

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Summary of Minutes

Date: September 4, 2025

Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

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

Meeting Chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitator: Denise Livingston, Council Staff Support

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Leslie Patterson Vacant	<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 Vacant
<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 Strambaugh Michael Kent		

Also present: Alicia Lee, Annika Schiller, Bill Hoffman, Chris Loft, Christina Kaeini, Christopher Perry, Dan Strub, Daniel Nix, Ellie Bass, Joe Capesius, Kerry Greathouse, Kevin Kluge, Hector Ortiz, Karan Mehta, Kathy Fonville, Kyle Wright, Micheal Turco, Lexlie Ramirez Garcia, Natalie Houston, Natasha Lewis, Ruby Perez, Sarah Kirkle, Sarah Riggins, Shannon Hamilton, Ted Pick

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TWDB Staff –Denise Livingston, Jessica Paz, Marla Heger, Jonathan Mathers, Temple McKinnon, Yun Cho.

1. The meeting started at 10:31 am
2. Roll call- A quorum of the Advisory Council was present at the meeting.
3. Presentation – this item was postponed due to AWE staff conflicts. It was discussed to consider having a webinar presentation at a later date; possible in partnership with AWE. *Update on Proposals to Rollback Federal Water Efficiency Standards, Alliance for Water Efficiency - Kelly Connolly Kern* <https://allianceforwaterefficiency.org/awe-submits-comments-opposing-doe-proposals-to-rescind-and-weaken-water-efficiency-standards/>
4. Karen introduced the new and returning Council members appointed by the TWDB August 21, 2025
 - *Reappointments*
 - Adam Foster –Groundwater Districts
 - Dustan Compton – Water Control and Improvement Districts
 - CJ Tredway – Mining and Recovery of Minerals
 - *Alternates now Council members*
 - Colin McDonald – Professional Organization – Water Conservation Focus
 - John Bender – Agriculture
 - Mitch Conine – Texas State Soil and Water Conservation
 - *New members*
 - Eddie Wilcut – Institutional Water Users
 - Anthony Strambaugh – Irrigation Districts
 - Tanushri Jain – Refining/Chemical Manufacturing

Karen announced her upcoming retirement from the San Antonio Water System on Dec. 31, 2025. She will still stay involved with workgroups, but she believes the Municipal representative needs to be a person who is working full-time in Municipal conservation.
5. Approval of Minutes
 - October 17, 2024
 - November 4, 2024
 - February 6, 2025
 - April 17, 2025

CJ moved and Aubrey seconded approval of all the minutes. No further discussion. Motion passed.
6. Public Comment – no public comments were received.
7. TWDB report – Sam Marie Hermitte
 - Staff updates.
 - i. TWDB hired a summer intern
 - ii. 2 positions posted; Data Analyst and Conservation Manager
 - Water Conservation Plan Review status
 - i. TWDB received 453 of the required 639 – 71%
 - ii. To date, 302 reviews have been completed
 - Education - Separate from the Statewide Public Awareness Campaign identified as part of 2023 SB 28, is the Statewide Water Public Awareness Program. TWDB

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staff began internal conversations on June 5 on how best to allocate funding and the criteria. The focus is on better access to data and improved education and outreach.

- Water Conservation Plan requirement review. An internal review of the requirements between TWDB and TCEQ WCPs is in progress to see if we can better align the language in our plans and make them more user friendly to stakeholders.
- Water loss program
 - i. Partnered with UTA to provide technical assistance to mitigate water loss per SB 28 (2023).
 - As of 8/25/25, UTA has initiated assistance with 70 utilities.
 - Prioritizing WLA with data issues. We are starting with negative water loss and smaller population served.
 - SB 28 criteria
 - Water loss audits submitted to the board
 - Population served; and
 - Integrity of the utility's water system.
 - ii. House Bill 29, 89th Legislative session. A municipally owned utility that provides potable water through more than 150,000 service connections. The TWDB is in the process of creating frequently asked questions to put on their website.
 - iii. As of Sept. 1, 2025, TWDB performed 124 water loss audit validations.
 - Updating on-line water loss audit to align with AWWA version 6.
 - iv. [Water Loss Dashboard](#) is updated as of July 2025.
- Water Use Survey
 - i. The 2024 water use survey closed with a 78% of response rate in July.
 - ii. The 2023 Annual Water Use Estimates are now available online.
<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/waterusesurvey/dashboard/index.asp>

8. Discussion of Legislative Session

- [HB 29](#) – requires the largest 6 utilities in the state to have a more detailed water loss mitigation plan, validation, and annual reporting.
- [HB 517](#) - Property owners' association may not assess a fine for violation of covenant that requires owners to plant grass or turf or maintain green vegetation during watering restrictions or before the 60th day after watering restrictions are lifted.
 - i. The landscape irrigation work group identified “Improving community association and homeowner association partnerships in acceptable practices of landscape water conservation” as a focus item for this biennium. This is an agenda item for the next workgroup meeting. (not yet scheduled)
 - ii. Hill Country Alliance is working on HOA engagement; including educating community members on [SB198](#) from 2013, legislation that prohibits HOAs from restricting a homeowner's ability to install drought-resistant landscaping or water conserving turf.
 - Instead of an HOA changing covenants, an HOA can modify the landscaping policy to clarify landscaping, rain barrels, and drought related issues. This will help ensure that a change in HOA leadership is still aware of policies.

