



Approved Minutes

PdNWC Executive Committee September 29, 2009 – 3-5PM USIBWC Headquarters 4171 N Mesa, Suite C-100 | El Paso, TX

Conrad Keyes, Chair
Hilary Brinegar, Asst Chair

Sue Watts, Secretary
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

Present:

Conrad Keyes, Jr.-Corps consultant
Kevin Bixby-SWEC
Barbara Kauffman-Rio Grande COG
Sue Watts-TTUHSC
Inga Groff-League of Women Voters
Joe Groff-Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue
Peter Bennett-City of LC
Julie Maitland-NMDA
Christopher Brown-NMSU Dept of Geography
Daniel Borunda-USIBWC
Ari Michelsen-TX Agrilife Research
Elizabeth Verdecchia-USIBWC
Mike Landis-USBR
Garisha Ganjegunte-TX Agrilife Research
Chris Canavan-NMED
Dan Carter-BLM
Louis Irwin-Rio Grande Citizen's Forum
Kevin Von Finger-Frontera Land Alliance
Beth Bardwell-NM Audubon
Katrina Martich-Martich Professional Services
Korina Navarro-Rio Grande COG
Cyndie Abeyta-USFWS
Omar Al-Qudah-UTEP
Lisa Santana-USIBWC
Kati Carberry-USIBWC
Aimee Roberson-USFWS

1. Meeting of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council called to order by Conrad Keyes at 3:04 PM.. Those present introduced themselves.
- 1a. Minutes from June 22, 2009 meeting approved.

2. New Member Nominations-application of Kevin Von Finger approved. (Frontera Land Alliance)
3. PdNWC 2010-2012 Work Plan – Section A, B, and C approved. We will continue to work on section D.
4. NM Outstanding National Resource Water Initiative (ONRW)-Julie Maitland. The Council should decide whether it wishes to support this effort. The goal is to protect wilderness areas and prevent further water quality degradation. This proposed designation is a minimally funded state effort in New Mexico and there has been limited evaluation on potential socioeconomic impacts. Because the watersheds involved do not impact water resources in our geographic area, the Council does not feel it is a valid concern for us and does not wish to write a letter of support.
5. Re-establishing the Rio Grande silvery minnow in the Big Bend reach-Aimee Roberson of the USFWS gave a presentation about progress made in reintroducing the silvery minnow in the Big Bend area. They are making periodic releases and then sampling later to see if they are able to recover fish. They are also studying the effects of salinity and chlorine on the eggs. It was suggested that she contact the Rio Grande Project Salinity Coalition for information about salinity studies. The next release will be in October.
6. Committee and subcommittee reports/updates:
 - a. Clean Water Subcommittee – 319(h) Workplan Status and Next Steps – Julie Maitland reported that the workplan has been submitted to NMED and that the recommended changes to the original draft proposal were not extensive. The changes related to making further emphasis on the 9 elements required by EPA for watershed plans. EBID has pledged in-kind services and a letter of support. The grant has a \$423K budget with approximately half coming from the grant and half from in-kind activities provided by the Council, EBID, NMSU, NMDA. When the funding is available, some will be used to update Council educational materials. The approved workplan will be posted on the Council’s website.
 - b. Technical Committee - Chris Brown reported that URGWOM meetings are continuing. The committee provided an update to Marc Sidlow about the progress with their tasks, including upcoming reports. The task for the upcoming year will be to determine if changes in deliveries can improve water quality. They will also be looking at surface water-groundwater responses to shallow groundwater pumping.
 - c. Biological Committee-Kevin Bixby reported that he, Jennifer, and Conrad met with Daniel Borunda about new projects being undertaken by USIBWC. These discussions have again raised the issue of what is the Council’s role in river restoration? We need to develop priorities for restoration projects and decide if we have an active and/or support role.

Also, the Council sent a letter to Commissioner Ruth offering our help with the ROD.

- d. Education Committee-will work with the clean water committee to update fact sheets when funding available.
7. Financial report-Ari Michelsen reported that there will be new funds from the USACE for the technical committee and that the Bureau of Reclamation has also provided a grant. End of year funding from the Corps did not come and at this time there is no URGWOM funding in the FY10 WRDA bill.
8. Other:
 - a. Triennial review-Conrad Keyes-Dec 3,4 in Santa Fe. Will discuss changes in the middle Rio Grande of NM
 - b. Transboundary Aquifer Assessment-Ari-\$50million over 10 years authorized but will probably be only \$500K. Involves 3 WRRI's, USIBWC, and CILA. Will meet in Oct or November to discuss research projects.
9. Date for next meeting -Conrad Keyes. Choice between meeting same day as Citizen's Forum (Dec 15 in Las Cruces) or have a lunch at Radium Springs on Dec 3. Officers will decide and send a notice.
10. Adjourned at 4:56PM.