

## Summary of Minutes: Agricultural Workgroup Meeting (Conference Call)

12/11/2017

Meeting Called to Order: 1:30 PM

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 PM

MEMBERS	ALTERNATES	INTERESTED PARTIES	TWDB STAFF
Jay Bragg, Wayne Halbert, Dan Hunter, Jennifer Allis, Karen Guz	Steve Bednarz, David Villarreal	Daren Turley, Stacy Pandey, CE Williams, Allen Berthold, Daniel Nix, Chuck West, John Bender, Phil Brown	Director Kathleen Jackson, Jennifer White, Cameron Turner, Whitney Johnson

PARTICIPANT	AFFILIATION	CONTACT EMAIL	POSITION
Jay Bragg	Texas Farm Bureau	<a href="mailto:jbragg@txfb.org">jbragg@txfb.org</a>	Chair
Wayne Halbert	[irrigation districts representative (retired)]	<a href="mailto:waynehalbert@gmail.com">waynehalbert@gmail.com</a>	Member
Dan Hunter	Texas Dept. of Agriculture	<a href="mailto:Dan.Hunter@texasagriculture.gov">Dan.Hunter@texasagriculture.gov</a>	Member
Steve Bednarz	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board	<a href="mailto:sbednarz@tsswcb.texas.gov">sbednarz@tsswcb.texas.gov</a>	Alternate
David Villarreal	Texas Dept. of Agriculture	<a href="mailto:david.villarreal@texasagriculture.gov">david.villarreal@texasagriculture.gov</a>	Alternate
Jennifer Allis	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	<a href="mailto:jennifer.allis@tceq.texas.gov">jennifer.allis@tceq.texas.gov</a>	Member
Karen Guz	San Antonio Water System	<a href="mailto:karen.guz@saws.org">karen.guz@saws.org</a>	Member
Daren Turley	Texas Dairy Association	<a href="mailto:dturley@milk4texas.org">dturley@milk4texas.org</a>	Interested Party
Stacy Pandey	LCRA	<a href="mailto:Stacy.Pandey@LCRA.ORG">Stacy.Pandey@LCRA.ORG</a>	Interested Party
C.E. Williams	Panhandle GCD	<a href="mailto:cew@pgcd.us">cew@pgcd.us</a>	Interested Party
Allen Berthold	AgriLife, TWRI, A&M system	<a href="mailto:taberthold@ag.tamu.edu">taberthold@ag.tamu.edu</a>	Interested Party
Daniel Nix	Wichita Falls	<a href="mailto:daniel.nix@wichitafalls.tx.gov">daniel.nix@wichitafalls.tx.gov</a>	Interested Party
Chuck West	Texas Tech University – TAWC project	<a href="mailto:chuck.west@ttu.edu">chuck.west@ttu.edu</a>	Interested Party

John Bender	Texas Corn Producers	<a href="mailto:jsb@jsbender.com">jsb@jsbender.com</a>	Interested Party
Phil Brown	Texas Tech University	<a href="mailto:philip.brown@ttu.edu">philip.brown@ttu.edu</a>	Interested Party
Director Kathleen Jackson	Texas Water Development Board	<a href="mailto:Kathleen.Jackson@twdb.texas.gov">Kathleen.Jackson@twdb.texas.gov</a>	Board Member
Cameron Turner	Texas Water Development Board	<a href="mailto:Cameron.turner@twdb.texas.gov">Cameron.turner@twdb.texas.gov</a>	Board Staff
Jennifer White	Texas Water Development Board	<a href="mailto:Jennifer.white@twdb.texas.gov">Jennifer.white@twdb.texas.gov</a>	Board Staff
Whitney Johnson	Texas Water Development Board	<a href="mailto:Whitney.johnson@twdb.texas.gov">Whitney.johnson@twdb.texas.gov</a>	Board Staff

## 1. Agenda/Outcomes/Comments: [Agenda](#)

- **Introductions/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM and participants introduced themselves.

*Director Jackson* thanked everyone for their efforts and commitment to agricultural water conservation and assisting or serving on the Water Conservation Advisory Council's Ag Workgroup. She also noted that the application period for TWDB's Agricultural Water Conservation Grants is currently open and closes on February 14, 2018.

- **Overview of the Ag BMP Manual (BMPs) and Desired Audience**

- Purpose

The purpose of the BMP guide was discussed with *C. Turner* noting that the Texas Water Development Board was required by law to develop the Best Management Practices guide in coordination with the Water Implementation Task Force, the predecessor to the Water Conservation Advisory Council. (The WCAC is now charged with monitoring new technologies for possible inclusion by the Board in the BMP guide.)

- Audience

End-users may include agricultural producers, irrigation districts, consultants, and regional water planning group stakeholders. The original focus was to provide the BMP guide as a resource for agricultural water users. It might be better if the document included links to resources, to help end-users with the specifics of implementing a BMP. Aligning the BMPs with water management strategies, however, may help to inform and complement the regional water planning process.

