

# MINUTES

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

9:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

LRGVDC TRANSPORTATION CENTER BOARD ROOM  
510 S. PLEASANTVIEW DR., WESLACO, TX  
PRESIDING: GLENN JARVIS, CHAIRMAN

### **1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman Jarvis called the meeting to order at 9:39 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

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman  
Tomas Rodriguez, Vice Chairman  
Sonny Hinojosa, Executive Committee  
Frank Schuster, Executive Committee  
Sonia Lambert  
Carlos Garza  
Jorge Barrera  
Judge Joe Rathmell  
Jaime Flores  
Armando Vela  
Nick Benavides  
Judge Humberto Gonzalez

#### Category

Other  
Municipalities  
Water Districts  
Other  
Water Districts  
Small Business  
Municipalities  
Counties  
Environmental  
Groundwater Management Area  
Small Business  
Counties

The following members were not in attendance:

Mary Lou Campbell  
John Bruciak  
Dennis Goldsberry  
Donald McGhee  
Ray Prewett  
Mayor Jim Darling  
Robert Fulbright  
Robert Pena, Jr.

Public  
Municipalities  
Water Utility  
Industries  
Agriculture  
River Authorities  
Agriculture  
Electric Generating Utility

### **2. Consider Approval RE: Minutes of the April 15, 2015 Meeting**

***Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Nick Benavides seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

### **3. Hear Public Comment**

No requests for Public Comment were received.

### **4. Consider Ratification of Executive Committee Action RE: Two (2) Amendments to 2011 Regional Water Plan**

Ms. Sara Eatman, Black & Veatch (B&V) was recognized and explained that there were two entities currently working toward amending the 2011 Regional Water Plan (RWP) and the 2012 State Water Plan (SWP). TWDB funding decisions will be based on the 2012 SWP until the regional plan updates

that the Group has been working on are integrated into the 2017 SWP. Both Hidalgo County Drainage District #1(HCDD1) and United Irrigation District (United ID) are working to amend the plan, which requires changes to B&V's contract with LRGVDC. However United ID may no longer be pursuing an amendment to the 2011 Plan because they will be eligible for the next round of SWIFT since they submitted this strategy for this next RWP/SWP. Both United ID and HCDD1 have already paid for the work needed for these amendments. The Executive Committee unanimously approved these amendments as of July 6, 2015 and that approval requires ratification by the Group. ***Mr. Sonny Hinojosa made a motion to ratify the Executive Committee approval of the two amendments to the 2011 Regional Water Plan. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

#### **5. Presentation RE: Update on LRGV Groundwater Transport Model**

Dr. William (Bill) Hutchison was recognized and began a presentation that included the background and history of the project. He informed the Group that the primary objective of this project is to develop a numerical groundwater model to simulate impacts of brackish water withdrawal by the current and recommended desalination plants in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. He then explained that the project will be approached by developing a new Groundwater Availability Model (GAM) that can delineate the quality of the water (fresh vs brackish) in the Gulf Coast Aquifer within the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV). Three primary sources of data and information will be utilized: the current Gulf Coast Aquifer GAM, the associated hydrogeologic framework developed by Young, et.al., and the recent TWDB study on brackish groundwater in the LRGV (Meyers et.al., Report #383, September 2014). The completion date of this project will be in mid-2017 and stakeholder involvement is a key element. The first task of this project is to schedule a stakeholder meeting. One of the major goals is that the results of this study will inform determination of existing groundwater sources for the next cycle of Region M regional water planning. Upon conclusion of the presentation and discussion it was the consensus of the Group and Dr. Hutchison to schedule the stakeholder meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. at the LRGVDC Transportation Center Board Room. No action needed.

