

*** Meeting minutes should be considered DRAFT until approved at the next council meeting. ***

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: March 2, 2022

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: LCRA Headquarters (3700 Lake Austin Blvd. Austin, TX 78703) and remote

Meeting chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitators: Josh Sendejar, Council Staff Support

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Jennifer Allis*	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Alternate Eddy Trevino*
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	Alternate David Villarreal*	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Sarah Schelssinger*
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	---	<i>Higher Education</i>	Alternate Allen Berthold
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Alternate Mitch Conine	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	Charles Ring
<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Sam Hermitte*	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Craig Elam
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Aubrey Spear*	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Greg Carter
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Maria Martinez	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway*
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz*	<i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i>	---
<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	Leah Martinsson	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton*
<i>River Authorities</i>	Valerie Miller*	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Kyle Eppler*
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Jennifer Walker*	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe*
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	---	* - denotes in-person attendance	

Also present: Alternates – John Bender, Leslie Patterson, Whitney Milberger; Interested Parties – Andrew Cummings, Ashley Evans, Brianna Fuller, Chelsea Atkinson, Chris Loft, Guy Fipps, Jessica Thayer, Jennifer Nations, Jessica Woods, Kevin Kluge, LaTrichia Spikes, Natalie Houston, Perry Fowler, Ryan Skrobarczyk, Sarah Robinson, Virginia Collier; TWDB Staff – Dir. Kathleen Jackson, Jennifer White, Temple McKinnon, Yun Cho, Katie Dahlberg, John Sutton, Daniel Rice, Kyla Peterson, Shae Luther, Travis Brice, Mark Mathis.

** Documents can be found at: <http://www.savetexaswater.org/meeting/council-meetings.asp>**

1. Introduction

The meeting began at 10:32 a.m.

Director Kathleen Jackson of the Texas Water Development Board gave opening statements thanking the council for their work to conserve our most precious resource – water.

2. Approval of minutes from the November 3, 2021 meeting

David Villareal made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Aubrey Spear seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, none opposed, the minutes were approved as written.

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3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. TWDB Update

- Agricultural Grants – TWDB received 12 applications requesting approx. \$2 million. \$1.2 million is available to be funded. TWDB staff are currently scoring applications and plan to present at a future TWDB board meeting.
- The LUC (Loss, Use, and Conservation) application is opened for Water Use Surveys (due March 1), Water Loss Audits and Annual Conservation Reports (both due May 1).
- TWDB Conservation Staff are working with IT to incorporate some calculation changes to the Water Loss Audit Report to better align with the AWWA V6 Audit.
- Water Loss, Use & Conservation Webinars: TWDB Conservation staff will be holding three webinars, the first held on February 10, the next will be March 9, and the last is scheduled for April 12. These webinars will focus on the Water Use Survey, Water Loss Audit, and Annual Conservation Reports.
- With the opening of the 2021 Water Use Survey, a new historic use dashboard for public water systems is available for utilities and the public to see previously reported use, ID any anomalies, and facilitate QC of the data by the reporting entity.
<http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/waterusesurvey/dashboard/index.asp>
- Draft water demand projections for livestock, manufacturing, and steam-electric power generation have been released to the RWPGs. Datasets for projections and supporting data, methodology summaries, and interactive dashboards are available on our website:
<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/data/projections/2027/projections.asp>
- The Water Supply Planning Division of TWDB have been working with the Conservation & Innovative Water Technologies Division on improvements to providing our conservation data to the RWPGs for consideration in their plan development.

Jennifer Walker asked about the status of the Ag Conservation Fund, if the fund is being replenished and if not, the depletion timeline for the fund.

TWDB Staff noted that with the increase in available funding each year (currently \$1.2 million, up from \$600,000/year) the Ag Conservation Fund is being drawn down quicker. Current projections indicate the fund could be depleted in 2024 or 2025, depending on projects awarded.

It was noted this would be a great inclusion for the 2022 WCAC Report.

Sarah Schlessinger asked what the trends are for TWDB report submissions.

TWDB Staff noted that report submission is usually about 80 – 85% submittals across all reports.

Dir. Jackson noted that one of the benefits of TWDB's reporting is while the data is needed for planning purposes, the data is also useful for the utilities submitting the data.

Aubrey Spear noted that with the RWP process starting up again, it is a great opportunity to provide outreach to the groups as to what conservation data is available for their consideration.

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Mr. Spear also asked Dir. Jackson regarding the availability of funding for both water supply projects and flood protection projects. Would the availability of funds compete between both types of projects?

Dir. Jackson noted that while there are different funds for different types of projects, with some projects being applicable for a combination of funding programs, it will ultimately be dependent on the legislature's continued appropriation of funds.

5. Workgroup Updates:

a. Agricultural

Charles Ring noted that while the workgroup has not met in the new year, an email has been sent out requesting feedback on potential updates for the agricultural portions of the legislative report. The workgroup will aim to have a meeting discussing any submitted feedback.

