The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Chairman Zack Libbin and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Participants introduced themselves. Attendees included:
Zack Libbin, Chairman
Jerry Schikendanz, DASWCD
Carl Lukesh, DAC Flood Commission
Slim Whitlock, Village of Hatch, Caballo SWCD
Clayton Bradley, NMSU
Karen Ray, EBID
Dennis McCarville, EBID
Jack Barnitz, BLM
Rusty Stovall, BLM
Jessica Knopic, BLM
Dwaine Solana, Sunland Park
Conrad Keyes, Paso del Norte Watershed Council

(Blue color indicates Coalition member representative)

Member entities present included: Dona Ana County Flood Commission (DAC Flood), Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID), Village of Hatch, Caballo SWCD, and Dona Ana SWCD (DASWCD) were present

Minutes and bylaws were not yet prepared and will be distributed as soon as possible.

Initiations to other entities who are potentially interested in joining the Stormwater Coalition have not been prepared yet but will be sent by the Chairman as soon as possible. Entities discussed to invite include: City of Las Cruces, Mesilla Park, Sunland Park (expressed interest), NMSU, NMDOT, BNSF, and Dona Ana County.

The group reviewed the two projects prioritized by the group at previous meetings:
1) Cothern and Butler Dam watershed rehabilitation project and study
2) Rincon Arroyo sediment project
Zack provided maps of the areas.

The group reviewed “SMART” goals and how they can apply to these projects:
Substantial, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely

Zack led a discussion on a noteworthy and award winning project done by Souther Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA). The slides from a presentation by Dave Gatterman at a previous date were used to explain and discuss the project.

A discussion on the group goals for the COther/Butler watershed project was led by Zack.
The goal was determined to be a small scale, dual treatment, experiment.

The goals were further refined, discussed, and decided upon were:
1) Demonstrating reduced sediment transport
2) Stabilizing erosion
3) Vegetation establishment
4) Dual treatment research experiment
5) Increased watershed viability
6) Reduced maintenance cost of the dams
7) Repeatable techniques that could applied elsewhere
8) Measurable
   a. Vegetation growth
   b. Flow reduction
   c. Channel aggradation
9) Increased infiltration
10) Aesthetics
11) Watershed education

The methods to reach these goals caused discussion ranging from ideas to concerns that nothing could be done to reach these goals due to a lack of adequate precipitation to reestablish vegetation, high velocities, and sandy, erodible soil conditions. The group discussed one rock dams, hay bale dams, alluvial fans, braided/meandering streambeds, and other options. The group raised many potential obstacles, including Right of way/property ownership issues, Clean Water Act/404 permitting, time and costs required for NEPA clearances, BLM permitting required, a need for ongoing maintenance commitments and funding, and a need for a long term operations and maintenance plan.

Zack led the group to move on the Rincon project starting with an explanation of EBID’s major concern with the Rincon Arroyo: sediment loading to the Rio Grande. Zack explained the arroyo is also called Sandy Draw by its neighbors.

Goals developed by the group include:
1) Control sediment and keep sediment upstream from the river
2) Reduce the need for river channel maintenance
3) Wildlife habitat?
4) Flood protection for the nearby wastewater treatment plant
5) Flood threat reduction for the village of Rincon
6) Education

Methods discussed included bridge maintenance, arroyo maintenance, sediment traps, and Jack Barnitz provided input for keeping sediment upstream on the watershed by improving the health of the watershed and upstream grasslands. Jack explained that BLM is already working towards these watershed health goals and he welcomed ideas for watershed wide improvements. Other methods discussed included simple sediment capture structures, compound sediment capture that could create wildlife habitat, and Zack proposed the idea of an alluvial fan immediately upstream of the river.

Potential obstacles discussed included Clean Water Act/404 permitting, cost and time required for NEPA approval, proximity to the river and endangered species concerns, water rights for habitat, and sediment disposal.
Potential funding sources discussed included US Fish and Wildlife Service, International Boundary and Water Commission, impacted rail roads (BNSF), State Water Trust Board, State capital outlay funding, and Bureau of Reclamation grant opportunities.

Clay Bradley of NMSU asked questions about Tortugas #2 dam located at NMSU and explained that a neighboring project at the landfill was soon to take place.

Slim Whitlock discussed that the Village of Hatch was planning on making use of available funding for planning and improvements to the Placitas Arroyo and explained the Caballo SWCD progress on the Garfield dam sediment removal.

The BLM was asked questions about the progress approving sediment removal permits. The BLM updated the group and noted that only DAC Flood had requested a permit. Jessica explained that a maintenance plan for sediment removal was desirable documentation and that a letter from EBID to DAC Flood to sediment to be removed from Anthony Dam was required since EBID is the primary right of way holder.

The meeting ended by discussing the next month’s meeting and people to invite.

Meeting adjourned 4:15 pm.