

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: September 4, 2025

Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Lower Colorado River Authority, Redbud Center, Rm 108  
3601 Lake Austin Blvd. Austin, TX 78703

Meeting Chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson Vacant	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Eddie Wilcut Vacant
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal Vacant	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Colin McDonald Josh Sendejar
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Marty Kelly Jennifer Whitt	<i>Higher Education</i>	Robert Mace Allen Berthold
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Mitch Conine John Foster	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	John Bender Charles Ring
<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Sam Marie Hermitte Erika Mancha	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Tanushri Jain Vacant
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Aubrey Spear Wayne Wilson	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Greg Carter Ryan Bayle
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Troy Hill Salvador Gandara	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway Cory Pomeroy
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz, Chair Joyce Warren	<i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i>	Whitney Milberger Dean Minchillo
<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	Adam Foster Stephanie Keith	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton Vacant
<i>River Authorities</i>	Stacy Pandey Amy Muttoni	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Kyle Eppler Mary Alice Boehm McKaughan
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Jennifer Walker Marisa Bruno	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe Earl Foster
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Anthony Strambaugh Michael Kent		

**Also present:** Alicia Lee, Annika Schiller, Bill Hoffman, Chris Loft, Christina Kaeini, Christopher Perry, Dan Strub, Daniel Nix, Ellie Bass, Joe Capesius, Kerry Greathouse, Kevin Kluge, Hector Ortiz, Karan Mehta, Kathy Fonville, Kyle Wright, Micheal Turco, Lexlie Ramirez Garcia, Natalie Houston, Natasha Lewis, Ruby Perez, Sarah Kirkle, Sarah Riggins, Shannon Hamilton, Ted Pick

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

**TWDB Staff** –Denise Livingston, Jessica Paz, Marla Heger, Jonathan Mathers, Temple McKinnon, Yun Cho.

1. The meeting started at 10:31 am
2. Roll call- A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Presentation – this item was postponed due to AWE staff conflicts. It was discussed to consider having a webinar presentation at a later date; possible in partnership with AWE. *Update on Proposals to Rollback Federal Water Efficiency Standards, Alliance for Water Efficiency - Kelly Connolly Kern* <https://allianceforwaterefficiency.org/awe-submits-comments-opposing-doe-proposals-to-rescind-and-weaken-water-efficiency-standards/>
4. Karen introduced the new and returning Council members appointed by the TWDB August 21, 2025
  - \_ *Reappointments*
    - Adam Foster –Groundwater Districts
    - Dustan Compton – Water Control and Improvement Districts
    - CJ Tredway – Mining and Recovery of Minerals
  - \_ *Alternates now Council members*
    - Colin McDonald – Professional Organization – Water Conservation Focus
    - John Bender – Agriculture
    - Mitch Conine – Texas State Soil and Water Conservation
  - \_ *New members*
    - Eddie Wilcut – Institutional Water Users
    - Anthony Strambaugh – Irrigation Districts
    - Tanushri Jain – Refining/Chemical Manufacturing

Karen announced her upcoming retirement from the San Antonio Water System on Dec. 31, 2025. She will still stay involved with workgroups, but she believes the Municipal representative needs to be a person who is working full-time in Municipal conservation.
5. Approval of Minutes
  - October 17, 2024
  - November 4, 2024
  - February 6, 2025
  - April 17, 2025

CJ moved and Aubrey seconded approval of all the minutes. No further discussion. Motion passed.
6. Public Comment – no public comments were received.
7. TWDB report – Sam Marie Hermitte
  - Staff updates.
    - i. TWDB hired a summer intern
    - ii. 2 positions posted; Data Analyst and Conservation Manager
  - Water Conservation Plan Review status
    - i. TWDB received 453 of the required 639 – 71%
    - ii. To date, 302 reviews have been completed
  - Education - Separate from the Statewide Public Awareness Campaign identified as part of 2023 SB 28, is the Statewide Water Public Awareness Program. TWDB

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

staff began internal conversations on June 5 on how best to allocate funding and the criteria. The focus is on better access to data and improved education and outreach.