- **Possible revisions, updates or additions of the Ag BMP Manual**
  - Format Updates
    - The document is currently more of a reference document, than technical document – expanding to a technical format would significantly increase its length, and require greater investment.
    - To increase usefulness, a question was posed to the group regarding whether the guide should shift to bulleted format and point toward other, more technical, resources, such as the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide.
    - Costs and links need to be updated on all BMPs.
    - The first 11 BMPs were revised and reformatted, the final 11 BMPs remain in need of revision.
  - Format Additions
    - Capital costs? *C. West* cautioned that agricultural systems are subject to too many variables to provide reliable outcomes. Could create cost scenarios.
    - Collated funding sources?
    - Anecdotes/Case Studies of Demonstration Projects? (Include TAWC data)
    - Other items to consider when revising BMPs: water savings, cost-benefit analysis, research and demonstrations, resource links, funding sources, priority considerations in funding programs, examples or case studies, and conversion costs.
  - Where to include new technologies
    - Remote Sensing, soil moisture monitoring, variable rate irrigation, evapotranspiration and crop stress data could all be included as tools/resources in the Irrigation Scheduling (BMP 3.2) [see below]
    - Should keep such additions open, as they can be used to complement and inform several BMPs
    - Reference states in Great Plains for use of remote sensing with variable rate irrigation
  - Brush Control (BMP 4.1)
    - *S. Bednarz* mentioned that revisions are still in process.
  - Irrigation Scheduling (BMP 3.2)
    - Discussion to mention the availability of newer technologies
    - Consider including:
      - List of tools and costs
      - Update Texas ET links
      - Include West Texas Mesonet and TAWC Solutions

- Ogallala Coordinated Agriculture Project (CAP) is also developing resources to help with irrigation scheduling in several states across the Greater High Plains region.
- Soil Health under Cropping and Management Practices (BMP 3.0/3.1)
  - Discussion to broaden BMP 3.1 to Soil Health, to more adequately encompass a range of practices that improve soil health, and thus soil water holding capacity
  - What other practices should be included?
- Conversion of Supplemental Irrigated Farmland to Dry-Land Farmland (4.3)
  - Should this remain as a BMP – perhaps it is more of a strategy for dealing with reality in areas of declining water availability.
  - Discussion to shift framing from a stand-alone water conservation practice to more of a water allocation decision making process. *P. Brown* mentioned that dryland or deficit-irrigated production is often a part of a “split pivot” irrigated production system, where the majority, or all, of the irrigation water is focused on crop(s) with a higher economic return, but some dryland crop production also occurs within the same “irrigated production system”.
  - Agreed that this BMP should be revised to focus more on Water Allocation with a Deficit-Irrigated Production System.
- Inclusion of BMP for SCADA systems and automated gates by irrigation districts (previously discussed)
  - This new BMP could include SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) and automated gates.
  - The Harlingen Irrigation District and Lower Colorado River Authority both have some information related to their automated gates and SCADA system projects. W. Halbert and S. Pandey will provide that information to C. Turner.
- Others
  - Coordination and communication amongst multiple irrigation districts and large water users regarding releases, management, and partnership opportunities..
  - Precision mobile drip irrigation (PMDI)
    - integrate into the Low Pressure Center Pivot BMP (5.5).
    - Consider referencing appropriate demonstration projects (Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, North Plains Groundwater Conservation District, Texas Alliance for Water Conservation).

- Drought contingency plans
    - Surface water vs. groundwater
    - Surface water entities (wholesale water providers/irrigation districts) are required to develop and submit these to TCEQ.
    - *W. Halbert* offered caution in developing broad guidance for something that is so site specific.
    - Drought contingency planning is inherent to agricultural producers' decision-making process in terms of groundwater availability. – depends on wholesale water producer, watershed, site
  - The BMP guide currently does not include practices related to Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).
    - *J. Bragg* was going to follow-up with D. Turley who had to leave the call early, and other folks regarding possible CAFO BMPs for inclusion in the guide.
- **Other Discussion**

Blue Legacy Awards ceremony will occur in coordination with Texas Water Day at the State Capitol in March 2019. Tabled discussion until more relevant, although Ag Workgroup members may promote the awards program at any time.
- **Volunteer Assignments**
  - C. West - Irrigation Scheduling and Soil Moisture Conditions
  - C. West – PMDI
  - J. Bragg – Soil Health/Conversion to Dryland
  - C. West and P. Brown – Remote Sensing and Variable Irrigation
  - W. Halbert & S. Pandey –SCADA and Automated Gates
  - J. Bragg – CAFOs
  - S. Bednarz – Brush Control
- **Next Meeting**
  - [General WCAC Meeting](#) – January 17, 2018
  - [Ag Workgroup](#) – February TBD
- **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.

*Note: Topics were taken up in random order but are presented here in order of the posted agenda.*