

Summary of Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: July 31, 2023

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Customer Care Center Room CR-C145, San Antonio Water System Office
2800 US Hwy 281 N., San Antonio, TX 78212

Meeting chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitators: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support, TWDB
John Sutton, Water Conservation Manager, TWDB

Entity	Member* Alternate		
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Leslie Patterson	Institutional Water Users	Bill Hoffman* Eddy Trevino
Texas Department of Agriculture	David Villarreal*	Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation	Sarah Schlessinger* Colin McDonald
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Vanessa Chapman	Higher Education	Robert Mace* Allen Berthold
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	Mitch Conine	Agricultural Groups	John Bender
Texas Water Development Board	Erika Mancha	Refining and Chemical Manufacturing	Craig Elam*
Regional Water Planning Groups	Aubrey Spear*	Electric Generation	Greg Carter*
Federal Agencies		Mining and Recovery of Minerals	CJ Tredway*
Municipalities	Karen Guz*	Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture	Sara Riggins
Groundwater Conservation Districts	Julia Stanford	Water Control and Improvement Districts	
River Authorities		Rural Water Users	Kyle Eppler* Jewel Uzquiano
Environmental Groups	Jennifer Walker*	Municipal Utility Districts	Donna Howe* Whitney Milberger
Irrigation Districts			

Also present:

Interested Parties – Natalie Houston (USGS), Valerie Miller, Stacy Pandey, Virginia Collier, Perry Fowler, Patrick Schriver, Marshall Elliot.

TWDB Staff – John Dupnik, John Sutton, Daniel Rice, Shae Luther, Jaclyn Buck, Mark Mathis, Denise Livingston.

** Documents can be found at: <https://savetexaswater.org/meeting/council-meetings.html> **

1. Introduction:

The meeting began at 10:32 a.m.

John Sutton introduced new staff member, Denise Livingston

Roll Call was taken. 17 of the 23 entities were in attendance.

Karen Guz introduced guests Patrick Shriver and Marshall Elliot, SAWS Water Resource Dept., with duties including water loss control.

2. Notes from the presiding officer.

- Meeting format:
 - WCAC will meet in a hybrid manner. However, when the agenda includes action items, the board will meet in person with a quorum. I.e. regarding approval of minutes, please review minutes for accuracy and provide comments as soon as you receive them. The vote on approval of minutes will be held until there is an in-person quorum.
 - Discussion was held on the location of the in-person meetings. It was agreed that the in-person meetings will still be held in Austin.
 - Robert Mace added that the presiding officer has to be in person and also, other committees he sits on require voting members to have their camera on. This is also a requirement in other governmental committees. Therefore, it was agreed that voting members will have their cameras on.
 - Reminder to please mute yourself if you are not talking.
- Alternates:

Karen advised members, if you do not have an alternate, please appoint an alternate to represent you if you are unable to attend a meeting. We need 12 people to satisfy a quorum. Alternates become voting members when the member is not present.

 - Send your alternate's name and contact information to Denise Livingston.
- Meeting Frequency:
 - It was discussed that perhaps a poll should be sent out to determine the best dates for a quarterly meeting. At this point, monthly meetings are not required. However, work groups need to start meeting again on a regular, more frequent basis. David V. and Sarah S. agreed setting up a quarterly schedule for the year would work best.
 - A September meeting poll was sent out with Sept 11 being the best possible meeting date. At this time, no confirmed meeting date has been set.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Board Vacancies and Term Expirations:

Questions were posed regarding reappointments for state agencies, term expirations, remaining on the board after term expires if no other appointment is made prior to August 31 and the formation of a nominating committee. The following items were clarified for the Council:

- Regardless of reappointment, TWDB must perform due diligence and send letters requesting a state agency to submit the name of their designee. TWDB does need documentation of the re-appointment from the agency.

- Members will continue to serve past their terms expiration if no appointment has been made by August 31st.
- The nominating committee is to be formed for the selection of presiding officers of the council, not for council member recruitment.
- Letters are already drafted to be sent out to various entities and organizations in an effort to solicit nominations for council members for the following seats: federal agency, river authorities, municipalities, municipal utility districts, landscape irrigation and horticulture.
- A request was made for volunteers for a nominating committee. Please contact Denise Livingston.

5. TWDB Update – Erika Mancha

- Municipal conservation intern and staff are finalizing a PowerBI data dashboard for water loss that will be added to the TWDB website. This dataset will include required reports mandated by SB28 rule language.
- TWDB has reached an agreement with AWWA to be able to incorporate the calculations, weighted scores and such of their water loss audit worksheet into our online water loss audit reporting.
- TWDB is in the process of hiring 2 staff for our validation program, beginning limited validations in the spring.
- SB 28 will codify our water loss technical assistance program. Key items:
 - Rules to be adopted by January 1, 2024. TWDB will be considering proposed rules at their September meeting. The rules would then be available for public comment.
 - *SB 28 requires the TWDB to provide technical assistance to qualifying retail public utilities to (1) conduct water loss audits required by Chapter 16 of the Texas Water Code and (2) apply for financial assistance from the TWDB to mitigate the utility system's water loss.*
 - *TWDB is also required to prioritize technical assistance offered to qualifying retail public utilities based on submitted water loss audits, the population served by the utility, and the integrity of the utility's system.*
 - *S.B. No. 28 also requires the TWDB to publish on the official website of the agency (1) water loss data according to category of retail public utility and to regional water planning area, (2) measures taken by retail public utilities to reduce water loss, and (3) a list of those retail public utilities who received technical and financial assistance to mitigate a retail public utility's water loss.*
 - *The TWDB can contract with or partner with other entities to help implement any aspect of the program as established by these proposed rules.*
- 2022 Water loss audits, annual reports and water conservation plans were due by May 1, 2023. Notice of non-submittal were sent out with moderate response. The online reporting application closed on 7/17 for public access. Entities will now need to work directly with staff to submit.

- Water Loss Audits – 636 of 736 (86%) entities have submitted.
 - An additional 505 entities not required have submitted.
- Annual Conservation Reports – 612 of 863 (71%) entities have submitted.
- The 2022 water use survey was closed on July 5th. The response rate is 77% for all surveys (municipal and industrial surveys). For municipal surveys, the response rate is 79% (3,661 systems).
- The 2021 water use estimates will be available at the end of August.
- July 14 was the deadline for TWDB to receive RWPG revision requests to the draft non-municipal demand projections.
- August 11 is the deadline for TWDB to receive RWPG revision requests to the draft population and municipal demand projections – staff are working with RWPGs as they assess their population and GPCD reviews.
- The planning database opened last June to the RWPGs, so data entry has begun in the development of the 2026 RWPs.

6. Discussion Legislative Session:

Public Awareness of water conservation - SB28 removes “conservation”, making it a Statewide Water Public Awareness program supporting regional education/awareness programs. Expanding water ‘awareness’ in a broader sense in addition

Sarah Schlessinger (Texas Water Foundation) stated they have a pilot statewide water campaign. They found that conservation specific messages, although important, are insufficient in covering the larger scope of water challenges.

Research thus far indicates establishing a cultural movement and awareness of water, knowledge of water is a long approach that requires a continual communication strategy.

The TWDB does have the opportunity to contract with other entities to execute the campaign.

Discussion was held on next steps pertaining to legislative action and having the public awareness work group meet to further discuss how TWDB can best fulfill a statewide water awareness campaign.

7. Work Group reports:

Karen advised work groups activity has been low.

Wholesale: Dustan Compton, Chair. Dustan will be scheduling a wholesale work group meeting soon.

Water Loss: Jenifer Walker, Chair. Water loss work group met on July 19.

- Reviewed SB-28 rulemaking
- Denise will send out notes from the water loss meeting with slides.
- Further discussion was held on water loss legislation and future conservation plans addressing water loss.

Municipal: Karen Guz, Chair. No recent meeting. The proposed topic for the next meeting is upcoming conservation plans due May 2024.

- Propose other resources for communities to consider for drought and conservation plan.

Commercial & Institutional – Bill Hoffman, Chair.

- Discussed need to update plumbing codes, International Water Code has implemented brilliant new commercial plumbing (codes). Bill will send information out to the council.
- Need to be more current on our basic plumbing codes i.e., change showerheads.

Dialogue arose regarding HB2127 (Death Star Bill) could local updated plumbing codes be challenged– request to have TWDB staff possibly give summary presentation.

- Certified auditor training for commercial/industrial water efficiency audits contract should be viable within the month.
- EPA is updating its Water Sense for business documents.
- East Bay Municipal Utility District is updating BMPs for commercial, industrial and intuitional.

Public Awareness – Sarah Schlessinger, Interim Chair

- Sarah is willing to be the interim chair of PW work group to get it going to address SB28 public awareness issues.
- Blue Legacy Awards, need work group to initiate process.
- The Council clarified that people on the work groups do not have to be on the council. However, a workgroup cannot be comprised solely of interested parties. A council member/alternate does need to be involved in the work group.
- TWDB staff discussed having the Blue Legacy Awards line up with our conference. Will this work out in terms of time? Also, will need dedicated volunteers to encourage applications, review applications, and raise money for awards.

Agriculture, Charles Ring, Chair. John Bender advised that as soon as harvest is complete, will come up with a plan for the ag work group meetings.

8. Other items from the Council:

Leslie (TCEQ) reminded the council of the May 1, 2024, deadline for Water Conservation Plans and Drought Contingency Plans. Letters will be going out in the fall.

9. Announcement of Conferences and Events:

- Water Smart Innovations in Las Vegas, October – Bill Hoffman

- Nursery Landscape Expo in San Antonio, August 9-11
<https://www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org/> - Sarah Riggins
- Texas Groundwater Summit in San Antonio, August 29 – 31
<https://texasgroundwater.org/news-events/events/texas-groundwater-summit/>
Julia Stanford
- Rainmaker awards dinner in Austin, September 19
<https://www.texaswater.org/texas-rainmaker-award-dinner> Sarah Schlessinger
- Climate change conference at Meadows Center, San Marcos, September 7 Robert Mace
- American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association annual conference, San Antonio, September 26-27.
- US Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (USCID) conference in Fort Collins, October 17 – 20
- National Irrigation Association in San Antonio, November 27

10. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Please watch for information or survey on next meeting(s)

It was noted that the September TWDB meeting will be a traveling meeting in Harlingen, TX Sept 14.

11. Adjourn

The presiding officer adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.