

LOWER COLORADO REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2004 REGULAR MEETING
McKINNEY ROUGHS

These are the minutes approved by motion at the December 8, 2004 LCRWPG meeting.

Members Signing In:

John Burke, Water Utilities
Ron Fieseler, Environment
Rick Gangluff, Electric Generating Utilities
Ronald Gertson, Small Business
Dale Henry, Other
Barbara Johnson, Industries
Mark Jordan, River Authorities
Chris King, Counties
Teresa Lutes, Municipalities
Bill Miller, Agriculture
Bill Neve, Counties
Bob Pickens, Other
Cole Rowland, alternate for Del Waters
Haskell Simon, Agriculture
Harold Streicher, Small Business
James Sultemeier, Counties
Paul Tybor, Water Districts
Jennifer Walker, Environment
Del Waters, Recreation

David Bradsby, TPWD, Non-Voting Member
David Meesey, TWDB, Non-Voting Member

Voting Members Absent:

Jim Barho, Environment
Dennis Jones, Municipalities
Julia Marsden, Public
Stanley Reinhard, Water Districts
Billy Roeder, Counties

Consultants/Support

Dan Strub, City of Austin Water Conservation
Cynthia Braendle, Aqua Resources

Mark Lowry, TC&B
Rebeka Lien, TC&B

Visitors/Others:

Ron Anderson, LCRA
Joe Cooper, LPGCD
Sandy Dannhardt, STP

Kelly Payne, Alan Plummer and Associates
John McLeod, LCRA
Wendy Gordon, TPWD

Quorum: Yes

Number of present voting members including designated alternates, representing absent voting members: 18.
Number required for quorum based on current voting membership of 23: 12.

FORMAL ACTIONS TAKEN:

- 1) Approved minutes from July 20, 2004 joint meeting with Region L.

- 2) Approved minutes from July 20, 2004 regular meeting.
- 3) Elected Mark Jordan as a voting member representing river authorities.

ADDITIONAL DECISIONS MADE:

- 1) Assigned Dale Henry, Barbara Johnson, Bill Neve, James Sultemeier, Haskell Simon, and Chris King to the nominating committee. Rick Gangluff was designated the chair.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR FUTURE ACTION:

- 1) None.

MEETING MINUTES:

1) Call to Order – John Burke

2) Welcome and Introductions

3) Attendance Report – Teresa Lutes

Teresa Lutes summarized the attendance report, noting that there were no members in violation of the attendance policies.

4) Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes for the May 12th Joint Meeting with Region L

Paul Tybor moved to accept the minutes. Del Waters seconded. The motion passed.

b. Approval of Minutes for the May 12th Region K Regular Meeting

Ronald Gertson moved to accept the minutes. Bob Pickens seconded. The motion passed.

c. Financial/Budget Report

None given.

5) Committee Reports

(a) Environmental Flows

Jennifer Walker said that the committee had been working on their section for Chapter 2, and they would send it out shortly.

(b) Groundwater Management Plan Review

Ron Fieseler said that they had received a groundwater management plan from the Lost Pines GCD, and he reviewed it with Paul Tybor and John Burke. The plan was largely acceptable, but used old groundwater availability numbers. The committee sent a letter to the TWDB said that they did not object to the plan, but would be working with Lost Pines to review their groundwater numbers once the GAM is completed.

(c) Legislative

Ronald Gertson said that the committee examined six or seven recommendations, and they would distribute them to the group in approximately two weeks. He noted that due to the desire to have a consensus on the recommendations, they may not be as strong as they would be if they only needed majority support.

(d) Liaison Reports

Jennifer Walker said Julia Marsden resigned as Region G liaison. David Meesey said that he could give reports of their progress. David Bradsby said Region H submitted their twelve amendments to their plan. Jennifer said that some of those amendments were large and of a questionable nature.

(e) Public Information

None.

(f) Unique Stream Segments

None.

(g) Water Modeling Committee

Bob Pickens said the committee met with TC&B, during which some GAM modeling issues were discussed. The first was what they should do if there were no models available for the Gulf Coast, and the committee agreed that they should use the numbers from the last plan. The next issue was which data set should be used, and they determined it was best to use the 2006 data set. The third issue was which of the Gulf Coast GAM models was preferred, and they told TC&B that the central model would be the best. The final issue was what was the definition of sustainability. The committee determined it would be the level of groundwater production which shall not exceed the net recharge of an aquifer or portion of an aquifer except during drought of record conditions. During drought of record conditions, production that results in a drawdown of the water table in an aquifer or the applicable portion of an aquifer shall be restricted to the amount that can be recovered in five years after the drought is over. Barbara Johnson asked if they defined when a drought starts. Bob said they did not consider it. The models look at a ten year period, during which there are seven average years and three years of a drought on the order of the drought of record.

6) Candidate's presentation to the board

Mark Jordan, candidate from the LCRA, introduced himself to the group. Bob Pickens asked if the technical quality control that the LCRA had previously provided the group through Jobaid would continue. Mark said that although he is an attorney, he does have some technical expertise and knowledge and can also supply additional technical support through LCRA staff.

7) Discuss and take action to elect voting member to represent River Authorities

John Burke moved to elect Mark Jordan as a voting member representing river authorities. Del Waters seconded the motion. The motion passed.

8) Discuss and take action on selection of the Nominating Committee

Dale Henry, Barbara Johnson, Bill Neve, James Sultemeier, Haskell Simon, and Chris King were named to the nominating committee, and Rick Gangluff was named the committee chair.

9) Present and discuss draft water supplies

Mark Lowry said that they were trying to get the information to the group as early as possible to provide time for feedback. Randy Williams presented on the GAM results.

Paul Tybor asked if they had looked at the parameters for other GAMs. Randy said they had not yet. Mark said they were holding off in order to conserve the budget. Barbara Jordan asked if TC&B had coordinated their efforts with other regions, as those regions' assumptions would have to be reconciled later in the planning process. Mark said that they would contact the other regions. Ron Fieseler asked how stream flows were determined. Randy said that model numbers for streams and seeps were for the base flow. David Bradsby asked how that value was determined. Randy said it was done through a literature review in conjunction with a conceptual model. David asked how they calculated evapotranspiration. Randy said it was from published data and historical water levels. David asked if they used the average ET or ET from the drought of record. Randy said they used both. Bob Pickens asked how they should evaluate the model results. Mark said that all of the planning groups are dealing with that question. Mark said that the modeling committee would evaluate the results. Bob asked if anyone was familiar with this GAM. Mark said no. Ronald Gertson asked what counties were covered by the GAM. Randy said it covered Burnet, northern Hays, northwestern Travis, and western Williamson counties. Teresa Lutes asked if the North Edwards aquifer was included in the GAM. Randy said it was not. Bob expressed the desire for a more robust model. Mark said he would like to have one as well, but they were limited by funding constraints. Bob suggested that the model be run in areas where existing groundwater districts already have numbers and then compare the results. Ron Fieseler said that his district and others have already used the model as is. Randy said that they do need to run the model for Hays County and compare the results.

Rick Gangluff asked if there was funding for the model runs. Mark said that only 25% of the GAM budget had been used. Jennifer Walker asked if items from the original scope of work are endangered by the budget shifts to pay for the model runs. Mark Lowry said they were not if the Legislature approves the funding. If the funding is not approved, \$108,000 worth of work will have to be cut, but the only other option was to use availability numbers from the last planning cycle. Jennifer asked if all the planning groups were having this problem. Mark said that only Region K has required supplemental funding for such a critical task. Jennifer asked if other groups funded GAMs in their original scope of work, or if the TWDB performed it for them. Mark did not know, but said that some groups did not need GAMs. David Meesey said that some groups did GAMs in their original scope or in the first supplemental funding round. The problems are caused by attempting to put together a plan over a five year span while on a two year funding cycle. Mark Jordan asked if any of the work was duplicating work being done elsewhere. David said that he had thought that the TWDB and the LCRA could do the WAMs, and the GAMs are the problem, in part because of problems with the models that the contractors submitted to the Board.

