

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 7, 2026

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

10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Staff Support to the Council

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson Jade Rutledge*/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 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: Aly Foreman, Ashley Shin, Augusto Villalon, Bill Hoffman, Curtis Smith, Dan Strub, DJ Seeger, Jack Jones, Jayme Martone, Jennifer Nations, Jessica Wright, Karan Mehta, Kathy Fonville, Kevin Kluge, Lacie Ulrich, Natasha Lewis, Natalie Houston, Paula Paciorek, Paula Szymanski, Ronald Garcia, Santosh Palmate, Shannon Ward, Ted Pick, Tom Entsminger, Yesema Perez. **TWDB Staff** –Denise Livingston, Emma McNeal, Jane Bullan, Jessica Paz, Marla Heger, Melanie Butler

* Jade Rutledge is standing in for Leslie Patterson.

1. Welcome- Karen Guz 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. Approval of the minutes – CJ Tredway moved to approve the minutes for the meetings held on September 4, 2025, December 2, 2025, January 27, 2026, and February 24, 2026. Aubrey Spears seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed
4. Public Comment – No requests were received.
5. TWDB report – Sam Marie Hermitte
 - TWDB Conservation Departments have two job openings with a closing date of April 8.
 - Agricultural Water Conservation Specialist

- Municipal Water Conservation Specialist
- WUS, as of April 6, 2026, 5,608 submitted of 7,939 required. Approximately 70% compared to 74% last year at this time. WUS were due March 1.
- WLAs, WCPs, and ARs are due May 1. Reports submittal status as of 3/30/26.
 - Water loss audit –424 submitted of the 4,139 required (10.2%). 2026 is a five-year reporting cycle where all utilities submit.
 - Retail annual conservation reports – 81 submitted of 796 required (10.2%)
 - Retail water conservation plan – 0 of 29 required
 - Validations – 166 utilities are required to be validated due to an existing loan or new loan application
- TWDB hosted 3 Water Loss Use and Conservation webinars with a total of 395 attendees. The webinars walked a participant through the reporting process from WUS, WLA and the conservation reporting, including UP and WCPs.
- Proposed rulemaking for 31 TAC Chapters 358 and 363 related to water loss audit validation and mitigation plans for large municipally owned utilities were approved to be published at the March 31st Board meeting. They will be published in the *Texas Register* on April 17th and be open for a 30-day comment period.
- Groundwater Conservation grant application closed March 13, 2026. TWDB is currently reviewing applications.
 - Nearly half of all GCDs applied
 - Total funding requested was ~\$8.8M
- Agricultural Loan and grants application closed on March 18, 2026. TWDB is currently reviewing applications.
- HB 500, The intended use plan for the Water Supply and Infrastructure grants, WSIG, was presented to the Board at the March 31 meeting.
 - \$1.038 billion.
 - 100% grant for water infrastructure projects
 - Appropriation is provided to communities by 8/31/2027
 - Application period is now open and closes on July 30, 2026
 - Informational webinars will be held April 23 and May 13.
- The draft 2027 state water plan will go to the Board on April 16th for their consideration to post the draft for public comment.
- The three studies described in Charge 6 of the WCAC last legislative report are set to conclude this summer. The results of the studies will aid in the regional and state water planning process.
 - Updating Key Metrics Regarding Outdoor Water Use
 - Assessment of Municipal Population and Water Demand Projections
 - Estimating Non-surveyed Groundwater Use for Texas Regional and State Planning

Discussion was held on the studies, 2026 regional water plans, and the conservation section of the state water plan. Regional water plans and the status of the three studies can be found on the TWDB website.

6. Work Group Legislative Report Updates and Vote on Recommendations

- a. Agricultural -John Bender gave a summary of the two recommendations for agriculture.
 - i. Recommendation to include irrigation districts to be eligible SRF funding
 - This recommendation was pulled since SRFs are federally sourced and state legislation cannot change the eligibility requirements for funding through the SRF program.

- ii. Clarify and highlight agricultural water conservation opportunities through Texas Agricultural Finance Authority, TAFA

Discussion was held on the proposed recommendation to clarify and highlight agricultural water conservation opportunities through Texas Agricultural Finance Authority, TAFA

Although conservation projects are already eligible for funding, producers may not be fully aware of this opportunity due to being included in an extensive list of eligible items.

John Bender made a motion to approve the recommendation that Chapter 58 of the Texas Agriculture Code be amended to clarify that the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority is authorized to provide grants and low-interest loans for the purpose of implementing water conservation measures. Mary Alice Boehm McKaughan seconded. Motion passed. TWDB, TCEQ, TP&WL representatives abstained.

