

Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting

January 14, 2015
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
John Dupnik, GMA 10
Ron Fieseler, GMA 9
Ronald Gertson, Small Business
Lauri Gillam, Municipalities
Karen Haschke, Public Interest
John Hoffman, Electric Utilities
Barbara Johnson, Industries
Donna Klaeger, Counties (Elected this meeting)
Brenton Lewis, Municipalities
Teresa Lutes, Municipalities
Bill Neve, Counties (Resigned this meeting)

Doug Powell, Recreation
Robert Ruggiero, Small Business
Haskell Simon, Agriculture
James Sulzemeier, 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
Charles Shell, Alternate, GMA 8

Voting Members Absent:

Bill Luedecke, GMA 8, alternate attended

Billy Roeder, Agriculture

Consultants/Support/Visitors/Other:

Ward Wyatt, CTWC
Brent Batchelor, Agriculture
David Venhuizen, Venhuizen Water Works
Bill Thaman, FNI
Robin Gary, BSEACD, alternate
Wes Birdwell, Halff Associates
Clay Collin, City of Sunset Valley
Karen Bondy, LCRA
Brent Covert, Forestar
Carissa Shelley, Pape-Dawson
Cindy Rodibauger, FCGWD
Mitchell Sodek, CTGCD
Aaron Wendt, TSSWCB
Jared Bower, TSSWCB
Katy Phillips, City of Sunset Valley
Rudi Rosengarten, City of Sunset Valley
Usa Guardiolle, SAWS
David Lindsay, Recreation Alternate
Stephen Ramirez, SOS

Jay Long, Empresario Partners
Linda Roye Rogers, HTGCD
Velma Danielson, Blanton & Associates
Tommmmy Koch, C Thomas Koeler
Heather Cooke, City of Austin
Susan Roth, Susan Roth Counseling
Charlie Flatten, HCA
Robert Howard, Bluebonnet Electrical
Barbara Wildon, Village of Volente
Owen Moorhead, Texas Impact
Danielle Martin, City of Austin
Jeff Fox, COA Alternate
Gary Gold, City of Austin
Will Conley, Hays County Commissioner
Linda Rogers
Jim McMeans
Stephen Ramirez, Save our Springs Alliance
Jaime Burke, AECOM
James Kowis, Consultant

Quorum:

Quorum: Yes

Number of voting members or alternates representing voting members present: 24

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

Formal Actions Taken:

1. Approved motion to adopt the minutes, as presented.
2. Approved motion to elect the Executive Committee members as nominated by the Nominating Committee.
3. Approved motion to accept Bill Neve's resignation from the group.
4. Approved motion to elect Judge Donna Klaeger as the Counties Interest group member for Burnet County.
5. Approved motion to designate LCRA as the Political Subdivision for the 5th planning cycle for the 20121 Regional Water Plan.
6. Approved motion to authorize the LCRA to post the associated 30-day public notice to apply for and to authorize submitting a grant application to TWDB on behalf of Region K for funding the 2021 Regional Water Plan cycle.
7. Approved motion for Region K to address projected water demands in the Region K portion of western Hays County by including for consideration a water management strategy (WMS) that will consider the importation of non-Trinity and/or non-Edwards water sources from Region L into Hays County. This WMS has the potential to either partially or wholly meet those projected water demands; and, in order to avoid any water management strategy incompatibility with Region L, AECOM is directed, as the budget allows, to coordinate, not develop, any such water management strategy with HDR Engineering in order to assess strategy options, water sources, quantity of water available for any such strategy, or other relevant considerations.

Regular Meeting:

1. Call to Order – Chairman John Burke
2. Welcome and Introductions – Chairman John Burke
3. Attendance Report – Teresa Lutes
4. Consent Agenda:
 - a. Approval of Minutes from the October 8, 2014 meeting – Jim Barho's motion to adopt the minutes as presented was passed.
 - b. Financial/Budget Report – David Wheelock reported that the Grant account holds \$214,295, while the Members' account has \$13,140. \$8,200 will be withdrawn from the Members account to fund updated hydrology modeling.
5. Election of Officers – Ronald Gertson called attention to the email from himself to Chairman Burke regarding the Nominating Committee recommendation of John Burke for Chair, Jim Barho for Vice Chair, Teresa Lutes for Secretary, and Byron Theodosis, Jim Brasher and Ronald Gertson for at-large Officers. There were no nominations from the floor. Barbara Johnson's motion to elect these nominated members was passed.
6. Discuss and take action concerning Region K Planning Group member Bill Neve's recommendation to appoint Commissioner Neve's alternate Judge Donna Klaeger as his replacement for Counties (Burnet) Interest group, and take action on Commissioner Neve's tendered resignation. Bill Neve's motion to resign from the group was approved. Commissioner Neve's motion to appoint Judge Donna Klaeger as his replacement was passed after discussion from Jennifer Walker and John Burke on the process.. Commissioner Neve said goodbye to the group as a member.
7. Discuss letter from Senator Fraser. Take action as necessary – John Burke called attention to the letter included in the members' packets regarding the Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group (LCRWPG) and the Texas Open Meetings Act. Ronald Gertson, Chairman Burke, David Meesey, Jim Barho, and Ron Fieseler discussed the posting of committee meetings; Judge Klaeger and David Meesey commented on making public decisions and properly recording meeting minutes. The group came to the conclusion that the current committee process meets the requirements of the Open Meeting Act, and no action was taken.
8. Presentation and possible action on requested Water Management Strategies for Hays County – Ronald Fieseler is the Region K liaison with Region L; he introduced a requested water management strategy for consideration which would require coordination with Region L to import water into and through Hays