- Water Conservation Plan requirement review. An internal review of the requirements between TWDB and TCEQ WCPs is in progress to see if we can better align the language in our plans and make them more user friendly to stakeholders.
- Water loss program
  - i. Partnered with UTA to provide technical assistance to mitigate water loss per SB 28 (2023).
    - As of 8/25/25, UTA has initiated assistance with 70 utilities.
    - Prioritizing WLA with data issues. We are starting with negative water loss and smaller population served.  
SB 28 criteria
      - Water loss audits submitted to the board
      - Population served; and
      - Integrity of the utility's water system.
  - ii. House Bill 29, 89th Legislative session. A municipally owned utility that provides potable water through more than 150,000 service connections. The TWDB is in the process of creating frequently asked questions to put on their website.
  - iii. As of Sept. 1, 2025, TWDB performed 124 water loss audit validations.
    - Updating on-line water loss audit to align with AWWA version 6.
  - iv. [Water Loss Dashboard](#) is updated as of July 2025.
- Water Use Survey
  - i. The 2024 water use survey closed with a 78% of response rate in July.
  - ii. The 2023 Annual Water Use Estimates are now available online.  
<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/waterusesurvey/dashboard/index.asp>

### 8. Discussion of Legislative Session

- [HB 29](#) – requires the largest 6 utilities in the state to have a more detailed water loss mitigation plan, validation, and annual reporting.
- [HB 517](#) - Property owners' association may not assess a fine for violation of covenant that requires owners to plant grass or turf or maintain green vegetation during watering restrictions or before the 60<sup>th</sup> day after watering restrictions are lifted.
  - i. The landscape irrigation work group identified “Improving community association and homeowner association partnerships in acceptable practices of landscape water conservation” as a focus item for this biennium. This is an agenda item for the next workgroup meeting. (not yet scheduled)
  - ii. Hill Country Alliance is working on HOA engagement; including educating community members on [SB198](#) from 2013, legislation that prohibits HOAs from restricting a homeowner's ability to install drought-resistant landscaping or water conserving turf.
    - Instead of an HOA changing covenants, an HOA can modify the landscaping policy to clarify landscaping, rain barrels, and drought related issues. This will help ensure that a change in HOA leadership is still aware of policies.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- [SB 2662](#) - Enforcement of Drought Contingency. Leslie Patterson, TCEQ.
  - i. Primarily effects Investor-Owned utilities and if they can enforce their drought contingency plans (DCP).
  - ii. TCEQ is to work with the Board and PUC to update DCP templates every 5 years.
- Appropriations – John Bender, Agriculture
  - i. Discussion was held on the appropriation for the agricultural loan and grant funding. [Items regarding the ag appropriation will be further clarified at the next meeting]. TWDB has the authority to use a specified amount every year. The legislature doubled the allowable amount from \$1.5 million to \$3 million but they did not increase the funds. The Agricultural Water Conservation Fund was moved under the Texas Water Fund (TWF)
  - ii. Additional funding for the Texas Water fund, new and recurring, is subject to the passage of Proposition 4.
- Evapotranspiration Network– Dustan Compton
  - i. The Council recommended dedicated financial resources to support and statewide ET networks into the TexMesonet program. The TWDB asked for \$1.8 million but received half of the funding request.
- [SB 14](#) credits against impact fees to builders and developers for certain water conservation and reuse projects.
- Impact fees are charged by districts and cities to developers to compensate them for the infrastructure they have to outlay. This cost can be extremely expensive. SB 14 allows for credit to impact fees if the builders are implementing water conservation methods.
- Utilities are expected to construct reasonable offers and incentives with measurable data.

### 9. Work Group Reports:

- Agricultural – No workgroup report. Tentative meeting in November. John wants to focus on increasing participation.
- Commercial and Institutional- Currently no chair for this workgroup. Karen introduced Kevin Kluge, the co-chair of the new TAWWA Commercial, Institutional, and Industrial (CII) group that meets monthly.
  - i. In November, the group is hosting a commercial auditing certification training by IAMPO, in Austin
  - ii. The group surveyed conservation coordinators last August on what their needs are in CII conservation.
  - iii. Karen introduced Eddie Wilcut, the new institutional water conservation representative. Eddie will work with the TAWWA CII group and will provide the CI report to WCAC at quarterly meetings.
- Landscape, Irrigation, and Horticulture – The workgroup met twice since the last Council meeting; May 22 and Aug 7.
  - i. Regarding non-potable water use for homeowner, the workgroup determined they are unable to recommend non-potable use for landscaping due to no guidance, regulation, or maintenance requirement on small systems.
  - ii. More impactful water conservation plans continues to be an ongoing conversation. A small group did meet for a follow-up discussion on revisiting

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

the “Gold Star” program that was intended to highlight entities with impactful water conservation plans.