If you have any feedback regarding the agricultural portions of the legislative report, please send an email to: WCAC@twdb.texas.gov

b. Commercial & Institutional

Eddy Trevino noted there is no formal update for the workgroup. However, AWE's Cooling Tower Study has been completed and Eddy will be sending out to key stakeholders.

c. Industrial

Craig Elam noted there are no changes or updates to the workgroup's current operations.

d. Municipal

Karen Guz noted the workgroup had met in conjunction with the Water Loss workgroup. Several items were discussed:

- 140 GPCD Target: looking at how to craft appropriate targets and goals
- Land-use planning: potential for BMP on the subject
- Consumer data tools: ways to engage customers regarding their water use (AMI & Flume in example)

Valerie Miller noted that Residential GPCD can be a good metric for communities, but what are some appropriate metrics for other Water User Groups (WUGs) (CI, Industrial, etc.)?

Greg Carter noted that the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force developed BMPs for those users, as developing a suitable metric across different industries would be difficult.

Jennifer Walker noted that having a single GPCD target it useful in terms of the regional water planning process.

Jennifer Allis noted the Task Force also recommended a 1% reduction in usage each year. If a single metric is difficult, perhaps a recommended rate of reduction could provide a meaningful target.

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Sarah Schlessinger stated it is also important to consider local nuances from a public awareness perspective.

Greg Carter noted there needs to be a long-term perspective behind the targets and goals, not a snapshot. Allowances or variances in weather will also need to be considered.

e. Public Awareness

Sarah Schlessinger provided an update from the workgroup meeting which took place on December 8, 2021. The meeting focuses on the Texas Runs on Water campaign, how the campaign progressed in its pilot markets, and the aim to transition from brand recognition to achieving behavioral change. The Texas Water Foundation will also work to develop a toolkit that utilities can use to tailor their messages using templates/imaging from the Texas Runs on Water campaign.

Karen Guz noted that AWWA is developing a Drought Digital Toolkit, which would be a good discussion point at the next workgroup meeting.

Sarah Schlessinger noted that it is important to remain aware of the national landscape and changes as reports and data evolve as it relates to public awareness.

Sam Hermitte asked if AWWA was working with the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)?

K. Guz noted she was unsure, however the focus is creating a toolkit that utilities can utilize to customize messaging to their customers.

f. Water Loss

Jennifer Walker provided the workgroup update. The workgroup met in conjunction with the Municipal workgroup on February 16th. The workgroup continued discussion on the following topics:

- Water Loss Metrics: the workgroup discussed including a primer in the legislative report on the complexity of water loss metrics and how multiple metrics can better provide a glimpse into the health of a system.
- Winter Storm Uri: previous discussion had included the need to provide some guidance in water loss reporting given the circumstances of the winter storm. However, several workgroup participants noted that the effects have not been as severe as previously believed.
- AMI: This topic was discussed as a potential cross-over topic with the Municipal workgroup. AMI can be used as a water loss tool for monitoring losses and communicating losses with customers. The workgroup is currently in the process of developing an outline for a potential BMP on the subject.
- Water Loss Validation Study: The pilot TWDB has conducted has been completed and staff are awaiting the official report. TWDB staff will discuss the consultant's report and recommendations at an upcoming TWDB board work session. The workgroup will meet again after the work session to discuss the possibility of developing a legislative recommendation for the 2022 WCAC report.

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- The workgroup has also been discussing differences between AWWA's water loss auditing form and TWDB's form. Will continue discussion as components of TWDB's form are updated.

g. Wholesale and Regional Water Authorities

Dustan Compton provided the following update for the workgroup:

- The workgroup met last week and is looking to increase participation amongst wholesale and regional providers.
- Survey: the workgroup is planning to send out a survey to its stakeholders seeking feedback for inclusion in the legislative report.
- BMPs: the workgroup has several BMP topics being discussed. Will develop smaller committees to continue discussion and develop drafts.
- ET Data Survey: The workgroup collaborated with the Agricultural and Municipal workgroups to develop the ET Data Survey to assess the accessibility of statewide ET data. The deadline for survey responses is March 4th and the workgroup will plan another meeting to discuss the responses received.

6. Vice Presiding Office Election

Josh provided a digital poll to those council members and alternates able to vote.

With 12 votes, Mr. Aubrey Spear was elected as Vice Presiding Officer.

7. Discussion: 2022 WCAC Legislative Report

Josh provided a brief summary of the timeline for developing the legislative report. The council discussed getting drafts of potential legislative recommendations together to be discussed at the next council meeting.

8. Other Business

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Eddy Trevino asked if any were aware of resources relating to the BIL. Several participants noted that formal guidance is still expected, though there are several organizations with resources on the topic.

It was suggested that the council be briefed on this topic through an invited speaker at an upcoming council meeting. Karen Guz will try to find a speaker who can provide an update.

9. Announcement of Conferences and Events

- Texas Water
- ACE
- Emerging Technologies Conference

10. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Two meeting dates were set:

- April 11th at LCRA Headquarters
- May 4th at LCRA Headquarters

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.