

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: April 18, 2024

Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Barbara Jordan Building 2nd Floor Meeting Room 2.013
1601 Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701

Meeting Chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support

Attendees:

<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	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Colin McDonald
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Marty Kelly 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>	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>		<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz, Chair 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	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Kyle Eppler
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Marisa Bruno	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe Earl Foster
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Wayne Halbert		

Also present: Alicia Lee, Alyssa Pantuso, Annika Schiller, Becki Begley, Blaire Parker, Charles Swanson, Chris Loft, Christopher Perry, Clifford Howard, Daniel Nix, Dawn Walker-Hughes, Dean Man Minchillo, Doug Christenson, Guy Fipps, Hector Ortiz, Jennifer

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Barr, Jennifer Nations, Jessica Woods, Kathy Fonville, Lexile Rameriz-Garcia, Marshall Elliot, Micah Reed, Natalie Houston, Paige Bain, Paula Szymanski, Perry Fowler, Sarah Kirkle, Sarah Riggins, Ted Pick

TWDB Staff – Charlotte Gilbert, Daniel Rice, Denise Livingston, Enriqueta Caballero, Erika Mancha, Jaclyn Buck, Jane Bullan, Jessica Paz, John Sutton, Karen Sanders, Loren Whitman, Shae Luther, Taylor Nickell, Temple McKinnon.

Links to documents or sites discussed in meeting:

[Database for State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency](#)

1. The meeting started at 10:30am
2. Roll call - A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Public Comment – No public comments.
4. Consent Agenda:
 - a. Approval of minutes from July 31st, October 26th, January 18th, February 18th, and March 21st meetings. Leslie Patterson moved to approve; Bill Hoffman seconded. Motion passed.
 - b. Approval of Gate Automation BMP. John Bender moved to approve; Stacy Pandey seconded. Motion passed.
 - c. Approval of Landscape/Irrigation work group Leah Martinson moved to approve; Bill Hoffman seconded. Motion passed.
5. TWDB Update – Sam Hermite gave TWDB report.
 - a. New resources are now available to support regional water planning group development of conservation water use reduction strategies, water loss mitigation strategies, GPCD goals, and the conservation subchapter of the 2026 Regional Water Plans. The resources that can be found on the [Conservation Resources for 2026 Regional Water Plan Development webpage](#).
 - b. The TWDB is continuing to seek 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 comment period ends April 30.
 - c. The TWDB and the Lower Colorado River Authority held a *Surface water evaporation monitoring and estimation: new developments and implications for reservoir operations and water planning*, on March 19. The 5-year vision resulting from the workshop:
 - Continue validation of the reservoir-specific daily evaporation dataset
 - Update reservoir evaporation data used in the Water Availability Models (WAMs)
 - Undertake peer review of open water datasets collected for Texas
 - Add new reservoirs that are/will come online to the reservoir specific daily dataset

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

The slide presentations are available [here](#).

- d. Agriculture water conservation grant applications were due by April 3. More information on the applications received will be shared at the next meeting.

6. Workgroup Updates:

a. Municipal - Karen

- i. No legislative recommendations from the municipal work group in this year's report.
- ii. The municipal section will provide an overview of items already in code, I.e., cooling towers. The municipal group will further review code updates and work with stakeholders and TCEQ to identify additional items for plumbing codes.
- iii. Drought increases GPCD. Highlight the importance of managing drought to achieve regional water plan savings.
- iv. Discussion was held of the resource library charge and how to make Save Texas Water website more impactful. It was proposed to submit a survey through the Texas Water Fund requesting consideration of using a future budget and IT work plan to refresh the Council's website to better carry out the charge for a resource library. The Council does not have its own funding and is not a political subdivision, and the website is a TWDB managed asset, low on the priority scale due to not being part of the day-to-day operations of TWDB. The discussion also included the need for a work group to identify what needs to be done and draft an outline of how the site needs to function. Robert Mace volunteered to lead the website committee. Whitney Milberger and Sam Hermite also volunteered to be on the committee. Leah Martinson moved, and CJ Tredway seconded to submit a survey asking for consideration to update Save Texas Water website to be used as a better tool to address water awareness issues and resource library. Motion passed.

Karen Guz moved, and Greg Carter seconded to create a short-term committee to identify scope of work for updating the website. Motion passed.