- iii. The workgroup will be focusing on “Improving community association and homeowner association partnerships in acceptable practices of landscape water conservation” and incorporate the conversation on [HB 517](#) and [SB 14](#).
  - Industrial – No report
  - Municipal –
    - i. On June 26, WCAC met with TCEQ/TAWWA to discuss drought planning and drought contingency planning.
      - Discussed current guidance on TCEQ’s website.
      - Reviewed and discussed what best management practices exist and if BMPs need to be developed to aid entities in drought planning.
      - This is an ongoing conversation and has received interest from stakeholders.
    - ii. Municipal will also initiate conversations regarding [SB 14](#), impact fees.
  - Public Awareness – Colin McDonald is the new chair of Public Awareness.
    - i. Colin will give a report on the public awareness campaign as decisions are finalized. The goal is to have the campaign moving forward in 2026.
    - ii. The Blue Legacy Award committee will need to reconvene to start planning for the 2027 awards.
  - Water Loss – Karen gave brief summary on the joint municipal and water loss meeting held on July 21.
    - i. Reviewed the results of the legislative sessions.
    - ii. Discussed excessive line breaks due to drought.
  - Wholesale/Rural Water – Workgroup met on August 28. They are working on two Best Management Practices (BMPs)
    - i. Wholesale financial incentives to end users.
    - ii. Wholesale water conservation education and public awareness.
10. Announcement of Conferences and Events
- [North Texas Water Symposium](#), November 6, 2025
  - [Agriculture Water Symposium](#), Lubbock, TX, October 14 – 15, 2025.
  - [Texas Water 2026](#), San Antonio, TX. April 27 – 30, 2026.
  - [Rio Grande Rio Bravo Binational Water Symposium](#), McAllen, TX. November 5 – 7, 2025
11. Future Meetings:
- December 2, 2025 – CJ moved, and Greg seconded that the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter meeting will be held virtually.
12. Motion to adjourn at 12:04 p.m.

Additional links of interest shared in meeting

[SB 198 \(2013\)](#)

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: December 2, 2025  
Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Location:

Meeting Chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer  
Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson Ashley Niell	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Eddie Wilcut Vacant
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal Vacant	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Colin McDonald Josh Sendejar
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Marty Kelly Jennifer Whitt	<i>Higher Education</i>	Robert Mace Allen Berthold
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<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Sam Marie Hermitte Erika Mancha	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Tanushri Jain Sherman Hampton
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Aubrey Spear Wayne Wilson	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Greg Carter Ryan Bayle
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Troy Hill Salvador Gandara	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway Cory Pomeroy
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz, Chair Joyce Warren	<i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i>	Whitney Milberger Dean Minchillo
<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	Adam Foster Stephanie Keith	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton Vacant
<i>River Authorities</i>	Stacy Pandey Amy Muttoni	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Kyle Eppler Mary Alice Boehm McKaughan
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Jennifer Walker Marisa Bruno	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe Earl Foster
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Anthony Stambaugh Michael Kent		

**Also present:** Andrea Chick, Alicia Lee, Annika Schiller, Bill Hoffman, Chance Rushing, Chris Loft, Christopher Perry, Cliff Carson, Curtis Smith, Guy Fipps, Jacie Lewis, Jade Rutledge, Jason Afinowicz, Jason Pierce, Jennifer Barr, Karan Mehta, Kathy Fonville, Kerry Greathouse, Kevin Kluge, Kyle Wright, Natalie Houston, Paula Paciorek, Ron Burke, Ruby Perez, Suzanne Williams, Ted Pick, Virginia Collier, Willian Bosland **TWDB Staff** –Denise Livingston, Emily Fort, Fritz Reinig, Jessica Paz, Karen Sanders, Marla Heger, Melanie Butler, Yun Cho.

1. The meeting started at 10:31 am
2. Roll call- A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Presentation – this item was moved to 11:00 to accommodate A4WE’s schedule.
4. Review of Minutes
  - September 4, 2025 – no comments
5. Public Comment – no public comments were received.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

