

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: January 18, 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

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Bill Hoffman Eddy Trevino
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Colin McDonald
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Vanessa Chapman	<i>Higher Education</i>	Allen Berthold
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>		<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>		<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>		<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe Earl Foster
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>			

Also present: Kyle Wright, Isabel Martinez, Guy Fipps, Dana Porter, Chris Loft, Jessica Woods, Laura Ashley-Overdyke, Vilma Luna, Hector Ortiz, Adam O’Conner. Paula Szymanski, Shelly Galeazzi, Charles Swanson, Natalie Houston, Virginia Parker, Jennifer Barr, Bill Carr, Monica Polgar, Dan Strub, Alicia Lee, Dawn Waker-Hughes, Jennifer Nations, Isabella Garrone, Paige Bain, Sarah Kirkle, Sarah Riggins, Latricia Spikes, Marshall Elliot, Amber Knott, Christopher Charles, Clifford Howard; **TWDB Staff** – Shae Luther, Nathan Leber, Elizabeth McCoy, Loren Whitman, Jane Bullan, Lauren Munguia, John Sutton, Daniel Rice, Temple McKinnon.

Links to documents discussed in meeting:

The [2021 annual water use estimates](#) for Texas water.

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

[Stakeholder survey](#) for TWDB led initiatives furthering public awareness of water.

[TexMesonet](#) interactive site

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

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

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[Stakeholder Opportunities | Texas Water Development Board](#)
[TAWWA Drought Survey Summary of Findings](#)
[American Water Works Association RFP Enforcement](#)
[American Water Works Association RFP Climate](#)

1. The meeting started at 10:30am with introductions.
2. 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 in March. 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 available on-line and is due March 1.
 - b. Texas Water Service Boundary viewer editor is open through July 1. All public water suppliers who are authorized to complete their annual water use survey are asked to please verify or update their service boundaries.
 - c. The [2021 annual water use estimates](#) for Texas have been released.
 - d. TWDB planning staff have developed a potential calculation methodology for implementing GPCD reduction per Council recommendation in the December 2022 report. Feedback requested of the Council.
 - e. TWDB is conducting water loss use and conservation [webinars](#).
 - f. TWDB is in the process of interviewing for 3 FTEs to join water loss and conservation teams. 2 positions in Technical Assistance and Water Loss Control (TWALC)
 - g. Senate Bill 28- proposition 6
 - i. Created a draft program overview for water loss validation program as part of TAWLC.
 - ii. In the process of researching past water loss waivers and developing thresholds or conditions for an entity to not have to include water loss as part of funding package.
 - iii. Mural update- Colin McDonald, Texas Water Foundation, explained the challenges that were had finding a wall for the proposed mural. Need a structurally sound, highly visible site that is going to be around for several years. A proposed unveiling is expected this spring.
 - iv. The Public Awareness campaign portion of SB 28TWDB is in the process of drafting a request for applications to award a contract to develop a state-wide awareness campaign. The campaign needs to consider the difference in water needs of various geographic regions, increase awareness and education on Texas water and drive behavioral change.
 - v. Target date for RFA is March with a target of May for board approval.
 - h. In addition to the public awareness campaign, TWDB wants to explore TWDB led initiatives that could further public awareness of water. TWDB posted a survey soliciting ideas from stakeholders.
<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/home/tabs/doc/hot/TWF-Issues-Stakeholder-Input.pdf>
 - i. Agriculture – Stakeholder input on agricultural conservation. 26 ideas were submitted:

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- i. precipitation enhancement, (9)
- ii. irrigation efficiency, (4)
- iii. managed aquifer recharge, (2)
- iv. rainwater harvesting, (1)
- v. groundwater database technology, (1)
- vi. regenerative agriculture, (1)
- vii. crop water demand based on meteorological data, (1)
- viii. drop structure (1)
- ix. irrigation estimates, (1)
- x. rainwater stock tanks, (1)
- xi. conservation program financing (1)
- xii. water quality studies, (1)
- xiii. native grass conservation, (1)
- xiv. Playa Lake restoration, (1)

- j. \$1.5 million in grants approved for ag conservation. The request for applications will go out soon with a deadline of April 3.

Further discussion was held on the GPCD calculation methodology and regional water planning resources. A municipal work group meeting will be coordinated to further review and discuss.

6. Presentation: [TexMesonet](#) – Nathan Leber, Program Manager, gave a presentation on Texas’s mesonet program.

- a. TexMesonet’s goal is to unify networks of weather stations across the state to communicate and share data.
- b. Oklahoma’s mesonet program is 30 years old. Even West Texas mesonet has been in place for about 20 years, Texas’s statewide mesonet started in 2016 based on a feasibility study.
- c. HB 2759 and SB 988 reflect the responsibilities of the TexMesonet and its advisory committee: the executive administrator shall establish the text message at Astro Meteorological Network to provide a statewide resource for hydrometeorological data and information benefiting weather forecasting, flood preparedness, drought monitoring, wildfire management, water resources, planning, water conservation, agricultural readiness and productivity, industrial readiness and related readiness, related business readiness and productivity across the state..
- d. TexMesonet objectives:
 - i. Unify existing resources
 - ii. QA/QC data from existing resources.
 - iii. Identify gaps in coverage
- e. Over 3000 stations on TexMesonet but most are in urban areas
 - i. TWDB infrastructure focuses on large gaps in rural, less populated areas.
 - ii. Many existing sites capture only a couple of parameters. (precipitation and temperature)
 - iii. New infrastructure captures a wide array of data (wind speed, direction, temperature, humidity, solar radiation, geometric pressure, two different rain gauges, soil temperature and moisture at 4 different levels)
- f. TexMesonet status

