



Interstate Stream Commission Regional Water Planning Program

Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan

February 9, 2016

Summary of Meeting

Facilitator: Rosemary Romero

Hydrologist: Laila Sturgis

Technical Support: Dominique Cartron

The meeting was opened with welcome and introductions. Rosemary noted that she will be facilitating this phase of the water planning effort with continued support from Laila Sturgis and additional technical support from Dominique Cartron. Rosemary will be responsible for the public involvement; support to the steering committee; writing Section 2 public involvement chapter of the plan with the steering committee. Laila will be responsible for writing Section 8 with support from Dominique. Dominique's role will be as technical support because of the technical knowledge about the draft plan and will be able to answer issues specific to the methodology and process. During the introductions, Emily Geery, the newly appointed ISC Regional Water Planning Manager introduced herself and other ISC staff were in attendance.

Rosemary reviewed the agenda for the meeting as follows:

- Brief review of update process, timeline and objectives
- Steering committee and subcommittee membership/vacancies
- Process for commenting on the draft plan
- Public involvement
- Projects, programs, and policies (PPPs)
- Next Steps

Regional Water Plan Update Objectives:

Update 16 regional water plans in a common timeframe using a common technical platform. This effort addresses the original purpose of regional water planning, which was summarized in the regional water planning handbook as follows:

The original impetus for regional water planning came in 1987, when a federal court ruled that New Mexico's prohibition against out-of-state transfer of New Mexico groundwater was

unconstitutional. As a result of this ruling, it became evident that New Mexico must actively plan for its water future by demonstrating the need for its water supplies.

The Regional Water Planning Statute, §72-14-44 NMSA 1978, was passed in 1987 and establishes general criteria for developing regional water plans and addressing future water supply needs. In addition, the statute gives the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) certain powers and duties for implementing regional water planning including:

- Provides a better process for informing funding agencies of water project needs
- Informs future updates of the State Water Plan
- Provides an opportunity for local collaboration

Technical Components of the Updated Regional Water Plan completed by the ISC:

Handbook sections B, D, E, F, G, and H:

- Introduction
- Background information
- Legal issues
- Water supply and demand (administrative supply)
- Population and economic trends
- Future water use projections
- Gap between supply and demand

Process for Updating Regional Water Plan:

During FY 15

- Regional Steering committees were formed for all sixteen regions
- Stakeholder lists and public involvement plans were prepared
- A minimum of four meetings were held in each region
- Draft technical, legal, and public involvement sections were completed
- Preliminary lists of projects programs, and policies were compiled (compiled list presented at the first meeting for FY 16)

Process for Updating Regional Water Plans during FY 16

- Regional steering committees will review draft plan sections
- Three meetings will be held in each region
- Preliminary lists of projects, programs, and policies will be reviewed and updated
- Regions will identify projects of interest for regional collaboration
- Section 8 (Strategy Implementation Chapter) of the RWP Update will be completed

Components of the Updated Regional Water Plan completed by the Region:

- Section 2, Public Involvement Section 8, Implementation of Strategies to meet future needs
- Initial list of projects, programs, and policies for Section 8 completed June 2015
- Final Plans published in 2016; time will vary by region

Document Review Process:

Rosemary presented the *ISC's Guidance Document* on Review Process. ISC welcomes all comments on the technical or process aspects of the plan as it will help to guide the future updates. ISC will attach comments as an appendix to the plan, but will not be modifying the technical approach at this time.

Comment: One participant asked that all comments and input into the plan be documented. It was clarified that all comments are to be sent to the steering committee for consolidation and will be addressed by the ISC as appropriate, and all comments will be included in the appendix. Representatives of the “Water Assembly” asked that their 26 page document be reviewed at the meeting and Rosemary asked that the document be sent directly to the steering committee as noted in the Guidance Document #2 for receiving comments. Comments will be consolidated by the steering committee with support from contractors.

It was noted there were issues raised about the administrative water supply. This is a methodology issue and should be sent to the steering committee with a recommendation that during the next round of water planning this be reviewed.

The plan was sent out to the steering committee initially and then to others requesting the public documents. Comments on the plan should be sent to the steering committee and contractors by March 21. The steering committee will meet on March 15 and will consolidate the comments received into one document. Dominique Cartron will attend the meeting to help in the consolidation and reconcile proposed comments. The pueblos will send comments directly to the steering committee. One committee member asked if comments were similar to how NEPA processes receive and address comments. It was noted that this process is a planning exercise – and has no specific authority and depends on implementation for the plan from a committed steering committee, leadership and elected officials and managers.

It was noted if a region has specific information about a study that should be referenced, this should be sent to the steering committee and consultant in order to include the information in the appendix of the plan for future reference.

ISC had talked about a form/table to collect the comments and this is still in discussion. However, it does not preclude the steering committee from developing their methodology for consolidating comments.