6. TWDB report – Erika Mancha
- Staff updates.
    - i. Conservation Data Analysis – Eric Jenkins
    - ii. Ag GIS – Yared Bayissa
    - iii. Municipal Water Conservation Manager – Jessica Paz
  - Legislative updates
    - i. HB 29 – TWDB is preparing FAQs, projected to be out mid-December.
    - ii. Prop 4 – [FAQ's](#)
    - iii. GCD Science Grants - \$7.5M - This funding will assist GCDs with developing local groundwater data, improving models, and implementing sustainable water management practices. Requests for application are expected to be posted early 2026.
    - iv. Provided additional information on ag water conservation fund.
  - Agricultural water conservations
    - i. Presenting the FY 26 RFA for Ag Water Conservation Grants to the December Board meeting.
    - ii. Ag conservation is hosting a webinar at 11:00 a.m. on December 3 to explain how the TWDB estimates how much water is used to irrigate agriculture in the state each year.
  - Education - We have agreement with Happy Camper to complete an education analysis of our conservation material. He will be conducting interviews. The project kicked off in late October and will be completed in January.
  - Water Conservation Plan Completed an analysis comparing TCEQ's and TWDB's water conservation plans and met with TCEQ.
  - TWDB will be participating on the Alliance for Water Efficiency's Technical Advisory Committee for a per capita water use project. The project aims to document current water use per capita methodologies and purposes, then work towards a standardized framework for how per capita water use is calculated and used across various contexts, ensuring consistency, transparency, and applicability across the water sector.
  - Partnered with UTA to provide technical assistance to mitigate water loss per SB 28 (2023).
    - As of 8/25/25, UTA has initiated assistance with 70 utilities.
    - Prioritizing WLA with data issues. We are starting with negative water loss and smaller population served.  
SB 28 criteria
      - Water loss audits submitted to the board
      - Population served; and
      - Integrity of the utility's water system.
    - with AWWA version 6.
  - Water Loss Audit Validations – As of 11/24/25, TWDB has performed 217 validations of the 498 required utilities (utilities with new or existing loans). **Apprx 43%**
    - Discussion was held on whether TWDB will submit a summary of findings or lesson learned on the validation program.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

7. Ron Burke was introduced by Karen Guz – Presentation on *Update on Proposals to Rollback Federal Water Efficiency Standards*, Alliance for Water Efficiency – Ron Burke <https://allianceforwaterefficiency.org/awe-submits-comments-opposing-doe-proposals-to-rescind-and-weaken-water-efficiency-standards/>
8. Discussion of Legislative Report Timeline – Denise and Karen reviewed the legislative timeline and breakdown of charges and responsible contributors.
9. Work Group Reports:
  - Agricultural – John Bender discussed setting up a workgroup meeting by the end of the year to discuss trends and new technologies in ag.
    - i. Report will include section on the situation in the Rio Grande Valley.
  - Commercial and Institutional- Eddie Wilcut has met with TWDB staff and Bill Hoffman. He is committed to building a larger network from the CII community. Workgroup will be looking at benchmarking.
  - Landscape, Irrigation, and Horticulture – Dean Minchillo discussed recent workgroup meetings. A small group met in September to discuss the possibility of reintroducing of the Council's Gold Star program, a water conservation incentive program. The program did not move forward in 2019/2020 due to the pandemic.
    - i. Brief discussion on possibly obtaining corporate sponsors for the program since the Council does not have a budget.
    - ii. Municipal/LIH joint meeting to be held to discuss possible legislative recommendation. Require master valves on irrigation systems.
      - Not just CI but also residential
      - Properties over an acre
      - Include water budgeting over a certain acreage
  - Industrial – No report
  - Municipal – Further discussion on working with TCEQ on drought templates.
  - Public Awareness – Colin McDonald
    - i. Public Awareness campaign rollout expected in early 2026.
    - ii. Blue Legacy Awards planning meeting to be scheduled.
      - Discussion on one award focusing on data tracking.
  - Water Loss – Jennifer Walker
    - i. Discussion on increased maintenance during extreme drought in addition to the drought management of increased usage.
    - ii. Increased maintenance issues in Austin, SAWS, and Houston.
    - iii. Additional planning needed to address infrastructure in extreme drought to be topic of upcoming water loss/municipal workgroup.
    - iv. Future discussion on metrics; the use of GPCD vs per connection (GCD)
    - v. Request to TWDB on the information on how the initial Texas Water Fund dollars were spent on water loss and helping support mitigation of water loss efforts primarily in disadvantage communities.
  - Wholesale/Rural Water – Dustan Compton
    - i. Workgroup is in the process of drafting two BMPs.
      - Financial incentives program
      - Wholesale Public Education

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- ii. Dustan will work with TexMesonet and the ET network to determine if the Council will include a funding recommendation in this year's report.

