

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: February 15, 2024

Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Conservation Conference Room CR-A238, San Antonio Water System Office
2800 US Hwy 281 N., San Antonio, TX 78212

Meeting chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support

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| <i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i> | Leslie Patterson Jennifer Allis | <i>Institutional Water Users</i> | Bill Hoffman Eddy Trevino |
| <i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i> | David Villarreal Addie Stone | <i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i> | Sarah Schlessinger Colin McDonald |
| <i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i> | Vanessa Chapman | <i>Higher Education</i> | Robert Mace Allen Berthold |
| <i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i> | Mitch Conine | <i>Agricultural Groups</i> | Charles Ring John Bender |
| <i>Texas Water Development Board</i> | Sam Marie Hermitte Erika Mancha | <i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i> | Craig Elam |
| <i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i> | Aubrey Spear | <i>Electric Generation</i> | Greg Carter Ryan Bayle |
| <i>Federal Agencies</i> | Troy Hill | <i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i> | CJ Tredway |
| <i>Municipalities</i> | Karen Guz Joyce Warren | <i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i> | Whitney Milberger |
| <i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i> | Leah Martinsson | <i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i> | Dustan Compton |
| <i>River Authorities</i> | Stacy Pandey Amy Muttoni | <i>Rural Water Users</i> | Kyle Eppler |
| <i>Environmental Groups</i> | Jennifer Walker | <i>Municipal Utility Districts</i> | Donna Howe Earl Foster |
| <i>Irrigation Districts</i> | | | |

Also present: Adam Conner, Annika Schiller, August Dreyer, Augusto Villalon, Kyle Wright, Christopher Charles, Chris Higgins, Chris Loft, Clifford Howard, Dawn Waker-Hughes, Natalie Houston, Jessica Barr, Jennifer Nations, Laura Ashley-Overdyke, Hector Ortiz, Kelsey Delgado, Kevin Kluge, Paula Szymanski, Shelly Galeazzi, Dan Strub, Alicia Lee, Lissa Gregg, Marshall Elliot, Monica Jacobs, Monica Polgar, Phil Price, Sarah Kirkle, Sarah Riggins, Virginia Parker, Qiwen Zhang

TWDB Staff – Loren Whitman, Jane Bullan, John Sutton, Daniel Rice, Temple McKinnon, Marla Heger, Antonio Delgado, Yun Cho, John Dupnik, Jaclyn Buck, Taylor Nickell.

Links to documents discussed in meeting:

Water Loss, Use and Conservation (LUC) [webinar registration](#)

[Stakeholder Opportunities | Texas Water Development Board](#)

Agricultural Water Conservation Grants – [Request for Applications](#)

Agricultural Water Conservation Grants – [Application Instructions](#)

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1. The meeting started at 10:30am
2. Roll call - A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Karen requested comments on the past meeting minutes, reminding the Council that approval of the minutes will occur at the next in-person meeting. No comments were made on the past meeting minutes/notes.
4. Public Comment – No public comments.
5. TWDB Update – Sam Hermite gave TWDB report.
 - a. The Water Use Survey is due March 1.
 - b. Regional Water Planning Group technical memoranda are due to TWDB March 4. These mid-point deliverables will identify water supply needs for which water management strategies, including demand reductions strategies, will be evaluated.
 - c. The TWDB is seeking public input to assist in implementing the Texas Water Fund and requests stakeholder feedback to inform funding priorities as well as the administration of the programs to which funds may be transferred. The TWDB is seeking input via three online surveys, public comment and Board meetings through March and a stakeholder workshop on **March 20**. Written feedback may also be submitted to TexasWaterFund@twdb.texas.gov. Survey responses and emailed commentary are due by **April 30**.
 - d. The TWDB and the Lower Colorado River Authority are co-convening a workshop in Austin, **March 19**, on *Surface water evaporation monitoring and estimation: new developments and implications for reservoir operations and water planning*.
 - e. Up to \$1.5 million in grant funding is available to eligible political subdivisions and state agencies for agricultural water conservation projects that improve irrigation efficiency, enhance resilience to weather extremes and climate variability, and promote innovation in agriculture. Selected projects will further water conservation in the state and serve the public interest by supporting the implementation of water conservation strategies identified in the state and regional water plans. Applications are due by April 3 at 2:00 pm. The TWDB will host two more informational webinars on **March 6, and March 27** from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The first webinar, on February 7, had 30 participants. Webinar will be posted as an on-line resource soon.
 - f. TWDB Financial assistance deadlines. TWDB invites entities to submit project information to be included in the intended use plans (IUPs):
 - i. Clean and Drinking Water SRF – “General Activities” IUP – **March 1**
 - ii. Drinking Water SRF – Lead Service Line Replacement – **April 1**
 - iii. Clean and Drinking Water SRF – Emerging Contaminants – **April 1**
 - iv. Flood Infrastructure Fund – **April 15**
 - g. The final water loss use and conservation [webinar](#) is March 12. Copies of the webinars will be posted soon on TWDB website as a future resource. The first two webinars had over 250 participants; 152 (February) and 101 (January)

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- h. Conservation division vacancy interviews:
 - i. Water Loss Specialist (2)/ Water Conservation Specialist (1) – interviews have been conducted and recommendations to fill the 3 positions are being finalized.
 - ii. Agricultural Conservation Specialist – interviews are being conducted.
 - iii. Agricultural Data Analyst - applications are being reviewed.

