

Preliminary Draft. This is an outline of the public involvement section of the updated Regional Water Plan (RWP). The purpose of this section is to document the public involvement process that has taken place during the update of the RWPs. The table below lists the first two sets of meetings that took place by region:

- Meeting 1: Kick-off meeting
- Meeting 2: Technical components of the regional water plan, presentation of data to the regions

ISC Planning Region		Meeting #1		Meeting #2	
		Date	Location	Date	Location
1	Northeast New Mexico	Jun 30, 2014	Grady	Oct 20, 2014	Tucumcari
2	San Juan Basin	Jul 17, 2014	Farmington	Dec 4, 2014	Farmington
3	Jemez y Sangre	Mar 4, 2014	Santa Fe	Nov 13, 2014	Santa Fe
4	Southwest New Mexico	Aug 13, 2014	Silver City	Mar 12, 2015	Deming
5	Tularosa-Sacramento-Salt Basins	Jul 24, 2014	Tularosa	Jan 14, 2015	Alamogordo
6	Northwest New Mexico	Mar 19, 2014	Grants	Dec 5, 2014	Gallup
7	Taos	Mar 31, 2014	Taos	Oct 30, 2014	Taos
8	Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe	Feb 27, 2014	Las Vegas	Oct 27, 2014	Las Vegas
9	Colfax	Apr 23, 2014	Cimarron	Oct 29, 2014	Cimarron
10	Lower Pecos Valley	May 9, 2014	Artesia	Feb 13, 2015	Artesia
11	Lower Rio Grande	May 21, 2014	Las Cruces	Jan 13, 2015	Las Cruces
12	Middle Rio Grande	Apr 2, 2014	Albuquerque	Jan 23, 2015	Albuquerque
13	Estancia Basin	Apr 17, 2014	Moriarty	Feb 19, 2015	Estancia
14	Rio Chama	Mar 31, 2014	Española	Nov 13, 2014	Hernandez
15	Socorro-Sierra	May 21, 2014	Truth or Consequences	Oct 28, 2014	Truth or Consequences
16	Lea County	May 8, 2014	Lovington	Feb 12, 2015	Hobbs

2. Public Involvement in the Planning Process (*Prepared by the Region with ISC contractor assistance*)

As specified in the *Updated Regional Water Planning Handbook* (NMISC, 2013), the regional water plan update shall include participation of a representative group of stakeholders, referred to in this document as a steering committee, to guide the public involvement during the update and to identify strategies for addressing water issues and needs in the region. This section documents the steering committee and public involvement process used in the update of the plan.

2.1 Identification of Regional Steering Committee Members and Stakeholders

The RWP Update Handbook (NMISC, 2013) specifies that the steering committee membership include representatives from multiple water user groups. Some of the categories may not be applicable to the specific region, and the regions could add other categories as appropriate to their specific region. The steering committee representation listed 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

Steering committee members were recruited from interviews, public meetings, and recommendations. Through this outreach, the Middle Rio Grande Water Planning Region established a representative steering committee, the members of which are listed in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Steering Committee Members, Middle Rio Grande Water Planning Region

<u>Steering Committee Criteria*</u>	<u>Primary Member</u>	<u>Organization/Representation</u>
Agricultural - Surface Water User	Janet Jarrett	Land Owner & Water Irrigator
Agricultural - groundwater user	Gilbert Sandoval	Acequia (Jemez Springs)
Municipal Government	Larry Webb	City Of Rio Rancho
Municipal Government	Kevin Daggett	City Of Albuquerque

Rural Water Provider	John Chavez	Sandia Peak Utility
Environmental Interest	Sharon Wirth	National Audubon Society
County Government	Jacobo Martinez	Valencia County
County Government	Dan McGregor	Bernalillo County
Business Interest	Michelle Henrie	NM Business Water Task Force
Tribal Entity	Jessica Tracy, Sandia	Appointed by Pueblo and Tribal Governors
Tribal Entity	Sharon Hausam, Laguna	Appointed by Pueblo and Tribal Governors
Tribal Entity	TBD	Appointed by Pueblo and Tribal Governors
Watershed interest	Lynn Montgomery	Coronado Soil & Water Conservation District
Federal Agency	Paul Tashjian	US Fish & Wildlife
Sustainability	Katherine Yuhas	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Flood Control	Ron Brown, Chair	AMAFCA
Business	Steve Perich, Vice Chair	Association of Commerce & Industry of New Mexico (A

