

Meeting Minutes
Region 14 URFPG-Subcommittee 2 Meeting
Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 10:00 am

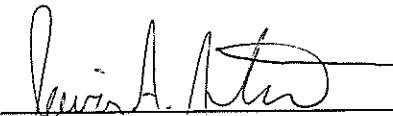
<u>Subcommittee Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present (✓)/Absent (X) / Alternate Present (*)</u>
Omar L. Martinez, Chair	<i>Water districts</i>	X
Oscar D. "Jay" Ornelas	<i>Agricultural interests</i>	X
Gilberto Saldana Jr.	<i>Counties</i>	✓
Jeff Bennett	<i>Environmental interests</i>	✓
Javier Acosta	<i>Municipalities</i>	✓
David "Dave" Hall	<i>Public</i>	✓
Gisela Dagnino	<i>Water utilities</i>	✓
Levi Bryand	<i>Water Utilities</i>	✓
Carlos Velarde	<i>Public</i>	✓
Delbert Humberson	International Boundary Water Commission	X
Others Present:		
Annette Gutierrez, RGCOG	Jeff Irvin - AECOM, PIC	
Richard Bagans	Alejandra Marco - AECOM	
Gilbert Andujo, AECOM	Lily Cartwright - AECOM	
Bryan Blaisdell, AECOM	Dr. Apurba Borah, IBWC	
Chris Wright, AECOM		

- Chris Wright, AECOM, welcomed the members of Subcommittee 2 and asked if any of them had any interests in any specific Flood Mitigation Projects (FMP). Jeff Bennett mentioned he had interest in two FMPs. He reminded everyone of the 2008 flooding in Presidio and Ojinaga, Mexico out of the Rio Conchos. He explained the flooding occurred due to sediment, infilling and loss of conveyance capacity. He said he was interested in an environmental flows program. The second category of strategies would be nature based solutions that lifts the stream functions such as recharge and habit maintenance floodplain connectivity. AECOM asked if Jeff Bennett could provide them with any studies that he may have to assist them. Jeff Irvin also mentioned these concerns should get cross referenced in Subcommittee 3 as well. Jeff Bennett also mentioned the National Park Service has conducted many studies for over fourteen years. He also said he could send Steven Lance's contact information from the Park Service.
- Chris Wright provided the objective of the Subcommittee. He stated this committee is for task 4B(c) – Identification and Evaluation of Potential Flood Management Projects, which will cover the following:
 - Representative of entire region
 - Some meetings will focus on just the Rio Grande Main Stem
 - Meeting topics can be identified from agendas
 - Members can introduce any related topics from throughout region

3. Chris Wright next provided a presentation of technical issues. He provided a definition of Flood Mitigation Projects (FMPs) with examples, stakeholder coordination for FMPs in the planning stage, summary of selected planning documents to be used for El Paso County FMPs, and to have a discussion of planned flood projects that potentially have multiple benefits.
4. Christine Westermen from SWCA provided an overview of the Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. and how it applies to the planning group's projects. She reminded the group as they begin to do the environmental review for flood strategies, they will need to review impacts to jurisdictional waters, primarily waters wetlands. As part of the natural resources review, projects will be evaluated for their potential to affect jurisdictional wetlands/waters that is GIS-based. The projects will also be reviewed to determine potential U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permitting requirements. The USACE permitting may be affected by impacts to other sensitive resources (e.g., federal endangered species or significant cultural resources). She also provided an explanation on the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule that significantly reduced waters protections (exception for ephemeral streams), that was remanded in August 2021. She said this rule change was particularly significant in arid environments and affected status of arroyos. In June 2021, there was a proposed Intention to revise the definition of "Waters of the U.S." and is likely to revert to pre-2015 regulations. She said this regulatory environment will continue to evolve over the course of the flood planning cycle.
5. Confirm chair of subcommittee
Dave Hall made a motion to have Javier Acosta serve as the Chair for Subcommittee 2. Gisela Dagnino seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.
6. Tentative future meeting dates for subcommittee
The subcommittee agreed to meet November 4, 2021, at 10:00 am for the second meeting.
7. Javier Acosta made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gilbert Saldana seconded. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

11/04/2021

Date



Subcommittee 2 Chairman, Javier Acosta