

Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting

October 8, 2014

LCRA Dalchau Service Center

3505 Montopolis Drive

Austin, Texas

10:00 a.m.

Members Signing In:

Jim Barho, Environmental
Jim Brasher, GMA 15
John Burke, Water Utilities
Ronald Gertson, Small Business
Karen Haschke, Public Interest
Barbara Johnson, Industries
Joe King, Electric Utilities
Brenton Lewis, Municipalities
Teresa Lutes, Municipalities
Bill Neve, Counties
Doug Powell, Recreation
Billy Roeder, Agriculture
Robert Ruggiero, Small Business

Haskell Simon, Agriculture
James Sultemeier, Counties
Jim Totten, GMA 12
Byron Theodosios, Counties
Paul Tybor, GMA 7
David Van Dresar, Water Districts
Jennifer Walker, Environmental
David Wheelock, River Authorities
David Bradsby, Non-voting, TPWD
David Meeseey, Non-voting, TWDB
David Villarreal, Non-Voting, TDA
Robin Gary, Alternate, GMA 10
Lauri Gillam, Alternate, Municipalities

Voting Members Absent:

John Dupnik, GMA 10, alternate attended
Brandon Wade, Municipalities, alternate attended

Ron Fieseler, GMA 9
Bill Luedecke, GMA 8

Consultants/Support/Visitors/Other:

Andres Garza, Jr., City of Wharton, City Manager
Jasmine Gardner, Blanton & Associates, Inc.
Jonathan Lala, Freese & Nichols, Inc.
Doug Shaw, TWDB
Heather Cooke, City of Austin
Mayra Ortiz, Halff
Wes Birdwell, Halff
Bill Swanson, MWH
Joe Trungale, TES
David Lindsay, Alternate, Recreation
Karen Bondy, Alternate, River Authorities
Susan Roth, Susan Roth Consulting
Laurance Armour, Peirce Ranch
Gay Erwin, Strategic Partnerships
James Lee Murphy, Esq., GBRA

Stefan Schuster, MWH
Brent Batchelor, Alternate, Agriculture
Lyda Creus Molarpley, WaterSmart Software
Jim Campbell, WaterSmart Software
Jeremy Mazur, Representative Callegari's Office
Frank Gradiline, PVAMC
Jeff Fox, Alternate, Municipalities
Chris Hoelter, LCRA
Chris Lippe
Holly Vierk, TWDB
Rudi Rosengarten, SSV
Margaret Cook, UT Austin
Aaron Wendt, TSSWCB
Tommy Koeh
John Hoffman, Alternate, Electric Utilities

Quorum:

Quorum: Yes

Number of voting members or alternates representing voting members present: 23

Number required for quorum per current voting membership of 25: 13

Formal Actions Taken:

1. Approved motion to adopt the July 9, 2014 minutes with no changes.
2. Approved motion to send a letter to TWDB requesting a review of City of Wharton population and water demand projections.

3. Approved motion to replace Voting Members Brandon Wade with alternate Lauri Gillam and Joe King with alternate John Hoffman.
4. Approved motion to send letter drafted by the Legislative Committee to TWDB and the Texas Groundwater Alliance.
5. Approved motion to authorize LCRA to contract with AECOM to extend Water Availability Model (WAM) hydrology through 2013 for \$8,200.
6. Approved motion to ratify the Technical Memorandum submitted on August 1, as outlined by Consultant.

Regular Meeting:

