

Environmental Planning Advisory Committee (EPAC) Meeting Summary

Summary of 9:30 a.m., Friday, December 1, 2023, Meeting

Full Video Recording (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-86uYrU7z4>

ATTENDEES

Voting Members

Natalie Shepp, Pima County DEQ
Christina McVie, Tucson Audubon
Barabara Johnson, Tohono O'odham Nation SXD
Kimberly Baeza, Pima County RWRD
Alexandra Chavez, Town of Oro Valley
Teresa Bravo, TEP
Howard Myers, SAHBA
Jessica Rodriguez, Tucson Water
Paula Bluemer, Town of Marana
Charles Stack, Town of Oro Valley citizen

Abigail Okrent, Pima County DEQ
David Robinson, Tucson Audubon
Ben Elias, City of Tucson
Jessica Rodriguez, City of Tucson

Non-Voting Members

Katie Predick, Arizona Sonora Desert Museum

Staff Lead

Hannah Oden

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was conducted electronically and called to order by the Chair at 9:31 a.m. Introductions were made.

2. In-kind Form

Members were informed that PAG would calculate in-kind contributions for meeting time from the attendees list. Members were asked to inform PAG Planning Coordinator Hannah Oden if their work is funded by federal dollars.

3. Approval of October 6, 2023, EPAC Meeting Summary

Action: A motion was made by Christina McVie and seconded by Paula Bluemer to approve the Oct. 6, 2023, EPAC Meeting Summary. Approval was unanimous.

4. Nomination and Election of EPAC Chair and Vice Chair

Action: A motion was made by Christina McVie and seconded by Paula Bluemer to elect Abigail Okrent as Chair and Paula Bluemer as Vice Chair. Approval was unanimous.

5. Update on PAG Area Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan)

PAG Planning Manager, Mead Mier-Welborn, provided an overview of the annual administrative process to update the data in the appendices of the PAG Areawide Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan). Administrative updates do not include any changes to adopted policies or permit review procedures but can inform agencies that fund our program on progress made towards our regional water quality conditions, accomplishments, and recommendations for consideration of related funding opportunities. Annual administrative updates will aid the next comprehensive update in 2025, during which the entire plan will undergo thorough and complete review. Ms. Mier-Welborn shared topics that have been included in the draft administrative update so far, stated which local, state, and federal agencies contributed, and gave a preview of next steps. Members interested in providing expert review or any recent information about water quality conditions, accomplishments or tasks for the Action Plan were asked to contact 208info@PAGregion.com. For inclusion in this year's administrative update, comments and review should be provided by the end of Jan. 2024. The current plan can be found at <https://pagregion.com/sustainability/water-quality/208-plan/>.

This was an information item.

6. Natural Infrastructure in Dryland Streams

Dr. Laura Norman from U.S. Geological Survey provided a presentation on Natural Infrastructure in Dryland Streams (NIDS). Dr. Norman reviewed the science behind ecohydrology and how NIDS can benefit the environment. These benefits include flood control, increased water availability, erosion control, and improved soil carbon storage and sequestration. Statistics of the impacts of rock detention structures, beaver dam analogues, and gabions were also provided. This item was identified in the EPAC Top Environmental Issues List for 2023 and a presentation was requested by EPAC members.

The presentation is available [here](#).

This was an information item.

7. EPAC Top Environmental Issues List for 2024

PAG Planning Coordinator Hannah Oden reviewed the final draft of the EPAC Top Environmental Issues List for 2024. Ms. Oden presented the purpose of the list, the development process, and key changes from the previously approved list.

Barbara Johnson, Tohono O'odham Nation SxD, requested more specificity for ongoing efforts and how the issues list could be used to track tangible committee accomplishments using measurable actions.

Abigail Okrent, Pima County DEQ, expressed the importance of addressing environmental justice in the issues list and Natalie Shepp, Pima County DEQ, requested that this issue be moved to the top of the list with the previous title.

The presentation is available [here](#).

Action: A motion was made by Christina McVie and seconded by Abigail Okrent to postpone final adoption of the EPAC Top environmental Issues List for 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

8. EPAC Membership and Vacancies

PAG Planning Coordinator Hannah Oden reviewed the committee structure, member roles and process for filling vacancies. Members were reminded of the requirements for voting members, along with the responsibilities and capabilities of both voting and non-voting members.

This was an information item.

9. Future Agenda Items

Suggested future agenda topics to be considered by PAG included:

- A presentation on wildlife connectivity
- Update on current actions related to the Carbon Reduction strategies and EPAC and subcommittee involvement
- A presentation of Pima County's Priority Climate Action Plan
- EPAC Top Environmental Draft Issues List for 2024

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.