

REGION 14. UPPER RIO GRANDE FLOOD PLANNING GROUP  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, January 27, 2026  
1:00 P.M. (MST)  
8037 Montana Ave, Suite 100, El Paso, TX 79925

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present (✓)/Absent (X) / Alternate Present (*)</u>
Javier Acosta, Chair	<i>Municipalities</i>	✓
David "Dave" Hall, Vice Chair	<i>Public</i>	✓
Gisela Dagnino, Secretary	<i>Water Utilities</i>	✓
Jeff Bennett	<i>Environmental Interests</i>	✓
Vacant	<i>Industries</i>	X
Omar L. Martinez	<i>Water Districts</i>	✓
Vacant	<i>Agricultural Interests</i>	X
Rene Rodriguez	<i>Small Business</i>	✓
Gilberto Saldaña Jr.	<i>Counties</i>	✓
Oscar Villalobos	<i>Flood Districts</i>	✓
Levi Bryand	<i>Water Utilities</i>	✓
Rick Tate	<i>River Authorities</i>	X
Carlos Velarde	<i>Public</i>	✓
Teira Solis	<i>Generating Electric Utilities</i>	✓

<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(✓)/Absent(X)/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
John-Clayton Campbell	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	✓
Elijah Casas	General Land Office/Region 14 Liaison	✓
Anita Machiavello	Texas Water Development Board	X
Vacant	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	X
Vanessa Rosales-Herrera	Region 15 Liaison	X
Dr. Apurba Borah	International Boundary Water Commission	X
Leticia Ausberger	Texas Division of Emergency Management	✓
JD Lawrence	Texas Department of Agriculture	✓
Judy Albus	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	X
Nick Collins	Texas Water Development Board	✓
Luis Alday	AECOM	✓
Travis Brand	AECOM	✓
Antonio Santana	Texas Department of Transportation	X
Kevin Wessels	Texas Water Development Board	✓

Belle Gonzalez	Texas Water Development Board	✓
Justin Kozak	The Nature Conservancy	✓
Allison Hand	Freese & Nichols	✓
John Blount	Texas General Land Office	✓
Fernando Perez	Texas Division of Emergency Management	✓
Cynthia Nolasco	Texas Water Development Board	✓
Monica Wedo	AECOM	✓
Judy Lucio	Texas Division of Emergency Management	✓
Others Present:		
Aarón Burciaga, RGCOG		
Dr. Santosh Palmate, Texas A&M AgriLife Research Extension – El Paso Center		
Isadora Garcia, City of Alpine, TX		

1. Welcome and call to order

Chairman Acosta received confirmation that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

2. Public Comments

Chairman Acosta asked if there were any public comments from the public. There being none, he moved on to agenda item #3.

3. Review and approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 5, 2026.

Vice Chairman Dave Hall made a motion to approve the Minutes from January 5, 2026. Voting Member Gilbert Saldana seconded the motion. Chairman Acosta called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. TWDB Updates

Nick Collins provided TWDB updates regarding the Technical Memorandum, that was due January 7, 2026. Nick Collins briefed the group regarding the Technical Memorandum, administrative and completeness reviews are ongoing with a 30-Day review period. TWDB staff will notify regions with a notice of receipt to Task 5A, or request for information if technical memorandum is found to be administratively incomplete. Following the administrative completeness review, TWDB staff will provide informal comments. Furthermore, Nick provided a reminder on work performed under Task 4C, performance of Flood Management Evaluations is not contingent on approval of the technical memorandum. The goal of Task 4C is for the URGRFPG to perform a subset of the potential FME(s) identified in Task 4A and in doing so identifying and evaluate additional FMP(s) or FMS(s) that could be recommended under Task 5A. URGRFPG has flexibility determining which identified FME(s) should be performed under Task 4C and should approve their list at a regular RFPG meeting. Nick Collins briefed the group on the Chair's led Conference Call that was held most recently on December 3, 2025, to discuss regional approached to Task 5B. Nick mentioned that the ordered list of FME(s) for TWDB to perform under Task 5B is due on or before March 26, 2026. Prior to submission