- b. The water loss work group – Co-chair Marshall Elliot gave a water loss work group report.
 - i. The report will highlight progress in water loss:
 - TWDB's Level 1 validation and technical assistance. More staff and resources have been added to the program.
 - Water loss has been separated as a standalone water management strategy

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

- Water loss mitigation is a priority investment because of Senate Bill 28.
 - The report will contain a ‘storytelling’ component using data from recently submitted water conservation plans.
 - A discussion was held by the work group on a uniform water loss matrix. What is the best measure, gallons per capita per day, gallons per connection or Infrastructure Leakage Index (ILI)
 - A summary will be included on how the past two summers have impacted infrastructure with increased line breaks due to shifting soils and higher pressures.
- ii. Due to needing the current programs to have time to reflect progress, no further recommendations will be made for this reporting year.
- c. Commercial/Institution- Bill Hoffman briefed the Council on the content proposed for the commercial/institutional report. CI will not put forward recommendations this year but will have an aggressive work plan for the next two years. Topics to include:
- i. A national certification program for commercial institution water auditors is now operational.
 - ii. Develop webinars addressing how we help utilities work with commercial/institutional water users
 - iii. Develop water conservation newsletters.
- d. Public Awareness – Colin McDonald
- i. The legislative report will include a summary encouraging water awareness and discussing the success of Proposition 6 Water Awareness Campaign.
 - ii. Blue Legacy Awards is seeking applications on Save Texas Water
 - The awards require a strong data component to show water savings and the ability to be replicated.
- e. Agriculture - John Bender discussed the results of the previous recommendations to replenish the agricultural grant and loan program. The new recommendation was stated: **The Council recommends that the Texas Legislature replenish funding in the Agricultural Water Conservation Fund sufficient to support the TWDB’s grant and loan program for the next ten years, including continued grant funding at or above the current level of \$1,500,000 per year.**

After discussion, the Council modified the recommendation as follows: **The Council recommends that the Texas Legislature replenish funding in the**

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Agricultural Water Conservation Fund sufficient to support the TWDB's grant and loan program for a total of \$15,000,000 for the next ten years.

Leah Martinsson moved to approve the motion as revised, Leslie Patterson seconded. The following Council members abstained from voting: Sam Hermite, Leslie Patterson, Marty Kelly. Motion passed.

- f. Industrial – No report
- g. Wholesale/Rural water– Dustan Compton gave a summary of the work group's support of the ET network and has put forward a funding recommendation for the ET Network. The recommendation was stated: **Increase appropriations by \$1,200,000 for the biennium to the TWDB to develop and support a statewide ET network within the TexMesonet. Funding will be used for:**
 - **Up to 2.5 new full-time equivalent staff positions**
 - **Contracting a study on existing TexMesonet weather stations regarding siting requirements to accurately calculate ET (study of fetch)**
 - **Resources to update existing sites to accommodate ET measurements**
 - **Grants and/or contracts with agencies to provide technical assistance**

Greg Carter moved to approve the motion; Leah Martinsson seconded. The following Council members abstained from voting: Sam Hermite, Leslie Patterson, Marty Kelly. Motion passed.

- h. Efficient Landscape and Watering Nexus (E-LaWN)– Next meeting is scheduled for May 9th 1:00 – 2:30pm. Whitney Milberger outlined the purpose and goals for the work group.
 - i. The purpose is to serve as the WCAC's technical and educational resource for landscape irrigation best management practices statewide.
 - ii. The work group will focus on:
 - BMPS for efficient landscaping and irrigation design, installation, maintenance, and management.
 - Education of HOA's, irrigators, and designers.
 - Support of a statewide clearinghouse of supporting materials for educators and professionals to use.
 - Reports to the State Legislature on trends and issues in landscape and irrigation.

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

7. Discussion: 2024 WCAC Legislative Report: Draft reports of trends, issues and new technologies for individual work groups are due to Denise Livingston by July 19. The compilation of the pieces will be returned to Council for review by early August for comments and review.

Karen reminded everyone to use brevity in their summaries and keep readability in mind. Avoid long text, use bullet points, and for extended information, consider an appendix. Summary reports need to be reviewed by work group stakeholders prior to submitting to the TWDB staff.

Karen advised that work groups need to have report highlights submitted for June 20th meeting.

August 22, in-person, will vote on insubstantial format.

8. Other Business: Bill Hoffman discussed a couple additional items:
- a. The potential for funding academic programs in the State's universities. Council members Hoffman, Mace and Berthold will continue to discuss academic programs over the next 2 years and build a potential recommendation for 2027 report.
 - b. Discussion was held on TCEQ wastewater disposal information. Need data architecture to make information more readily available and user friendly for regional planning efforts.
9. Announcement of Conferences and Events
- a. [Agricultural Water Sustainability Summit](#), August 7 – 9 in Lubbock. Call for presenters.
 - b. [Next Generation Water Summit](#), June 20- 21 in Santa Fe, NM
 - c. [Texas Water Foundation](#), Film Festival, April 30
 - d. April is [Safe Digging](#) month
 - e. 2024 Texas Water Needs survey is coming out soon – Contact Perry Fowler for more information.
 - f. [Texas Groundwater Summit](#) – August 20-22 in San Antonio.
10. Future Meeting Dates: June 20, Aug. 22 (in-person at LCRA), Oct. 17, Nov. 7
11. Adjourn – meeting ended at 1:04 pm