

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG) (REGION "M")

9:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2017

LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS – KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM
301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TX
PRESIDING: PRESIDENT TOMAS RODRIGUEZ, CHAIRMAN

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Tomas Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9.32 a.m. and announced that the meeting had been posted as required by statute, and that a quorum of the voting membership was present.

The following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Tomas Rodriguez, Chairman
Sonny Hinojosa, Vice Chairman
Donald McGhee, Secretary
Frank Schuster, Executive Committee
Nick Benavides, Executive Committee
Glenn Jarvis
John Bruciak
Sonia Lambert
Carlos Garza
Dennis Goldsberry
Armando Vela
Riazul Mia
Dale Murden

Category

Public
Water Districts
Industries
Other
Small Business
Other
Municipalities
Water Districts
Small Business
Water Utility
Groundwater Management Area
Municipalities
Agriculture

The following members were not in attendance:

Mayor Jim Darling
Jorge Barrera
Judge Joe Rathmell
Jaime Flores
Robert Pena, Jr.
Judge Humberto Gonzalez
Dr. Neal Wilkins

River Authorities
Municipalities
Counties
Environmental
Electric Generating Utility
Counties
Agriculture

2. Consider Approval RE: Minutes of February 8, 2017 Meeting

Mr. Glenn Jarvis made a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2017 as presented. Mr. Carlos Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

3. Hear Public Comment

Dr. Ron Lacewell was recognized and informed the Group that the Water for Agriculture project awarded to the Texas Water Resources Institute was approved through USDA water portfolio for the Rio Grande; and he would like to make sure it is incorporated back into the Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. He also informed the Group that they were working on a TWDB Project on the demonstration of agriculture water efficiency for citrus and row crops, and a Dry Year Option for South Texas which has relevance to the Rio Grande Regional Water Plan (Plan).

Next, Mr. Javier Mendez, City Administrator for the City of Primera, was recognized and informed the Group that the city has exhausted their water rights and would like to amend the 2016 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. He came before the Group to advise them of their need and intentions.

4. Presentation RE: Update on Lower Rio Grande Valley Transport Model

Dr. Bill Hutchison was recognized and began a presentation titled “Lower Rio Grande Valley Groundwater Transport Model: Predictive Simulations”. The background of this project comes from the 2016 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan (Plan). The Plan recommends an additional 23 water management strategies involving both brackish and fresh groundwater. This model is needed in order to evaluate groundwater level and quality changes, evaluate impacts to surface water, and evaluate potential for subsidence. The “takeaways” of this model are historic groundwater pumping in the LRGV has been low, and Region M strategies represent a large increase. The increased groundwater pumping lowers groundwater levels, induces flow from surrounding areas, and reduces surface water flow at a ratio of approximately 2:1. The draft Predictive Simulations report was delivered on June 30, 2017 and all reports can be found on the Texas Water Development Board website.

5. Presentation RE: Long Term Management of Carrizo Cane along the Rio Grande in the U.S. and Mexico by Biological and Mechanical Control Methods

Dr. John Goolsby, USDA Agricultural Research Services was recognized and gave a presentation titled “Biological Control of *Arundo donax*, an invasive weed of the Rio Grande Basin”. In this presentation Dr. Goolsby explained the impacts of *Arundo* in the Rio Grande Basin, gave a comparison to its native range in Europe, and explained the biological control program in Texas and Mexico. He also showed photographic evidence of the immediate results from the new mechanical topping and biological program to achieve immediate visibility of the Rio Grande. In summary, *Arundo donax*, Carrizo cane is declining along the Rio Grande from Del Rio to Brownsville due to attack by biocontrol insects. A new topping technique synergizes with biocontrol to provide immediate visibility and is a scalable technology for the Rio Grande. A third agent, the *Arundo* leaf-miner, will further accelerate the decline of this non-native, invasive plant.

6. Presentation RE: Ocean Naiad – Seawater Desalination Project

No one was present to speak on this topic.

7. Status Reports

A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities

Ms. Sara Eatman, Black & Veatch was recognized to address the following items.

1. Population and Municipal Demand Projections

a. Review of Projections

Ms. Eatman went over the population and municipal demand as well as demands for irrigation, manufacturing, steam-electric, livestock, and mining. She informed the Group that, should they opt for the Sub-Water User Group (WUG) option, the deadline to submit is September 1, 2017

b. Summary of Survey Results

Ms. Eatman stated that surveys were emailed to 95 representatives of the 63 municipal WUGs. 27% of respondents approved of the projections, 12% did not respond.

c. Option to Establish Sub-WUGs

Ms. Eatman informed the Group that under the current definition of a WUG, the following entities do not qualify as such: Brownsville Navigation District, Llano Grande Lake Park East, Bruni Rural WSC, Oilton Rural WSC, IBWC Falcon Village, Town of Indian Lake, Quiet Village II, Llano Grande Lake Park West, La Miranda

Country Estates, Trails End Mobile Home Park. The Group does have the option to include any of these entities as a Sub-WUG and categorize them away from the County-Other category. **Mr. Glenn Jarvis made a motion to include the entities listed above as Sub-WUGs. Mr. Riazul Mia seconded the motion.** Upon further discussion **Mr. Jarvis modified his motion to include the ability to refer any issues obtaining information from the above mentioned entities from County-Other to Sub-WUGs to the Executive Committee for consideration and action. Mr. Mia seconded the modified motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Demand Projections for Non-Municipal Water Uses
Ms. Eatman explained the methodology used for the non-municipal demand projections for Irrigation, Manufacturing, Steam-Electric, and Livestock.
3. GMA 16 Groundwater Availability Projections
Ms. Eatman summarized the procedure to make the Groundwater Available Projections.

