of the three, regional Water 2025 Projects. Zhuping also offered to present a full slide presentation on the closure of Phase II of the COE portion of the Coordinated Database Program. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.