

# **Southwest Regional Water Planning Steering Committee Meeting Minutes on January 13, 2004**

## **Attendees:**

Vance Lee- Hidalgo County, Jerry Donaldson- NM O-PD, David Mc Sherry (for Don Hartman)- Luna County (Luna Co F &LB), John Burkstaller-DBS&A, Inc., Tom Bates- City of Deming, Wayne D. Ericson- Engineers Inc., Louis Jenkins- City of Deming, Gerald Schultz- Black Range RC&D, George Pintar- DSWCD, Rick Olson- NRCS Black Range RC&D coordinator, Bobby Creel- WRRI, Mary Helen Follingstad- ISC, John Sweetser- Luna County (F&LB), Walter R Biebello III- S.W.N.M, Robert Esqueda- Town of Silver City, Walter Biebelle Jr.- Self , Mary Jo Lopez- City of Deming.

## **Call To Order/Introductions:**

Mr. Bates called the meeting to order at approximately 9:30 am. Suspending the roll call to sign in sheet and introductions, due to time.

## **Minute Approval:**

Mr. Bates asked that everyone review the minutes for October 23<sup>rd</sup> and asked for any corrections and/or changes. Mr. Lee motioned to approve the October 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes with the suggested corrections, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, carried unanimously.

Mr. Bates then asked that the committee review the November 20<sup>th</sup> minutes for any corrections. After some time reviewing the minutes it was motioned by Mr. Pintar to approve the minutes with the suggested corrections, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, carried unanimously.

## **Ms. Follingstad- ISC Regional Water Planning Report**

Mr. Bates introduced Ms. Follingstad and gave her some time to speak on the funding and the process of the water planning process.

Ms. Follingstad stated that the process started by the Law Suit between Texas and New Mexico over pumping the ground water and the wells that El Paso wanted to drill. New Mexico had to plan to show that the demand for water was greater than the supply of water. The State of New Mexico is looking to the regions for the plans. Ms. Follingstad stated that the funding would be approved on January 21, 2004. Ms. Follingstad stated that each region is an important part of the State water plan. Ms. Follingstad stated that there are two components in working with the alternatives, which are management and conservation and determining implementation. Ms. Follingstad stated that the importance of the alternative and feasibility analysis is the funding to implement the project.

Ms. Follingstad stated that the 18,000acre ft. is very important for the state of New Mexico to present a unified front to try and capture the water then work on the allocation of it. Mr. Jenkins asked why Ms. Follingstad thought it was questionable

about getting the 18,000 acre ft. Ms. Follingstad stated that if New Mexico wants the water we have to make our presence and be obvious that we need the water.

Mr. Bates stated that Mr. Torres would take the lead in organizing the group who will contract for the 18,000 acre ft. He also stated that the Steering Committee would help with that.

Mr. Bates stated that he met with Jerry and Tom Shelley on exploring the possibility of using Bill Evans Lake as storage. Mr. Bates stated that the important thing is that there is the lake, which has the storage capacity of 2 acre feet for the settling of the sediment as well as the pipeline. The pipeline has a diversion capacity of 14,000 acre feet. Mr. Bates stated that Phelps Dodge is willing to allow the region access to the pipelines and pumping with the understanding that their requirements come first. There are still some details to work on, such as the maintenance, which is expensive, and other details as well. Mr. Bates stated that Joanne feels that recharge of the aquifer is a very beneficial use.

Mr. Bates stated that Mr. Roepke has made a model and accordingly to that model there is only 12,000 acre feet of wet water as opposed to the said 18,000 acre feet of water rights. Mr. Pintar asked what the plan was to move the water to this area. Mr. Bates stated that the plan for part of it was to put a little bit into Bill Evans, and recharge the aquifers in Grant County. Mr. Bates stated that during flooding PD shuts down the pumps because of sediment and floating debris.

Mr. Pintar asked if this would require some kind of holding damn on the Gila. Mr. Bates stated that only a reservoir would be able to capture the flood water. Mr. Bates asked if Jerry knows the maintenance cost for the system. Mr. Donaldson stated that he did not know the exact cost, however it is very costly. Mr. Pintar questioned if the water that goes into the Bill Evans Lake goes into different aquifers. Mr. Bates stated that it goes into two basins, the Mimbres Basin and the Gila-San Francisco Basin.

Mr. Bates asked that Joanne make comments on the Draft Supply and Demand Report.