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- i. Currently only 5 FTEs. Requested 11 FTEs. (In comparison, Oklahoma's program has 30 FTEs)

Discussion was held regarding past Council recommendations. It was recommended that the wholesale/rural water work group continue to work with TexMesonet on building recommendations focused on additional resources for TexMesonet.

7. Workgroup Updates:

- a. Municipal – Karen briefed the Council on the drought survey project with TAWWA.
 - i. Over 120 water providers responded.
 - ii. Summary of findings available on [Save Texas Water](#) website.
 - iii. Looking at state code to capture passive water savings.
 - iv. Discussion on what recommendations to legislature are most likely to be successful.
 - v. What Best Management Practices can be put in place to increase efficiency standards?
 - vi. A discussion was held regarding the creation of an irrigation work group, to be chaired by Whitney Milberger with a focus on WaterSense standards, WaterSense irrigation controller, or spray bodies for irrigation systems. Karen reviewed the By-laws and determined we could move forward with the work group. Karen suggested all work groups should draft a couple of bullet points for the focus of each work group.
- b. Water loss – No report
- c. Commercial/Institution- Bill Hoffman briefed the Council on the following:
 - i. Contract in place to start the Certified Commercial Institutional Water Auditor Training program.
 - ii. Reviewed GPCD changes in residential, commercial, institutional for leak loss. Leak loss appears to remain around 20 GPCD
 - iii. Discussion on funding new water conservation research in academia and water conservation programming.
- d. Public Awareness – Blue Legacy Awards sub-committee gave update of program.
 - i. The proposal is for the awards to be given out at the Water for Texas event next January 2025.
 - ii. The following goals were presented as the objectives of the Blue Legacy Awards:
 - 1. Do not repeat awards already in existence from other organizations.
 - 2. Make the awards available to a larger audience from various professions, not specifics.
 - 3. Do not create too many awards; keep them short and simple.
 - 4. Create award categories based on hard data.
 - iii. The committee proposed the following modified award categories:
 - 1. **Legacy of Efficiency:** An award for organizations and projects implementing long-lasting water efficiency measures.
 - 2. **Legacy of Source:** An award for organizations and projects protecting established water resources and discovering new water sources for current and future generations.

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3. **Legacy of Awareness:** An award for organizations and projects that instill the public with a drive to protect their water resources and care about their use.
 4. **Legacy of Commitment:** Recognition for past winners of the Blue Legacy Awards who continued their winning project and keep records of how it has reduced water consumption since their win. Two years must have passed since the organization or project's win to submit for this award.
 5. **Best in Flow:** An award highlighting projects, organizations, and people who have made impactful ripples in the water community and industry. This award cannot be self-nominated.
- iv. The Texas Water Foundation will put together reels for social media and to display at the conference.
- e. Agriculture: John Bender gave a report on the agricultural work group.
 - i. Renewing recommendation for continued funding of the agricultural water conservation grant and loan program.
 - ii. Recommend replenishing funding in the agricultural water conservation fund.
 - iii. The work group is also developing a report on the trends and agricultural water conservation.
 - iv. The work group will submit a draft Gate Automation BMP for approval at the next in-person meeting. The BMP will be on the next agenda for discussion.
 - v. Request for status update of the agricultural water conservation fund in upcoming meeting.
 - f. Industrial – No report
 - g. Wholesale/Rural water – Dustan Compton briefed the Council on the Wholesale work group.
 - i. TCEQ presented guidance on drought plan requirements.
 - ii. Moving forward with a wholesale public awareness BMP.
 - iii. Partner with municipal work group
 - iv. Help develop recommendations for Evapotranspiration (ET) network.
8. Discussion: 2024 WCAC Legislative Report has two parts:
 - a. Summarize trends in each area
 - b. Legislative recommendations
 - c. Budgeting items need to coordinate with TWDB legislative appropriations request timeline.
 9. Other Business
 10. Announcement of Conferences and Events
 - a. Texas Water Conference - April 9 – 12th in Ft. Worth.
 - b. Texas Groundwater Summit – August 20-22 in San Antonio. Currently accepting requests for proposals.
 - c. Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium, March 19th in Austin.
 - d. Gulf Coast Efficiency Network Symposium, February 22nd in Houston
 - e. Texas Water Foundation is hosting an informational meeting on the Texas Water Leader program. Tuesday January 23, 2024.
 - f. AWWA has a Request for Proposals:

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- i. [Climate Change and Impact in Water Planning](#)
 - ii. [Enforcement Options Beyond Municipal Ordinances](#)
- 11. Future Meeting Dates: Feb. 15, Mar. 21, April 18, June 20, Aug. 22, Oct. 17, Nov. 7
- 12. Adjourn 1:40pm

DRAFT