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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 Karen Haschke and a three-member Public Information and Participation Committee that she chaired. Committee members were Teresa Lutes, Haskell Simon, and Jennifer Walker.

Major aspects of this effort included:

- **Holding 18 open regular meetings of the Planning Group** for presentation of material, discussion, deliberation, voting on specific measures, and public comment between September 2011 and May 2015. 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 Austin in Travis County, with two meetings being held at locations in Bastrop County, one meeting being held in Bay City in Matagorda County and one meeting in the City of Burnet in Burnet County.
- **Holding a public meeting to receive input by the public** on the scope of work for the 2016 Region K Water Plan. This meeting was held on April 13, 2011.
- **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 supplies, water conservation activities, and drought management activities.
- **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.
- **Forming a Population and Water Demand Committee** in order to assist in the review, consideration, and determination of the methodology used to request revisions to the draft population and water demand projections developed by the TWDB in Chapter 2 of the Region K Plan.
- **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 this report.

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 Initially Prepared Regional Water Plan** available to the public by placing a copy of the Initially Prepared Region K Water Plan in at least one public library in each county in the region and either the county courthouse’s law library or the county clerk’s office for each county in the region and counties outside the region involved in Region K recommended water management strategies. The Initially Prepared Region K Water Plan was also posted on the Region K and TWDB websites.

The 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

Eighteen regular Planning Group meetings were held between September 2011 and May 2015 for presentation of material, discussion, deliberation, voting on specific measures, and public comment. These meetings were mainly held in Austin (in LCRA Dalchau Service Center), although four 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. The LCRWPG approved the 2016 Region K Initially Prepared Plan for submittal to TWDB at the April 22, 2015 Region K meeting. *Table 10.1* provides information on the feedback and comments received at the meetings held throughout the region.

Table 10.1 LCRWPG Publicized “Local” Meetings Throughout the Region

| Date | Meeting Type | Meeting Location | # Public Attending | Public Comments |
|------------|--|---|--------------------|---|
| 9/14/2011 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Riverside Conference Center, Bastrop | 10 | None |
| 1/11/2012 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA McKinney Roughs Nature Park, Cedar Creek | 16 | None |
| 4/11/2012 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 16 | None |
| 7/11/2012 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 37 | Steve Box with Environmental Stewardship thanked the group for the website and posting information. Steve asked if the committee meetings could be posted and whether they are open to the public. John Burke indicated that committee meetings are not posted regular public meetings. |
| 10/10/2012 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 33 | None |

| Date | Meeting Type | Meeting Location | # Public Attending | Public Comments |
|-----------|--|---|--------------------|--|
| 1/9/2013 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 24 | Dave Lindsay - Central Texas Water Coalition: noted a suggested clarification on Slide 6 (“Summary of Major Items from October 2012 Meeting”) as presented in AECOM’s January 9, 2013 meeting presentation. Mr. Lindsay requested that the bullet be broadened to more closely match the minutes reflecting a request for a new demand category, which was submitted, as part of the public input process, with a number of endorsements. |
| 4/10/2013 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 16 | None |
| 7/10/2013 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | Burnet Community Center, Burnet | 41 | None |
| 10/9/2013 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | The Center for Energy Development, Bay City | 40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave Lindsay reminded the group of Intera’s presentation at the last meeting and noted that it showed a dramatic drop in water availability. He stated there have been statistical studies on the significance of a disconnect in historical inflows since 2008. He encouraged the modeling committee to carefully consider recent inflows and include inflows since 2009. Jim Barho suggested David Lindsay review the guidelines for including a strategy with Jaime. • James Arnold expressed concern over not calculating changes in groundwater levels in the next 50 years, as his well has dropped dramatically, and he urges GMA representatives to include declines in groundwater levels in the plan. |
| 1/8/2014 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | Texas State Capitol, Austin | 38 | None |
| 4/9/2014 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 26 | None |
| 7/9/2014 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 22 | None |

| Date | Meeting Type | Meeting Location | # Public Attending | Public Comments |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 10/8/2014 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 30 | David Lindsay suggested studying inflows and how the drought inflows impact WAM modeling results. |
| 1/14/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlie Flatten, Hill Country Alliance, stated that the proposed Hays County WMS does not meet minimum criteria for the LCRWPG administrative procedural process, including no demonstrated specific demand, associated price, defined source, or route, stating that the Carrizo-Wilcox region is already strained. • Will Conley, Hays County Commissioner – noted that Hays County’s population is rapidly growing, and there is a need to ensure long-term water sustainability. • Linda K Rodgers expressed concern about the proposal for a lack of communication and transparency, and that the purpose for it is to allow development. • Jim McMeans expressed concern over developing Central Hays County which the proposed pipeline would traverse, as it is an aquifer recharge area. He proposed an alternate pipeline route. • Stephen Ramirez, Save our Springs Alliance, encouraged a thorough discussion among the group. |
| 2/18/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 8 | None |
| 3/11/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 11 | None |
| 4/8/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 19 | None |
| 4/22/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 11 | None |

| Date | Meeting Type | Meeting Location | # Public Attending | Public Comments |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 7/8/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 53 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reagan Burnham expressed concerns about the proposed City of Goldthwaite channel dam project. Dedra Reinert expressed concerns about the proposed City of Goldthwaite channel dam project. |
| 10/14/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | 13 | None |
| 11/12/2015 | Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting | LCRA Dalchau Service Center, Austin | N/A | None |

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: 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 |
| John Burke | 9/11/14 | Fort Worth | Tarrant | H2O4Texas Conference | Region K Water Planning |
| Paul Tybor | 3/2/15 | Fredericksburg | Gillespie | Fredericksburg City Council | 2016 Region K Plan Draft Chapters 2-4 |

10.4 REGION K ACTIVITIES

10.4.1 Population and Water Demand Committee

The Population and Water Demand Committee was formed in September 2011 in order to review the draft population and water demand projections developed by the TWDB for the 2016 regional water plans, determine whether any revisions should be requested to the TWDB for the non-municipal demand projections, and provide the projections to the municipal water user groups for their feedback on the projections. The Committee presented their recommended revision request to the RWPG for approval to

submit to TWDB. TWDB then reviewed the revision requests and considered approval. More details on the revision process are provided in Chapter 2 of this report.

