

## **Environmental Committee Meeting, Paso del Norte Watershed Council, Las Cruces offices**

February 24, 2016 10:00 AM at Las Cruces city offices

Chairs are: Brian Hanson, Gill Sorg, Leslie Grijalva

Attendees – Brian Hanson, Gill Sorg, Leslie Grijalva, Peter Bennett, Conrad Keyes, Kurt Anderson, William Little, Jan Kirwan via phone - Elizabeth Verdecchia and Mike Gaglio

This committee was formed during the last Watershed Council meeting on January 21. It combined 2 previous committees; Water Quality and Biology.

We talked about a variety of topics

- A. NMISC Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Plan groups meets this afternoon. The planning is led by the NMISC (Interstate Stream Commission). A local Steering Committee guides the planning that has to be completed at the end of June 2016. The plan is based upon the 2010 water year and addresses water supply and use now and in the future. There is a large list of capital projects. If your project is on the list, then the NM Water Board gives you some credit towards your project during the annual capital project selection process.
- B. 319 E. coli report (Watershed-Based Plan) - Suggested that the Committee should address the last 319 project report that addressed E. coli in the Rio Grande. All members of this committee should review it and suggest actions. Look at the Council website. [http://smiley.nmsu.edu/pdnwc/docs/2014/PdNWC\\_WBP\\_revision\\_5-27-14.pdf](http://smiley.nmsu.edu/pdnwc/docs/2014/PdNWC_WBP_revision_5-27-14.pdf)
- C. Wetland on Rio Grande - Jan Kirwan was concerned with the proposed wetland above the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park above Interstate 10. It could affect reclaimed water flows to the Rio Grande from the Treatment Plant. This water in the Rio Grande channel that support not only winter waterfowl but year round native wildlife species. It has not been funded yet by Las Cruces or any other source according to Gill Sorg. Kevin Bixby was tasked to plan and design the wetland. Discussion ensued on combining it with the USIBWC restoration projects (US International Boundary and Water Commission).
- D. USIBWC restoration projects – Elizabeth said that they are pursuing water rights for their 30 restoration projects in NM, totaling 553 acres. The Record of Decision (ROD) stated that all projects should be completed by June 2019. They are moving very slowly. The group decided to send a letter to US IBWC stating it was important for USIBWC to complete the projects. Conrad said we sent a previous letter. Brian will write a draft.
- E. Letter to Congressional members asking for their support for watershed planning – The letter was circulated last year. At the Watershed Council meeting January 21 they wanted this committee to get another draft letter. Brian and Gill will get a letter to Conrad.
- F. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park – Jan is trying to lease 50 acre feet of water from EBID for restoration. NM State Parks in partnership with USIBWC are looking into the possibility of purchasing water rights to support the restoration projects at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. This is a long term project and a very involved process.
- G. Committee benefits – Jan thinks the committee is a good place to comment upon projects and their impacts on the environment. Jan believes that the environment committee is a good venue for the review of proposed projects with a holistic view of the environment. Jan commented on the need to review proposed projects with an eye toward the potential

impacts both negative and positive to the surrounding areas. Jan also stated that as the committee reviews the work plan, support of the USIBWC restoration should remain in the forefront.

- H. PDNWC work plan – Conrad wants the committee members to review the plan and make changes so it reflects what the group wants to do. (See attached).
- I. EBID will join the Watershed Council – Conrad made this announcement.
- J. The Watershed Council meets April 21 at 3:00 to 5:00 PM at EBID (Elephant Butte Irrigation District).
- K. The South Central Stormwater Management Coalition meets March 17 at 1:30 PM and April 21 1:00 to 3:00 PM both at EBID, 530 S. Melendres.

The proposed next Environmental meeting is April 21 at 10:00 AM at Southwest Environmental Center, 275 N. Main Street, Las Cruces 88001.

#### Agenda

- A. status of Congressional stormwater letter and IBWC letter
- B. discuss possible 319 projects
- C. discuss EPA Educational grants  
[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/2016\\_ee\\_local\\_grants\\_rfp\\_final\\_2\\_9\\_16\\_508version.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/2016_ee_local_grants_rfp_final_2_9_16_508version.pdf)
- D. review PDNWC work plan

Brian Hanson [bhanson5@comcast.net](mailto:bhanson5@comcast.net); 505-856-1386 cell 505-235-0427