In July 2014, the Mid Region Council of Government's (MRCOG) Water Resources Board established a Steering Committee for the purpose of preparing an update to the Region's Water Plan that had been created approximately ten years prior. This action by the Water Resource Board was in response to a requirement by the New Mexico Legislature and the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) for all regions in New Mexico to update their regional water plans. The steering committee identified Ron Brown as the Chair and Steven Perich as the Co-Chair.

In addition to the steering committee, the water planning effort included developing a list of stakeholders to facilitate outreach to individuals and entities interested in the water planning update; the list is on file with the ISC. Invitations to all meetings were e-mailed to this list. Steering committee members were asked to share information about the process with stakeholders in the region.

2.2 Description of the Public Involvement Process

The public involvement process was centered on developing a representative steering committee, informing the regions about the process for updating the RWPs, and revitalizing interest in regional water planning. All steering committee meetings were open to the public and interested stakeholders. Meetings were announced to the master stakeholder list by e-mail, and participation from all meeting attendees was encouraged. Steering committee members served as a conduit of information to others and through their own organizational communications with other agencies to encourage participation in the process.

2.2.1 Regional Water Plan Update Kick Off Meeting (Round 1)

An initial kick off meeting for the Regional Water Plan Update was held in the Middle Rio Grande region on April 2, 2014. In preparation for this meeting, a master stakeholder list was developed building from the previous plan, and extensive efforts were made to begin identifying

the representatives from the water user groups who should be invited to the meetings. These individuals were identified through research, communication with other water user group representatives in the region, contacting local organizations and entities, and making phone calls. Other individuals and entities that have an interest in water were also added to the master stakeholder list. The meeting was announced through e-mails and by telephonic communication with the preliminary stakeholder list.

The purpose of the initial meeting was to present the regional water planning update process to the region and continue to conduct outreach to begin building the steering committee. Many of the meeting attendees were not on the master stakeholder list, and those individuals were added to the list. Representatives from many of the water user groups attended the meeting and were instrumental in identifying other individuals as potential representatives for a particular group.

2.2.2 Presentation of the Technical Information to the Water Planning Region (Round 2)

A second meeting was held for the Middle Rio Grande region on January 23, 2015. The purpose of the meeting was to present the technical data compiled and synthesized for the region. The data presented included population and economic trends through a series of tables, the administrative water supply, the projected future water demand, and the gap between supply and demand for both normal and drought years. In addition, the presentation reaffirmed the development of a steering committee to guide the process as outlined in the RWP Handbook.

2.2.3 Development of the Public Involvement Process and List of Projects, Programs, and Policies in the Water Planning Region (Round 3)

The Steering Committee met every other week from February 17, 2015 through June 9, 2015 at the Dekker/Perich/Sabatini office located at 7601 Jefferson St., NE Suite 100, Albuquerque NM 87109. Meetings were not publicly advertised due to budget limitations but were open to the public, and representatives of interested groups frequently attended the meetings. Each Steering Committee member identified an Alternate to represent their organization in the event the primary member was unable to attend a meeting and early in the process a telephone call-in number was created so that any interested parties or committee members unable to attend in person had the opportunity to teleconference the meeting if they so wished. Copies of the Meeting Report summaries are included in **Appendix B**.

During the first few meetings, the Committee discussed and reached consensus on what could and could not be accomplished in the limited time period, and with the limited funds available. The Committee ultimately concluded that it would be most valuable to policy makers in the Mid Region area for the Committee to assess what has been implemented in the past ten years, and for the Committee to offer policy makers its collective recommended strategies as to the highest priority items to focus on during the next five years, which the ISC has defined as the planning horizon for this Regional Plan Update. To facilitate this effort the Committee determined it

would utilize the Recommended Strategies section of the current Mid Region Water Plan as a tool for the update. A copy of those existing Mid Region Plan Recommended Strategies can be found in Appendix A.