#### **6. Presentation RE: SB 1734 Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program**

Chairman Jarvis recognized Mr. Aaron Wendt, Natural Resources Policy Analyst for the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Mr. Wendt gave a presentation that included an agency overview, Water Supply Enhancement Program, and Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program. Regarding the Arundo donax/Carrizo Cane, Mr. Wendt gave an overview of the impacts and biology of this invasive species of reed and reported on the success of the eradication program. Eradication progress has been made with an integrated program that utilizes an ecosystem-based approach to manage Carrizo cane along the Rio Grande. The use of biological, chemical, mechanical, and cultural controls has shown initial success. At the conclusion of Mr. Wendt's presentation Dr. John Goolsby, USDA was recognized and provided supplemental information that included an update on the USDA's progress with biocontrol of the Arundo donax. The USDA has seen good results in the Del Rio, TX area, where bio-control was first introduced. He reported that the cane stands are thinning out as the Arundo scale population grows and thrives below ground on the roots of the plants, and subsequently native vegetation is returning to the riverside. In Brownsville there has been a 50% reduction in Arundo since 2007 due to the biological control program. Significant decrease in Arundo has also been seen in Los Indios, TX due to the release of the Arundo Wasp. In conclusion Dr. Goolsby stated that all state and federal permits are in place for immediate action on the Rio Grande; there are no environmental issues – the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is completed; the bio control process is gradual which keeps the river bank stable and prevents erosion; native trees, shrubs and grasses are re-growing to fill the ecological void; biological and mechanical techniques are expandable for use over large areas; and the thinning cane provides immediate visibility of the Rio Grande for law enforcement personnel. The recommendations for the next steps are to identify high priority areas based on law enforcement needs, conduct an aerial survey to measure acreage, meet with land owners for approval, top Carrizo cane and follow up with Arundo wasp release and to revisit sites to track visibility and access.

It was the consensus of the Group to hear item 8.A. before item 7.

## 8. Status Report

### A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities

1. Consider Approval RE: Approved Budget Memorandum #4 (ABM #4) Request for Contract #1148301324 between TWDB and LRGVDC

Ms. Eatman was recognized and informed the Group that there were some over and under allocations in the budget, but overall the budget is in good shape. B&V staff assigned a greater amount in the Subcontractor Services category and less in the internal labor categories than has been utilized; B&V has adjusted those amounts accordingly in the Proposed Budget Revision. Ms. Eatman noted that there are no changes to the budget totals, only shifts between categories. Ms. Connie Townsend, TWDB, has requested a revised Task Budget in addition to the revised Expense Budget presented today. Ms. Eatman is in the process of creating this, which is requiring further, more detailed review of the subcontractor activities/payments over the past five years. Upon conclusion of the budget revisions Ms. Eatman will be able to present a finalized Proposed Budget Memorandum to the Group for approval consideration and noted that this presentation to the Group is to keep them abreast of budget activity and needs. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Jorge Barrera made a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to review and approve ABM #4. Judge Humberto Gonzalez seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Timeline for Completion of 2016 Recommended WMSs

Ms. Eatman listed the deadlines on the timeline for the 2016 RWP from now until the end of the year noting that from October through November 4<sup>th</sup> committees will need to review their assigned chapters of the IPP, on November 4<sup>th</sup> the Group will consider the final RWP, November 9<sup>th</sup> is the Production Deadline for changes to the RWP, and December 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for the final RWP. Ms. Eatman brought the Group's attention to the Committees with Review Tasks list and noted that these committees were used to review the IPP as the Group was moving towards that finalization. She then began an overview and discussion on TWDB's comments on the IPP that included: quantification of environmental/agricultural/economic impacts of the plan; no zero-supply WMS; report of costs, units, financing; and justification of some WUGs having unmet needs. The two possible 2011 amended WMSs (HCDD1 and United ID) will also need to be fully evaluated for inclusion in the final 2016 Plan.

Upon conclusion of discussion on TWDB's comments, the following Chapter/Reviewer assignments were made:

Chapter 1 – Description of the Regional Water Planning Area: Carlos Garza

Chapter 2 – Demand Projections – Frank Schuster

Chapter 3 – Water Supply Analysis – Jaime Flores, Nick Benavidez

Chapter 4 – Identification of Water Needs: Sonny Hinojosa, Sonia Lambert, Tomas Rodriguez

Chapter 5 – Water Management Strategies: Sonny Hinojosa, Sonia Lambert, Tomas Rodriguez

Chapter 6 – Impacts of Regional Water Plan: Sonny Hinojosa, Sonia Lambert

Chapter 7 – Drought Response Information, Activities, and Recommendations: Jaime Flores, Nick Benavidez

Chapter 8 – Policy Recommendations & Unique Sites: Ray Prewett

Chapter 9 – Infrastructure Financing Analysis: Jim Darling

Chapter 10 – Public Participation: Marcie Oviedo

Chapter 11 – Implementation and Comparison to the Previous Regional Water Plan: Glenn Jarvis

## **7. Consider Staff Recommendation RE: Consulting Services for 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle of TWDB Water Supply Planning**