- 10. Announcement of Conferences and Events
  - [Texas Water College](#), Lubbock, January 21
  -
- 11. Future Meetings:
  - January 27, 2026
  - February 24, 2026
- 12. The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Additional links of interest shared in meeting

[Proposition 4 Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[A4WE report on Rollback of Efficiency Standards](#)

[Pacific Institute's Report Untapped Potential: An Assessment of Municipal and Industrial Water Efficiency Potential in the United States](#)

[Texas Livings Waters](#)

[Meadows Center Rainwater Harvesting](#)

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: January 27, 2026  
Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Location: Virtual

Meeting Chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer  
Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson Ashley Niell	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Eddie Wilcut Vacant
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<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Jennifer Walker Marisa Bruno	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe Earl Foster
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**Also present:** Adam Conner, Alex Flashing, Alison Wells, Allen Shiftley, Amanda Covington, Annika Schiller, Bill Hoffman, Brianna Fuller, Cecilia Balderrama, Chandler Crouch, Christi Upton, Christina Gildea, Christina Kaeini, Christopher Charles, Christopher Sanchez, Crysta Guzman, Daryll Spillman, Denise Ma, Domonique Green, Drew Aliyas, Eddy Trevino, Emma McNeal, Eric Anderson, Guy Fipps, Jade Rutledge, Jacie Lewis, Jade Rutledge, Jason Pierce, Jayme Martone, Jennifer Barr, Jennifer Nations, Jesse Luna, Jessica Woods, Jesus Palomares, Joseph Hopkins, Kerry Greathouse, Kevin Hunt, Krystal Copp, Margaret Cook, Martha Wright, Michelle Simpson, Natasha Lewis, Paula Paciorek, Paula Szymanski, Perry Fowler, Rachel Hanes, Rob Newman, Ronnie Lemmons, Ruby Perez, Samantha Tweet, Sarah Kinkle, Sasha Kodet, Shala Geer-Smith, Shannon Hamilton, Summer Hvasta, Susan Alvarez, Suzanne Williams, Tillery Sims, Todd Votteler, Troy Allen, Yesenia Perez **TWDB Staff** –Denise Livingston, Jessica Paz, Marla Heger, Melanie Butler, Mindy Conyers, Natalie Ballew, Shae Luther, Yarid Bayissa.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

1. The meeting started at 10:30 am
2. Roll call- A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Presentation – Thirsty Data: Water and Energy Resources for New Data Centers – Houston Advanced Research Center, [Margaret Cook](#), PhD
4. Review of Minutes
  - December 2, 2025 – no comments
5. Public Comment – no public comments were received.
6. TWDB report – Sam Hermitte
  - On-line reporting for water use survey, water loss audit, and water conservation reports opened January 2, 2025 water use surveys are due by March 2. All other reports are due before May 1, 2026
  - TWDB is hosting 3 webinars on [Water Loss Use and Conservation](#). The webinars walk participants through the reporting process from WUS, WLA and the conservation reporting. Licensed water operators can receive 4 hours of continuing education through TCEQ by taking this no-cost webinar.
    - i. January 15 – 120 attendees
    - ii. February 11 – 99 registered – as of 1/26/26
    - iii. March 10 – 35 registered – as of 1/26/26
  - Fiscal year 2026 Agricultural water conservation grant request for applications is open with a closing date of March 18
  - Happy Camper presented their analysis of TWDB Municipal Conservation education program.
    - i. Purpose was to evaluate TWDB’s current K–12 education resources, identify practical opportunities for improvement, and align resources with the future statewide water campaign
    - ii. They conducted nine qualitative interviews with participants from the water sector, classroom teachers, and communications/education professionals from nonprofit water organizations.
    - iii. TWDB resources, participants signaled a consistent need for revision. Some identified barriers were findability, classroom readiness, visual clarity, and audience fit.
  - 112 water conservation remain to be reviewed for 2024 and 40 for 2025.
  - Final numbers for the 2024 water loss audit
    - i. UTA reviewed 244 audits. Of those
      - 88 return to TWDB staff (required validation, no ILI, insufficient data, etc.)
      - 16 were inactive public water systems
  - Final numbers for the 2024 water loss audit validations
    - i. TWDB identified 497 required utilities to be validated due to new or existing loans.
      - 224 validations completed
      - 133 were non-responsive entities
      - 78 were non submittals – delinquent reporting
      - 62 unable to complete due to staffing
  - - i. HB 29 – TWDB is preparing FAQs, projected to be out mid-December.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- ii. Prop 4 – [FAQ's](#)
- iii. GCD Science Grants - \$7.5M - This funding will assist GCDs with developing local groundwater data, improving models, and implementing sustainable water management practices. Requests for application are expected to be posted early 2026.
- iv. Provided additional information on ag water conservation fund.
- Agricultural water conservations
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- TWDB will be participating on the Alliance for Water Efficiency's Technical Advisory Committee for a per capita water use project. The project aims to document current water use per capita methodologies and purposes, then work towards a standardized framework for how per capita water use is calculated and used across various contexts, ensuring consistency, transparency, and applicability across the water sector.
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SB 28 criteria
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  - with AWWA version 6.
- Water Loss Audit Validations – As of 11/24/25, TWDB has performed 217 validations of the 498 required utilities (utilities with new or existing loans). **Approx. 43%**
  - Discussion was held on whether TWDB will submit a summary of findings or lesson learned on the validation program.

