

*** Meeting minutes should be considered DRAFT until approved at the next council meeting. ***

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: 10 March 2020

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: LCRA Redbud Center – 3601 Lake Austin Blvd. Austin, TX 78703

Meeting chaired by: Karen Guz, Presiding Officer

Meeting Facilitators: Josh Sendejar, Council Staff Support

<i>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</i>	Jennifer Allis	<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	--
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	Alternate David Villareal	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Sarah Schlessinger
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Cindy Loeffler	<i>Higher Education</i>	Tim Loftus
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	John Foster	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	Charles Ring
<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Kevin Kluge	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	--
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Alternate Wayne Wilson	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Greg Carter
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	--	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz	<i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i>	Anai Padilla
<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	--	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton
<i>River Authorities</i>	--	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Celia Eaves
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Ken Kramer	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Wayne Halbert		

Also present: Alternates – John Bender, Kimberly Horndeski, TJ Helton, Jennifer Walker; Interested Parties – Tommy McClung, Teal Harrison, Tammy Carter, Dan Strub, Deborah McMullan, Chris Charles, Craig Smith, Isabel Martinez; TWDB Staff – Kathleen Jackson, Jennifer White, Bryan McMath, Temple McKinnon, Yun Cho, Cameron Turner, Kyla Peterson, Shae Luther, Daniel Rice.

** Documents can be found at: <http://www.savetexaswater.org/meeting/council-meetings.asp>**

1. Introduction

The meeting began at 10:36 a.m.

Director Kathleen Jackson of the TWDB addressed the Council, thanking them for their work and giving updates on goings on at TWDB including the development of rules relating to recent flood legislation, TWDB's ongoing Total Water Loss Control Workshops throughout the state.

2. Approval of minutes from the February 11, 2020 meeting

Donna Howe made a motion to accept the minutes as written.

Cindy Loeffler seconded the motion.

The minutes were accepted as written.

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3. Public Comment

There was no public comment

4. Update from Texas Water Development Board

Kevin Kluge presented the following updates from TWDB:

- TWDB's Level 1 Data Validation Pilot for Water Loss Audits is in progress.
- TWDB's Total Water Loss Control Workshops are currently being conducted throughout the state. The full schedule for the workshops can be found [here](#).
- The last round of Municipal BMPs submitted from the Council to TWDB have been accepted and are posted to the TWDB's [Municipal BMP](#) page.
 - o The BMPs include:
 - Enforcement of Irrigation Standards
 - Utility Water Audit and Water Loss

5. Reports from Workgroups

Karen Guz began the discussion by saying several workgroups may have had discussion relating to the legislative recommendations. She recommended those updates be saved for the discussion on legislative recommendations (*Agenda Item 6*).

The following are updates given outside of legislative recommendations.

a. Commercial & Institutional

Workgroup Chair Bill Hoffman was not in attendance. Karen Guz mentioned that a call was held with various stakeholders regarding the recommendation concerning data trend analysis. As part of that call, discussion included NAICS coding, benchmarking, and getting a better handle on data.

b. Public Awareness

Workgroup Chair Denise Hickey was not present. Sarah Schlessinger gave an update on the public awareness campaign effort underway at the Texas Water Foundation. The statewide polling effort is now complete. Results seem to indicate that a localized message is more favorable. The TWF will focus on a message that can easily be localized and seek funding to further develop messaging.

6. Discussion and Potential Action on Potential Legislative Recommendations for the 2020 Legislative Report.

The following updates were drafted for the background documents of the accepted recommendations from the February 11, 2020 WCAC Meeting:

Continue funding for the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation.

- Emphasized peer-to-peer mentoring, university research, and on-farm conservation
- Project allows for documentation of research over multiple years

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- Noted that water savings from wide-scale implementation across the region are not as easily calculated as [comprehensive county-level] irrigation surveys are no longer being completed [by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service].

K. Guz noted that there is no need to vote on accepted recommendations again. However, as the legislative report is continued to be developed the recommendations will need to be edited and processed for 'scan reading'.

Restore funding for the Texas Ag Water Efficiency Education and Demonstration Project facility.

- Highlighted use of surface water resources
- Added language regarding the irrigation district's involvement and support

Maintain level of funding for TWDB's Agricultural Water Conservation Grant program.

- Added additional specifics of the program
- Financial projections of Agricultural Water Conservation Fund included

Establish Level 1 Validation program for Water Loss Audits.

- Provided additional information relating to the recommendation being a voluntary effort, as well as expanded on the selection process for the program.
- Added information on what Level 1 Validation entails and how information will be used.

There were two recommendations that were tabled at the February 11, 2020 WCAC meeting. Revisions/clarification was asked for regarding the recommendations and discussion regarding these recommendations included the following.

