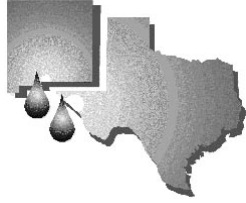


New Mexico – Texas Water Commission



Public Entities in Partnership for Sustainable Water Resources

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MEETING OF THE NEW MEXICO –TEXAS WATER COMMISSION

Dona Ana County
“Old Courthouse”
251 W. Amador
Las Cruces, New Mexico
Telephone: (505) 647-7145
January 19, 2006
9:00 A.M.

Sue Padilla of Dona Ana County 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:

Sue Padilla – Dona Ana County
Karl Wood – NMSU-WRRI
Michael Fahy – EPWU
Tony Tarquin – UTEP
Ari Michelsen-TAMU
Gene Paulk- Las Cruces

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from November 14, 2005 Commission Meeting (Commission Members)

Sue asked if anyone had comments on the November 14, 2005 Commission meeting minutes. Karl moved to accept the minutes as distributed and Ari seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted was passed and accepted unanimously by the Commission.

II. Progress of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PdNWC) (Irene Tejeda, Program Coordinator)

Irene explained that the updates to the Spanish version of the Web Page are being completed now, and that a total of 13 individuals attended the Corps of Engineers supported Riverware Training conducted by Phil King and Zhuping Sheng. She also announced that the regular meeting of the PdNWC would also be held at 1:00 p.m. on 1/19/06, and that elections would be conducted for those Executive Committee members whose terms would expire in 2008.

III. Update on Status of New Mexico 319 Grant Funding Proposal submitted to NM Department of the Environment (Julie Maitland, NM Dept. of Agriculture)

Julie reported that she and Jennifer Atchley-Montoya planned to attend the orientation session to be provided at the Albuquerque office of NMED by invitation on 1/24/06. The purpose of this meeting is to explain the process for preparing work plans and standard administrative procedures for 319 Projects. She elaborated that there was no guarantee yet that the PdNWC would be provided the grant award, and invited all members of the NM-TX Water Commission and PdNWC to participate in the meeting on 1/24, and to also participate fully in the project if PdNWC is awarded the grant. NMED specifically requests that these projects be conducted as collaborative events. According to the PdNWC proposal, NMDA will act as the fiscal agent for this project if awarded. Conrad Keyes remarked that these proposals also receive review by EPA.

IV. Year 2006 Irrigation Season, Early Snowpack and Precipitation Forecast (Wayne Treers, USBR)

“**Exhibit B**” contains the hand outs and graphics distributed by Wayne at the meeting. Wayne reported that the meteorological signals indicate a neutral position with respect to an El Nino. These conditions could hold steady in that position for a few more months, or even progress into a La Nina, which would indicate prolonged drought for the Southwestern United States.

Normally 30% of the final snowpack is in place by January 1 of a typical year for this portion of the Rio Grande Watershed. However, for this season, there is currently little snowpack in New Mexico and the soils are exhibiting a moisture deficit, which will affect spring runoff. The short range National Weather Service Forecast shows temperatures above normal for the next 6 to 9 months. Review of the graph depicting flows passing the San Marcial gage from 1979 through 2005, indicate that the area is currently experiencing prolonged drought.

With respect to reservoir conditions, storage in Elephant Butte (EB) on 1/18/06 equaled 453,000 AF. EB gained only 120,000 AF since the gates were closed in 2005, and on 12/7/05 storage first exceeded 400,000 AF, so that now the upstream reservoirs can store water. Neither EP# 1 nor EBID will likely order deliveries until mid-March or later, and neither will likely increase their irrigated acres compared to 2005.

Using a 45% of normal runoff forecast, and adjusting for upstream regulations yields a total release of only 436,000 AF for 2006, based on the end of January data. Projecting this runoff out to August yields a total projected allocation of 633,000 AF for 2006. However, Wayne explained that USBR is only expecting a total demand of 570,000 AF from all customers this year, based on the number of irrigated acres. The 45% of normal runoff scenario is the most probable and will result in a low storage level of only 94,000 AF in October 2006. No reasonable or probable scenario will yield a full supply for 2006. Therefore, with respect to the 2007 irrigation season, the allocation will be totally dependant on runoff.

V. Progress Report on FLO-2D Modeling from Caballo Dam to Fort Quitman (April Sanders, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Aprils' presentation is attached as “**Exhibit C**”. April explained that the draft EIS for the URGWOM –Operations Document would be made available to the public on 1/20/06 and that

there would be a 60 day comment period. Public meetings are scheduled in the evening for 2/21 in El Paso at IBWC, and in Las Cruces on the following day at the Mesilla Valley Inn. Consultations with the Indian Tribes within the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District are continuing regarding potential impacts to their reservations. April offered a more thorough, technical presentation on the FLO-2D modeling by the model author, Jim O'Brien, at the next meeting of the PdNWC. She also expressed her appreciation for the work that Gail Stockton provided to the project, from the initiation of the model until her retirement from the COE. IBWC is now using the model for some flood and dredging studies and to evaluate gaging options at some of the tributaries.