The committee met several times in 2012 and 2013 to review data that had been provided, and to suggest revisions to the draft TWDB demand projections, when the Committee felt the Region's demands were not being accurately quantified.

10.4.2 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.

10.4.3 Surveys

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

- The Regional Water Planning Population and Water Demand Projections survey was sent on April 24, 2013, to stakeholders in the Region K area soliciting feedback on the draft population and water demand projections developed by TWDB. The TWDB required certain types of information be submitted as support for any proposed changes to their projections. Forty responses were received from the survey. See *Appendix 10A* for an example of the survey letter and accompanying materials, and a summary of the responses.
- A survey to help identify the water supplies, and the water conservation and drought management activities used by water user groups was sent to Region K stakeholders on October 18, 2013, with a follow-up contact on October 31, 2013. Forty-one responses were received. See *Appendix 10B* for an example of the correspondence and the survey. Survey responses are available on the Region K website at <http://www.regionk.org/third-regional-plannig-cycle/scope-of-work/>.

10.4.4 Public Meetings and Hearing

In addition to the meetings shown earlier in *Table 10.1*, a meeting was held for the primary purpose of gaining input and answering questions from the public on Region K's grant application for the 4th cycle of regional water planning. This meeting was held on April 13, 2011.

Two public meetings and one public hearing were held to receive public comments on the Initially Prepared 2016 Region K Water Plan. The two public meetings were held in the City of Burnet and the City of Wharton, on June 25, 2015 and July 23, 2015, respectively. Comments were received at the meeting in Burnet and are provided in *Appendix 10E* along with comment responses, while no public comments were received at the meeting in Wharton.

The public hearing was held in the City of Austin on July 8, 2015, and both oral and written public comments were received. *Appendix 10C* contains the public hearing notice, the affidavits of publication, the presentation given at the public hearing, and the oral comments received.

Written comments from State agencies were received from both the TWDB and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. These comments, including the comment cover letter from TWDB that addresses what needs to be included in the final adopted plans, and their respective comment responses are provided in *Appendix 10D*.

Written comments were received from the public until September 15, 2015. Due to the volume of comments received, comments and comment responses from Region K are included as an electronic appendix in *Appendix 10E*. Comment response letters (included in *Attachment M* of *Appendix 10E*) were divided into two groups: letters in response to comments that generated changes to the 2016 Region K Water Plan; and letters in response to comments that were considered, but did not generate any changes.

The following is a summary of comment response letters where the comments generated a change to the 2016 Region K Water Plan:

1. Central Texas Water Coalition Comment Response – New Appendix on Highland Lakes in Chapter 1
2. City of Buda Comment Response – Direct Potable Reuse Strategy added as an alternative WMS in Chapter 5
3. City of Marble Falls Comment Response – Direct Reuse Strategy added as a recommended WMS with no capital costs in Chapter 5
4. Dave Lindsay Comment Response – New Section on Inflows to Highland Lakes in Chapter 8
5. Goldthwaite Channel Dam Comment Response (general) – Removal of Goldthwaite Channel Dam as a recommended water management strategy from Chapter 5
6. Hays County Pipeline Strategy (general) – Modification to recommended Hays County Pipeline strategy and removal of alternative version in Chapter 5
7. LCRA Comment Response – Multiple text changes throughout 2016 Region K Water Plan
8. Mary Cunningham Comment Response - New Appendix on Highland Lakes in Chapter 1 and removal of Goldthwaite Channel Dam as a recommended water management strategy
9. National Wildlife Federation Comment Response – Recommendation of Unique Stream Segments in Chapter 8
10. Sierra Club Comment Response – Recommendation of Unique Stream Segments in Chapter 8
11. STPNOC Comment Response – Water Right Permit Amendment as a recommended water management strategy in Chapter 5

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 2010 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 prior to 2012 and are currently under review by TCEQ.

General information and a copy of the amendments can be found on the LCRA's website at www.lcra.org.

10.5.2 Environmental Flows Advisory Group

The 80th 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 formed the Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee along with Basin and Bay Area Stakeholders Committees. 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

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 made recommendations to the TCEQ on the quantity of water needed to maintain the health of the named rivers and bays. TCEQ has adopted new environmental flow standards from the input they received from the Committee. The Committee continues to meet on a regular basis.

10.5.3 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.

APPENDIX 10A

*REGION K POPULATION AND WATER DEMAND PROJECTIONS
SURVEY AND RESPONSE*

APPENDIX 10B

*REGION K WATER CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT SURVEY AND
RESPONSE*

APPENDIX 10C

*REGION K IPP PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE, AFFIDAVITS OF
PUBLICATION, PUBLIC HEARING PRESENTATION, AND RECEIVED
ORAL COMMENTS*

2016 LCRWPG WATER PLAN

APPENDIX 10D

*STATE AGENCY COMMENTS ON INITIALLY PREPARED PLAN WITH
REGION K COMMENT RESPONSES*

APPENDIX 10E

*RECEIVED WRITTEN/ORAL PUBLIC COMMENTS ON INITIALLY
PREPARED PLAN WITH REGION K COMMENT RESPONSES*