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- [SB 2662](#) - Enforcement of Drought Contingency. Leslie Patterson, TCEQ.
 - i. Primarily effects Investor-Owned utilities and if they can enforce their drought contingency plans (DCP).
 - ii. TCEQ is to work with the Board and PUC to update DCP templates every 5 years.
- Appropriations – John Bender, Agriculture
 - i. Discussion was held on the appropriation for the agricultural loan and grant funding. [Items regarding the ag appropriation will be further clarified at the next meeting]. TWDB has the authority to use a specified amount every year. The legislature doubled the allowable amount from \$1.5 million to \$3 million but they did not increase the funds. The Agricultural Water Conservation Fund was moved under the Texas Water Fund (TWF)
 - ii. Additional funding for the Texas Water fund, new and recurring, is subject to the passage of Proposition 4.
- Evapotranspiration Network– Dustan Compton
 - i. The Council recommended dedicated financial resources to support and statewide ET networks into the TexMesonet program. The TWDB asked for \$1.8 million but received half of the funding request.
- [SB 14](#) credits against impact fees to builders and developers for certain water conservation and reuse projects.
- Impact fees are charged by districts and cities to developers to compensate them for the infrastructure they have to outlay. This cost can be extremely expensive. SB 14 allows for credit to impact fees if the builders are implementing water conservation methods.
- Utilities are expected to construct reasonable offers and incentives with measurable data.

9. Work Group Reports:

- Agricultural – No workgroup report. Tentative meeting in November. John wants to focus on increasing participation.
- Commercial and Institutional- Currently no chair for this workgroup. Karen introduced Kevin Kluge, the co-chair of the new TAWWA Commercial, Institutional, and Industrial (CII) group that meets monthly.
 - i. In November, the group is hosting a commercial auditing certification training by IAMPO, in Austin
 - ii. The group surveyed conservation coordinators last August on what their needs are in CII conservation.
 - iii. Karen introduced Eddie Wilcut, the new institutional water conservation representative. Eddie will work with the TAWWA CII group and will provide the CI report to WCAC at quarterly meetings.
- Landscape, Irrigation, and Horticulture – The workgroup met twice since the last Council meeting; May 22 and Aug 7.
 - i. Regarding non-potable water use for homeowner, the workgroup determined they are unable to recommend non-potable use for landscaping due to no guidance, regulation, or maintenance requirement on small systems.
 - ii. More impactful water conservation plans continues to be an ongoing conversation. A small group did meet for a follow-up discussion on revisiting

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the “Gold Star” program that was intended to highlight entities with impactful water conservation plans.

- iii. The workgroup will be focusing on “Improving community association and homeowner association partnerships in acceptable practices of landscape water conservation” and incorporate the conversation on [HB 517](#) and [SB 14](#).

- Industrial – No report
- Municipal –
 - i. On June 26, WCAC met with TCEQ/TAWWA to discuss drought planning and drought contingency planning.
 - Discussed current guidance on TCEQ’s website.
 - Reviewed and discussed what best management practices exist and if BMPs need to be developed to aid entities in drought planning.
 - This is an ongoing conversation and has received interest from stakeholders.
 - ii. Municipal will also initiate conversations regarding [SB 14](#), impact fees.
- Public Awareness – Colin McDonald is the new chair of Public Awareness.
 - i. Colin will give a report on the public awareness campaign as decisions are finalized. The goal is to have the campaign moving forward in 2026.
 - ii. The Blue Legacy Award committee will need to reconvene to start planning for the 2027 awards.
- Water Loss – Karen gave brief summary on the joint municipal and water loss meeting held on July 21.
 - i. Reviewed the results of the legislative sessions.
 - ii. Discussed excessive line breaks due to drought.
- Wholesale/Rural Water – Workgroup met on August 28. They are working on two Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - i. Wholesale financial incentives to end users.
 - ii. Wholesale water conservation education and public awareness.

10. Announcement of Conferences and Events

- [North Texas Water Symposium](#), November 6, 2025
- [Agriculture Water Symposium](#), Lubbock, TX, October 14 – 15, 2025.
- [Texas Water 2026](#), San Antonio, TX. April 27 – 30, 2026.
- [Rio Grande Rio Bravo Binational Water Symposium](#), McAllen, TX. November 5 – 7, 2025

11. Future Meetings:

- December 2, 2025 – CJ moved, and Greg seconded that the 4th quarter meeting will be held virtually.

12. Motion to adjourn at 12:04 p.m.

Additional links of interest shared in meeting

[SB 198 \(2013\)](#)