Mr. Ken Jones, LRGVDC Executive Director was recognized and informed the Group that in preparation for the next round of water supply planning funded by the TWDB, staff recommends to keep B&V on board as the Group's consultant. He conferred with the LRGVDC Procurement Department and this recommendation is consistent with LRGVDC's Procurement Policies. Ms. Eatman stated she would provide an informal proposal from B&V for services at the next meeting. ***Mr. Carlos Garza made a motion to approve Black & Veatch as the consultant for the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle of TWDB Water Supply Planning. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

## **8. Status Reports (continued)**

### **B. Financial Report**

Ms. Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC, was recognized and reported that \$5,973.74 remains in the 2015 budget and that there are currently \$94,849.38 in available funds. She also distributed a list of local match contributions requested this year noting that the majority of entities invoiced have made contributions netting close to \$50,000. Ms. Oviedo asked the Group for assistance in contacting some of the entities who have not yet contributed. No action needed.

### **C. Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA's 4, 5, 6, 13, & 16**

Mr. Armando Vela was recognized and reported that GMA 16 met on September 22<sup>nd</sup> in Falfurrias. During that meeting the Desired Future Conditions (DFC) were discussed and Mr. Randy Williams, Bar W Ranch provided information on various DFC scenarios. GMA 16 has received requests to increase the amount of water usage in Jim Wells County; and in San Patricio County there is a rancher who wants to desalinate water. Mr. Vela reported that at their October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting GMA 16 will consider adoption of the final DFC. He reported that they will have 90 days to present those DFCs to Region M and offer a comments period at the local level.

### **D. Discussion of IBWC Water Accounting at Fort Quitman**

Chairman Jarvis announced that Mr. Carlos Rubinstein resigned from the TWDB and Mr. Herman Settemeyer resigned from the TCEQ. The Chairman stated that he has not heard of this project being reassigned at the State level; however, he would like to keep it on the agenda as it is something to work toward.

### **E. Report RE: Other Water Planning Groups**

Chairman Jarvis noted that all other RWPGs are in the same Regional Water Planning process as Region M.

### **F. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans Filed with Region**

The Chairman noted that one new plan has been filed since the last meeting.

### **G. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants**

No new notices have been received

### **H. Status of Studies and Activities on Rio Grande Basin Groundwater Interaction with Surface Water**

Mr. Tomas Rodriguez was recognized and introduced Mr. Riazul Mia, the new Utilities Director for the City of Laredo, who took over the position upon Mr. Rodriguez' retirement. Mr. Mia will keep abreast of the progress of the study on the Devil's River, and the City is still working on getting the study on the Pecos River started.

## **9. Report from TWDB**

### **A. TWDB**

Ms. Connie Townsend was recognized and reported that every five years the TWDB revisits the boundaries of the Regional Water Planning Groups and during their September 22, 2015 meeting the Board announced that comments on the boundaries had been received, therefore the Board took action to keep the comments period open until October 13<sup>th</sup>. One of the comments Ms. Townsend was aware of is that Region L requested that Region P become a part of Region L. The extended comments period will allow all interested parties the opportunity to comment. Ms. Townsend informed the Group that October 27<sup>th</sup> is the tentative date for the second TWDB meeting in October. At this meeting the Board will consider finalizing the rules for the inter-regional conflict. A draft rule revision was released for public comment, and that public comment period closed on August 4<sup>th</sup> and the final decision will be made at the proposed October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Townsend also reported that on September 9<sup>th</sup> the TWDB acted on the new SWIFT (State Water Infrastructure Fund for Texas) timeline and that information was emailed to all the RWPG members. She also gave a reminder that December 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for all RWPGs to submit their 2016 Regional Water Plans.

### **B. IBWC**

Mr. Rodolfo Montero was recognized and reported that for the current five year cycle Mexico has a deficit of 269,076 acre feet (84% of the cycle target) to date; this cycle will end on October 24, 2015 and Mexico has assured the U.S. that it will make the minimum treaty delivery in the last year of the cycle.

### **C. TCEQ Watermaster**

Mr. Pablo Medrano was recognized and reported on the Falcon and Amistad reservoir levels, releases and allocations.

### **D. TPWD**

Mr. Willy Cupit was unable to attend due to the need to monitor the current red tide bloom.

## **10. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule**

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 9:30 a.m.

## **11. Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

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Glenn Jarvis, Chairman

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Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary