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## CHAPTER 10.0: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

### 10.1 OVERVIEW

The Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group (LCRWPG) made a commitment to conducting public outreach as a part of their duties as Planning Group members. The public involvement effort was led by Planning Group member Laura Marbury and a four-member Public Information and Participation Committee that she chaired. Committee members were James Kowis, Teresa Lutes, Haskell Simon, and Jennifer Walker.

Major aspects of this effort included:

- **Holding more than 20 open regular meetings of the Planning Group** for presentation of material, discussion, deliberation, voting on specific measures, and public comment between June 2006 and March 2010. Members of the public attended all of these meetings, which were posted on the Texas Secretary of State website and the Region K website in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. Every meeting included a scheduled time for public comment and questions. Nearly all of the meetings were held in Bastrop in Bastrop County, with two meetings being held in Wharton in Wharton County and Burnet in Burnet County.
- **Holding public meetings to receive input by the public** on both the scope of work for both the First Biennium Studies and the 2011 Region K Water Plan, on the First Biennium Studies themselves, and on the population and water demand projections.
- **Serving as speakers at various civic and interest group meetings** representing a wide spectrum of interests and public opinion. These presentations took place throughout the planning period and in various counties of the region.
- **Conducting surveys** to obtain feedback on population and water demand projections and to obtain information regarding water conservation and drought management strategies.
- **Maintaining a web page** with documentation and notices of meetings and discussions, with links from the LCRA home page and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) website.
- **Providing fact sheets** that were used as handouts at the public meetings and hearing.
- **Forming a Population and Water Demand Committee** in order to assist in the determination of the methodology used to update the population and water demand projections in Chapter 2 of the Region K Plan.
- **Forming a SH 130/45 and Northern Hays Committee** to discuss the issue of future growth in the area and determine whether the Region K Plan provides for that growth. This committee was formed as part of the First Biennium Studies for this round of planning.
- **Developing policy statements** through the Region K Legislative Committee regarding public involvement and education that have been adopted by Region K and which are located in Chapter 8 of the report.
- **Giving an interview with a local radio station** regarding the water planning process.

Once the Region K Initially Prepared Regional Water Plan was approved by the Planning Group, the Group continued required public involvement by:

- **Holding two public meetings throughout the region**, which were publicized through news releases and advertisements.
- **Holding a public hearing** to solicit public comments on the Initially Prepared-Regional Water Plan.
- **Making the Draft Regional Water Plan** available to the public by placing a copy of the Draft Water Plan in at least one public library in each county and either the county courthouse's law library or the county clerk's office. The Draft Water Plan was also posted on the Region K and TWDB websites.

These activities of the Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) members are discussed in more detail below.

## 10.2 PLANNING GROUP MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

### Regular Planning Group Meetings

More than 20 Planning Group meetings were held between July 2006 and August 2010 for presentation of material, discussion, deliberation, voting on specific measures, and public comment. These meetings were mainly held in Bastrop (in Bastrop County), although two of the meetings were held in other locations throughout the region to enable a broader spectrum of the public to observe the work and to ask questions or comment. *Table 10.1* provides information on the feedback and comments received at the meetings held throughout the region.

In addition to regular planning group meetings, two public meetings to receive public input on the population and water demand projections were held on March 19, 2009, and on April 2, 2009, which are listed in *Table 10.3* in Section 10.4.5. Comments received as a result of those meetings have been included in *Appendix 10D*.

**Table 10.1 LCRWPG Publicized “Local” Meetings Throughout the Region**

| Date     | Meeting Type  | Meeting Location                      | # Public Attending | Public Comments  |
|----------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 6/14/06  | Regular Public Meeting  | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 9                  | None   |
| 8/23/06  | Regular Meeting and Public Meeting to Solicit Input on a Proposed Scope of Work for | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 8                  | None   |
| 1/10/07  | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 13                 | None   |
| 6/20/07  | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 16                 | None   |
| 9/12/07  | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 14                 | None   |
| 1/9/08   | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 6                  | None   |
| 4/9/08   | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 20                 | None   |
| 5/19/08  | Scope of Work Public Meeting and Scoping Committee Meeting for Region K 2011 Plan   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 6                  | None   |
| 9/3/08   | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 10                 | None   |
| 11/12/08 | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 7                  | None   |
| 1/14/09  | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 17                 | None   |
| 3/11/09  | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 8                  | Steve Box referred to the gallons per capita per day (gpcd) figures in the current Region K plan appendix (adopted in 2006) and requested that gpcd figures be included in the tables for public review. This would help in the evaluation process to determine the reasonableness of the projections. An overall total would also be helpful. |
| 4/8/09   | Regular Meeting   | Burnet<br>Community<br>Center, Burnet | 9                  | None   |
| 5/5/09   | Regular Meeting   | City of Bastrop,<br>Bastrop County    | 6                  | None   |

**Table 10.1 LCRWPG Publicized “Local” Meetings Throughout the Region (continued)**

| Date     | Meeting Type    | Meeting Location                     | # Public Attending | Public Comments   |
|----------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 6/10/09  | Regular Meeting | Wharton Civic Center, Wharton County | 9                  | Steve Box made a comment that the regional water planning process has no provision for taking into account environmental flows on the demand side of the equation in quantitative analyses. Jennifer Walker indicated that meeting the LCRA’s Water Management Plan environmental flows (instream and bay and estuary inflows) criteria is part of the analysis thus far and noted that environmental flow requirements stemming from the SB3 environmental flows process may change the requirements for future plans. |
| 9/9/09   | Regular Meeting | City of Bastrop, Bastrop County      | 13                 | None  |
| 10/14/09 | Regular Meeting | City of Bastrop, Bastrop County      | 8                  | None  |
| 12/9/09  | Regular Meeting | City of Bastrop, Bastrop County      | 10                 | Steve Box commented that the environmental flows need to be compared to the established environmental flows, that it seems confusing whether the base flows are meeting the environmental flows. And secondly what are the environmental impacts of not meeting established flows? The question arises of what is acceptable as an environmental impact and would some strategies be readjusted to address.   |
| 1/13/10  | Regular Meeting | City of Bastrop, Bastrop County      | 10                 | None  |
| 1/27/10  | Regular Meeting | City of Bastrop, Bastrop County      | 5                  | Steve Box asked about the availability of data from the SAWS studies. He stated that if a restraining order on the data occurred, it would dilute the public's ability to review.   |

### 10.3 PRESENTATION TO CIVIC AND SPECIAL-INTEREST GROUPS

Using their own materials and a standardized set of presentation materials, Planning Group members gave presentations to civic and special-interest groups. *Table 10.2* provides a summary of this outreach effort with a listing of the LCRWPG presentations to civic and special interest groups.

These presentations were made to groups composed of individuals from all types of general and special interests that were identified by the TWDB in the establishment of the RWPGs.

**Table 10.2 LCRWPG Public Outreach Record: Presentations by Group Members to Community Groups**

| Presenter      | Date                                 | City       | County   | Community Group          | Topic/Subject               |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ronald Gertson | Monthly, throughout planning process |            | Wharton  | Coastal Bend Groundwater | Update on Region K planning |
| Bob Pickens    | Various                              |            | Colorado | Colorado County GCD      | Update on Region K planning |
| John Burke     | 10/29/09                             | San Marcos | Hays     | Texas State University   | Region K Water Planning     |

### 10.4 REGION K ACTIVITIES

#### 10.4.1 Population and Water Demand Committee

The Population and Water Demand Committee was formed in January 2009 in order to review the population projections in the 2006 Region K Plan, evaluate the latest available data, studies, and information on population for the Region K area, and to recommend any changes.

The committee met several times in early 2009 to determine county population totals, evaluate methodologies for distributing county totals among the WUGs in each county, and review steam-electric demand projections from TWDB reports, while providing planning group member knowledge of facility current and expected usage in the planning area.

The committee assisted in discussions with TWDB staff regarding the LCRWPG-developed population projections, and assisted in the revision of the projections after receiving recommendations from the TWDB staff. The committee was also instrumental in developing a Resolution that the LCRWPG adopted regarding the issue of having to revise the population projections.

#### 10.4.2 SH 130/45 and Northern Hays Committee

The Region K SH 130/45 and Northern Hays Committee was created in mid-2007 to provide input on the Evaluation of High Growth Areas Task of the First Biennium Studies. The committee looked at available information about the projected growth in the SH 130 corridor. Discussion occurred on how best to determine the projected growth numbers. The Onion Creek Recharge strategy in Hays County was also one of the sub-tasks that the committee provided feedback on. Meetings were held in November and December of 2007.

### 10.4.3 Advertising and Media

The LCRWPG advertised Region K regular meetings through the Secretary of State website, the Region K website, and mailouts to interested parties of meeting agendas and associated meeting materials. *Appendix 10A* contains a sample press release for the public hearing and public meetings to receive public input on the Initially Prepared 2011 Region K Water Plan.

### 10.4.4 Surveys

The Planning Group conducted two surveys to obtain feedback on population and water demand projections and to gain information regarding water conservation and drought management strategies. These letters and surveys are summarized below, and examples of the survey letters and types of responses are contained in *Appendix 10B*.

- The Regional Water Planning Population and Water Demand Projections survey was mailed on March 12, 2009, to stakeholders in the Region K area soliciting feedback on the population and water demand projections. A revised version of the survey was sent again on May 7, 2009. Twenty-one comments were received from the two surveys and the related public meetings. See *Appendix 10B* for the survey letters and comment responses.
- A survey to help identify the water conservation and drought management strategies used by water user groups was mailed to Region K stakeholders on August 7, 2009. Thirty-two responses were received. See *Appendix 6A* for the survey letter.

### 10.4.5 Public Meetings and Hearing

In addition to the meetings shown earlier in *Table 10.1*, additional meetings were held for the primary purpose of gaining input and answering questions from the public. This included two public meetings to receive public comments on the First Biennium Study Reports, two public meetings to receive public input on the population and water demand projections, and one public hearing and two public meetings for comment on the Initially Prepared Regional Water Plan. All seven of these meetings are summarized in *Table 10.3* below, with details in *Appendix 10C*. Summaries of the First Biennium Study Reports can be found in *Appendix 10E*.