Ms. Hilton stated that a lot of the comments she got were very helpful. She stated that although they are not addressed, they will be incorporated into the plan. Ms. Hilton stated that the numbers on the water rights have been changed with the help of Wayne Ericson from Engineers, Inc. Mr. Ericson stated that he met with the municipalities as well as Phelps Dodge and asked for records to resolve these differences. Ms. Hilton stated that before publishing the Report she would give the Committee a revised copy to review and double check before going on with it. Ms. Hilton stated that the growth projections as to the comments that were made on them being too high and some stating that they were too low, could be changed. Ms. Hilton stated that they need more clarification on is the future use of irrigated agriculture.

Ms. Hilton stated that the committee would be having a conference call with SW Planning and Marketing at 11 a.m.

Mr. Bates called a short break at 10:24- Reconvened at 10:32

Mr. Bates had all attendees introduce themselves.

### **Phase I Review by Bobby Creel (WRRI)**

Mr. Bates turned the meeting over to Mr. Bobby Creel with WRRI. Mr. Creel stated that he had served on the ISC Template Committee, and was the research faculty in Ag School at NMSU until he became the Associate Director of the Water Research

Institute. Mr. Creel stated that there was an excellent job done on the information gathered by the Consultant and the team that was put together. Mr. Creel stated that they noted a lot of items, in which a lot of the are minor. Mr. Creel also stated that the comments were discussed with Tom and Joanne.

Mr. Creel's flaws as stated in the review of DRAFT were as follows:

1. Introduction- pages 4 & 5 are misleading, as there are a number of other sources utilized in addition to those listed.

Mr. Creel suggests using a more general statement concerning data sources as well as published reports relevant to the area.

2. Background- Section 3.1 General Description of the Planning Region starts with discussion of major geologic Physiographic Provinces.

Mr. Creel suggests beginning with Climate followed by land use, Economy, and then Geologic. He states that he does not feel the necessity to discuss each county separately.

3. Administrative Policies of the State Engineer- It would be appropriate to note that the Declared Underground Water Basins discussed here are administrative and their boundaries do not necessarily match the physical hydro-geologic basins in the planning region. Also there are hydro-geologic basins that are not yet declared.

4. Water Resources- The water resources of the region should be described following the physical hydro-geologic basins structure rather than the administrative basins. Mr. Creel stated that the report by Hawley et al., 2000 made estimates of extractable groundwater in storage in each of the hydro-geologic basins along the border which could help in this area. In figure 5-3, he suggests labeling the points with station name. In figures 5-4, 5-5 & 5-6, he suggests providing the source reference. In figure 5-7, the number of streams shown, are not labeled. There were many changes in section 5, as stated in the report Mr. Creel handed out.

5. Water Demand- Mr. Creel states that since the report is including withdrawals and return flows, as well as depletions in the tables and figures, he suggests pointing out that your use of the term "water use" means depletion. And the water use projections in tables in Appendix e5 should also be changed to depletions.

6. Water Budget- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph on page 166 you make the important point that it would be more appropriate to develop water budgets for each of the hydrologic basins in the region. If this can be done it would be preferable to county budgets. Mr. Creel's recommendation for the water budget is that they should attempt to provide only generalized annual estimates similar to those that the Middle Rio Grande developed for their planning program.

Gerald Schultz questioned if everyone understood the differences of the different kinds of water basins. He stated that he was a bit confused in this area. Mr. Pintar asked the difference between declared and undeclared basins. Mr. Creel stated that the statues for the State Engineer to have jurisdiction must have declared basin boundaries. Without a

declaration there'd be no control and people can put wells etc. and may result in effecting an existing user.

It was stated that there is a need to study more on the consumption of water by livestock.

Mr. Lee questioned the change due to the Border Land Security Project. Mr. Hilton stated that it is being considered, and it was agreed that it will have an impact in the supply and demand.

There was a conference call with the Southwest Planning and Marketing Bruce and Doug with SW Planning and Marketing stated that for 1 acre, usually there is one well allowed. Mr. Lee stated that the subdivisions use less water than the lands being farmed.

Mr. Schultz stated that Grant county is working on a comprehensive plan, and questioned how recent was Luna County's plan, in which Mr. Jenkins stated it was only like two (2) years old.

It was motioned by Mr. Jenkins to adjourn the meeting at approximately 12:00 noon, seconded by Mr. Pintar, carried unanimously.

The next meeting is set for February 26, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. in Bayard, NM at the Bayard Community Center.