Reinstate TSSWCB's Water Supply Enhancement Program.

Discussion was held regarding the WSEP. The program was created in 1985 but was unfunded until 1999. Through a Sunset process through the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, recommendations were adopted to eliminate the Texas Brush Control Program and create the Water Supply Enhancement Program, with the purpose of increasing available surface and ground water through the targeted control of brush species that are detrimental to water conservation.

Questions were raised regarding the operation of the program, how areas were selected for treatment, as well as the cost-effectiveness of the program.

The program was operated as a cost-share program, applications for treatment were ranked based on data provided by data and models from the feasibility studies conducted, and cost effectiveness has been a criticism of the program in the past.

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Points were raised that Brush Control/Management is an Agricultural BMP, the cost-share structure of the program is similar to what cities initiate for landscape renovations, and the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee is reportedly considering issuing a recommendation to reinstate the program, according to David Villareal.

Discussion continued regarding options for the recommendation, including leaving the recommendation as is, removing the funding amount from the recommendation, and removing the recommendation and instead highlighting the program within the body of the legislative report.

Charles Ring made a motion to accept the recommendation in its drafted state. David Villareal seconded the motion.

After additional discussion, Greg Carter made a motion to amend the previous motion by removing the funding amount and mentioning support for the program rather than including it as a legislative recommendation.

Cindy Loeffler seconded the motion.

Vote:

Abstain: 3

In-Favor: 15

The motion passes. The TSSWCB's WSEP will be highlighted within the report, and not included as a legislative recommendation.

Advancing Use of Data to Understand Trends in Water Use.

It was discussed that the goal of this recommendation was to keep it slightly broad to allow TWDB staff to flesh out as appropriate should the recommendation be approved. The end goal would be an analysis of trends in data sectors collected by TWDB which potentially could be replicated.

CJ Tredway asked how industrial data be included.

K. Guz noted that many Industrial water providers report directly to TWDB, while Municipal water providers also report their major industrial users to TWDB.

Greg Carter noted there were three instances he could think of in terms of industrial entities reporting:

- Industrial entities with a water right
- Industrial entities contracted with a municipal or other entity
- Industrial entities paying municipal unit cost within a city

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Anai Padilla noted that only municipal and industrial entities are mentioned.

K. Guz stated the wording could be clarified to include Institutional & Commercial users. She also noted that there is the least amount of data analysis amongst the Municipal and CII sectors.

CJ Tredway stated she would include commercial & institutional. The potential edit would be “understanding of municipal, industrial, commercial, and institutional water use trends.”

Celia Eaves noted that the language should perhaps be changed to “retail public water providers” to include additional providers that do not fall into the municipal category.

G. Carter also noted that given the cost of the recommendation, a pilot study would be all that could be funded.

K. Kluge noted that while TWDB receives monthly intake data through the Water Use Survey, however, sales and categorical volume data are received in an annual format. This may make getting true seasonal trends difficult.

S. Schlessinger made a motion to accept the recommendation with the discussed edits. CJ Tredway seconded the motion.

Vote:

Abstain: 3

In-Favor: 15

The motion passes, the recommendation is accepted.

7. Other Business

Josh stated that now that the Council’s legislative recommendations have been accepted in concept, the next step would be to begin drafting the body of the report.

Josh proposed sending Workgroup Chairs their respective sections of the report. The workgroup chairs can decide to begin drafting language for the report or hold workgroup meetings to begin discussion on updates to the report. The deadline for drafted sections would be April 15, 2020 so the Council would have plenty of time to review the drafts prior to the April 30th meeting.

The Council agreed to proceed as described.

K. Guz asked Josh and others should any relevant data or reports come about that may help the workgroups and/or the Council regarding updates to the report be shared the with the Council and/or appropriate workgroups.

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8. Announcement of Conferences and Events

March 31st – April 3rd: Texas Water 2020; Fort Worth, TX

www.txwater.org

April 4th: Hill Country Living Festival + Rainwater Revival; Dripping Springs, TX

<http://www.hillcountryalliance.org/rainwaterrevival/>

April 7th: Water Texas Film Festival; Austin, TX

<https://www.watertexasfilms.org/>

May 6th: Texas Rainmaker Award Dinner; Austin, TX

<https://www.texaswater.org/texas-rainmaker-award-dinner>

May 12th -13th: Emerging Water Technologies Symposium; San Antonio, TX

<https://ewts.org/>

9. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Thursday, April 30th – 10:30 a.m.

LCRA Dalchau Service Center

3505 Montopolis Dr. Austin, TX 78744

Thursday, August 6th

Location TBD

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.