**Table 10.3 Region K Public Meetings and Hearing**

| Date     | Location   | Public Attendance | Media Attendance | Comments*              |
|----------|--|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 12/03/08 | AECOM office, Austin, Travis County  | 0                 | 0                | None                   |
| 01/14/09 | Aqua WSC, Bastrop, Bastrop County  | 17                | 0                | 4 written              |
| 03/19/09 | LCRA Boardroom, Austin, Travis County  | 18                | 0                | 10 verbal<br>3 written |
| 04/02/09 | LCRA Boardroom, Austin, Travis County  | 1                 | 0                | 1 verbal<br>7 written  |
| 3/10/10  | Bay City Civic Center, Bay City, Matagorda County ( IPP public meeting)                            | 11                | 1                | 0 written              |
| 3/31/10  | Burnet Community Center, City of Burnet, Burnet County (IPP public meeting)                        | 38                | 0                | 2 written              |
| 4/28/10  | Thompson Conference Center, University of Texas Campus, Austin, Travis County (IPP public hearing) | 13                | 0                | 1 verbal<br>0 written  |

\* The verbal and written comments from the meetings as well as the responses can be found in *Appendix 10D*.

## 10.5 RELATED OUTREACH ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE REGION K AREA BEYOND THE LCRWPG

There are several ongoing studies, workgroups, and legislative committees whose findings may affect the way water needs are met, what the requirements will be, and other factors. The following related studies are activities within the Region K area beyond the LCRWPG.

### 10.5.1 LCRA Water Management Plan

LCRA currently operates the Lower Colorado River under provisions of the 1999 Water Management Plan (WMP). This plan is approved by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as a condition of the LCRA's water rights permits for Lakes Buchanan and Travis, the two major water supply reservoirs in the Highland Lakes. Recommended amendments to the plan were developed through a stakeholder process that began in early 2001 and are currently under review by TCEQ. Several parties have contested this round of amendments.

General information and a copy of the recommended updates can be found on the LCRA's website at <http://www.lcra.org/water/wmp.html>.

### 10.5.2 The LCRA-SAWS Water Project Scientific Studies

LCRA and SAWS have undertaken the study of the project's water supply potential, construction and operational costs, and environmental effects. During this study period, the proposal will be re-examined, refined with current information, and examined with public input. This study period started in 2004 and is scheduled for completion in 2010. Annual project viability assessments will be conducted each November. The assessments as well as monthly update reports can be found at the project website at: <http://www.lcra.org/lswp>. At the end of the study period, if LCRA and SAWS determine the project is technically feasible, environmentally sound, and cost effective, the implementation period will follow. For answers to specific questions, contact [lcraawswaterproject@lcra.org](mailto:lcraawswaterproject@lcra.org).

### **10.5.3 Environmental Flows Advisory Group**

The 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature established the Environmental Flows Advisory Group which is composed of nine members. This group is comprised of three Senate members, three House members and three public members. The public members are representatives of TCEQ, TWDB, and TPWD. This Advisory Group is tasked with balancing the demand placed on the State's water resources by the growing population and the requirements of the riverine, bay, and estuary systems. To assist them, the Advisory Group has formed the Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee along with Basin and Bay Area Stakeholders Committees. The Advisory Group has recently been for the Colorado and Lavaca Rivers and Matagorda and Lavaca Bays Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder Committee. Additional committee information, updates and activities can be found at TCEQ's website at: [http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water\\_supply/water\\_rights/eflows/group.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/water_rights/eflows/group.html)

In September 2009, the Texas Environmental Flows Advisory Group appointed members of the Colorado and Lavaca Rivers and Matagorda and Lavaca Bays Stakeholder Committee. The committee will make recommendations to the TCEQ on the quantity of water needed to maintain the health of the named rivers and bays.

### **10.5.4 Irrigation District Advisory Panel**

There are advisory panels for each of the three irrigation systems operated by LCRA: Garwood, Lakeside, and Gulf Coast. These groups are self-elected and are sponsored by LCRA. LCRA discusses with these groups anything related to LCRA's operations that is relevant to the customer groups. The discussions range from rate changes, changes in operations procedures, key projects impacting the irrigation districts, and other items that need to be communicated.

*LCRWPG WATER PLAN*

*APPENDIX 10A*

*LCRWPG SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE*

*LCRWPG WATER PLAN*

*APPENDIX 10B*

*THE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING POPULATION AND WATER  
DEMAND PROJECTIONS SURVEY*

*LCRWPG WATER PLAN*

*APPENDIX 10C*

*LCRWPG INITIALLY PREPARED REGIONAL WATER PLAN  
PUBLIC HEARING PRESENTATION*

*LCRWPG WATER PLAN*

*APPENDIX 10D*

*LCRWPG DRAFT PLAN COMMENTS  
AND LCRWPG RESPONSES*

***LCRWPG WATER PLAN***

***APPENDIX 10E***

***SUMMARIES OF FIRST BIENNIUM STUDY REPORTS***