April described the progress of the modeling for both the Canalization and Rectification Reaches of the Rio Grande Project. The presentation graphics included calibration graphs for predicted vs. measured discharges at the river gage stations at Haydon, Leasburg, Mesilla and Anthony. Also presented was a visual comparison of discharges using the prior HEC-2 model vs. FLO-2D, for two hydrology scenarios. Predicted levee freeboard deficiencies were also presented along with maps depicting flooded areas during a 100-year flood event. IBWC requested that levee deficiencies be delineated in one-foot increments. Ari requested the source of the elevation data for the flooded area maps, and April responded that this information was provided by Dona Ana County. Further slides for the Canalization reach described the benefits of the modeling, the issues that were resolved, and the updates to the sediment yield/load calculations using more recent NRCS data.

Karl Wood asked whether COE was aware of the model for the Rio Grande that has been developed by Sandia Labs. April replied that the COE is working with Sandia and reviewing their model results now, and that the Sandia model uses a monthly time-step and is best suited for large-scale planning for the overall river basin.

April briefly described the initiation and one-year timeline for the modeling for the Rectification reach, and related that a US-Mexico, bi-national meeting was conducted on 10/18/05. The purpose of this project is to construct a two-dimensional, flood routing model for the river from American Dam to Fort Quitman. Both TCEQ and EP# 1 are being consulted for their information and experience during this modeling. When Kevin Bixby asked why the project does not cover the Rectification Project below Fort Quitman, April responded that COE's authority ends at Fort Quitman during this project. April has asked that all project deliverables be provided in both English and Spanish.

VI. Report on El Paso County 50-Year Water Supply Strategy published in the Far West Texas Regional Water Plan (Bill Hutchison, EPWU Hydrogeology Manager)

This presentation is attached as "**Exhibit D**" which depicts a brief history of Texas Senate Bills 1 and 2, the state-wide, bottom-up method for state water planning, the report of the Far West Texas Region (Region E) for the El Paso County area for the original document prepared in 2001, and the water planning currently adopted for the El Paso County area for Round Two, or the second planning period of this process.

Bill related that the first Texas, state-wide water planning legislation, Senate Bill 1 (SB-1), was passed in 1997 as a measure to prepare for future droughts, and to avoid the financial and other impacts experienced in Texas during the drought of the mid 1990's. SB-1 required that all water providers develop 50-year plans that balanced projected water demands with supplies, and divided the state into 16, multi-county regions. El Paso (City and County) falls within

Region E, which has been named the Far West Texas Region by the seven member counties. The first regional water plan was submitted to TWDB in Austin in January 2001 and identified water deficits for El Paso County, along with possible water supply scenarios for meeting these deficits. However, this first plan did not specifically balance all future water supplies and demands. This shortfall was corrected with the second Phase of the water planning process under SB-2. Currently TWDB requires review and update of the plans every 5 years.

Bill's slides depicted the six scenarios developed and evaluated during the second planning process, including the respective water sources, their schedule for becoming part of the supply to the county users, and their respective capital and O&M costs. The review process was iterative and required majority concurrence of the 20-plus voting members of the Region E Planning Group. The basic components of the Plan for El Paso County include use of existing or currently used surface and ground water supplies, water conservation, use of reclaimed water and eventually importation of new ground water supplies. Drought impacts must also be included in the overall reliability of the respective water supply. The forecasts calculated by the consultant and reviewed by EPWU are referred to as Integrated Water Management Strategies, or IWMS's, and reveal that the current supply components of using existing supplies plus reclaimed water and continued conservation, will be sufficient to meet demands without imported water until approximately 2030. Then in 2030, ground water would first be imported from the Dell City area, with the next, additional importation from the Capitan Reef area of Texas in approximately 2040. The selected IWMS provides for a total water supply of 271,500 AFY in the Year 2060 to meet the demands of El Paso County, being provided according to the following proportions; 211,500 AF from local sources, 50,000 AF from Dell City and 10,000 from Diablo Farms. The selected IWMS is referred to as "Balanced with Moderate Increase in Surface Water".

VII. Other Business -

Mike provided a brief update on the preparation of the quarterly progress report to USBR for the EPWU Water 2025 project for the period from September through December 2005. Input for this report has been received from TAMU, and additional reporting requirements were to be discussed at the noon luncheon progress meeting at NMWRRI among the partners. EPWU will post the NEPA Categorical Exclusion on the Commission Web Page for the EPWU Project. Mike also distributed copies of the program from the EPWU Web Page for the EPWU-sponsored Concentrate Management Conference at the El Paso Marriott on March 16 and 17, 2006. All members of the Commission, PdNWC and of the audience were invited to attend.

VIII. Next Meeting/Location/Topics

The next meeting will be held on March 9, 2006 at TAMU. Topics mentioned for possible discussion included an updated allocation forecast from USBR, a progress report on the NM 319 Grant funding, the Technical Presentation by Jim O'Brien, Model Author, on the FLO-2D modeling of the Rio Grande Project, and possibly a discussion of the desalination and concentrate management projects being proposed by CHIWAHA. The January 19, 2006, meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.