



Approved Minutes
Paso del Norte Watershed Council
Annual Meeting and
Executive Committee Meeting
April 24, 2014 – 3:30PM-5:00PM
Las Cruces City Hall | 700 North Main Street | Rm 2007

Conrad Keyes, Chair
Hilary Brinegar, Asst Chair

Sue Watts, Secretary
Ari Michelsen, Treasurer

Present:

Ari Michelsen-TX Agrilife
Conrad Keyes, Jr.-Corps consultant
Elizabeth Verdecchia-IBWC
Gill Sorg-City of Las Cruces
Janet Kirwin-NM State Parks
Kevin Bixby-SWEC
Mike Landis-USBR
Woody Irving-USBR
Zhuping Sheng-TX Agrilife
Hilary Brinegar-Marron

Brigitte Fuller-Wilson
Peter Bennett-City of Las Cruces
Carol McCall-City of Las Cruces
Ryan Ward-NMDA
Lacey Levine-NMDA
Chris Canavan-NMED
Jack Kirby-NMSU
Fernando Cadena-citizen
Tom Mobley-citizen
Gary Esslinger-EBID

1. The Paso del Norte Watershed Council Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Conrad Keyes at 3:35. All participants introduced themselves. A quorum was attained at 4:00pm.
2. Agenda was approved once the quorum was obtained.
3. The December 6, 2013 meeting minutes were approved once the quorum was obtained.
4. Carol McCall of the City of Las Cruces provided a presentation on the draft Arroyo Preservation Plan.
 - Study area is within the Las Cruces ETZ. Arroyos exist within development and privately owned properties. Outside the ETZ, SLO and BLM has jurisdiction for undeveloped areas. Small portions of these are privately owned.
 - There is support for a regional stormwater management plan. This will be a city-level plan that would be modified at the county level in the future. There is a history of rules and regulations at the city supporting a management plan that dates back to 1956.
 - Purpose of the plan is to policy guidance, improve flood control and drainage, protect natural habitat, protect private property, utility maintenance, address stormwater quality, protect open space, and ultimately improve quality of life.
 - Ms. McCall requested that Council members review and edit the draft watershed section as it needs improvement.

- Issues, challenges, opportunities: erosion, flooding, development, existing utility infrastructure (location and exposure), flood control dams, wildlife corridors (reduction of due to development). Need to establish goals and policies.
- Arroyo buffers: the 100 yr flood zone has a buffer but development does occur. One size does not fit all. Detailed characterizations would be determined by hydrology, vegetation and other factors.
- Next steps: April public comment period. May 1-15 revisions. May/June P&Z commission work session and public hearing. June/July city council work session and adoption. Plan site is las-cruces.org/protectarroyos.
- Discussion/questions:
 - Did you look at the ABQ stormwater authority as part of your research? Response: Yes – there are policies to learn from such as the Sandoval County ordinance and the Volcano Heights plan.
 - What is the 1/100 probability of flooding and what is it based on? For instance, the El Paso weather station is placed in a rain shadow, it only produces estimates and it is widely used. Response: multiple sources such as LIDAR, historic data, FEMA maps.
 - What kind of policy will emerge from this document and will it be enforceable? Response: No, this will be a policy guidance document.
 - Are these compliant with OSE policies? Response: Unknown. The county flood commission has reviewed the policies but this should be posed to the OSE to check for consistency via Chuck Thomson with the Dam Safety Bureau. Should include EAP info.
 - NRCS should be consulted as well. Dam standards are different between the Army Corps and NRCS. Whose standards are to be followed? Where does the city have jurisdiction? So far the dams have held but there is liability to fix. Need to obtain federal funds and raise issue with all federal entities with jurisdictions and mandates.
 - Connectivity of wild arroyos, tributaries, and existing flood control dams.

5. Reports

- a. PdNWC Financial: financial handout was provided.
- b. Technical Committee: funding is on hold.
- c. Biological Committee:
 - Montoya Drain habitat enhancement project is being discussed for possibilities with 319(h) funding or NM River Stewardship funding.
 - La Mancha wetland project is 80% constructed, OSE groundwater rights are pending with OSE.
 - There is a May 19 meeting to discuss 319(h) projects at Las Cruces City Hall.

- There is \$2.3 million in NM River Stewardship funding for RFPs to be issued over the summer with fall awards anticipated.
 - NMWRRRI has an RFP out for water research.
 - Good Neighbor Environmental Board is discussing ecological restoration.
 - The Santa Teresa wastewater treatment plant received legislative appropriations for re-construction; the project includes other funding sources such as BECC.
- d. Clean Water Committee: the 2014 Texas Clean River program "Basin Highlights Report" has been provided. Additional funding sources are being discussed.
- e. Website: No report provided.
6. Next EC Meeting: July 24, 2014 at IBWC headquarters in El Paso, TX from 3:30-5pm. There may be a special meeting called to discuss project proposals. The council will draft funding request letters.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.