Discussion was held regarding a possible TWDB survey topic: using funds for additional university water research and water conservation academic coursework. Bill Hoffman will coordinate a team meeting for further discussion.

6. Workgroup Updates: Prior to the updates, Karen mentioned the timeline of getting the legislative report completed in a timely manner. Discussion was held on setting hard deadlines. The March meeting was changed to a virtual meeting. The April meeting will be in-person. The work groups will need to submit their legislative recommendations to Denise by April 11th so that they can be distributed to the Council prior to the April 18th meeting. Prior to the in-person August meeting, the work groups need to submit their trends and key information reports. This needs to be done significantly ahead of the August meeting to allow time for review and comments to avoid additional in-person meetings.

- a. Municipal.
 - i. The work group met February 9 to discuss dry year GPCD and the draft Regional Water groups conservation resource guide with TWDB staff.
 - ii. The municipal work group will be working on the next steps for the TAWWA drought survey. Develop case studies to aid other communities with common hurdles in drought management.
 - iii. Dialogue was held regarding regional water planning groups' drought plans, calculating drought costs, and charging users accordingly.
- b. Water loss – No report. Jennifer reiterated the TWDB funding priority of water loss projects through the SRF and because of the passage of Prop 6.
 - i. In addition, the legislative report needs to reflect all the water loss components now in place.
 - 1. Technical assistance program,
 - 2. Regional Water planning groups water management strategies including water loss as separate item from conservation.
 - 3. Verification program
 - 4. New TWDB water loss staff.
 - ii.
- c. Commercial/Institution- Bill Hoffman briefed the Council on the following:
 - i. Bill gave summary of data reflecting C&I use has remained the same, except for 2020, while residential use has decreased. New tools are being developed to help train people to work with C&I water efficiency.
 - ii. Bill will send out information on plumbing code changes, I.e., cooling towers will be equipped with conductivity meters, makeup meters, blowdown meters.
 - iii. Currently working on quantifying water usage in C&I.
 - iv. C&I will have a work group meeting prior to the March WCAC meeting.

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- v. Robert Mace mentioned plumbing code modifications discussions at the Water in the Desert Conference – recommend WCAC bring forth plumbing code recommendations, I.e., require new homes to have hot water circulation pump.
- d. Public Awareness –
 - i. Colin reported that they are currently working on the public awareness section, charge 3. The draft will then be presented to the public awareness work group for review and comments prior to the full council.
 - ii. Blue Legacy Awards – Donna Howe gave an update of the BLA sub-committee activity. Currently, the team is working on drafting the award application packets. The goal is to start advertising the award in April, with the awards presented next January at the Water for Texas conference. There are 5 award categories, each requiring a data component. Awarded projects will be used as case studies based off the data submitted.
- e. Agriculture: John Bender gave a report on the agricultural work group.
 - i. A recommendation for replenishing funding in the agricultural water conservation fund. Ready for Council approval at the next in-person meeting.
 - ii. TWDB staff will give a report on the status and operations of the agricultural water conservation grant and loan program.
 - iii. The work group submitted the draft Gate Automation BMP for Council review. The floor was open to discussion on the BMP. The Council had no additions/deletions. The BMP will be on the next in-person agenda approval at the next in-person meeting
 - iv. Request for status update of the agricultural water conservation fund in upcoming meeting.
- f. Industrial – No report
- g. Wholesale/Rural water – Dustan Compton was unable to attend the meeting due to a schedule conflict.
 - i. Evapotranspiration stakeholders’ meeting will be held February 28 at 11:00 am.
 - ii. A wholesale work group meeting will be scheduled next month. Please watch for an announcement.
- 7. Discussion: 2024 WCAC Legislative Report: Karen reminded the Council of the timeline to complete the legislative report.
 - a. Exceptional item requests need to be submitted and approved by the Council in April. Submit the request to Denise by April 11th to be considered at the April 18th council meeting
 - b. Summarize trends in each area
- 8. Other Business:
 - a. Whitney Milberger discussed the development of the new landscape/irrigation work group. A meeting will be held in March, the date has yet to be determined.
 - b. Aubry Spear announced he is the new general manager at San Jacinto River Authority.
- 9. Announcement of Conferences and Events
 - a. Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium, March 19th in Austin.
 - b. Gulf Coast Efficiency Network Symposium, February 22nd in Houston
 - c. Next Generation Water Summit, June 20-21, Santa Fe, NM
 - d. TAWWA Texas Water Conference - April 9 – 12th in Ft. Worth.
 - e. Texas Tech Law School – Water Policy Conference, March 1, Lubbock
 - f. Texas Groundwater Summit – August 20-22 in San Antonio.

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10. Future Meeting Dates: Mar. 21, April 18 (in-person), June 20, Aug. 22 (in-person), Oct. 17, Nov. 7
11. Adjourn 11:54 am