The Committee created a table of the Recommended Strategies. This covered the nine broad categories and a total of 43 subcategories that had been identified during development of the previous Mid Region Water Plan. The Committee then worked as a group to assess the Effectiveness of the current Plan Recommended Strategies, using its collective knowledge base to assess what had been achieved over the past ten years. The Committee scored each item on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most effective. The Committee then reviewed each of the current Plan Recommended Strategies using its collective knowledge base to identify what it felt to be the priority level of each Recommended Strategy. The same 1 to 5 scoring level was used with 5 being the highest priority.

Ideas for new projects, policies, or plans was also generated at the steering committee meetings. The projects are items typically found on Infrastructure Capital Improvement Projects (ICIP) lists, and Water Trust Board applications. Policies or programs that the Steering Committee would like to see included in the plan were also discussed and included.

Meeting # 3 – 02/17/15: The group reviewed the update process, which was important for new people who had not attended meetings before, and the timeline for updating the RWP. The steering committee/PVWUO membership and leadership were affirmed, with alternates named as appropriate. The group decided that future meetings would be held every other Tuesday at the Dekker/Perich/Sabatini Office in Albuquerque from 1:30 to 3 pm. A conference call number was also set-up so that members could join the meeting via phone. A worksheet to help gather ideas and data about updated/new projects/policies/programs was distributed and strategies for completing it were discussed. The group discussed the public welfare statement from the previous plan and decided there was not enough time to craft a new one that truly reflected regional input.

Meeting # 4 – 03/03/15: Bob Wessely provided the group a review of the previous water plan (2004) including recommendations that had been enacted to date. The group discussed concerns with the water budget data, but determined that they didn't have the resources or capability to update the regional water budget and agreed to move forward with the data provided by the NM ISC. The committee determined that it should rate the 2004 strategies by effectiveness and priority moving forward as part of the update process. Alternate project/policy/program surveys were shared with the committee as tools for gathering data for the update.

Meeting # 5 – 03/17/15: Members of the committee presented information on projects completed and in-progress, including a progress report from Rio Rancho, and an update from ABCWUA. A recommendation assessment was submitted by Michelle Henrie.

Public Meeting – 03/21/15: The Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly held a forum on *Climate Disruption & Our Water Future; Mitigate, Adapt, or Suffer – A Call for New Strategies* at UNM Dane Smith Hall. This was not a steering committee meeting, but a public meeting geared towards open discussion about water issues. A summary of key issues and proposed strategies was summarized and presented to the steering committee at the June 9th meeting.

Meeting # 6 – 03/31/15: Dr. Bruce Thomson of UNM gave a presentation to the committee about how the water supply data for the previous plan was developed. The URGSiM model was created using actual diversion and pumping data when available, then balancing the model to determine the unknowns like evaporation and riparian transpiration. This evapotranspiration accounts for 42% of the water budget and there is no water right for this “use”. After the presentation the committee began reviewing the alternatives in Chapter 8 of the previous plan.

Meeting # 7 – 04/14/15: The meeting began with a presentation by Janet Jarrett on the MRGCD. Modernization of the MRGCD water management had reduced diversions from the river almost in half over the last 25 years. A presentation on the status of the RWP process was given by the ISC (Angela Bordegaray) and work plan for the remainder of the planning process was lined out. After the presentation the committee continued reviewing the alternatives in Chapter 8 of the previous plan.

Meeting # 8 – 04/28/15: The group quickly reviewed the update process at the beginning of the meeting. A table of combined alternatives/recommendations from Chapters 8 and 10 of the previous plan had been distributed to the group by Elaine Hebard. The group noted the completion of the alternative. The effectiveness of the alternative on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is the least effective, 5 is the most). The priority of the alternative on a scale of 1 being the lowest priority and 5 has the highest priority. There was concern that the subregions of Rio Jemez and Rio Puerco, which are discussed in Chapter 12, are not being covered in this exercise. Outreach to these subregions for input was discussed.