- b. Commercial and Institutional – No legislative recommendations. Eddie Wilcut emailed Denise a draft CI report.
- c. Landscape, Irrigation, and Horticulture – Whitney Milberger presented the recommendation to require master valves on all new irrigation systems. Whitney gave a briefing on the benefits and potential savings of having master valves on irrigation systems.

Robert Mace made the motion to approve the recommendation that Texas Administrative Code Title 30, Chapter 344, F, section 32 be revised to require the installation of master valves on all new landscape irrigation systems. Dustan Compton seconded the motion. The floor was open to discussion. Robert Mace and Karen Guz spoke in favor of the recommendation and voiced additional benefits to adding master valves. Motion passed.

- d. Industrial – no recommendations
- e. Municipal –

- i. Karen introduced Kevin Kluge with Austin Water to give a summary of the recommendation to 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. Greg Carter made a motion to approve the recommendation. Donna Howe seconded the motion. The floor was open to discussion. There was a lengthy discussion suggesting that only municipal information be published. A vote was held on the original recommendation. The motion failed to obtain two thirds of the vote as required. TWDB, TCEQ, TP&WL representatives abstained.
- ii. The second recommendation from municipal was introduced by Ted Pick, North Texas Municipal Water District. It was recommended that the definition of Dwelling unit in Chapter 24, Subchapter I, §24.275 c.6, include single-family residential rental properties. Karen Guz moved to approve the recommendation. Mary Alice Boehm-McKaughan seconded. The floor was open for discussion. Discussion was held on whether the Public Utility Commission is the correct code to reference. Mary Alice agreed to help identify the correct code. The spirit of the recommendation will remain the same with the correct code identified. The Council approved the recommendation with the modification. TWDB, TCEQ, TP&WL representatives abstained.

- f. Public Awareness – No recommendations
 - g. Water Loss – No recommendations
 - h. Wholesale/Rural Water – Dustan summarized the proposed recommendation to provide financial resources to support a statewide ET network into the TexMesonet program. Eddie Wilcut moved to approve the recommendations. Robert Mace seconded the motion. The Council approved the recommendation. TWDB, TCEQ, TP&WL representatives abstained.
7. Karen moved to the discussion on the bylaw review and summarized the need for the Council to review the bylaws for potential updates, specifically regarding term limits. It was recommended that the Council form a committee that is willing to review the bylaws over the next 6 months and bring recommendations back to the full council. Karen requested a group of volunteers. The following members and alternates will serve on the bylaw committee; Robert Mace, Chair, Whitney Milberger, Dustan Compton, Karen Guz, Donna Howe, and Mary Alice Boehm-McKauhgan
8. Discussion of Legislative Report Charge 2- 7 Karen discussed the past structure of the report and reminded content writers for the need of clarity and brevity.; introduction, 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 1. Monitor trends in water conservation implementation.
 - The workgroup chairs will submit content for current conservation issues in their subject areas.
 - ii. Charge 2. Monitor New Technologies for Possible Inclusion in the Best Management Practices Guide
 - Include additional discussion on the importance of evapotranspiration
 - Leveraging the use of AMI technologies
 - iii. Charge 3. Monitor the Effectiveness of the Statewide Water Conservation Public Awareness Campaign
 - Colin McDonald will include follow up on the status of the state-wide awareness campaign from SB 28, 88th session, and awarded to Texas Water Foundation.
 - iv. Charge 4. Develop and Implement a Water Management Resource Library
 - v. This item usually focuses on what resources are already out there. The Council does not have resources to create a resource. are shared on the Save Texas Water website.
 - vi. 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.
 - vii. 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
 - viii. Charge 7. Monitor Target and Goal Guidelines for Water Conservation to be Considered by the TCEQ & TWDB –

- Past reports highlighted the non-relevance of the statewide 140 GPCD target.
- Possible sliding scale of GPCD targets as mentioned in Region K's plan
- Drought contingency plans
- CII benchmarking

May 15 is the deadline for infographics requests.

June 15 is the deadline for draft reports to Denise, so that they can be formatted and sent out to the Council members prior to the July meeting.

9. Announcement of Conferences and Events

- [Texas Water 2026](#), April 27-30, 2026, | Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, TX
- [ACE26](#), June 21-24, 2026, | Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.
- [2026 WaterReuse Texas Conference](#), September 15-17, 2026, | Embassy Suites San Antonio, TX
- [Texas Water Foundation's Film festival](#) – May 12, 2026

10. Future Meetings - July 7, virtual

11. Adjourn 1:21 p.m.

Links to items mentioned in meeting

[HB 500 Water Infrastructure Grants Information page](#)

[HB Webinar Registration Links](#)

[April 23](#)

[May 13](#)

[Regional Water Plans](#)

Current TWDB studies [information page](#) This page contains the status information on the three studies described in Charge 6 of the WCAC last legislative report. The results of the studies will aid in the regional and state water planning process.