RFPG's should approve the FME list, as well as the metrics used to determine small rural communities with limited resources. Nick noted FME definitions (small rural community definitions), TWDB refers to it as metrics. FME(s) to be performed by TWDB a reminder email was sent on January 20<sup>TH</sup> to provide details of RFPG requirements for this task. Finally, TWDB contracted with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to create a model for calculating economic losses due to flood events on agricultural lands. The project is now complete, and the Agricultural Flood Loss Guidance Document and analysis tool have been published on TWDB website is now available.

5. Freese and Nichols and The Nature Conservancy – Allison Hand from Freese and Nichols and Justin Kozak from The Nature Conservancy presented on a current on-going project in conjunction with TWDB on a Guidance Manual regarding the use of Nature Based Solutions for Flood Resilience, being developed for TWDB. Mr. Kozak provided the definition and examples of Nature Based Solutions for Flood Resilience, publishing schedule, Nature based Solutions content, how to promote nature based solutions through regional flood planning, and key takeaways. There was much discussion regarding nature based solutions, which is the use of nature to solve problems, which were highlighted in the presentation that have already been implemented within the Region 14 - Upper Rio Grande Flood Planning Group Region. Allison Hand stated the that the draft guidance manual for public comment should be in March and/or possibly April. The final guidance manual should be published in summer of 2026.
6. RIOCOG – Consider and approve the nominee recommendations from the Executive Committee for voting membership to the Upper Rio Grande Flood Planning Group. The URGRFPG Executive Committee processed new voting members prior to the regular meeting. Dr. Santosh Palmate represents agricultural interests, Isadora Garcia represents municipalities, and Chairman Acosta will now represent Industries. Chairman Acosta asked for a motion to approve the new URGRFPG voting members. Voting Member Gisela Dagnino made a motion to approve. Voting Member Levi Bryand seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Hall called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.
7. AECOM – Travis Brand provided general updates – important dates, upcoming events, and other information. Travis updated the group on Senate Bill 3 Disaster Declaration which included 4 counties that are located within the Region 14 URGRFPG. The eligible counties are Edwards, Sutton, Schleicher, and Reeves. Reeves is the only county that has not yet completed this application for outdoor flooding warning sirens. The Region 14 – URGRFPG will reach out to Reeves County to inform them of this important opportunity.
8. AECOM – Travis Brand provided updates on Task 3C – Flood Mitigation and Floodplain Management Goals, and recommended updates to existing goals, and recommended new goals.

9. RIOCOG – Discuss and take action on Task 3C – Flood mitigation and floodplain management goals. This item was tabled due to further discussion needed in order to properly prioritize goals.
10. AECOM – Updates on Task 5B – Recommend a list of Flood Management Evaluations to be performed by TWDB. Travis Brand provided updates and further discussion on Task 5B – Flood Mitigation and Flood Management Goals – Rural Definition. This item was tabled and no action was taken due to a voting member being absent.
11. RIOCOG – Discuss and take action as needed on Task 5B – Recommend a list of flood management evaluations to be performed by TWDB – Adopt a Rural Definition. This item was tabled and no action was taken due to a voting member not being present.
12. RIOCOG – Discuss and take action as needed on Task 5B – Recommend a List of Flood Management Evaluations to be performed by TWDB – Prioritization Guidance. This item was tabled and no action was taken due to a voting member not being present.
13. RIOCOG – Discussion on next General URGRFPG meeting date. The next scheduled Region 14 – URGRFPG meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. MST/2:00 p.m. CST.
14. Chair – ADJOURN

Chairman Acosta made a motion to adjourn. Voting member Levi Bryand seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Hall called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

3/13/2026

Date



Gisela Dagnino, Secretary