Haskell Simon asked if they would get the GAM in time, and if so will the group want to use it. Mark Lowry said the fall back is to use the Colorado County numbers from the last planning cycle. David Meesey said that he was not sure that those old numbers would be approved by the TWDB. Rick Gangluff suggested sending a letter to the TWDB warning that the group is having difficulties getting the numbers in time. David said he is not convinced the old numbers would be acceptable. They have a calibrated run of the GAMs, but do not have predictive runs compete yet. Mark asked if the TWDB could ask the Legislature to relax the deadlines. David said that only the final deadline is in the statute, so the TWDB could change the interim dates, and a letter requesting they do so might help the situation.

Haskell Simon said that there would be a meeting on the north gulf coast GAM at 10 AM on November 12 at the Wharton Civic Center.

Mark Lowry said that they would have the results from the WAM runs to the members within a week following an upcoming meeting with the LCRA.

10) Present Draft Chapter 1 – Description of the Region

Rebeka Lien presented.

11) Present Draft Chapter 2 – Population and Water Demands

Rebeka Lien presented. She asked that suggested changes to the chapters be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than ten days before the next meeting to allow them to be voted on. Ronald Gertson asked if the members were going to get copies that tracked the suggested changes. Rebeka said they would try. Mark Lowry said that would be easiest to do electronically.

12) Update on HB1437 relating to the powers of the Lower Colorado River Authority to provide water services in Williamson County

John McLeod presented. Del Waters asked what impact the agreement would have on the Highland Lakes. John said they would drop about eight inches during a drought of record. Del asked if the conservation measures proposed to return water to the basin are the same as those proposed to be claimed by the LCRA/SAWS project. John said they were, and that SAWS can pay for the work that was done, but the water saved cannot be counted for both Williamson County and SAWS. Ronald Gertson said that the strategies are ultimately reserved for SAWS, but Williamson County can use them in the interim. If SAWS wants to use the strategies later, it can pay for them and Williamson County would then have to find other sources. Haskell Simon asked if there was a definition of “no net loss.” John said that there were three proposed definitions, each of which has flaws. Cole Rowland suggested requiring a credit balance of water conserved before any water is delivered to Williamson County. John said that a credit balance has become a stumbling block in negotiations due to accounting problems. Mark Jordan said he has asked the Brazos River Authority how much water it needed and when, and was told that they would need 600AF in 2006, but did not give a figure for years after that. Haskell Simon said that this deal will set a precedent on how to share water, so it is important to make it work, but they must satisfy concerns

about how the water will be replaced.

Del Waters asked what the impact would be on lake levels during a non-drought year. John McLeod said it would not be measurable. Mark Jordan said that 15,000 AF equals about one foot in lake levels.

13) New/Other Business

Mark Lowry gave an update on the status of negotiations with the LCRA on the consultant's contract. He said that the expectations that the TWDB would have staff to do work on WAMs and GAMs were too optimistic. TC&B will not be able to move forward with the supply availability projections without the WAMs and GAMs being done, so they are going to do the work. The TWDB approved additional funds for the work, but they will not be available until after the draft plan is completed. TC&B will notify the group when there is \$30,000 - \$50,000 left in the budget, and they may have to rearrange their workload so they do not deplete the funding. Because the supplemental funding is not available yet, TC&B is using funding from other tasks to complete the supply availability work. They may revisit the funding request status in the spring.

Jobaid Kabir thanked the group for the opportunity to serve as a member.

Paul Tybor said that Stanley Reinhard was undergoing chemotherapy and radiation but was looking well.

Bill Neve said that Burnet County would be asked to conduct an enabling vote for a groundwater district, and he expects a vote to take place in May.

Rick Gangluff said the South Texas Project sent a letter to the TCEQ requesting technical reviews on the pending major water rights applications in the Colorado basin be consolidated.

14) Calendar

December 8, 2004 McKinney Roughs – Regular Meeting

15) Agenda for next meeting

Agenda items for next meeting include:

- (a) Adopt chapters 1 and 2 of the plan.
- (b) Discuss and take action on policy recommendations to be submitted to the Legislature.

16) Public Comments

None

Thanks to Aqua Water for supplying lunch.

Meeting minutes prepared by Dan Strub for Teresa Lutes, Secretary, Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group (11/30/04). These minutes of the Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group November 10, 2004 meeting were approved in a motion passed at the December 8, 2004 Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group meeting.

Signature on File 12/8/2004
TERESA LUTES, SECRETARY DATE
Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group