Meeting # 9 – 05/12/15: The group completed the review and prioritization of the Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 alternatives at this meeting. The meeting concluded by discussing new project ideas to discuss at the next meeting, including data sources such as Infrastructure and Capitol Improvement Plans (ICIP) and Water Trust Board applications. The group was encouraged to bring new project ideas to discuss.

Meeting # 10 – 05/26/15: The meeting began with a short presentation from Larry Blair describing new projects that Eastern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority are working on. A discussion on the status of the RWP process was led by ISC and Laila Sturgis and deadlines for submitting new material were discussed. The plan for reviewing the draft and the public involvement plan for the next 12 months were reviewed. The steering committee

began to review the ICIP data for this region, but due to the size and population of this region, the list is overwhelming and not a helpful planning tool.

Meeting # 11 – 06/09/15: The group reviewed the timeline for completion. The draft public involvement plan was provided to the group for review. The group strategized on methods that would increase participation in the Rio Puerco and Rio Jemez subregions. The alternatives from Chapter 12 were not evaluated as there was not sufficient participation from these subregions. There was also concern that the plan can easily become urban centric, and increased outreach in rural areas is needed. A summary of information compiled by the Water Assembly was quickly discussed at the meeting and then forwarded to members for more detailed review. After again reviewing ICIP and Water Trust Board data, the steering committee felt it would be more beneficial to point the readers of the water plan to the appropriate agency websites, as any static table of projects would quickly become outdated.

2.3 Public Involvement in Middle Rio Grande Water Planning Region in Fiscal Year 2015-2016

During the Round 3 meetings in the spring of 2015, the steering committee worked with the technical contractors to begin identifying the best approach to develop a public involvement plan and the identification of the projects, programs, and policies to include in the plan. During FY 2015-2016, this process will continue, with the ISC contractors working with the regions to complete the two regional tasks (Sections 2 and 8 of the Updated Regional Water Plan). The ISC contractor is responsible for working with the steering committee to obtain the information necessary to draft both sections. The steering committee is not responsible for drafting the text of these sections; however, they will provide much of the information to be included by the contractor in these sections of the plan. The outcome of the process in 2016 will be completed *Public Involvement in Planning Process* and *Implementation of Strategies to Meet Future Water Demand* sections.

The ISC contractors will facilitate three meetings with the Steering Committee between October 2015 and May 2016 to continue working on identifying projects, programs, and policies, as well as an approach to implementation. The first meeting will be held once the ISC has released a draft of the technical sections of the updated regional water plan. Subcommittees may meet as needed to work on the projects, programs, and policies that pertain to their area of interest. ISC contractors will not facilitate these meetings. The subcommittee will provide the ISC contractors additional information as needed on the projects, programs, and policies reviewed in the subcommittees.

2.3.1 Meeting Locations and Times

The steering committee made the following recommendations regarding meeting times and locations:

- Albuquerque remains is the preferred location, but Belen or San Isidro are also options
- Public meeting advertisement would include radio, and flyers in rural locations like feed stores, post offices, and grocery stores.
- Weekends or evening should be considered to ease participation from those who can't miss work hours.
- Be considerate of conflicts with local events when planning public meetings
- Consider a website where the public can submit comments on the plan and suggest new alternatives
- Steering committee members will continue to assist with outreach.

2.3.2 Public Outreach

The regional water planning process will continue to be an open and inclusive process. The steering committee will continue to keep all water planning meetings open to the general public and to forward the invitation e-mails at their discretion. Generally, steering committee members ensure that other concerned or interested individuals receive the announcement and have communicated key contacts to add to the stakeholder list throughout the planning process. At the present time, it is not anticipated that the ISC will initiate or ask the regions to hold a general public meeting to present the planning process to the public at large. Because public outreach has been inclusive throughout the update process, members of the public who have an interest in water have either been invited directly or indirectly through the steering committee representative. The contractors will continue to encourage the steering committee members to communicate with interested stakeholders about the planning process.