



Approved Minutes
Paso del Norte Watershed Council
Annual Meeting and
Executive Committee Meeting
December 6, 2013 – 10:30AM-12:30PM
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:

Ari Michelsen-TX Agrilife
Beau Masse-Martich Assoc.
Brian Hanson-citizen
Christopher Brown-NMSU
Conrad Keyes, Jr.-Corps consultant
Elizabeth Verdecchia-IBWC
Gilbert Anaya-IBWC
Gill Sorg-City of Las Cruces

Janae Reneaud Field-Frontera Land Allia
Janet Kirwin-NM State Parks
Kevin Bixby-SWEC
Mike Landis-USBR
Sue Watts-ecologist
Woody Irving-USBR
Zhuping Sheng-TX Agrilife

1. The Annual Meeting of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council was called to order by Conrad Keyes at 10:35. All participants introduced themselves. Quorum was attained.
2. There were no changes to the agenda.
3. Update on USIBWC restoration projects-Liz Verdecchia reported that restoration projects for 2013 included burning salt cedar debris piles in Broad Canyon and tree-planting at Mesilla East, Broad Canyon, and Leasburg. They are planning to plant 20,000 more trees in partnership with USFWS near Percha, Seldon point bar, Rincon Syphon, and Mesilla Valley Bosque Park. They are using photo points to monitor vegetation survival rates, cover, and native vs non-native veg. They have been conducting SW willow flycatcher surveys and their recovery goals were met in 2012 and 2013. The new river management plan includes SWW flycover management and channel maintenance plans. They have installed 53 groundwater monitoring wells at 20 sites from Percha to Sunland Park. Data to be available in February. EBID has ruled that IBWC restoration sites meet criteria as agricultural sites and that irrigation water can be delivered to them once water rights have been obtained.
4. Frontera Land Alliance-Janae Reneaud Field provided an introduction to her organization. FLA was established in 2004 and is a land trust that can hold both land and water rights. They are supported by funding from the Meadows Foundation. They currently are involved in preserving land in Franklin Mountains State Park, Resler Canyon, Thunder Canyon, and Casner Range. They will hold a workshop about conservation easements in the near future. They also organize work days, clean-ups, and hikes and are starting an 'adopt a pond' program in the Upper Valley.
5. Reports

- a. PdNWC Financial Report-Ari Michelsen reported that there still is no final cooperative agreement with USBR for spending their last funding award.
 - b. Technical Committee Report-Zhuping Sheng reported that the URGWOM tech team will meet Dec 17. Riverware upgrades continue. Water quality issues are only being addressed above Elephant Butte Reservoir at this stage. Groundwater inputs are being considered and salinity simulations are being tested. USBR grant proposal is in development.
 - c. Biological Committee-Brian Hanson urged members to make off-channel refugia for aquatic species a restoration priority. This could be accomplished using private land outside the levees. These provide travel corridors for wildlife as well as temporary water sources that would help reproduction of amphibians. They could be instrumental in helping to save remaining biological assets, especially in the TX sections. The proposed Montoya Drain project is a good example of such efforts.
 - d. Website update-Chris Brown reported that broken links have been fixed and they have updated the PdNWC contacts list. The Google calendar problem appears to be fixed as well.
6. Decisions
- a. Election of new Executive Committee members (2014-2016 terms) – A motion was made to re-elect Anaya, Bennett, Bixby, Hanson, Landis, and Sheng. The motion was seconded and approved with the understanding that Elizabeth Verdecchia will replace Gilbert Anaya in April.
 - b. Minutes from August 2, 2013 and Oct 11, 2013 (only EC members) – both documents approved without edits. Sue Watts to send final versions to Hilary for posting on website.
7. New business/announcements-Rio Bosque Park has water right now and there are lots of birds. We need to develop a report on the watershed council that summarizes who we are, what we do, publications, report, accomplishments. USBR could support a student to do this.
8. Next EC Meeting – Feb 14, 1PM, Las Cruces City Hall
9. Meeting adjourned at 12:20PM.