

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: August 18, 2022

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: LCRA Headquarters (3700 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>	Bill Hoffman*
<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal*	<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Sarah Schlessinger*
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Marty Kelly*	<i>Higher Education</i>	---
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Alternate Mitch Conine	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	Charles Ring*
<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Alternate Erika Mancha*	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Craig Elam
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Aubrey Spear	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Greg Carter
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Maria Martinez	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway*
<i>Municipalities</i>	Karen Guz*	<i>Landscape Irrigation and Horticulture</i>	---
<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	---	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton*
<i>River Authorities</i>	Valerie Miller	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Kyle Eppler
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Jennifer Walker*	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe*
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Wayne Halbert*		

Also present: Alternates – John Bender, Marisa Bruno, Helen Dulac, Amy Muttoni, Eddy Trevino; Interested Parties – Chris Charles, Perry Fowler, Natalie Houston, Alicia Lee, Chris Loft, Kevin Kluge, Isabel Martinez, Colin McDonald, Ryan Skrobarczyk; TWDB Staff – Temple McKinnon, Katie Dahlberg, Nathan Leber, John Sutton, Daniel Rice, Shae Luther, Travis Brice, Jaclyn Buck, Belle Gonzalez.

** Documents can be found at: <https://savetexaswater.org/meeting/council-meetings.html> **

1. Introduction

The meeting began at 10:33 a.m.

Updates to Membership included David Villarreal now serving as the Member for the Texas Department of Agriculture, with Addie Stone serving as his Alternate.

Marty Kelly is now representing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Marisa Bruno with the Hill Country Alliance is now serving as the Alternate for Jennifer Walker (Environmental Groups).

Amy Muttoni with Brazos River Authority is now serving as Valerie Miller's Alternate (River Authorities).

2. Approval of minutes from the May 4, 2022 meeting
Sarah Schlessinger motioned for the minutes to be approved as written.
Donna Howe seconded the motion.

None opposed, the minutes were accepted as written.

3. Public Comment
There was no public comment.

4. TWDB Update

- Director Kathleen Jackson has been appointed to Public Utilities Commission.
- New Agricultural Water Conservation Staff
 - Jaclyn Buck – Natural Resource Specialist
 - Belle Gonzalez – Natural Resource Specialist
- Water Loss, Use, and Conservation (LUC) application, the online reporting application, closed on July 5, 2022, for submission of 2021 reports, due May 1, 2022.
 - Water Loss Audits – 627 of 738 entities have submitted an audit as of 8/1.
 - An additional 463 entities not required have submitted an audit as of 8/1.
 - Annual Conservation Reports – 627 of 855 entities have submitted as of 8/1.
 - Although the LUC Application has been closed, submitting entities can still work with staff to get their reports submitted.
 - Staff anticipates freezing the data in September for final analysis.
- [Agricultural Water Conservation Grant Awardees](#)
 - Construction:
 - El Paso Water Irrigation District No. 1
 - United Irrigation District
 - Equipment:
 - Edwards Aquifer Authority
 - Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District
 - North Plain Groundwater Conservation District
 - Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District
 - Research:
 - Texas A&M University - Kingsville
 - Texas Tech University
- TAP into Conservation Program: TWDB's Conservation Department will begin a new technical assistance program aimed at providing one-on-one assistance for small utilities to complete a Water Conservation Plan.
- [Draft IUP – Technical Assistance in Water Loss Control \(TAWLC\) Program](#): Deadline for comments is August 20, 2022.

- TWDB Staff will be going before the Board on September 1st to propose the appointment of a new member to serve in the Landscape Irrigation & Horticulture interest group.
5. Discussion and Potential Action on Legislative Recommendations
Discussion began with a brief overview of the three legislative recommendations being considered.

Dustan Compton provided an overview of the recommendation regarding incorporating a statewide ET network into the TexMesonet Program. The recommendation includes granting TWDB the statutory authority as lead agency to ensure the longevity and reliability of the statewide TexMesonet earth observation network. The recommendation also includes language to allow TWDB to collaborate and contract with other entities as appropriate and provide necessary funding to begin the effort.

John Bender provided an overview of the recommendation regarding continuing funding for TWDB's Agricultural Water Conservation Grant and Loan Programs. The Ag Fund began in 1985 with an initial bonding authority of \$200 million. It is estimated that the program has resulted in over 923,019 acre-feet of water saved since 2004. The recommendation includes language to replenish the Ag Fund to provide sufficient support to continue funding at or above the current level of \$1.2 million per year.

Sarah Schlessinger provided an overview of the recommendation regarding a statewide public awareness campaign. The recommendation acknowledges the Council's history of supporting the effort of a statewide public awareness campaign. Based on feedback at the last WCAC meeting, the language has been updated to include a request for appropriations to TWDB to be able to implement or contract with another entity for implementing the program. It was also noted that Helen Dulac is working on language regarding existing regional efforts and the value a statewide effort would contribute.

Jennifer Walker noted that education is vital to water conservation. Perhaps including language asserting the value of education in state's water conservation efforts would make a stronger case for this recommendation.

Discussion then turned toward revisions and next steps regarding the recommendations. Josh noted that he felt there was some language in each of the recommendations that could be utilized in other portions of the report to justify the need for the legislative recommendations and make the recommendation language briefer and more concise.

Karen Guz asked the primary authors of the recommendation if they could spend some time looking at the text that had been drafted and identifying what portions could potentially be utilized in other portions of the report.

The primary authors agreed to look at ways some of the language from the legislative recommendations could be utilized in other portions of the report.

6. Discussion: Updates to the 2022 WCAC Legislative Report

Discussion began with Josh providing a breakdown of the 2022 Legislative Report. This document broke out each section and identified progress, contributors, where additional input is needed, and notes. Discussion then focused on Council members identifying different portions of the report they could work on and acknowledging where meetings would need to take place to gather additional input.

Josh also presented an updated Report Timeline, noting that the original meeting schedule discussed in December of last year changed due to safety concerns with meeting in person and the inability to secure an in-person quorum for some meetings. Josh noted that if an end of October deadline is still the Council's goal, a meeting in September and October will be necessary to ensure workgroup meetings and draft revisions can occur before the next meeting dates.

It was also noted that with Josh leaving TWDB, John Sutton will be the point of contact for WCAC-related business until a replacement can be brought onboard. Josh also noted that while TWDB Conservation staff are willing and able to help, there will be a diminished capacity in administrative support until a replacement can be brought onboard.

Josh will send the updated Report Breakdown to the Council along with the meeting minutes and an updated First Draft of the 2022 Legislative Report.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Announcement of Conferences and Events

[Water, Texas Film Festival](#) – submission deadline: September 16, 2022

9. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

- Wednesday, September 28th (LCRA Dalchau Service Center (Montopolis location))
- Tuesday, October 25th (LCRA Headquarters (Lake Austin Blvd. Location))

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.