

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

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: 9 December 2020
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Remote (GoToMeeting)

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 Villarreal	<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>	Aubrey Spear	<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>	Leah Martinsson	<i>Water Control and Improvement Districts</i>	Dustan Compton
<i>River Authorities</i>	Valerie Miller	<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Celia Eaves
<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Ken Kramer	<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Donna Howe
<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	---		

Also present: Alternates – Jessica Woods, Whitney Milberger, John Bender, Eddy Trevino, Jennifer Walker; Interested Parties – Dominik Sobieraj, Katherine Drury, Paula Paciorek, Natalie Houston, Molly Ballesteros, Christopher Charles, Allen Berthold, Mark Jordan, Colton Mitchell, Tulsı Oberbeck, Steven Walthour, Chris Loft, Isabel Martinez; TWDB Staff – Temple McKinnon, Yun Cho, John Sutton, Shae Luther, Travis Brice, Cameron Turner, Kyla Peterson, Heather Rose.

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

1. Introduction

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Approval of minutes from October 29, 2020 meeting

Donna Howe noted a revision needed under Agenda Item 2.

Leah Martinsson motioned to accept the minutes.

Anai Padilla seconded the motion.

The minutes were accepted pending the mentioned revision.

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3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Presentation: *Texas Commercial and Institutional Water Use*, Colton Mitchell; Student, St. Edwards University

Presentation can be found at the council website (link above).

5. Update on Workgroup Initiatives for 2021

a. TWDB Update

- 79% of the state currently in drought
- Water Loss Data Validation Study
 1. Cavanaugh & Associates awarded contract to conduct third party validations for 10 utilities.
- Water Loss Audits will be due May 1, 2021 for all water providers (~4,000)
- TWDB has published their 2020 biennial report, [Water Use of Texas Water Utilities](#)

b. Agricultural

The workgroup conducted a conference call last week, where development of two BMPs were discussed (Gate Automation, and an update to Irrigation Scheduling). The workgroup has a deadline of January 15th to submit feedback on the drafts introduced. Expanding workgroup participation to include commodity groups and others working in agricultural water conservation was also discussed.

c. Commercial & Institutional

Bill Hoffman noted that the workgroup has not met since the last meeting but would like to continue discussing an effort to analyze data from commercial audits conducted by cities. Allan Plummer and Associates, Inc. has done much of the work in the way of the audits but would need consent from the cities before releasing the data.

Karen Guz noted that the workgroup may need to discuss having a non-disclosure agreement procedure in place, as some utilities may require an agreement in place before being willing to consent.

d. Industrial

CJ Tredway noted that the workgroup has not met, nothing new to report.

e. Municipal

Karen Guz noted she has been receiving questions regarding conservation and water use in the time of COVID. She would like to discuss this in a workgroup meeting to see others thoughts, perhaps a survey could be sent out to assess how the pandemic is impacting different utilities across the state.

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Sarah Schlessinger brought up that there is a conversation going on about declaring water employees as essential workers in terms of a timeline for COVID vaccination. It was noted that this could be a component of the conversation during COVID discussion.

Additionally, it was noted there was a bill ([H.B. 2439](#)) from the last legislative session relating to building supplies. This bill was not written with water fixtures in mind, however, some believe it could impact water efficiency related ordinances. Karen would like to continue discussions regarding this bill going forward.

f. Public Awareness

Denise Hickey was unable to attend this meeting; however, Josh gave a brief update regarding the 2021 Blue Legacy Awards (BLA). As of this meeting, there have been no submissions for consideration for the awards and after correspondence with Denise, Josh recommended extending the deadline to January 15th to increase participation of the awards. Josh also encouraged council members and alternates to share the information with their networks again broadcast the information further.

Sarah Schlessinger voiced her support for extending the nomination deadline to increase participation in the BLAs. She also noted that the award reception will have to be adapted for 2021. Historically, the award ceremony has been in conjunction with Water Day at the Capitol, however, due to current circumstances events at the capitol will not be occurring. It was also noted that if members/alternates are familiar with worthy projects, please reach out to them and encourage them to apply. Sarah also noted the need to fundraise for the awards. If anyone would like to contribute to the awards, please contact her.

Karen Guz noted it would be good to piggy back on an existing conservation event, which would amplify the spirit of the awards to highlight worthy conservation projects across the state. The Texas Water Conference was brought up as a possibility, the conference will begin on March 27, 2021 and will be virtual. The Texas Wrangler Conference, hosted by Texan by Nature, was also brought up. Sarah mentioned that it will be important to balance the length of the event with the audience's 'bandwidth' for virtual presentations. TWDB's Water for Texas Conference was also rescheduled for September 2021 and could also be an option.

None were opposed to extending deadline for the 2021 Blue Legacy Awards, the deadline will be extended to January 15, 2021.

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g. Water Loss

Jennifer Walker noted that the workgroup has not met since the last meeting. Will plan on meeting after the new year to further discuss and refine workgroup initiatives.

h. Wholesale and Regional Water Authorities

Dustan Compton noted that the workgroup has not met since the last meeting. Will schedule a workgroup meeting soon to continue discussion on BMPs and expanding workgroup participation.

6. Other Business

Sarah Schlessinger noted that the Texas Water Foundation has launched their [Degrees in Texas Water](#) database, which can be sorted by degree type, university system, and location.

Cindy Loeffler noted that she will be retiring at the end of December, this will be her last WCAC meeting.

7. Announcement of Conferences and Events

December 18th – TWDB Mining Water Use Study Meeting. Please contact TWDB's Economic & Demographic Analysis Team, EDA@twdb.texas.gov.

Spring 2021 – Jennifer Walker noted that preparations are being made for the 2021 Central Texas Water Conservation Symposium. If anyone has suggestions for speakers, please contact her.

8. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

March 10, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. [Tentatively Remote]

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.