1. Call to Order – Chairman John Burke called the meeting into order.
2. Welcome and Introductions – John Burke welcomed everyone in attendance.
3. Attendance Report – Teresa Lutes called attention to the attendance report included in member's packets.
4. Consent Agenda:
 - a. Approval of Minutes from the July 9, 2014 meeting – Teresa Lutes presented the minutes, Jim Barho moved to adopt the July 9th minutes with no changes. The motion passed.
 - b. Financial / Budget Report – David Wheelock reported a grant account balance of \$85,504. The member's account has \$1,576, plus an additional \$7,000 gathered so far from the group's region-wide solicitation for funds to help support the regional planning process. David noted that, if approved, these funds collected will partially fund WAM modeling services to be considered in agenda item #13.C. John Burke urged members to contact officials and Water User Groups (WUGs) in their areas for donations.
5. Texas Water Development Board Communications – David Meesey (TWDB) updated the group on the water planning timeline. The Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) should be adopted and submitted to TWDB by May 1; a public hearing will follow with a comment period. Comments will be considered by the group and, as needed, revisions will then be made. The final adopted Plan is due to TWDB November 2, 2015.
6. Highland Lakes Drought Update – David Wheelock (LCRA) reported that the Highland Lakes which hold just over 2 million acre-feet have been below 40% (800,000 acre-feet) since May 2013, with the lowest point being approximately 32% (637,000 acre-feet) in September of 2013. A year ago at the beginning of October the lakes were at approximately 33% 664,000 acre-feet. The combined lakes Travis and Buchanan storage volume is currently at approximately 35% (700,000 acre-feet). LCRA is currently operating under a TCEQ approved Emergency Order to depart from operating under LCRA's current Water Management Plan (WMP). It is anticipated that additional Emergency Orders may be needed for 2015.
7. LCRA Water Management Plan (WMP) Revision Update – David Wheelock (LCRA) reported on the status of LCRA's WMP revision process. TCEQ published updated Colorado Basin hydrology through 2013 in May and issued a draft report to LCRA along with a proposed drought management framework for new WMP revisions. Some of the suggested changes to the plan include maintenance of combined storage volumes above 600,000 acre-feet, a multiple level drought management structure, and a look-ahead element. LCRA developed a model, proposed changes, and after a stakeholder review, the LCRA Board approved the framework for an application incorporating TCEQ recommendations to be filed at the end of this month.
8. GBRA Presentation on ocean desalination project – Jim Murphy (Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority) asked the group to consider their project as an alternate strategy, and introduced Bill Swanson(MWH), consultant project engineer. The their Integrated Water and Power Project

(IWPP) is a regional water supply strategy that integrates ocean water desalination with existing water supplies to decrease costs related to desalination. The concept proposes to start with an initial 25 MGD plant with expansions up to 250 MGD. The feasibility study encompasses a large area of central and coastal Texas and includes portions of 6 Water Planning Regions. David Meesey noted that the Region L plan is being amended to include desalination in the current and next plans. Costs saving strategies include sharing facilities, minimizing energy cost, reducing treatment cost, delivery and financing strategies, and regional water integration. Bill Neve asked how cost sharing would be distributed; Mr. Swanson responded that it would be a benefit-based cost allocation. Mr. Murphy noted that initially this project would serve customers in the lower basin, therefore, the cost of the infrastructure and water received would be borne by those entities. If demand develops in the upper basin, most of the network infrastructure would already in place to distribute the water. Jim Barho noted that the group has considered desalination in the past and have encountered two key issues; relatively high cost per volume, and residue disposal. Mr. Swanson mentioned that the proposed strategy benefits from reduced costs and environmental impacts of open water concentrate disposal by collaborating with power developments. John Burke requested a comparison between desalination and the SAWS Vista Ridge groundwater project. Mr. Swanson commented that the cost of seawater treatment is the same anywhere; where the cost varies is in the transportation of seawater to the plant and connection of treated water to customers. The cost of the Vista Ridge project is achievable for desalination, depending on transportation variables. David Van Dresar, Bill Neve, and Jennifer Walker asked about who pays for the water and benefits to other regions. Jennifer Walker commented that it seems that a community that invests in desalination should first stretch all existing water supplies before turning to more expensive sea water desalination. Mr. Murphy commented that from his perspective all other resources in Region L are very limited, and with projected population and manufacturing growth along the Texas coast, a desalination facility would allow for greater flexibility of supply.

9. Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board: Water Supply Enhancement Program (WSEP) legislative changes and brush control program update presentation – Aaron Wendt / TSSWCB presented current program operations affected by recent legislative changes. The purpose of WSEP is to increase available surface and ground water through noxious brush control and re-vegetation. Mesquite, Juniper, and Salt Cedar are all found in Texas and have a negative impact on water supply. The USGS found through a feasibility study linked with a WAM that lake storage would increase with brush control under drought conditions. Changes to the program include funding processes, feasibility studies - including modeling and follow-up treatments; committees have been established to implement changes, and an internal audit found full compliance with legislative directives. The Stakeholder Committee recommended goals, including focusing on municipal water supplies. Proposals for TWDB funding are ranked based on water yield increased per capita, among other criteria. Funding is potentially available for proposals that have a feasibility study and are in the Regional Water Plan; there is currently one completed and four proposed feasibility studies in Region K. Jim Barho, Chairman Burke, and Mr. Wendt discussed incorporating WSEP in the Regional Plan; brush control has been included in past Plans, and the group could specifically mention a study in the Plan; an entity such as LCRA, Region K, or a municipality could apply for a feasibility study. Robin Gary suggested another candidate may be a Priority GMA area to include groundwater information in a feasibility study area such as the western Travis County area. David Villarreal asked what species are problematic in the downstream counties of the region; Mr. Wendt replied: primarily Huisache (typically pronounced "wee-satch"). Byron Theodosios inquired about cost; Mr. Wendt noted that feasibility studies include cost analysis, and the State cost share is a 70% maximum. Billy Roeder commented on the required follow-up commitments from landowners.
10. Presentation by WaterSmart Software: conservation software – Jim Campbell presented WaterSmart's customer engagement software which seeks to encourage conservation through

behavioral change. WaterSmart combines meter data with other information to provide individual households with reports on their water use in the context of their peers. WaterSmart works with Utilities to increase customer engagement, and studies show an average of 5% water use reduction.

11. Presentation on City of Wharton water planning – Wes Birdwell introduced himself as the City's consultant and introduced Andres Garza, Wharton City Manager. The City of Wharton is developing a sustainable and affordable water supply to prepare for growth and higher demands on groundwater from within the county. A feasibility study has been authorized to look at all supply possibilities to keep the cost as low as possible. Population could potentially grow faster than TWDB forecasts due to several factors including local economic and transportation expansion. Pierce Ranch is willing to consider allowing Wharton to use their groundwater under conditions that are sustainable. In order to do that, an in-channel detention system could be built. Wharton requests that their Sustainable Water System be included as a water management strategy in the Region K Regional Water Plan. Jim Brasher expressed concern that the Central Gulf Coast MAG is approaching its limit; Mr. Birdwell responded that they would like to work with the groundwater district to do additional detailed testing to see if there is more water available. Ronald Gertson commended the City for taking the initiative to plan for its future, and looks forward to working on improving the plan, but believes that this water management strategy it is not ready for Region K to include in the Plan. Mr. Meesey, Ms. Walker, and Mr. Gertson discussed Region K's ability to present a population review request to TWDB. David Wheelock and David Meesey discussed potentially including the water management strategy in the plan regardless of population projections so that Wharton can apply for funding; this project could fall under strategies already included in the Plan. Jim Barho asked whether the study will include also looking at groundwater options and consultant Wes Birdwell said yes. Gertson motioned to send a letter to TWDB requesting them to review the Wharton population and water demand projections. The motion passed.
12. Discuss and Take Action on replacement of Voting Member with the Alternate Member for the following two members at the request of the two following members. Their term will expire at the time of the current member's term ends. Motion to replace the two members passed.
 - a. Replace voting member with alternate member for the Municipalities Interest Group currently filled by member Brandon Wade with alternate Lauri Gillam.
 - b. Replace voting member with alternate member for the Electric Generation Utilities Interest Group currently filled by member Joe King with alternate John Hoffman.
13. Committee Updates / Reports. Take action as necessary.
 - a. Prioritization Committee – Jaime Burke reviewed that at the July meeting the group authorized the Committee to review and give final approval for submitting prioritized 2011 Water Management Strategies list to TWDB. The Committee did not suggest any further changes and it was submitted on August 27th. The due date for the prioritization of the approved list of 2016 Plan water management strategies was postponed.
 - b. Legislative and Policy Committee – Barbara Johnson reported that the Committee has not met since the last RWPG meeting. A letter was drafted to be sent to TWDB suggesting alignment of groundwater and surface water deadlines to allow use of more recent data in the regional planning process. Virginia Wilkinson noted that David Meesey suggested sending the letter to the Texas Groundwater Alliance (TGA) as well. Barbara Johnson motioned to send the letter to TWDB and the TGA, the motion passed.
 - c. Water Modeling Committee – Teresa Lutes updated the group on committee recommendations, including extending WAM hydrology through 2013; the consultants estimated a budget of \$8,200, which will be funded by Member Fund donation solicitations, as discussed by the Executive Committee. The proposal is for the Consultant team to run the updated modeling analysis to provide results at the January 2015 RWPG meeting. Doug Powell asked about including 2014 data, Teresa Lutes responded that due to IPP deadlines,

