

**Notes from URGWOM Steering Committee Meeting; May 11, 2000; 10:00 AM; Corps of Engineers Albuquerque District**

*In attendance:*

Roberta Ball, Corps	Dick Kreiner, Corps
John Cawley, BIA	Tracy Matthews, ISC
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC	William J. Miller, WJM Engineering
Lloyd Gronning, Parsons Engineering Science	Leann Towne, Bureau of Reclamation
Walter Hines, CH <sub>2</sub> M Hill	Dave Wilkins, URGWOM, USGS
Conrad Keyes, Jr., EWRI of ASCE	Mark Yuska, URGWOM, Bureau of Reclamation

- ❖ John Cawley opened the meeting and turned it over to Mark Yuska for an update on URGWOM development and Technical Team activities. Mark distributed a handout that is attached to these notes. Additional discussion and comments are listed below.
  - URGWOM is working well in developing the Annual Operating Plan (AOP). It is able to juggle contracts, accounting, and data successfully. It is pointing up some errors in dam operations that should be helpful.
  - One of the performance enhancements that CADSWES has developed involves clearing two years' data from the model before saving, if the data are not used.
  - The Technical Team received little feedback on the physical model documentation.
  - With data from two more of the lower reaches complete, the team is closer to completing the model by late spring.
  - Collection of groundwater data from Elephant Butte to American Dam is not going well because no good data source has been identified yet. Dave Wilkins is trying to work through the USGS to obtain data from the Elephant Butte Irrigation District.
    - Conrad Keyes suggested that Dave review the data in the New Mexico-Texas Water Commission report on the Rincon model, available on the Bureau of Reclamation web site or on CD from Mike Fahey of El Paso Water Utilities. The report contains drain flows and other measurements from Rincon and Mesilla.
    - Dave stated that he needs gage heights and stream flows.
  - Mark asked Bill Miller to discuss the crop acreage reported by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) and how to check the data independently.
    - MRGCD data are reported by their ditch riders, and they recognize that they often do not report crops in the small fields.
    - Bill is trying to obtain the 1998-1999 crop acreage from the District for validation. The 1999 data are nearly ready to be released but do not include acreage planted by pueblos.



- John Cawley explained that the BIA gets the crop acreage reports from the pueblos and compiles them before providing to MRGCD. He will check on the status of the 1999 data.
- One way to independently check the MRGCD reported crop acreage would be to compare selected fields to the crops reported annually for those fields to the USDA-Farm Services Agency by the farmer.
- Bill is trying to total the reported crop acreage in the middle valley by reach, but he is having a problem grouping the acreage by the correct reach boundaries.
- Bill is also trying to determine the best way to track crop acreage in the future. He is considering using remote sensing resources like satellite imagery.
- Dick Kreiner asked if the Technical Team has determined how they will meet the requirements specified by the Rio Grande Compact Commission Engineer Advisors before they will accept URGWOM.
  - Mark responded that the Engineer Advisors asked that the water accounting model should replicate, within a few acre-feet, the actual numbers for 1995, 1996, and 2000, to prove to them that URGWOM works. In developing the AOP, this is working well.
  - They also plan to demonstrate its accuracy by running URGWOM against currently used daily programs.
  - Leann Towne pointed out that a meeting for the Engineer Advisors to discuss historical operations policies in relation to water accounting, planned for May 10, was postponed, but will be led by the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Bill asked if the Technical Team has developed flood control rules for Caballo.
  - Mark responded that this will be completed after they finish the flood control rules for Elephant Butte. They are using the rules developed by the Bureau of Reclamation.
  - The Technical Team has committed to developing these rules for Caballo with the IBWC soon.
- Issues for consideration by the Steering Committee
  - The Steering Committee should think about what tests of URGWOM should be done to ascertain that it works correctly.
    - Walter Hines reiterated that the City of Albuquerque needs the planning model. He suggested that aggregation of the daily data into monthly timesteps would provide some independent verification of URGWOM and average out daily fluctuations.
    - Mark asked if a formal process is needed for the Steering Committee to propose testing criteria.
    - It is premature to select test criteria until the Technical Team and the operators are more familiar with URGWOM.
  - Gains and losses in the middle valley need to be more accurate, with less fluctuation. Most of the comments on the physical model pertained to possible criteria to use for validating local inflow data used to calculate gains and losses.
    - Bill recommended that the Technical Team work with the water operations staff to determine an acceptable level of accuracy and variation for the data in order to use URGWOM to make operations decisions.

- Different technical teams working on the EIS will need to develop criteria for evaluating impacts on different resources from changes in water operations and work with the URGWOM Technical Team to determine the data resolution and quality necessary to conduct their analyses.
- Dick asked what kinds of data problems are occurring with URGWOM in the middle valley. Bill responded that local inflows account for most of the error but the quantity of water is larger than expected. The model is not calibrated properly.

❖ Database development

- A database is needed to make it easier to get data from the URGWOM environment and to facilitate sharing of data among agencies and the public. The old data management structures used for URGWOM are not robust or suitable for data sharing with other models and databases.
- Mark Treviño had been selected to lead the database development team, but has recently changed jobs, leaving the team without leadership again. No progress will be made on database development until a leader is selected to pull together the needed staff and resources.

❖ The Steering Committee was asked to review a draft letter from the Corps and written by Gail Stockton, to be sent to agencies and organizations requesting funding support for development of the database discussed above.

- Conrad suggested that the groups receiving the letter be the same ones that supported the funding of URGWOM.
- Dick wanted to replace Roberta Ball with Mark Yuska as the point of contact.
- Consider having the letter sent under a joint signature with Colonel Fallin and Michael Gabaldon of the Bureau of Reclamation.

➤ **Additional comments on the draft letter should be provided to Gail Stockton by May 19.**

❖ Gail would like the Steering Committee to consider meeting bimonthly instead of monthly and begin monthly meetings to discuss database development. The Steering Committee should be prepared to discuss this at the **next meeting on June 8 at 10:00 a.m. at the Corps of Engineers conference room.**