### Discussion items

- Discussion was held on clarification of the agricultural grant funding and annual authorization.

7. Work Group Reports: Karen summarized the timeline and charges for the Council
- Agricultural –. John Bender gave a summary of the two agricultural workgroup meets held since the last meeting. The work group was divided into 2 subgroups; surface water and groundwater.
    - i. Current funding for ag loan and grant funding is only for political subdivision.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- ii. No state programs to provide funding directly to farmers and ranchers.
  - iii. HB 43 expanded the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority, TAFA, program. TAFA funds can already be used for conservation, however, highlighting conservation as a funding opportunity would be beneficial.
  - iv. The surface water workgroup also discussed the issue of the expense of engineering and estimating water savings as a barrier for small irrigation districts to seek funding through the ag program. Proposed discussion with TWDB to identify avenues to alleviate barriers through an administrative methods versus legislative recommendation.
  - v. John gave a report on the issue in the Rio Grande Valley where many municipalities and ag users receive water through the irrigation districts. Many of the irrigation districts use unlined canals that can experience up to 40% of water loss due to seepage.
  - vi. A possible recommendation that is similar to SB 1606 (89<sup>th</sup> session), is to allow irrigation districts that provide raw water to municipal water districts to apply for financial assistance from TWDB through the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Fund.
  - vii. [WUTAP](#) program is a program through TWDB to help water/wastewater systems that are interested in funding, get assistance with water conservation plans, rate studies, submission of project information forms and funding applications. The ag workgroup is interested in exploring an option for irrigation districts to have a similar resource.
  - viii. Next workgroup meeting will be in February.
- Commercial and Institutional- Eddie Wilcut is meeting with support staff, Denise Livingston and then will be having a workgroup meeting.
    - i. Discussion on data centers falling in both commercial and industrial categories.
  - Landscape, Irrigation, and Horticulture (E-LaWN) – Whitney Milberger discussed recent a workgroup meeting. The group discussed a possible recommendation for master valves on all irrigation systems. Whitney explained the function and benefits of a master valve.
    - i. Next meeting to further discuss the recommendation will be Feb. 3 at 2:00 pm.
    - ii. Industry professionals will be part of the Feb. 3 discussion.
    - iii. The work group also discussed re-creating the Gold Star recognition program. This program recognizes outstanding water conservation plans. The program was created in an attempt to generate more impactful water conservation programs.
    - iv. The municipal and E-LaWN group will work with the Public Awareness/Blue Legacy Awards committee to further the program.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- Industrial – No report
  - Municipal –
    - i. Further discussion on gold Star program
    - ii. Work with TCEQ to look at drought templates to make suggestions on improvements
      - TCEQ will be doing a formal solicitation process for comments as required by Senate Bill 2662.
  - Public Awareness – Colin McDonald
    - i. Next meeting is February 11 meeting on Blue Legacy Awards. Large focus on data, even if the project was not successful, if the entity is willing to share the data, could be beneficial.
    - ii. Working with TWDB for approval to host award ceremony at 2027 Water for Texas conference again.
  - Water Loss – Jennifer Walker
    - i. Joint meeting will be planned for municipal and water loss
      - Discuss maintenance plans for extreme drought or other infrastructure stressors.
      - GPCD vs GPC
      - Request for information on how the initial SB 28 water fund dollars were spent. Sam Hermitte will research the issue and report back.
      - HB 29 (89<sup>th</sup> Legislature) impacts 6 utilities. TWDB FAQs are available. Jennifer requested a future discussion at a work group meeting on how the requirement for water loss mitigation plans will be implemented.
      - Infrastructure proactive analytics and pipe replacement plans to mitigate water loss.
  - Wholesale/Rural Water – Dustan Compton
    - i. Workgroup is in the process of drafting two BMPs.
      - Financial incentives program
      - Wholesale Conservation and Public Education
    - ii. Drafting survey for wholesale contacts on successes in conservation
    - iii. Dustan is working with TexMesonet and the ET network. He will be meeting with the stakeholders in early February to determine if a funding recommendation will be needed and what it may entail.
8. Discussion of potential content items for Charges
- (1) monitor trends in water conservation implementation;
  - (2) monitor new technologies
    - i. AMI – how to best use AMI to help mitigate water loss and other benefits.
    - ii. Robert Mace discussed atmospheric water harvesting technology
    - iii. ET network
  - (3) monitor the effectiveness of the statewide water public awareness program;

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- (4) develop and implement a state water management resource library;
- (5) develop and implement a public recognition program for water conservation; The Blue Legacy Awards and the possible Gold Star program will go under this charge.
- (6) monitor the implementation of water conservation strategies by water users included in regional water plans; 2026 Regional water plans were approved by the Board in January's meeting. and
- (7) monitor target and goal guidelines for water conservation to be considered by the board and commission.

