

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

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: November 19, 2019
 Time: 10:30 a.m.
 Location: Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Airport Commerce Office
 (1340 Airport Commerce Dr. Austin, TX 78741)
 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>	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>	Alternate Karen Magid
<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Alternate TJ Helton	<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	Charles Ring
<i>Texas Water Development Board</i>	Alternate Sam Hermitte	<i>Refining and Chemical Manufacturing</i>	--
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	Aubrey Spear	<i>Electric Generation</i>	Alternate Greg Carter
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	Alternate Paul Kaspar	<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Treway
<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>	Valerie Miller	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	--
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Ken Kramer	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	---		

Also present: Alternates – Eddy Trevino, Whitney Milberger, Jessica Woods, Jennifer Walker; Interested Parties – John Bender, Chris Charles, James Theiss, Dan Strub, Isabel Martinez, Al Fuentes, Scott Swanson, Deborah McMullan, Ryan Skrobarczyk; TWDB Staff – John Sutton, Cameron Turner, Shae Luther, Travis Brice, Laurie Ghelsen.

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

1. Introduction
The meeting began at 10:30 a.m.
2. Approval of minutes from the September 25, 2019 meeting
C. Loeffler brought up that her alternate’s name is misspelled in attendee portion of the minutes.
B. Hoffman motioned to accept the minutes with revision.

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A. Spear seconded the motion

Minutes approved with discussed revisions.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Update from Texas Water Development Board

TWDB's Total Water Loss Control Program workshops have been scheduled and registration is now open. Schedule and registration information can be found at: http://www.twdb.texas.gov/conservation/municipal/waterloss/auditor_training.asp

TWDB municipal conservation staff will be presenting an item to the Board regarding the update of water loss thresholds and aligning our rules to industry standards. A question was brought up regarding a potential change in definition of 'connection' from TCEQ. A clarification document was sent out last January by TCEQ, which can be found [here](#), however, the definition has not changed.

5. Reports from Workgroups

Workgroup Updates were combined with Agenda Item 6.

6. Discussion on Potential Legislative Recommendations for the 2020 Legislative Report. Agriculture:

A conference call was conducted on November 12th.

Charles Ring discussed that from his perspective, economics dictates the need for conservation, especially in North Texas and other areas where water availability issues exist in the state. Certain federal regulations can be counter-intuitive in terms of water conservation, particularly those involving crop failure and crop insurance. Political factors in the Rio Grande Valley are also an issue for producers in that region, in terms of water supply concerns with Mexico.

Several recommendations from the 2018 legislative report were discussed during the call. The recommendation concerning restoring the funding for the Texas Ag Water Efficiency Education & Demonstration Project was discussed during the call (2018 Recommendation #5).

V. Miller asked what the funding would specifically be used for.

TWDB staff commented that being that the facility was constructed for the Hidalgo County Irrigation District #1's operations facility as well as the demonstration and education facility to train irrigation district staff and producers on the latest technology available for water conservation and efficiency in the agricultural sector. The initial

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funding lapsed in 2014 and since that time the irrigation district has not had the resources to provide the outreach and education activities that they conducted initially. Continued funding could help with the maintenance of the facility as well as fund staff time and other resources to continue the training efforts.

The recommendation regarding maintaining funding for ag conservation programs (2018 Recommendation #3) was also discussed. Participants on the call stated that more specific information regarding programs requiring resources could be incorporated into the body of the report to give context to the recommendation. K. Guz noted that more background is needed to refine the recommendation.

Another topic discussed on the call was the possibility of introducing a recommendation for the Texas Legislature to release a policy statement or similar, highlighting the federal regulations regarding crop insurance and crop failure and its hinderance on water conservation efforts.

S. Schlessinger noted that there was a bill introduced in the legislature several sessions ago regarding opened data and water usage. A GCD was seeking to have some information made confidential, which may have related to the issuance of payment for crop failures. Ms. Schlessinger also brought up the connection between our previous recommendation regarding enhanced data collection (2018 Recommendation #1) and this issue, as well as the connection with the issue regarding the federal regulation regarding crop failure.

K. Kramer commented that the Council could recommend that the State Legislature make a resolution regarding the federal regulation/insurance policy.

C.Tredway commented that a resolution does not have any enforceability behind it.

D.Villareal stated that from a scientific perspective, a resolution would highlight the issue and potential start conversations regarding it.

A.Spear mentioned that the federal insurance policy is one of the biggest causes of water losses in terms of his Regional Water Planning Group.

J.Walker mentioned that if the Council makes a recommendation regarding the federal policy, it would be a good idea to notify the RWPGs.

K.Guz stated that there would need to be a working group meeting to discuss the issue further.

A question was asked if the previous recommendations #3 & #5 should be combined as they are similar in nature. K.Kramer stated that since recommendation #3 is asking to maintain the funding levels and #5 is asking for funding for a specific purpose, it would

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be best to keep them separate and seek collaboration with appropriate state agencies to incorporate #5 in a Legislative Appropriations Request.