Steering Committee Composition: Rosemary reviewed the composition of the Steering committee as outlined in the RWP Handbook. The initial list in the Handbook includes:

- Agricultural – surface water user
- Agricultural – groundwater user
- Municipal government
- Rural water provider
- Extractive industry
- Environmental interest
- County government
- Local (retail) business
- Tribal entity
- Watershed interest
- Federal agency
- Other groups as identified by the Steering Committee

Rosemary consolidated the steering committee information following the ISC approved template and integrated the steering committee list provided by Laila Sturgis into the ISC format. Rosemary further noted that she had developed a Master List that had been updated and she will continue to update this list from the current meeting sign in sheet; additional outreach and will make the list available to the steering committee. This is a deliverable to the ISC. Rosemary noted that she had followed up with several individuals that could meet the Regional Water Planning Handbook guideline such as the MRGCD. Mr. Hamman responded and asked to be placed on the Master List. Rosemary also sent information to Professor Jose Rivera representing Land Grants in the area and is interested in supporting this effort because of his on-going research on land and water issues as well as knowledge about the region.

Steering Committee Leadership

- Ron Brown Chair
- Steve Perich, Vice Chair

Discussion about Steering Committee composition:

There was some discussion about why this issue was open to further discussion. The steering committee was built by MRCOG and vetted by their Water Board. The Steering Committee document provided to the Steering Committee should be clear about who is approved and who is recommended. Rosemary noted that the Regional Water Planning Handbook specifically lays out the composition of the steering committee and for the MRG it has overall filled in the blanks, but there are specific gaps that should be filled in order to meet the guidelines set out by the ISC Handbook. In order to support the steering committee she suggested a few names that could fit a

category such as MRGCD, land grants and more tribal representative. Sandy Gaiser from the MRCOG had sent an official letter of invitation to the tribes in the region and Laila followed up with several of the tribes in the area and did not receive follow-up. Letting the tribes know about what is going on will be a continual process with follow-up and allow them to participate as they deem appropriate. Rosemary will send the updated steering list with the highlighted areas and the steering will review and determine what to do with the suggestions.

Additional outreach: It was suggested that additional outreach be conducted to BIA, USDA, acequias, Rio Jemez and Rio Puerco and it was suggested these should be represented on the steering committee. Rosemary asked the group to send her additional suggestions for the master list as this will be the mechanism for communication with stakeholders. She further noted that this region does not have subcommittees so far, but it might be useful to create some in the future. She gave examples from other regions that had created and utilized various subcommittees in order to solidify ideas for strategies. The steering committee will review these ideas.

Ron Brown, Chair noted that steering committee meetings are open to the public, but the work is focused on the steering committee. This method of open meetings will continue.

Section 8 will include:

- A brief assessment of strategies from the last plan
- Areas of greatest interest for regional collaboration and implementation
- Recommendations for key programs and policies to inform the State Water Plan
- Draft list compiled 2016 – review for completeness, accuracy
- Projects, Programs, and Policies (PPPs) on draft list will not be ranked or prioritized
- PPPs on list will receive additional points for Water Trust Board funding applications, but will not be guaranteed funding.
- Other funding sources may or may not consider regional water plan PPPs as relevant to their funding process.
- Narrative of Section 8 will be prepared by consulting team with Steering Committee input and review.

Accepted Regional Water Plan Strategies

Laila summarized the accepted water plan completed in 2003 and these categories were ranked as a high priority during steering committee discussions last spring:

- Urban Water Pricing
- Conjunctive Use Management

- Treated Effluent Re-use
- Water Resources Database
- Watershed Management Plans
- Funding Source for Water Activities
- Measure All Water Uses

The steering committee also graded the effectiveness of the strategies in the 2003 plan, these ranked as the most effective:

- Laser level ag fields
- Restrict new water uses at golf parks
- Undeclared water
- Conversion to low flow appliances

Section 8 of the plan will include a brief assessment of these strategies, summarizing how they have been implemented and which are still relevant.

The group was interested in a process for commenting on the PPPs and felt strongly that the ICIP list should not be included – or included only as an appendix. ISC will clarify the intention of why this was incorporated into the planning process and report back to the steering committee.

Next Steps and Meetings:

Written comments on the draft plan are due by March 11 before the next Steering Committee meeting scheduled for ***March 21, 1:00 – 4:00 at the ISC Conference Room.*** An agenda will be sent prior to the meeting.

The Steering Committee will meet on ***March 15*** at the Dekker/Perrich office, 1:30 – 4:00 to consolidate the comments received with support from Dominique Cartron. The ISC will take all of the comments and address them. It was suggested that a comment table and redline strikeout version might be the way to do this.

Proposed Dates for last two Meetings:

March 21, 2016 (OSE/ISC meeting room)
 May 17, 2016 (OSE/ISC meeting room)

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