

WCAC Work Group Number 4 Resource Library and Best Management Practices

Legislative Tasks # 2 & 4

- (2) monitor new technologies for possible inclusion by the Board as best management practices in the best management practices guide developed by the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force under Chapter 109, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003;
- (4) develop and implement a state water management resource library;

Summary of Progress

The Council clearly recognizes that the greatest level of success in water conservation can only be achieved when information is put in the hands of the largest number of stakeholders. Having a resource library that contains information about water conservation that all can access and use is seen as a key element to a successful water conservation program in Texas. This work group is charged with helping define the parameters for organizing water conservation information resources that all stakeholders can access and developing a process for pushing new information out to relevant stakeholders. Obviously, this resource library must capture any new technologies so they can be shared quickly with all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the resource library cannot be simply a database for collecting information; it must also incorporate a system for getting the information in the hands of those who can use it.

The Council has prepared two documents related to the two legislative tasks. One document titled “Water Conservation Best Management Practices” describes a methodology for managing the Texas BMP Guide to provide for revisions to existing BMPs and the addition of new BMPs. This document is attached as Appendix _____. This document relates to legislative task #2.

The second document “Texas Water Conservation Resource Library” outlines the key elements of an online resource library for water conservation. This document is attached as Appendix _____. This document relates to legislative task #4.

Additional work is need to provide more specificity to the library proposal but little additional progress can be made unless some funding can be provided to begin the development of the library. Obviously, the BMP Guide will be included as part of the library.

Key Findings/Recommendations

Water conservation is clearly not unique to Texas. Many states are struggling to implement and manage water conservation programs to better utilize a limited resource and increase public awareness of the need to conserve. The fact that this is not a Texas-only issue dictates that we will be best served by participating in a national effort so that we can leverage off the work of others. The Council recommends that Texas work with others to create a clearinghouse for water conservation information and research and a networking portal. The Alliance for Water Efficiency states that, “It is important to note that this clearinghouse concept is not just a web site program; it is an active technical assistance outreach, fully staffed, in the following areas:

- Improving the overall knowledge base of individuals and organizations related to water-efficiency products and practices;

- Creating a broad-based platform for the development of cost-effective outreach and implementation of water-efficiency programs in the U.S.;
- Acting as the focal point for technical exchanges on the topic of water-efficiency with organizations inside and outside of the U.S.; and
- Fostering the research, development, and manufacture of water-efficient products for U.S. applications.

There is a clear and compelling need for a national water efficiency information clearinghouse and a web network portal to serve a diverse community of users.”

The Council believes that Texas should play a role in the development and perpetuation of a water efficiency clearinghouse. We strongly believe that water conservation will only be achieved by having a well informed and involved public.

The council recommends that the State of Texas commit \$150,000 per year for the next two years toward the development of a Texas online library and portal to integrate with a national clearinghouse. These funds would provide 1.5 staff positions at the TWDB to develop the library and \$40,000 per year for outsourced programming to establish a website and link it to a national network clearinghouse. This commitment must also recognize that successful development of a Texas library will require continued commitment and support to sustain a ready network of water conservation information. While the cost of ongoing maintenance is very hard to predict at this time, the cost could easily exceed 50% of the development costs in current dollars.

Activities Report

The Council has achieved a good measure of progress on the legislative tasks and we have a greater appreciation of the tremendous amount of work that lies ahead. We will continue to aggressively pursue every opportunity to achieve a measure of water conservation in Texas. Realistically, water conservation is no different than most endeavors; the ultimate results are largely depended on the effort, commitment and resources that are brought to bear. We must lay out a consensus plan, set targets and goals, and apply the human and financial resources to achieving those goals. The Council’s 23 members alone can do little to achieve any reasonable measure of success. The State of Texas must set a priority on conserving our valuable water resources and commit the time, energy and money to accomplish a full measure of success.

Future Objectives

We have a crystal clear appreciation for the need to share information about water conservation and to get the information to the ultimate stakeholders, the public. We have a very good understanding of the need for Texas to have a water conservation information portal to assist with public awareness and education. We have a general idea of how the “Texas Water Conservation Resource Library” should be developed and integrated into a national effort. We have a number of options to consider in selecting the best way to meet this need. We have very few of the resources it will take to achieve any measure of success. Our future is truly dependent on the level of commitment of resources to get the job done.