Commercial & Institutional:

B. Hoffman stated that the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) is currently gathering water use data from state facilities. SECO is also undergoing the process of revising their water conservation standards for state facilities.

In terms of legislative recommendations from the 2018 report (2018 Recommendation #1) regarding enhanced data collection, there is a need for benchmarking in order to collect better data with ICI entities. The data needs to be collected and made available to the public for analysis. The impact of seasonality of use is also something to consider.

K. Guz mentioned the seasonality question would be a great workgroup project for 2020.

There is also an effort to attain a water auditor certification in similar fashion to existing energy auditors.

K. Guz mentioned that it would be good to see the differences and similarities related to how energy is used and audited. Additionally, we should reference some of those items in the upcoming legislative report.

J. Walker asked what the process is for updating SECO standards.

E. Trevino stated that a group of volunteers from higher education, state agencies, and other outside stakeholders are looking into referencing existing industry standards for efficiency rather than rewriting their own.

The contact for this effort is Fred Yebra (fred.yebra@cpa.texas.gov)

It was mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a presentation on this topic at a future meeting.

Municipal:

The workgroup has not held a meeting since the last Council meeting.

The workgroup is considering a recommendation regarding clarification of the recently passed House Bill 2439 which could be interpreted as voiding any city water conservation ordinance. The goal would be to clarify the intent of the bill. It was then

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brought up if gaining clarification from the bill authors would be a better course of action as opposed to a recommendation from the Council.

S. Schlessinger noted it would be easier to clarify the intent of the bill rather than call attention to it in a recommendation. K. Guz will provide any needed information to S. Schlessinger and K. Kramer.

Public Awareness:

K. Guz asked S. Schlessinger if a recommendation regarding the funding of a statewide conservation awareness campaign was needed. S. Schlessinger stated that state funding would be well appreciated for this effort. At this point, the Texas Water Foundation is conducting research on what message would be most effective, while avoiding the 'awkwardness' and instilling the value of water with emphasis on regional issues.

A question was raised regarding the history of the public awareness campaign. K. Kramer noted that in a previous legislative session, the TWDB was directed to create and distribute a statewide water conservation public awareness campaign, pending available funding. Since that directive, no funding has been appropriated for the effort. Within the last year, several entities, including the TWDB and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment had begun developing a campaign. Recently, the Texas Water Foundation has taken ownership of the effort and are currently developing a campaign that can be used throughout the state.

K. Guz asked the Council if there was an interested in a potential recommendation regarding state funding for a public awareness campaign.

The Council was in favor of continuing the development of this recommendation.

Water Loss:

J. Walker stated that the workgroup is interested in:

- A Validation Pilot Program
- Thresholds for Water Loss

J. Walker noted that a follow-up meeting will need to be scheduled to include discussion and data from what other states are doing.

It was also noted that presentations on emerging water loss technologies would be beneficial for the Council.

D. Strub stated that the AWWA Water Loss Control Committee has resources available to help move toward third-party validation.

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Wholesale:

The workgroup met on November 13th where discussion on a potential recommendation regarding ET Networks. Many wholesale providers and municipalities use ET Network data to provide lawn watering and other important information to their customers.

V. Miller noted that there was a meeting involving Water My Yard users coming up and will provide more information later.

S. Hermitte stated that the Texas ET Network provides a post-processing service that the TexMesonet does not provide. She also mentioned that the agency would most likely not support an effort to fund a duplicative network.

D. Compton stated he would be willing to contact Dr. Fipps, TWDB, and other appropriate stakeholders regarding this recommendation.

D. Compton & V. Miller will follow up.

K. Kramer noted that developing recommendations will need funding amounts if they are going to be successful.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Announcement of Conferences and Events

December 3rd-4th: Building Resilience to a Changing Climate: A Technical Training in Water Sector Utility Decision Support.

<https://www.sciencemissionsupport.com/utilityresiliencetrainingaw>

December 6th – Risk & Resilience Assessment: Tools for Completing Utility Assessments Webcast. <https://www.tawwa.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1283831&group=>

February 13th - Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium
Austin, TX.

April 14th – 17th – National Watershed & Stormwater Conference
Austin, TX. <https://www.cwp.org/2020-conference-registration/>

May 15th – 18th – River Network’s River Rally
San Antonio, TX. <https://www.rivernetwork.org/connect-learn/river-rally/>

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9. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Municipal Workgroup Meeting

December 16th 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

LCRA Redbud Center (3601 Lake Austin Blvd., Austin, TX 78703)

Water Loss Workgroup Meeting

December 16th 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

LCRA Redbud Center (3601 Lake Austin Blvd., Austin, TX 78703)

WCAC Meeting

January 14, 2020 10:30 a.m.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. Airport Commerce Office

1340 Airport Commerce Dr. Austin, TX 78741

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.