

## **Summary of Minutes**

Water Conservation Advisory Council Workgroup Meeting and Conference Call  
Workgroup: Agricultural

Date: Friday, September 3, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Remote (GoToMeeting)

<b><u>Members</u></b>	<b><u>Alternates</u></b>	<b><u>Interested Parties</u></b>	<b><u>TWDB Staff</u></b>
Charles Ring Wayne Halbert	John Bender David Villarreal	Dana Porter Stacy Pandey	John Sutton Kyla Peterson Josh Sendejar

\*\*Documents can be found at: [www.savetexaswater.org/meeting/workgroup/agricultural.html](http://www.savetexaswater.org/meeting/workgroup/agricultural.html)\*\*

### I. Introduction of Participants

The meeting began at 10:03 a.m.

### II. Discussion on BMP Updates

#### Gate Automation BMP:

The discussion began on the Gate Automation BMP. It was noted that Stacey Pandey and others at LCRA provided substantial updates on this BMP.

Wayne Halbert noted that making this a BMP will help increase the use of this technology.

Discussion turned to additional resources that could be cited:

- Josh asked about videos used for the Texas Project for AG Water Efficiency.
  - o Wayne Halbert noted that those videos should be available and can be cited for the BMP.

Regarding the Determination of Water Savings, it was noted there are several costs to consider:

- Equipment (physical equipment i.e. gates)
- SCADA (Automation equipment)

It was discussed that different projects could approach the purchase of these components in different ways, i.e. including them as two components of the same projects vs. each component as a different project.

Another consideration is the make-up of the cropland being irrigated.

It was noted that determining water savings can also be complicated, as the more water made available, the more likely producers are to use it.

It was also noted that an increase in water efficiency can increase the delivery acreage.

Josh asked the group if any had objections to the comments and revisions made in this version of the draft. No objections were presented. Josh will approve the tracked changes and resolve comments as appropriate and draft into the BMP format.

Josh also asked if there were others within the state that used gate automation technologies as wide-spread as LCRA and Harlingen Irrigation District. it was mentioned that El Paso Co. Irrigation District and Cameron Co. Irrigation District #2 may. Josh and John Bender will work on contacting representatives from these entities to gain feedback on the updated BMP.

**Irrigation Scheduling:**

The discussion then began on the Irrigation Scheduling BMP. Josh noted that because this BMP is an update, the format of this draft is more closely aligned with the final BMP formatting.

One comment discussed was if soil moisture sensors was the only method to include, as there are other methods that monitor rainfall received through rain gauges, while not as precise, they serve a similar purpose. The group agreed that this should be included.

It was also noted that ET data could be useful for this BMP, and could be mentioned or incorporated.

Regarding cost determination, the cost of water and pumping were brought up for inclusion in the BMP.

Another topic discussed was mentioning how different types of irrigation can affect the nature of this topic. Josh noted that there are BMPs specifically for drip irrigation and low-pressure center pivot irrigation, those documents may need updating.

Josh will accept the changes in this BMP as well. He will send it out one final time for any additional feedback before the workgroup considers sending the document to the full WCAC.

**ET Network:**

The mention of incorporating ET data in the Irrigation Scheduling BMP brought up a question regarding the ET Network. The question was asked where the WCAC stood on making a recommendation on the ET Network.

Josh noted that several of the workgroups within the WCAC showed interest in the ET Network. There were conversations held with members of Texas A&M University and the Texas Water Resources Institute, but at the time there was uncertainty about where the program was going to be housed and how it would be administered. It was determined that there was not enough information for the WCAC to develop a recommendation at that point in time.

John Bender noted that he recently had a discussion with Dustan Compton regarding the ET Network and they are unaware of any updates.

John Bender noted this is something that the WCAC will need to discuss further and suggested beginning discussions with TAMU and TWRI again to see if any progress had been made. The workgroup would need to begin these discussions quickly to bring to the Council if the hope is to develop a recommendation for the next legislative report.

III. Discussion on Expanding Workgroup Participation

Charles Ring asked how notifications of workgroup activities were circulated, Josh noted that a list of interested parties is kept specifically for the Ag workgroup and that list receives notifications specific to the workgroup. Josh noted he is happy to provide the list to Charles Ring and John Bender to review and see if any additions or revisions are needed.

It was noted that perhaps it would be better to send out notifications for specific feedback, rather than simply announcing meetings that some producers may not have the time to attend.

It was also discussed the workgroup needs to widen the audience receiving the notifications. It was noted that some GCDs have a large group of producers within their area. It was also noted that the Texas Drought Council and Texas Agricultural Council may also be good contacts to increase representation.

Charles Ring noted that the ET Network would be a good topic for specific feedback.

David Villarreal noted that the USDA-NRCS is holding a virtual Texas State Technical Committee meeting on Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. Additional information can be found [here](#).

IV. Other Discussion

No other discussions were had.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.