



Draft Minutes
Paso del Norte Watershed Council
Executive Committee Meeting
May 4, 2018 | 1:00-3:00PM
City of Las Cruces City Hall
700 N. Main St | Las Cruces, NM

Conrad Keyes, Chair Sue Watts, Secretary Zhuping Sheng, Treasurer

Present:

Christopher Brown-NMSU
Gary Esslinger-EBID
Woody Irving-USBR
Conrad Keyes-NMSU (retired)

Zhuping Sheng-TAMU Agrilife
Elizabeth Verdecchia-USIBWC, on phone
Leslie Grijalva- USIBWC, on phone
Connie Maxwell

1. Presentations

a. Zhuping Sheng provided updates on two USDA projects covering the Paso del Norte region:

- Project #1 (2015-2020): Sustainable water resources for irrigated agriculture in a desert river basin facing climate change and competing demands: From characterization to solutions; lead by Dr. Bill Hargrove, UTEP. This is a follow up to earlier presentations on this project. The workspace is available for the public to learn about the project, evaluate scenarios and provide feedbacks/inputs. Stakeholders had participated in this project through workshops. Then he shared updates on development of bucket model, hydrological model (SWAT, MODFLOW and RiverWare models).
- Project #2 (2017-2021): Diversifying the Water Portfolio for Agricultural in the Rio Grande Basin; lead by Dr. John Tracy, TAMU-TWRI. The objectives of this project include: Evaluation of water sources, including nontraditional sources, for urban, agricultural and ecosystem use under changing climate, water management and demographics; Assessment of how nontraditional waters can be used to extend supplies through a combination of new management practices, crops and treatment technologies; Evaluation of economical methods for conserving water and improving the operation of irrigation systems at the district and field scale; Development of a system how integrating water conservation technologies and management practices into Basin water plans. This project had its annual project in May, including advisory and stakeholders group meetings to solicit inputs. He showed overall project area covering whole Rio Grande basin and planned hydrological modeling activities within the Paso del Norte watershed.

b. Peter Bennet provided update on City of Las Cruces MS4 General Permit

- This presentation provides a basic understanding of the City of Las Cruces' Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit that is issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulates non-point source pollution by requiring MS4's to develop programs to manage stormwater pollution.
<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-municipal-sources>

- Watershed Based Plans: The EPA, Region 6 Water Division released the Draft MS4 General Permit (NMR040000) <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/07/30/2015-18720/draft-national-pollutant-discharge-elimination-system-npdes-general-permit-for-small-municipal> for the Lower Rio Grande. This draft permit mimics the General Permit from the Middle Rio Grande that was issued in December of 2014. This watershed based permit allows for multiple cooperation among regional MS4's to manage their permit requirements together or individually. Since watersheds do not follow jurisdictional boundaries it makes sense for MS4s to collectively manage watersheds and stormwater program activities together. MS4s can choose which program activities that they want to share. For example, The City of Albuquerque share their sampling and outreach program objective responsibilities with other MS4s such as AMAFCA and Bernalillo County. There are two program options permittees may choose from. Option A-Individual Monitoring or Option B-Cooperative Monitoring. The monitoring program focus is for wet weather monitoring: EPA suggested upstream/downstream approach.
 - This presentation also describes how the City of Las Cruces is currently managing stormwater within its MS4 and watershed.
- c. Zack Libbin from EBID talked about several multi-objective projects in the Rincon Valley, including the 2014 Water Smart Grant Rincon WHEN: Water Habitat Energy Nexus.
 - d. Connie Maxwell talked about potential new WaterSMART projects, including grant proposals that were submitted for watershed health and long-term drought contingency planning.