

MINUTES

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

10:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2011
LRGVDC TRANSPORTATION CENTER BOARD ROOM
510 S. PLEASANTVIEW DR., TX
PRESIDING: GLENN JARIVS, CHAIR

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chairman Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and announced that the meeting had been posted as required by statute and a quorum was present. The following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Jim Darling, Vice Chairman
Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary
Memo Benavidez for Robert E. Fulbright
Tomas Rodriguez, Executive Committee
Dennis Goldsberry
Sonny Hinojosa
Sonia Lambert
Donald K. McGhee
Carlos Garza
Jorge Barrera
Judge Joe Rathmell

Category

River Authorities
Public
Agriculture
Municipalities
Water Utilities
Water Districts
Water Districts
Industries
Small Business
Municipalities
Counties

The following members were not in attendance:

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman
John Bruciak
Ella de la Rosa
Ray Prewett
Commissioner Joel Quintanilla
Jaime Flores

Other
Municipalities
Electric Generating Utility
Agriculture
Counties
Environmental

2. Consider Approval RE: Minutes of the August 3, 2011 Meeting

*Ms. Sonia Lambert made a motion to approve the August 3, 2011 minutes as presented.
Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

3. Hear Public Comment

There being no Public Comments the Chairman moved to the next item.

4. Presentation and Consider Resolution of Support RE: Pulling Together Initiative (PTI) Application

Mr. Robert Affeldt was recognized and introduced himself as the Project Manager and Grant Writer for the Friends of the Wildlife Corridor (FWC). The FWC partners with the Wildlife Refuge System in this region on projects involving education and land acquisition. Currently the FWC had a grant proposal to be submitted to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). After his introduction Mr. Affeldt turned the floor over to Mr. Chris Hathcock, USFWS, who gave a presentation on the Rio Grande Valley Riparian Reestablishment Project. Mr. Hathcock stated that this project was in response to the flooding that occurred last summer. After the flood waters resided staff noticed a lot of salt cedar was coming up along the river. The flooding provided perfect dispersal and germination conditions for the salt cedar. Currently staff was seeing salt cedar establishing in all areas that were affected by the flooding, including irrigation canals. The trees were coming up in densities of several thousand per acre and had already grown 10 feet in just one year. The problems with this plant are that it has long tap roots that intercept deep water tables and interfere with natural aquatic system; it also disrupts the structure and stability of native plants and is a heavy water consumer. A single large plant can absorb 200 gallons of water per day, and its dense roots can slow down river flows. It is very hearty and resistant to drought and flood. USFW and the FWC would like the Region M Group to consider becoming a cooperator in support of this project and possibly to provide technical expertise. In addition, Mr. Hathcock requested a letter of support for their grant application to allow collaboration on the control of salt cedar and technical expertise through the Bi-national Aquatic Weed Taskforce as well as a resolution of support for the project. ***Upon conclusion of the presentation and discussion Mr. Don McGhee made a motion to approve the resolution in support of the Pulling Together Initiative and for the Region M Group to become a cooperator on the Rio Grande Valley Riparian Reestablishment Project grant application to be submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Mr. Carlos Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

5. Discuss and Consider Approval of Contract between LRGVDC and Black & Veatch Corporation

Ms. Connie Townsend noted that once the Group submitted the contract to TWDB, it will go through a contract review to make sure it has all the right clauses that correspond to the contract guidelines. ***Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to approve the contract between the LRGVDC and Black & Veatch Corporation subject to final review by TWDB. Ms. Sonia Lambert seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

6. Consider Recommendation from Bylaws Committee RE: Compliance with SB 660

Ms. Sonia Lambert was recognized and recommended a change to the suggested amendment in Article V. Voting Membership, Section 1. Composition. The last sentence read "Thereafter, the voting membership of the RGRWPG shall *be consistent with future actions by the State Legislature and* include persons added or removed as provided under this Article and any 31 TAC 357.4(g)(4) members selected for voting membership under Article VI". Ms. Lambert suggested removing the word "*future*". Upon conclusion of discussion Vice Chair Darling called for a motion. ***Ms. Sonia Lambert made a motion to approve the bylaws amendment with the suggested revision. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Armando Vela from the Red Sands Groundwater Conservation District was introduced as their representative on the Region M Group.

7. Status Reports

A. Financial Report

Ms. Marcie Oviedo was recognized and reported that \$29,160.55 of the requested \$57,349.00 Local Fund Contribution Match funds had been received to date.

Discussion RE: Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA's 4, 5, 7, 13 & 16 Under HB 1763 (2005)

Mr. Armando Vela reported on Groundwater Area Plans that were approved in August and informed the Group of some concerns the GMA 16 had.

C. Discussion of IBWC Water Accounting at Fort Quitman

Mr. Ricky Anderson reported on TCEQ's restructuring and added that he wanted to be a resource for the Region M Group. Mr. Anderson stated that there was no new information on the Fort Quitman issue at this time, but Mr. Herman Settemeyer continued working on this project and the Group will be provided updates as they become available.

D. Reports RE: Other Water Planning Groups

1. Reports from Liaisons with Regions E, J, L, & N
There was no new information to report.

E. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans Filed with Region

The City of San Juan submitted their Water Conservation Plan on August 17, 2011.

8. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

Ms. Connie Townsend was recognized and informed the Group that public meetings on the Draft State Water Plan had been conducted and the comments period would run until October 25, 2011. Ms. Townsend stated that at the next meeting she would like to conduct a "Water Planning 101" presentation for the benefit of the Group's new members and as a refresher for long standing members.

B. IBWC

Mr. Rodolfo Montero was recognized summarized a written report on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Levee Certification projects, and gave a verbal report on the El Morillo Drain pump status.

C. TCEQ

Mr. Erasmo Yarrito reported on the water deliveries from Mexico, the U.S. and Mexican reservoir levels, the drought conditions, and the recent red tide outbreak.

1. Status of Water Availability Model (WAM) for Mexico
This item was covered under item 7.C.

D. TPWD

Mr. Willie Cupit gave a comprehensive report on the red tide outbreak and noted that the red tide algae are always present, but it is only toxic when it blooms and that the red tide thrives in warm salty water.

9. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting on Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 10: 30 a.m. at the LRGVDC Transit Center in Weslaco.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman

Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary