

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: Tuesday-January 18, 2011
 Time: 10:04 a.m. – 1:09 p.m.
 Location: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 Conference Room – Building 6
 1340 Airport Commerce – Austin, TX

Meeting chaired by: C.E. Williams, Presiding Officer
 Meeting Facilitators: TWDB support staff

<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Bill Hoffman	<i>Refining & Chemical Manufacturing</i>	----
<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Carole Baker	<i>Landscape Irrigation & Horticulture</i>	Kelly Hall
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	C.E. Williams	<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Ken Kramer
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Cindy Loeffler	<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	----
<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe	<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Richard Egg
<i>Electric Generation</i>	Gary Spicer	<i>TWDB</i>	Robert Mace
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	Gary Walker	<i>TCEQ</i>	Scott Swanson
<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	Gene Montgomery	<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Steven Bednarz
<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Janet Adams	<i>Higher Education</i>	----
<i>Water Control & Improvement Districts</i>	----	<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Wayne Halbert
<i>River Authorities</i>	Jim Parks	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	Hughes Abel
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz		

At 10:04 the meeting was called to order by the presiding officer, C.E. Williams. The floor was opened for public comment for which there was none. The first item on the agenda was the approval of previous Council minutes; the minutes were approved without discussion.

Robert Mace made an announcement regarding the Know Your Water trademark associated with Water IQ: Know your water. There has been some back and forth regarding trademark issues. An agreement has been reached and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) will be able to use “know your water” in association with Water IQ.

Comer Tuck made an announcement that Wilson Scaling has resigned his membership from the Council. A notice will be sent out in regards to this new vacancy and nominations will be accepted. The TWDB will make the final selection to fill this vacancy for the agriculture interest group.

Jim Parks inquired about Kevin Ward’s (TWDB Executive Administrator) last day with the TWDB. Kevin Ward’s last day will be in mid February after the TWDB Board Meeting. It was expected that on January 19 an interim Executive Administrator will be selected by the Board to serve until summer or sometime soon after the summer of 2011. After that point, a decision will be made on permanently filling this vacancy.

The presiding chair asked for status updates on workgroup activities or other activities outside the workgroups. Carole Baker gave an update on water conservation awards she presented at the Agricultural Irrigation Expo 2010 in Harlingen. The recipients of the awards are Jim Hoffman and Jimmy Pollock, both citrus growers that have contributed to and worked with the Council in the area of agriculture demonstration projects. Additional award(s) will be presented in April at the American Water Works Association conference in Fort Worth.

Jim Parks introduced Carole Davis with City of Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) to give an update regarding water conservation program in the Dallas hospitality sector, which sparked a larger conversation about water conservation in this sector. DWU has teamed up with Dallas hotels, motels and restaurants to encourage water conservation. The voluntary program works with participating hotels and motels to encourage guests to embrace fewer linen and towel changes and informs guests that water is served in dining rooms by request only. The City will also provide free public service announcements to participating lodging facilities to educate their guests about the program. Dallas area restaurants are encouraged to serve water on request only. Karen Guz referred to on the ongoing efforts of the EPA Water Sense program, which targets water conservation activities in many areas, including the hospitality sector and suggested the efforts in Dallas be communicated to the Water Sense Program to serve as a case study to show there is a market for hospitality water conservation.

Jim Parks discussed the process of his district producing Water IQ spots for this coming summer. Creative ideas are going to the focus groups which will offer insight into how the public views these messages. Based on this feedback, the spots will be tweaked and further developed.

Karen Guz initiated a discussion regarding SB 181 which addresses the issue of a gallons per capita per day (GPCD) metric. She stated her main concern is that the bill does not reflect the work that the Council completed to inform this process, and that the work done by the Council is not referenced in the bill. Carole Baker added that the original intent of the GPCD metric, from the Council's perspective, was to offer utilities an opportunity to develop a baseline from which to measure the success of conservation strategies over time.

Bill Hoffman discussed water conservation research and his desire to see universities get involved in this process. He has visited with nearly every major university in Texas and the bottom line is that there is a lot of research on landscape irrigation and agriculture irrigation. What is lacking is a concerted effort to bring class work and research into the municipal, ICI sector, industrial, commercial, and institutional sectors. He stressed this is an important component to support the work of the Council and this is a desirable goal for the Council to support research and higher education course work related to conservation in these sectors.

Carole Baker announced Texas Water Day at the Capitol on April 27, 2010. A press release will be announced to spread the word about the event. State agencies, water organizations, and national speakers will attend.

C.E. Williams opened the floor to discussion regarding any other bills in the 82nd Legislature. Ken Kramer discussed HB 128 which was pre-filed and regards a pilot program for renewable energy in a state park and/or state natural area.

The Council then moved into a discussion regarding the Sunset Commission's recommendations regarding the Council. Some positive recommendations about the Council were offered in the Sunset Commission staff' report on the TWDB. However, there has been a alternative proposal to abolish the Council. Discussion ensued about showcasing the accomplishments and success of the Council since its inception and perhaps documenting the amount of volunteer hours within the Council, in an attempt to prove the State is better off with the Council than without the Council.

The Council shifted into a discussion regarding revisions to the Best Management Practices (BMPs) guide. Nora Mullarkey of the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) staff discussed the value of expanding the landscaping BMPs and discussed BMPs for wholesale water suppliers. She expressed their willingness to participate in updating this document, particularly because many LCRA customers use this guide. Bill Hoffman brought up the point that California and the EPA Water Sense program are both coming out with BMP materials and that these need to be on the radar of the Council as the BMP guide is updated.

Discussion then moved to the topic of restructuring the workgroups by water user titles and activities. C.E. Williams opened the floor for comment on these workgroups. The discussion was generally supportive of restructuring the workgroups. A discussion followed about involving stakeholders in each workgroup and soliciting involvement and ideas to identify the priorities for each water user group. It was suggested that research needs be added to each workgroup. It was agreed to communicate with stakeholders for each workgroup prior to the first workgroup meeting/conference call of the year. Council members identified their interest in serving on workgroup(s) and decided to take 30 days to contact stakeholders. Workgroup meetings will be scheduled for approximately one month from the January meeting.

Ken Kramer announced the Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium on March 22, 2011. The Symposium will be co-sponsored by the Sierra Club, LCRA, and City of Austin, among others, and will be held at the Cedar Park Recreation Center from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Comer Tuck announced that the TWDB will sponsor a Water Conservation 101 Conference in Waco on February 23, 2011. The Conference is free and open to anyone who would like to attend. Information such as agenda, location, and time can be found at the agency's website.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2011 at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Field Office in Austin. The meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.