2:03:55 left off here...

### 9. Announcement of Conferences and Events

- Leslie Patterson announced an upcoming restructuring within TCEQ that will result in her stepping down from the Council. Jade Rutledge and Ashley Neil will be appointed.
- [Central Texas Water Symposium](#), March 4, 2026, Texas State University, San Marcos
- [Texas Water](#) conference April 27-30, 2026, San Antonio
- [Texas Panhandle Water Conservation Symposium](#), February 11, 2026, Amarillo
- [Texas Water Leaders 2026 Program](#) Applications due Jan. 31, 2026

### 10. Future Meetings:

- February 24, 2026
- April 7, 2026, In-person at the Lower Colorado River Authority, Redbud Center

### 11. The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

## Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Public Welcome:

San Jacinto River Authority

1577 Dam Site Rd., Conroe, TX 77304

10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Chaired by: Aubrey Spear, Vice Presiding Officer, and Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Staff Support to the Council

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson Ashley Niell	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Eddie Wilcut Vacant
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal Vacant	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Colin McDonald Josh Sendejar
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Marty Kelly Jennifer Whitt	<i>Higher Education</i>	Robert Mace Allen Berthold
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Mitch Conine John Foster	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	John Bender Charles Ring
<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Sam Marie Hermitte Erika Mancha	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Tanushri Jain Sherman Hampton
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Aubrey Spear Wayne Wilson	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Greg Carter Ryan Bayle
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Troy Hill Salvador Gandara	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway Cory Pomeroy
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz, Chair Joyce Warren	<i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i>	Whitney Milberger Dean Minchillo
<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	Adam Foster Stephanie Keith	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton Vacant
<i>River Authorities</i>	Stacy Pandey Amy Mutton	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Kyle Eppler Mary Alice Boehm McKaughan
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Jennifer Walker Marisa Bruno	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe Earl Foster
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Anthony Stambaugh Michael Kent		

**Also present:** Adam Conner, Alex Flashing, Alicia Flores, Annika Schiller, Bill Hoffman, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Christopher Perry, Curt Campbell, Curtis Smith, Dana Porter, Doug Christensen, Eric Anderson, Guillermo Martinex, Isabelle Martinex, Jade Rutledge, Jacie Lewis, Jade Rutledge, Jacee Lewis, Jennifer Barr, Karan Mehta, Kristen Pittman, Lacie Ulrich, Margo Williams, Micheal Turco, Michele Risko, Natasha Lewis, Natalie Houston, Paula Paciorek, Perry Fowler, Ruby Perez, Sarah Kirkle, Shannon Hamilton, Steelee Fischenbacher, Tillery Sims, Victoria Rose **TWDB Staff** –Denise Livingston, Fritz Reinig, Jonathan Mathers, Karen Sanders, Lauren Bos, Marla Heger, Melanie Butler.

1. Welcome- Aubrey Spear called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.
2. Roll Call - A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Aubrey Spear turned the meeting over to Karen Guz
4. Karen advised Council members to review all the past minutes since the last in-person meeting. Approval of the minutes will occur at the next in-person meeting on April 7 at Lower Colorado River Authority. All minutes can be found on the Save Texas Water website.
5. Public Comment – No requests were received.

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6. Karen reviewed the expectations regarding legislative recommendation proposal prior to the April 7, in-person vote.

- a. Today the Council will discuss the proposed recommendation.
- b. Issues, concerns, and questions will be addressed and clarified prior to April 7.