2014 data will not be available in time, but the Drought Committee is tasked with addressing the ongoing aspects of the drought and can also address concepts such as safe yield during drought conditions or planning multiple water management strategies to meet needs. Bill Neve expressed concern about over-projecting water availability. Ronald Gertson, David Wheelock, Bill Neve, and Jaime Burke discussed incorporating 2014 data into the modeling if it becomes available in time to be included in the planning cycle. Teresa Lutes made a motion to authorize LCRA to contract with AECOM in the amount of \$8,200 to extend the 2013 hydrology and run the WAM water availability analysis. The motion passed.

- d. Drought Committee – David Wheelock informed the group that there is a new TWDB requirement which requires a new chapter on drought, drought contingency plans (DCPs), and drought preparedness; the Drought Committee will meet immediately following the RWPG meeting.
- e. Nominating Committee – John Burke appointed a Nominating Committee: Ronald Gertson, Chair, Barbara Johnson, Bill Neve, David Van Dresar, and Lauri Gilliam will serve.

14. Consultant Status Report – Jaime Burke, AECOM

- a. Summary of Major Items at July Region K meeting: TWDB Board Members Kathleen Jackson and Bech Bruun attended; LCRA update on drought and WMP; City of Austin drought planning update; Legislative and Policy Committee update; Region K Water Management Strategy (WMS) Prioritization list from the 2011 adopted plan was submitted to TWDB; Drought Committee created; Draft water needs analysis presented; approval to submit Technical Memo and Scope of Work (SOW) task 4D.
- b. Work Progress since last meeting: Final Scope Of Work, Prioritization for 2011 adopted plan water management strategies (WMS), and Technical Memo submitted to TWDB; Technical conference call held; WAM work scoped, to be completed by end of 2014; Strategy evaluation and chapter updates. Pflugerville demand increases, and Bastrop groundwater WMS use. Water Conservation and Drought Survey responses were posted on the Region K website.
- c. Schedule and Upcoming Work/Deliverables: TWDB Database 17 (DB17) coordination with other regions on split WUGs and strategies; WAM update; WMS evaluation; environmental flow impacts; Committee support; complete chapter drafts. Present modeling update January; IPP draft due for RWPG review March 1; approval to submit IPP to TWDB April 8; IPP due to TWDB May 1; Final plan due November 2.

15. Region K Technical Memorandum, approved for submittal to TWDB at July 9, 2014 Region K meeting. Take action to ratify the Technical Memorandum, which was submitted to TWDB on August 1, 2014. (Documentation provided as part of meeting materials packet.) Jim Barho motioned to ratify the Technical Memorandum; the motion passed.

16. Agenda items for next meeting

- a. Next meeting January 14, 2015.
- b. Tentative Water Modeling Committee meeting on December 10, 2014 to review WAM results.

17. New / Other Business: Jennifer Walker passed out a flyer for a workshop on Water Rates models for utilities.

18. Public Comments – David Lindsay suggested studying inflows and how the drought inflows impact WAM modeling results.

19. Adjourn at 2:08 PM