



~~Draft~~ Accepted Final Minutes

Paso del Norte Watershed Council Executive Committee  
US International Boundary and Water Commission  
4171 N. Mesa Street, The Commons, Bldg C  
El Paso, TX  
February 1, 2007  
1:30-3:30 PM

Sue Watts, Chair  
Jennifer Montoya, Secretary

Julie Maitland, Assistant Chair  
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

1. Convene meeting and welcome (Watts): 141
2. Introduction of attendees (all)
3. Kevin Bixby, Hilary Brinegar, Geri Quisenberry, Garish Ganjegunte, Sue Watts, Zhuping Sheng, Jaime Iglesias, Bobby Creel, Inga Groff, Joe Groff, Steve Smullen, Chris Brown, Mike Landis, Ari Michelsen, April Sanders, Brian Hanson, Alfredo Granados, Jennifer Montoya
4. Approval of minutes from Dec 18, 2006 (all).
5. URGWOM/URGWOPS update (April Sanders):

The Corps of Engineers efforts in developing URGWOM is in the Fourth Phase of development below Elephant Butte Reservoir. Data base development and groundwater surface water interactions are to be included in the URGWOM model using Riverware© Software. The interagency technical team would like to utilize other existing models to enhance the accuracy and will be linking to the Modflow model and a robust groundwater and riparian model being developed by the State.

The Corps wants URGWOM to be a useful tool in the southern part of the Rio Grande. Currently the stakeholders are just using a routing model. There is interest in expanding URWOM for flood routing and more. Phil King is supporting CADSWES (Center for Advanced Decision Support for Water and Environmental Systems) out of the University of Colorado at Boulder that is creating the dynamic link between Riverware and Modflow.

URGWOPS, a study to identify flexibilities in water operations on the Rio Grande started in 2000 utilizing URGWOM. That EIS was focused on entire basin from the headwaters in Colorado to Fort Quitman. This was a joint effort between the Corps, ISC, and BOR. The EIS is complete and will be published in April 2007. Corps is pursuing a tiered NEPA document that would allow native storage in Abuiquiu Reservoir. They also want to look at greater discharge out of Cochiti, trying to get a high channel capacity out of ABQ, allowing up to 10,000 cfs out of Cochiti for 7 to 10 days. Currently the Rio Grande can only handle 6500 cfs out before we induce damage. Part of this will involve re-prioritizing their models. Started a 5 year development plan, looking at enhancements of models. Senate delegation indicates that these models are good and further investment in them will make them the “go to” models, so the main stakeholders will get what they need.

Corps to host a Summit to ask current and potential partners for input on a five year development plan. Corps is committed to this effort and hopes the Council will attend.

In April, URGWOM will finish the Flo2D Model from American Dam to Fort Quitman. After that, Corps will be done in their work in the basin. They will have to get further authorization to go downstream of Fort Quitman.

General Discussion-

“Nickel Plan”- If each irrigation district were to dedicate 5% of their water to the river channel in a one time coordinated effort (this water would be leased for the year, plus the cost of loss of productivity to farms that would have used it for a crop) you could move a good plug of water through the Forgotten Stretch. Opportunity to study what would happen.

USFWS- Regional Director Tuggle is convening USFWS staffers across divisions to

discuss river management in the basin.

6. 319 grant update (Geri and Julie)

- New contracts. Wildlife assessment will be added to the 319 project. Ken Boykin at NMSU will hold the contract.
- Status of stakeholder outreach Lisa LaRocque has a first quarter report. She has had 30 key informant interviews on phone and face to face and is amassing a lot. She is finding that there is a lot of overlapping in work in the basin. The WRAS should describe this and there will be opportunities for understanding this overlap and collaboration with others.
- Six Homeowners Associations Focus Groups have been conducted. In these meetings, the Council is introduced. Geri and Lisa describe how it wants to expand to embrace issues of concern by the Homeowner groups. Examine available resources and constraints.

General discussion on increasing our distribution list and reconstituting our outreach committee, which has been inactive lately.

7. Technical Committee update (Zhuping/Chris/) Early January meeting, phase 3 of Corps work is completed. Report distributed. Looking for enhanced modeling in phase 4. Expanding modeling to include flood control below El Paso. NMISC will release groundwater model for Mesilla, which is key to linking this new model to Modflow to Riverware.

Water 2025 focusing on 5 areas. One of the areas is to link EBID sites w/telemetry to existing projects. Real time data, telemetry, will build another layer to the mapping system..

Treasurer's Report (Ari) A summary of grant awards and account balances as of January 30, 2007 was distributed. Ari noted that at this time the Council does not have funded projects beyond Sept. 30, 2007 except for one Bureau of Reclamation grant. The Corps may provide support for continuing data and modeling development but federal FY07 funding and budgets are unknown. Council members discussed potential projects and sources of future funding, writing proposals, and possibility of support for a ½ time coordinator associated with a specific project. An idea was also put forth that subcommittees create 1 page thought pieces for potential funding proposals. No action

taken on this.

8. Other updates

- WWF (Jennifer)-Updates on Water Resources Development Act Rio Grande Environmental Management Program (federal legislation), the Land Water and Clean Energy Act (state of NM legislation), and Governor Richardson's interest in a Living Rivers Program.
- PdN Water Task Force. Next meeting was postponed til further notice.
- Proposal(s) for Gov Richardson (Kevin). Board approves to endorse a memorial to the NM legislature (attached).
- other

9. New business

- Update strategic plan (Sue)
- Upcoming projects/issues (all).
  - i. Announcement that there will be a new Presidente of the JMCAS.
  - ii. Rio Grande Citizens Forum next Wednesday at IBWC 6:30
  - iii. Pecos River Watershed Assessment Team has a draft plan
  - iv. April 16 Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Meeting.
  - v. Jaime Iglesias/ EPA grant examining heavy metal discharge from Juarez. Heavy metal analysis in the soils due to lack of a dynamic transport (drain) out of the irrigation district. Only discharge point is in Luis Leon. Expects to find the heavy metals in the fields since they don't drain well.

10. Date and Location of next meeting

Suggestion to invite BLM to tell us about their restoration efforts.

Monday April 9, 2007 in Las Cruces at NMDA if needed at 9 a.m.