

**Tularosa Basin Desalination Research Center - Feasibility Study**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute**  
**Las Cruces New Mexico**  
**August 22, 2002**

**Attendees**

Lorenzo Arriaga - USBR/EI Paso

Cathy Klett – NM WRRRI

Mike Mayes – El Paso Water Utility

Jim Sizemore – NM State Engineers Office

Tom Jennings – USBR/Denver

Steve Easley – City of Alamogordo

Rick Huff – USGS/Las Cruces

Mike Hightower – Sandia

Eddie Livingston – Livingston & Assoc.

Andrea Mendoza – NM State Engineer Office

Paul Kinshella – Phoenix Water

Del Holz – USBR/Denver

Kevin Heberle – City of Alamogordo Engineer

John Layman – Nims-Calvani Architects

**Welcome/Goals and Objectives- Mike Hightower**

Mike welcomed members of the Executive Committee (EC) to the meeting. Mike had everyone introduce themselves and then reviewed the proposed meeting agenda, and presented the following meeting goals and objectives:

- Provide overview of recent outreach activities,
- Review Research Facility concept site selection, site layout, facility design,
- Review proposed facility operations and management plans, and
- Identify schedule for updated report, and future activities through October

**Tularosa Basin Outreach Activities – Mike Hightower and Tom Jennings**

Mike and Tom reviewed outreach activities since the last meeting in July. Presentations on the proposed Research Center was provided to Sen. Bingaman's Energy and Water staffer, Mike Connor on August 12<sup>th</sup> while he was at Sandia.

Mike and Tom have met and have been working with the BOR Director of Research over the past several weeks. These interactions and her comments on the report have been discussed on the conf. calls, but they continue to work closely with her as she is interacting with OMB to get them to review the facility study document. The draft report has been updated several times in the past month to accommodate her comments and suggestions and also those of members of the EC.

Mike Hightower also gave a presentation at the New Mexico Water Research Symposium in Socorro on August 13<sup>th</sup> on the Tularosa Basin study efforts. The conference was attended by about 170 people. The presentation was well attended and seemed to be well received.

Two articles came out in late July and early August on the Facility Study. One was in the New August 2-8 issue of the New Mexico Business Weekly and the other was in the July issues of the WRRRI magazine. The NMBW report was not as well written or as factual as the WRRRI report. The WRRRI article will be the basis for an article in a major southwestern ground water journal.

Additionally, Mike Hightower will be giving a presentation on Sept 10<sup>th</sup> in Las Cruces to the Texas-New Mexico Water Commission on the status of the project.

### **Draft Report- Mike Hightower**

Mike handed out copies of the latest draft report of the study for review by the Executive Committee. The report has been upgraded based on comments from the EC and the BOR. Each section was discussed in conjunction with the comments from the EC during the day. All of the suggested comments were to be incorporated into a new draft that will be sent to the BOR on Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> for further review by BOR and OMB.

### **Feasibility Study Progress**

#### Site Recommendations and Issues-

Tom Jennings went over the reevaluation of the potential sites and the review of a new city site on LaVell Rd. The top rated sites were reinvestigated by BOR personnel with Eddie on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Based on this reassessment, Tom suggested that the new city site provided the best location based on the evaluation criteria established including access, utilities, fire protection, and costs. Because this is in the city limits, this site will cost as much as \$500K-1000K less to develop than the other two top sites.

Based on the hydrology report, it was suggested that an area for water wells be located about three miles from all the sites, so there is no advantage to sites further west of the city owned site, and potential environmental issues of ground water taken from the city site become moot. The city site has pipeline right of ways available from the suggested well field to the site so there appear to be no access issues.

Based on this information, the EC identified the new city site as the preferred alternative and that the private and state owned sites be identified as alternatives A and B with no specific ranking. The site plan will be upgraded to reflect both the new location and the location of the proposed well field.

#### Site Layout-

With a preferred site identified, the EC customized the general site layout for the preferred site. The facility location and the location of the concentrate management research, renewable energy, and agricultural beneficial use areas were laid out to make optimum use of the preferred site. These final site layout suggestions were provided to the architect to incorporate in updated site drawings.

#### Facility Design –

John Layman of Nims-Calvani, discussed the suggested changes in the facility design floor plan and some possible options based on input from the last EC meeting. A preferred option was selected and a few changes recommended. The EC discussed the water feature and entrance and suggested some changes to make the entrance friendlier to visitors and students. This included drop off areas for school busses, a smaller water feature, and shading for the entrance. He will make changes and have them ready for a conference call on Sept 4.

#### Operational and Management Plans-

The EC extensively discussed the operational and management plans. They reviewed the roles and responsibilities of all of the management structure. They recommended that a chairperson be identified for the Executive Board to insure direction of the board. They suggested that an associate director may be needed that would be locally based to assist in state and local information sharing and marketing. They also suggested that Project Administration and Budgeting replace Contracting since this better identifies the true functions provided.

### NEPA and Cultural Investigations–

Information on facility operations and their environmental impact have been provided to Del Holz as part of the NEPA investigation. Further investigations are planned for September 16th. As part of the NEPA activities, a public information meeting is recommended. Steve Easley agreed to get the BOR and Sandia on the Agenda for the Alamogordo City Commission Meeting to officially notify them of the status of the project study and the preferred site and suggested layout and floor plan.

### Permitting –

Because of a site for a single well field for any of the sites, less permitting and exploratory drilling will be needed. Therefore, the major issue to pursue is to file for a water right transfer or land owner approval for water rights. Based on discussions with the State Engineers Office, they suggested that the BOR file for water rights for the site. Tom Jennings and Lorenzo will look into what it takes for the BOR to file for water rights. The permitting process will take about 3-5 months once the request is filed.

### Facility Design/Build and RFQ Issues

Based on typical conditions, we will need dimensional data for the site plan and design layout, topographical information, and hydrology information before going out for an RFQ. This information will be the focus of the next meeting in September.

### Facility Brochure

We also discussed the work initiated for a color brochure for the proposed facility as a marketing tool. A draft brochure has been prepared by the BOR through Mike Norris's staff at Yuma. There appears to be some reluctance within the BOR to publish a brochure at this time. Therefore, the brochure will stay in draft form until we get better direction from the BOR.

### **Next Steps**

The EC discussed the next steps for the project. These include:

- Get on City of Alamogordo City Council calendar in Sept. (~24<sup>th</sup>)
- Set up time to meet with congressional candidates in Sept.
- Conf. Call on Sept 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss updates to site layout, design, building layout, etc.
- Next meeting on Monday, Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> at WRRRI to discuss information needed for a design/build package, and review final report to be submitted.