



Minutes

Paso del Norte Watershed Council Annual Meeting and Executive Committee meeting March 8, 2010 – 10AM-noon Texas AgriLife Research Center 1380 A&M Circle|El Paso, 79927

Conrad Keyes, Chair
Hilary Brinegar, Asst Chair

Sue Watts, Secretary
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

Present:

Conrad Keyes, Jr.-Corps consultant
Hilary Brinegar-NMDA
Sue Watts-TTUHSC
Ari Michelsen-Texas AgriLife Research
Inga Groff-League of Women Voters
Joe Groff-Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue
Daniel Borunda-USIBWC
Jennifer Montoya-BLM
Julie Maitland-NMDA
Zhu Ping Sheng-Texas AgriLife Research
Brian Hanson-private citizen
Mike Landis-USBR
Chris Canavan-NM Environment Dept
Garisha Ganjegunte-Texas AgriLife Research
Korina Navarro-RioCOG
Debbie Kelly- League of Women Voters
Martin Walter-PhD Student, Northwest Univ
Cyndie Abeyta-USFWS

1. Meeting of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council called to order by Conrad Keyes at 10:03 AM. All present introduced themselves.
2. Agenda approved with no changes.
3. Updates and Announcements
 - a. Council on Environmental Quality 'Updated Principals and Guidelines' letter from Council - Kevin Bixby not present, but he suggested that the Council send a letter endorsing the Principals. Ari said that the AWRA and ASCE had sent in comments describing their concerns that the new principals have ignored the 1983 principals. He suggested that those drafting a letter for the

Council should read these comments and those of IBWC and the State of NM (if available) before drafting the Council's letter. Jennifer, Brian, and Kevin will draft a letter for circulation to the Council.

- b. DAMDWCA letter from Council- Conrad Keyes reported that he had not received any additional input. The environmental permit process is underway. We will wait until the public comment period occurs before we take any further action.
 - c. PdNWC Financial Report - Ari Michelsen reported that we had received another grant from the Bureau of Reclamation bringing the total available funds to \$27,000. We need to decide how to spend these funds effectively within the guidelines for federal funds. In the past we have used BOR funds to support the coordinator, printing costs, and GIS costs. Could be used for student salary if needed. Perhaps education conference or grant writing. Current URGWOM funding ends in Sept 2010. We have projects included in the next 5-year plan so funding may continue. Subcontracts to NMWRRRI will need to be modified due to the death of Bobby Creel. Karl Wood is handling things for Bobby until other arrangements can be made. If funds are to be used for restoration projects, biological committee must set priorities for projects.
4. Minutes from Dec 15, 2009 meeting were approved with 1 correction. Send to Conrad for posting on website.
 5. Executive Committee Membership (2010-2012 terms)-Motion to accept Christopher Brown, Alfredo Granados, Inga Groff, and Vanessa Loughed for a 3 year term was approved by acclamation. Barbara Kauffman has moved to Virginia. We will see if her replacement would like to have her position.
 6. Proposed Bylaws Amendments- Amendments approved with one change in reference to change in status of NM-TX Water Commission. Revised version of bylaws to be sent to all members.
 7. 319(h) grant update: The intergovernmental agreement was signed on Jan 12, 2010. Job description and then hiring of coordinator to begin. Funding is available to cover 2 years.
 8. USIBWC Canalization Report: Danny Borunda is acting chief of division. Edward Drusina is the new Commissioner and Carlos Pena is now Principal Engineer for Operations and Management. An interagency agreement similar to that with the Corps of Engineers has been signed with FWS. First projects will be in Selden Canyon and they have begun working on water rights issues. They need a contractor who will deal with purchasing the land for restoration projects. Levee rehab will begin soon in the Hatch, Mesilla, and Canutillo.
 9. Updates/announcements:
 - a. Conrad Keyes sent a letter to Oberstar on Jan 8 but WRDA extension not granted.

- b. Water Caucus is June 16,17. Bipartisan congressional group studying water issues.
- c. ONRW meeting is March 9. Some parts of our area of interest may be included in this classification. Sierra County soil and water district would have to be involved because only Palomas, Animas, and Percha watershed are involved.
- d. Zhuping Sheng gave a talk about the 319 grant at the Land/water/people conference
- e. Mike Landis reported that irrigation season has started and there is near normal snow pack. EBID may ask for credit water. Lorenzo Arriaga has replaced Wayne Treers.
- f. Bobby Creel Scholarship fund has been established.
- g. Rio Grande Citizens Forum meeting will be March 23 at IBWC headquarters.

10. Next meeting will be at NMDA on May 7 at 10AM.

11. Adjourn at 12:15 PM