

ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR
BART FARIS, VICE
CHAIR
JOSÉ CERRATO

DARRELL KUNDARGI
PAUL VAN GULICK
JONATHAN GONZALES

CHRIS WELCH
KATHERINE TARA

FEBRUARY 14, 2025

Location: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Elaine Howe (Chair), Bart Faris (Vice-Chair), Jonathan Gonzales, Paul van Gulick, Chris Welch, Rin Tara

Board Members Absent: José Cerrato (excused), Darrell Kundargi (excused)

PIC Members Present: Kelsey Bicknell (*Water Authority*), Rowan Hannan (*Water Authority*), Jeff Pompeo (*Water Authority*), Kali Bronson (*Bernalillo County*), Diane Agnew (*Water Authority*), Robert Mullin (*Bernalillo County*), Byron Lueras (*City of Albuquerque*), Corbin Carsrud (*Bernalillo County*), Patrick Chavez (*Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority [AMAFCOA]*), Shellie Eaton (*City of Albuquerque*), Danielle Shuryn (*Water Authority*)

Guests Present: Steve Glass (*Ciudad Soil & Water Conservation District*), Alyssa Ortiz (*Bernalillo County*), David Gatterman (*Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority [SSCAFCA]*), Herman Gallegos (*City of Albuquerque*), Kyle O'Malley (*City of Albuquerque*), Paul Chamberlain (*New Mexico Environment Department [NMED] Ground Water Quality Bureau [GWQB]*), George Schuman (*NMED GWQB*), Noel Hernandez (*NMED GWQB*), Kate Herrell (*NMED GWQB*), Bryce Williamson (*NMED GWQB*)

Call to Order

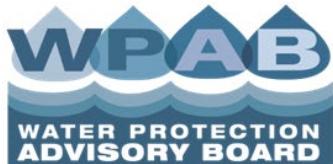
Chair Howe called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM when quorum was established.

I. Approval of Agenda

A. February 14, 2025 Agenda

Vice-Chair Faris moved to approve the January agenda; Mr. Welch seconded the motion.

Board Member	Vote on Motion
Chair Howe	Yes
Vice-Chair Faris	Yes
Darrell Kundargi	Absent (excused)
Chris Welch	Yes
Jonathan Gonzales	Yes
José Cerrato	Absent (excused)
Paul van Gulick	Yes
Rin Tara	Absent (excused)



ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR
BART FARIS, VICE
CHAIR
JOSÉ CERRATO

DARRELL KUNDARGI
PAUL VAN GULICK
JONATHAN GONZALES

CHRIS WELCH
KATHERINE TARA

II. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

B. January 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Mr. van Gulick moved to approve the November meeting minutes; Mr. Welch seconded the motion.

Board Member	Vote on Motion
Chair Howe	Yes
Vice-Chair Faris	Yes
Darrell Kundargi	Absent (excused)
Chris Welch	Yes
Jonathan Gonzales	Yes
José Cerrato	Absent (excused)
Paul van Gulick	Yes
Rin Tara	Absent (excused)

III. Policy Implementation Committee (PIC) Updates

Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) – Update from Ms. Kelsey Bicknell, Environmental Manager

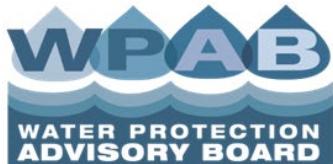
Hewlett-Packard (HP)/Digital Site: Ms. Bicknell reported that drilling for the Water Authority's source water protection monitoring well began on February 10, 2025. The well is planned to reach a total depth of approximately 492 feet below ground surface (bgs) with two screened intervals: one at approximately 320 ft bgs and another at 470 ft bgs.

Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Bulk Fuels Facility Site:

- In early February, Ms. Bicknell and Ms. Agnew met with new staff from Senator Heinrich's office to provide an update on the Site.
- Ms. Bicknell reported on the issuance of a letter from NMED intended to clarify the agency's planned methodology for verifying soil vapor monitoring data collected at the Site from 2016 to 2024 is quantitatively valid. The Water Authority has requested a meeting with the NMED and Air Force to discuss the statistical methods and ensure consistency in data analysis across agencies.
- During a January Site stakeholder call, NMED asked the Air Force if it would be willing to participate in a technical meeting with the Water Authority, to which the Air Force agreed. Ms. Bicknell had since contacted NMED to coordinate the meeting and was awaiting a response at the time of her report.

Questions & Discussion:

Chair Howe asked about the areas or data gaps the new monitoring well for the HP/Digital site was intended to address.



ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR
BART FARIS, VICE
CHAIR
JOSÉ CERRATO

DARRELL KUNDARGI
PAUL VAN GULICK
JONATHAN GONZALES

CHRIS WELCH
KATHERINE TARA

Ms. Bicknell responded that the well, located across the street from Del Norte High School, is intended to monitor an area of the aquifer where the Water Authority is concerned about contaminant migration, particularly 1,4-dioxane, from the HP/Digital Site. It will serve as an early detection, or sentinel well, for potential migration of groundwater contaminants toward that area.

City of Albuquerque, Environmental Health Department – Update from Shellie Eaton, Principal Engineer

Ms. Eaton reported that she had transitioned from the City's Storm Water Management office to the Environmental Health Department as Principal Engineer. She noted that the second Environmental Specialist II position in the department had recently been filled, and the Manager position is expected to be filled within the next couple of months.

Los Angeles Landfill (LALF) Groundwater Monitoring: The groundwater monitoring report for the second half of 2024 for LALF was submitted to NMED at the end of January. Groundwater sampling for the first quarter of 2025 at LALF was also completed in January.

Questions & Discussion:

Chair Howe asked whether groundwater monitoring at LALF was routine or required due to a compliance issue.

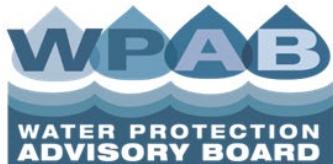
Ms. Eaton responded that monitoring at the Site is routine and required under LALF's Stage 2 Voluntary Abatement Plan.

Bernalillo County (County) – Update from Ms. Kali Bronson, Stormwater Compliance Program Lead

Tijeras Creek Watershed Restoration Project: Ms. Bronson reported that a contractor was identified for the Tijeras Creek Watershed Restoration Project, and work began this week. The project aims to restore a section of Tijeras Creek and its floodplain on a county-owned 12-acre parcel between Los Vecinos Community Center and A. Montoya Elementary School in the Village of Tijeras. The project is expected to be completed by June 2025.

Upper Tijeras Watershed Study: The County, in partnership with USGS, received grant funding to study nutrients sources in the Upper Tijeras Creek watershed, which is impaired for nutrients and subject to a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement. The study examines groundwater-surface water interactions to determine whether nutrients originate from natural or human sources such as septic systems. The project will include sampling for emerging contaminants, including PFAS and compounds from personal care products. Additional funding was approved to install a monitoring well near Tijeras Creek, with drilling expected to begin next month.

Questions & Discussion



ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR	DARRELL KUNDARGI	CHRIS WELCH
BART FARIS, VICE CHAIR	PAUL VAN GULICK	KATHERINE TARA
JOSÉ CERRATO	JONATHAN GONZALES	

Vice-Chair Faris asked whether existing monitoring wells from the nearby Gulton contamination site had been considered for use instead of installing a new well.

Ms. Bronson responded that those wells had not been considered, as they were in poor condition based on site visits. She clarified that the new monitoring well, which includes two nested wells, would be installed near the USGS stage gauge at Coyote Springs Road, where it crosses Tijeras Creek.

Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) – Update from Patrick Chavez

Legislative Update - NM NPDES Primacy: Mr. Chavez discussed AMAFCA's review of Senate Bills 21 (SB 21) and 22 (SB 22) which together address state regulation of discharges into surface waters and the establishment of state primacy for issuing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. AMAFCA participated in committee hearings at the Legislature, primarily voicing concerns over uncertainty in the program's funding structure, i.e., whether it would rely on fees, legislative appropriations, or a combination of both. Another key issue was the private right of action provision, which could impact Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) by shifting enforcement access from federal to local courts.

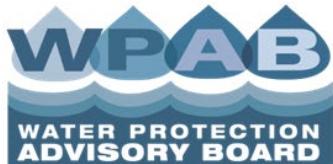
Tijeras Arroyo Use Attainability Analysis: Mr. Chavez noted that Kirtland Air Force Base* was considering a third-party petition to the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) to redesignate the reach of Tijeras Arroyo between the Rio Grande and Four Hills Bridge from "intermittent" to "ephemeral" under New Mexico's Water Quality Standards (20.6.4 NMAC). He stated that this potential reclassification was of particular interest to AMAFCA due to its implications for water quality standards.

*Correction: The Tijeras Arroyo Use Attainability Analysis and petition is being carried out by Sandia National Laboratories

Questions & Discussion

Vice-Chair Faris asked whether a redesignation of the Tijeras Arroyo as ephemeral would reduce required sampling.

Mr. Chavez responded that while the full implications were unclear, the designation change would likely lower the highest attainable use classification, which could result in different water quality standards and monitoring requirements. He noted that AMAFCA's sampling efforts would remain unchanged, as the agency collects samples twice a year at the confluence of the South Diversion Channel and the Tijeras Arroyo. He emphasized the importance of monitoring the situation, as it could set a precedent for a future Use Attainability Analysis of the Rio Grande, which would have broader implications.



ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR

BART FARIS, VICE
CHAIR

JOSÉ CERRATO

DARRELL KUNDARGI

PAUL VAN GULICK

JONATHAN GONZALES

CHRIS WELCH

KATHERINE TARA

Vice-Chair Faris agreed, stating that the Board should monitor any changes resulting from this petition.

IV. Board Business

A. Welcome new member, Rin Tara

The Board welcomed its new member, Mx. Rin Tara. A staff attorney at the Utton Center at the University of New Mexico School of Law, Mx. Tara specializes in water policy and governance, with experience in tribal water issues, hydropower reform, and climate adaptation.

B. Discuss letter to federal representatives regarding the Kirtland Air Force Base Bulk Fuels Facility Jet Fuel Leak

The Board discussed drafting a letter to federal representatives advocating for an accelerated cleanup of the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Bulk Fuels Facility jet fuel spill site. The letter would emphasize reinstating a collaborative technical process for stakeholder engagement and reinitiating interim treatment of the remaining fuel mass in the soil to prevent further groundwater contamination.

Discussion:

Ms. Bicknell provided additional explanation on the key points of the letter. Regarding stakeholder engagement, she explained that reinstating technical working groups, which previously included stakeholders in decision-making, would improve coordination, leverage broader expertise, and speed up progress. She also stressed the need for interim treatment of the remaining fuel mass in the soil, which continues to release vapors and pose a risk to groundwater. While the Air Force plans to address this issue as part of the final remedy, she stressed that taking steps now as part of the interim measure would accelerate overall cleanup and reduce future risks. She further explained that a letter from the Board would reinforce the need for action.

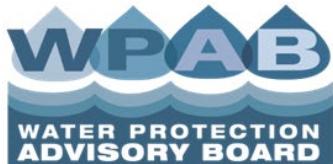
Ms. Agnew added that congressional offices value letters from advisory boards and organizations in dealing with entities such as the Air Force. Given recent discussions regarding site progress, she stressed that formalizing support through a letter would be particularly timely.

