

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2013
 Time: 9:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
 Location: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 Conference Room – Building 6
 1340 Airport Commerce – Austin, TX

Meeting chaired by: C.E. Williams, Presiding Officer
 Meeting Facilitators: TWDB support staff

<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Bill Hoffman	<i>Refining & Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Karl Fennessey
<i>Landscape Irrigation & Horticulture</i>	Brad Smith	<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Ken Kramer
<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Carole Baker	<i>Higher Education</i>	Alternate Calvin Finch
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	C.E. Williams	<i>Water Control & Improvement Districts</i>	Alternate Dean Minchillo
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Cindy Loeffler	<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	Stacey Steinbach
<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe	<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Richard Egg
<i>Electric Generation</i>	Gary Spicer	<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal
<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	-----	<i>TWDB</i>	Alternate Ken Peterson
<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	Hughes Abell	<i>TCEQ</i>	Chris Loft
<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Lara Zent	<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Steve Bednarz
<i>River Authorities</i>	-----	<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Wayne Halbert
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz		

At 9:30 am the meeting was called to order by presiding officer C.E. Williams. The first item on the agenda was the approval of previous Council minutes. The minutes were approved without discussion. The floor was then opened for public comment for which there was none.

The next item on the agenda dealt with the Blue Legacy Award in Agriculture:

- New two-step process for applications for the award.
 - One page nomination
 - Packet to be filled out by the nominee
- Timeline for next year shown and discussed briefly.
- New nomination process and timeline approved.

The next item on the agenda was the introduction and approval of a resolution for Vanessa Escobar’s service as Texas Water Development Board’s staff support for the Council. The item was approved.

The next item on the agenda was a report from each workgroup. The Agriculture Water Conservation Workgroup reported on the need and feasibility for updating the statewide irrigation survey. They are working to develop a process and work plan.

A discussion on the Council’s involvement with more outreach work, especially in municipal areas, brought up the need to discuss further and develop the Council involvement.

The next item on the agenda was the discussion and possible approval of Best Management Practices. The four new Agriculture Best Management Practices are posted. The comments from the thirty day review of the next five practices have been received and effort is underway to incorporate comments.

Industrial Workgroup reported that there are some best management practices posted for refining but they are posted for public comment until July 31, 2013.

The Municipal Water Conservation Workgroup has several Active Best Management Practices. The group brought up setting deadlines for final Best Management Practices and the process for moving them along. Additional discussion included how Texas Commission on Environment Quality and Texas Water Development Board edited and reviewed Best Management Practices. The workgroup would like to schedule a conference call to go through all staff edits.

There was discussion on providing guidance to a utility to work with its Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional customers through a Best Management Practice and a suggestion to have a draft ready by September 1st. The Municipal Workgroup and additional interested parties would like to hold a conference call in regards to this practice.

The Council Members had questions regarding Best Management Practices as updates might be needed. An example would be the new water loss audits as mandated recently by the Legislature. It was noted that staff of Texas Water Development Board and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality would be aware of rule changes and monitor existing practices. If and when rules are implemented, those practices will be updated by agency staff and submitted to the workgroups for review.

Council Members brought up the need for a comprehensive timeline in simple Excel format with current Active Best Management Practices included. The timeline would help the Council know where the Best Management Practices stand and what the next steps are to continue their movement forward. Texas Water Development Board support staff will work to complete this timeline and distribute to the Council Members.

A motion was made and approved to set the deadline for completion of all active Best Management Practices outstanding, if possible, to be approved as final by September 1, 2013.

Discussion began on Ken Kramer's edits to the Introduction to Municipal Best Management Practices. Council Members discussed differences in semantics as to what could be considered misleading. The suggestion was made to strike the numerous instances of "voluntary" and instead state it once in bold. Additionally, there was discussion between Texas Water Development Board's General Counsel and the Council Members on superfluous language which might imply something which is not in the legislative directive. A motion was made and accepted to accept Ken's edits excluding the addition of the word "specific."

The Landscaping Water Conservation Workgroup would like to get back to their task on irrigation management. There will be a second conference call to work on their report.

The next item on the agenda was the review of water conservation bills in the 83rd Texas Legislature. Ken Kramer reviewed a summary of the most significant legislation. In the appropriation bill:

- \$1 million was directed for grants to water conservation education groups which could require private matching funds. There was discussion on encouraging the Council's involvement in advising the distribution of the funds.
- Next item was the \$1.8 million for each year of the biennium out of the Agriculture Water

Conservation Fund for the Texas Water Conservation Demonstration project in the Texas High Plains. This will continue the project for the next several years.

- Additionally, \$1.5 million was set aside for each of the years of the biennium for grants to the Groundwater Conservation Districts that require metering.
- House Bill 4 requires Texas Water Development Board to apply not less than 20% of the allotted State Water Plan funding to water conservation. House Bill 4 also requires not less than 10% of the monies be used to support agricultural or rural water conservation projects.

House Bill 857 requires each public water utility with more than 3,300 connections to provide annual water loss audit reports to the TWDB. A number of utilities already have been under this requirement as recipients of Texas Water Development Board funds, but this bill requires about 250 more utilities to do annual water loss audits.

House Bill 1461 requires each retail public water utility required to file water loss audit reports to inform utility customers of the water loss. The utility has two options: it can be in their annual report to customers or in the month following submission of the water loss audit.

House Bill 3605 includes requirements for entities to use a proportion of assistance from the Texas Water Development Board to dedicate to a system's water loss when water loss exceeds criteria set by the TWDB. The second portion of the bill requires that TWDB staff will evaluate the utilities water conservation plan use of best management practices when reviewing loan applications. The Council discussed how utilities develop their water conservation plans to include Best Management Practices.

Senate Bill 198 reduces the ability of Homeowner's Associations to have restrictions on homeowners using water conservation techniques for landscaping. There was discussion on the Council's involvement in giving input to Homeowner's Associations.

Senate Bill 385 is a follow up on a bill passed several years ago in response to renewable energy. The bill would allow creation of governmental entities that would give a homeowner an option to finance water conservation equipment using property tax payments. There was discussion on having a presentation to the Council on this activity.

Senate Bill 654 grants municipalities the authority to enforce civil actions enforcing water use restrictions and Senate Bill 700 requires the State Energy Conservation Office to develop a template for state agencies and higher education facilities to create water use management plans.

The next item on the agenda was upcoming conferences and events related to Water Conservation.

- Texas Groundwater Summit; August 27-29, 2013
- Texas Rural Water Association; August 18-19, 2013
- Water Smart Innovation; October 2013

The Legislative Budget Board has sent a request to C.E. Williams for any Council related issues for review before the 2015 Texas Legislative Session.

The Council scheduled the next two meetings of the Water Conservation Advisory Council at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Austin Field Office.

- Monday, August 26, 2013 at 10:30 am.
- Tuesday, October 15, 2013 at 10:30 am

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.