7. Work Group Reports and Discussion of Potential Legislative Recommendation – Includes Recommendations and Charge 1. Monitor Trends in Water Conservation Implementation

- a. Agricultural -John Bender presented two recommendations for ag.
  - i. Recommendation to include irrigation districts to be eligible SRF funding
    - A question was posed, since SRFS are federally sourced can state legislation change the eligibility requirements for funds the SRF program? – TWDB staff will research and follow up with the workgroup.
  - ii. Clarify and highlight agricultural water conservation opportunities through Texas Agricultural Finance Authority, TAFA
  - iii. Further discussion was held on 89<sup>th</sup> legislature's appropriations for the agricultural loan and grant program
- b. Commercial and Institutional – No legislative recommendations. Eddie Wilcut discussed non-residential water use being the cause of increasing per capita water use.
- c. Landscape, Irrigation, and Horticulture – Whitney Milberger presented a recommendation revising Texas administrative code to require master valves on all new irrigation systems.
- d. Industrial – no report
- e. Municipal – Karen presented two recommendations for the municipal workgroup.
  - i. Provide resources for the TWDB to annually review and publish water conservation and reuse best management practices (BMP) for water volumes saved and reused as part of the mandatory municipal Water Conservation Plan Annual Report.
  - ii. Recommend that the definition of Dwelling unit in Chapter 24, Subchapter I, §24.275 c.6, include single-family residential rental properties.
- f. Public Awareness – Josh Sendejar stated that there will be no specific recommendation from the public awareness work group.
  - i. Blue Legacy Awards – Joyce Warren gave a report on the status of the Blue Legacy Award roll out for 2026. Verbiage is going to be added to the application that entities required to submit reports to TWDB must be current with their reporting.
  - ii. Gold Star – Joyce Warren gave a status report on the proposed re-implementation of the gold star awards program. Initially the program was to be implemented in early 2020. The program may also be changed to the Blue Star program to be more consistent in the Council's branding. Joyce proposed that this is a separate committee from the Blue Legacy Awards.
- g. Water Loss – Karen spoke on behalf of the water loss workgroup. No recommendation will be put forth regarding water loss. The report will discuss the status of the water loss programs that have been implemented in recent years.
- h. Wholesale/Rural Water – Dustan discussed the two BMPS the workgroup is working on. The wholesale/rural water group will not have a recommendation.
- i. Evapotranspiration stakeholder meeting- Dustan Compton held an ET stakeholder meeting to discuss the status of the ET network and TexMesonet. The recommendation will be similar to the recommendation presented in the 2024 legislative report. Additional stakeholder meetings may be held prior to April 7.

8. Discussion of Legislative Report Charge 2- 7 Karen reviewed the additional charges, gave examples of what each may include, and reminded content contributors to be clear, concise and keep it easy to read.
- i. Charge 2. Monitor New Technologies for Possible Inclusion in the Best Management Practices Guide – The wholesale BMP will be featured in this section
    - The last report featured trends in irrigation, landscape irrigation, and using GIS to analyze trends
    - Leveraging the use of AMI technologies
    - Discussion on including a section on reuse, industrial reuse, and other water saving technologies such as rainwater harvesting, AC condensate, etc.
    - Discussion held on having TCEQ post data on wastewater discharge.
    - Include additional discussion on evapotranspiration under charge 2.
  - ii. Charge 3. Monitor the Effectiveness of the Statewide Water Conservation Public Awareness Campaign
    - Include follow up on the status of the state-wide awareness campaign from SB 28, 88<sup>th</sup> session, and awarded to Texas Water Foundation.
  - iii. Charge 4. Develop and Implement a Water Management Resource Library
    - This item usually focuses on what resources are already out there. Some resources are shared on the Save Texas Water website.
  - iv. Charge 5. Develop and Implement a Public Recognition Program for Water Conservation– The 2025 Blue Legacy Award will be included in this section along with the 2026 BLA program and the reintroduction of the gold/blue star incentive program.
  - v. Charge 6. Monitor the Implementation of Water Conservation Strategies by Water Users in Regional Water Plans 2026-Karen and Aubrey Spears discussed the Regional water plans and what may be included in this section.
    - There is a lot of information for the recommendation of the various regional water plans.
    - State-wide goals do not fit all regions equality, I.e., 140 GPCD for a target goal.
    - Also, the summaries of the three TWDB studies that were highlighted in the 2024 report may also be included.
    - Mention drought conservation efforts and how they can better help meet targets of the regional plans
  - vi. Charge 7. Monitor Target and Goal Guidelines for Water Conservation to be Considered by the TCEQ & TWDB –
    - Drought contingency plans
    - CII benchmarking
9. Announcement of Conferences and Events
- a. Central Texas Water Efficiency Network Symposium – San Marcos, March 4
  - b. Texas Water, San Antonio April 27 – 30
  - c. Association of Water Board Directors, Gaylord Texan Resort, Grapevine, June 18 – 20
  - d. Rural Water, TWRA, Arlington, March 25
10. Future Meetings - April 7, in person (and virtual) at Lower Colorado River Authority, Red Bud Center
11. Adjourn 12:52 p.m.

Links to items mentioned in meeting

[NOWRA](#) – National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Organization