Motion:

Vice-Chair Faris moved to establish a subcommittee, consisting of Chair Howe, Vice-Chair Faris, & Mr. van Gulick, to send a letter about the Kirtland Air Force Base Bulk Fuels Facility Jet Fuel Leak to Senator Heinrich and Congresswoman Stansbury; Chair Howe seconded the motion.

Vote:

Board Member	Vote on Motion
Chair Howe	Yes



ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR
BART FARIS, VICE
CHAIR
JOSÉ CERRATO

DARRELL KUNDARGI
PAUL VAN GULICK
JONATHAN GONZALES

CHRIS WELCH
KATHERINE TARA

Vice-Chair Faris	Yes
Darrell Kundargi	Absent (excused)
Chris Welch	Yes
Jonathan Gonzales	Yes
José Cerrato	Absent (excused)
Paul van Gulick	Yes
Rin Tara	Yes

C. Discuss support of a State-led National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program

The Board discussed whether to draft a letter of support for the combined SB 21. The letter would support the bill's passage in the current legislative session, which ends on March 22, 2025.

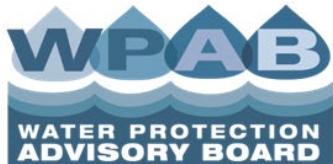
Discussion:

Ms. Bronson expressed general support for state primacy but raised concerns about specific bill language. She highlighted potential implications for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits, particularly language allowing termination of general permit coverage for listed conditions such as water quality standard violations. She also emphasized the need for a clearer definition of "Waters of the State" to prevent legal ambiguity, similar to past challenges with "Waters of the U.S."

Vice-Chair Faris noted that concerns with the bill's language could be addressed during rulemaking if it were to pass, since the bill will also need to be heard by the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC). Vice-Chair Faris asked who the Board should direct a letter to and whether there was enough time for a subcommittee to draft and approve it before the session ended.

Ms. Agnew noted that letters are typically addressed to the committee considering the bill. Given the session timeline, she suggested the Board could schedule a special meeting to approve a letter, if needed.

Mx. Tara added that state primacy seems to be broadly supported at the legislative level, so the Board's input might not significantly influence the bill's passage. Mx. Tara also suggested alternative actions, such as members attending the committee hearing to visibly show support.



ELAINE HOWE, CHAIR
BART FARIS, VICE
CHAIR
JOSÉ CERRATO

DARRELL KUNDARGI
PAUL VAN GULICK
JONATHAN GONZALES

CHRIS WELCH
KATHERINE TARA

Mr. Chavez suggested that if the bill advances to the House, it may provide a better opportunity for the Board to submit a letter or weigh in, as amendments could still be considered at that stage.

Following the discussion, Chair Howe concluded that there was no clear consensus on drafting a letter at this stage and recommended moving forward without further action. No motion was made.

V. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee Report

Chair Howe briefly stated that Mr. Kundargi remains committed to ensuring DEI efforts remain a priority and is interested in exploring ways to encourage involvement from underrepresented areas of the city on the Board. The Board tabled the discussion until Mr. Kundargi is present at the next meeting.

VI. Presentation: Regulatory Update – Priority Contamination Sites in Albuquerque

*Paul Chamberlain, George Schuman, Noel Hernandez, Kate Herrell, & Bryce Williamson
Groundwater Quality Bureau, New Mexico Environment Department
paul.chamberlain@env.nm.gov*

Staff from NMED's Groundwater Quality Bureau (GWQB) provided site-specific updates on several groundwater contamination sites in the Albuquerque area, including the Former BNSF Fueling Area Abatement Site, the Former Digital Equipment Corporation (HP/Digital Site), the Laun-Dry Supply Company Abatement Site, the Former Fox & Associates Facility Site, and the Los Angeles Landfill Site.

The presentation can be [viewed here](#).

VII. Other Board Business

A. Next WPAB Meeting – March 14th, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

Agenda item: To be determined.

VIII. Public Comment Period

There were no comments from the public.

IX. Adjourned at 10:46 AM