B. Financial Report

Ms. Debby Morales, LRGVDC, was recognized and reported that the current budget expenses total \$4,091.05, leaving a 2017 budget balance of \$13,158.95 for the remainder of 2017. The amount of current available funds is \$73,429.51.

C. Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA's 4, 5, 7, 13, & 16

Mr. Armando Vela was recognized and reported that the main topics of discussion at GMA 16 are the types of Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) and the drawdown of water.

D. Discussion of IBWC Water Accounting at Fort Quitman

There was no new information to report on this item.

E. Status of No Charge Releases from the San Juan River

Mr. Sonny Hinojosa was recognized and reported that the majority of irrigation districts in the region have filed a law suit against TCEQ because of the charged diversions from the San Juan River flood flows in 2015. There was an unfavorable decision regarding the pleas to the jurisdiction from the Travis County Court, so the irrigation districts have appealed that decision and the case is now in the Thirteenth Court of Appeals in Corpus Christi. However, TCEQ has stated that in the future they will *not* charge for any diversions of excess flows from the San Juan River. Mr. Hinojosa also reported that he communicated with Mr. Bech Bruun, the Governor's liaison for the 1944 Treaty and IBWC and Mexico. Mr. Bruun informed him that currently Mexico has no intention to release any water. Mexico also does not intend to offer any water from the San Juan, which is good. However, during discussions in March, Mexico officials said they were going to try to release some water to catch up with their delivery deficit; they are behind on deliveries and there was supposedly a plan to release 50,000 acre feet to the Rio Grande. Unfortunately, due to the results of some elections in Mexico, that did not happen.

F. Reports from Other Water Planning Groups

1. Reports from Liaisons with Regions: Region E, Glenn Jarvis; Region J, Chairman Tomas Rodriguez; Region L, Don McGhee, and Region N, Judge Humberto Gonzalez
Mr. Carl Schwing from Region J was recognized and reported that there is a burn ban in effect for 50% of Kerr County, and that the City of Kerrville has constructed 4 wastewater treatment plant effluent rendition ponds.

Mr. Rodriguez reported he attended a Region J meeting in Del Rio and found that some of their topics of discussion were related to those of Region M. After becoming more familiar with the Region J Group he hopes to confer with them on shared concerns.

- G. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans Filed with Region
Chairman Rodriguez noted that some entities remain in non-compliance of submitting their plans to Region M. Staff has posted this list on the Region M website: riograndewaterplan.org. Not submitting a plan to Region M will affect an entity's ability to receive grant funds.
- H. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants
Chairman Rodriguez noted that this list was in the meeting packet for review.
- I. Status of Studies and Activities on Rio Grande Basin Groundwater Interaction with Surface Water
Chairman Rodriguez informed the Group that the last report he had was that Dr. Ron Green had finished the study. Mr. Ria Mia stated that Dr. Green gave a presentation on the Study to the City of Laredo City Council and that they accepted the study. Chairman Rodriguez advises keeping abreast of this issue as it shows evidence of a relationship between pumping groundwater and the levels of surface water.
- J. Report on North Alamo Water Supply Corporation (NAWSC) Feasibility Study of Higher Energy Efficiency Alternatives for Brackish Groundwater Desalination
Chairman Rodriguez noted that there was a letter in the meeting packet from NAWSC that states they have contracted with Freese and Nichols, Inc. to conduct this study and that the estimated duration of the study is 10 months. The projected start date is October 1, 2017. Upon completion the findings of the study will be shared with the Group.

8. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

1. TWDB New Project Manager Assigned to Region M
Mr. William Alfaro was recognized and introduced himself as Region M's new Project Manager from TWDB. He began a presentation that included his background and qualifications.
2. Contract Amendment No. 1, and Consultant Contract Amendments
Mr. Alfaro informed the group that the LRGVDC contract amendment No. 1 has been executed by both parties. This amendment revises the scope of work, the task and expense budget, and the total committed funds.
3. Upcoming Deadlines
Mr. Alfaro informed the Group that the draft projections revision requests are due by January 12, 2018.
4. Current Rules (Pamphlet), and 5th Cycle Documents Availability
Copies of the current rules pamphlet were distributed to the group; that and the Fifth Cycle Working Documents are available on the TWDB website.
5. RWPG Chairs Conference Call Highlights
Mr. Alfaro informed the Group that during the Regional Water Planning Groups Chairs Conference Call on June 28, 2017 topics of discussion included an update on the state-wide Water Conservation Study, the 85th Legislature update on bills that were passed relevant to regional water planning, the 5th Cycle general timelines, and the projections updates.
6. Discussion on TWDB Approved SWIFT Projects

Mr. Alfaro provided a spreadsheet of all projects in the Region M area funded by TWDB; due to the large size of the spreadsheet it has been made available on the Groups website: riograndewaterplan.org on the meetings page.

7. **New Member Orientation – Part 1**

Mr. Alfaro was recognized and gave a presentation that included the background of water planning in Texas, and an overview of regional water planning groups.

B. **IBWC**

No representative from the IBWC was present and no report was provided.

C. **TCEQ Watermaster**

There were no representatives from the TCEQ Watermaster's Office; the report on reservoir levels was on the tablets for review.

D. **TPWD**

Mr. Willy Cupit was recognized and informed the Group that staff continues to coordinate on HB 32 with the GLO, TWDB, and TCEQ to finalize the identification of discharge zones for seawater desalination discharge.

9. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting on September 13, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

10. Adjourn

Prior to adjournment, Chairman Jarvis asked Mr. Ron Garza, LRGVDC Executive Director to inform the Group about the LRGVDC's Road to Recycling tire project. Mr. Garza gave a brief presentation and explained the benefits of this project as it relates to water issues in the Region M Area.

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Tomas Rodriguez, Chairman