County. John Dupnik explored the LCRWPG's role in weighing water quality issues related to projects, David Meeseey indicated that the LCRWPG can either decide to evaluate the project further or decline to consider it this round. Ron Fieseler commented that Region L is already working on this project, which lightens the load for Region K. Will Conley, Hays County Commissioner, spoke and indicated that he would assure that he would deliver detailed information to AECOM in a timely manner. Ron Fieseler moved that Region K address the projected water demands in the Region K portion of western Hays County by including for consideration a water management strategy that will consider the importation of non-Trinity and/or non-Edwards water sources from Region L into Hays County which could either partially or wholly meet those projected water demands; and, in order to avoid any water management strategy incompatibility with Region L, AECOM is directed, as the budget allows, to coordinate, not develop, any such water management strategy with HDR Engineering in order to assess strategy options, water sources, quantity of water available for any such strategy, or other relevant considerations. After discussion from the group on budget and use of consultant time, the motion passed.

9. Texas Water Development Board Communications – David Meeseey, TWDB reported on upcoming deadlines; a first draft of the IPP will need to be ready by the end of March or early April in order to meet the May 1 deadline for TWDB. Project Prioritization for the 2016 Plan is due December 1, 2015. After the IPP submittal due May 1, 2015 there will be a commentary period, after which any revisions by the planning group are due to TWDB by November 2, 2015.
10. Highland Lakes Drought Update – David Wheelock, LCRA, gave an update on the drought. 2014 was the second driest year in the history of the Highland Lakes, which are currently 34% full, the combined storage on January 1 was the lowest it had been since the lakes were full; the previous lowest January 1 storage level was in 1952. USGS data and evaporation data need to be finalized before a drought worse than the drought of record (DWDR) could be determined. LCRA drought management activities include: a third year of interruptible water cutoff and applying for a fourth year; a temporary permit to use run of river rights for downstream use; no storage releases from the lakes for almost 4 months; and mandatory once a week watering for firm customers. The weather forecast is for a weak El Nino, below average temperatures, and above average moisture. Jim Barho asked for a possible timeframe for 20% firm water curtailment, Mr. Wheelock responded that the model shows a slight possibility for reaching the trigger by March. Jennifer Walker asked if LCRA has done any research on rainfall to inflow ratio. Mr. Wheelock responded that he could more readily go into detail on that correlation and recent trends offline. John Dupnik asked if any research had been done by LCRA on the effects of well drilling on base flows. Mr. Wheelock responded that no specific study has been done, but that most stored water in the Highland Lakes is accumulated during high-flow events. Jim Barho and Teresa Lutes commented on current and future planning and conservation efforts that stretch the water supply. Karen Hashke suggested that PSA announcements would be beneficial to encourage public awareness and participation in conservation. Ronald Gertson commented that as a result of the lack of availability of surface water for irrigation, there has been an enormous amount of drilling for groundwater in the lower basin, which has seriously strained or even exceeded the available groundwater. Consequently, municipalities in the area, which are dependent on groundwater, are concerned about future planning. Mr. Wheelock noted that LCRA has broken ground on its Off-Channel Reservoir (OCR) in the Lane City area, which will be a new supply for interruptible and firm use. Haskell Simon added that there is a lot that is still not understood about the movement of water under ground; the worst case is that groundwater is over-appropriated; the best is that we don't know.
11. LCRA Water Management Plan (WMP) Update – LCRA/David Wheelock reported on recent WMP activities; LCRA has applied for an amendment to the LCRA WMP revision application to TCEQ, which is currently under TCEQ review, with expected activity from them in the next few months.
12. Discuss and take action: Teresa Lutes motioned to designate LCRA as the Political Subdivision for the next (5th) planning cycle for the 2021 Regional Water Plan. The motion was approved.
13. Discussion and possible action: A motion was made and approved to authorize LCRA, as the Region K Political Subdivision, to post the associated 30-day public notice (30 days prior to TWDB Board action) to

apply for and to authorize submitting a grant application to TWDB on behalf of Region K for funding the 2021 Regional Water Plan cycle.

14. Committee Updates/Reports. Take action as necessary.

- a. Prioritization Committee – Chairman Burke reported that a Chairs’ meeting was held; Chairman Burke and Jennifer Walker attended. It was decided that the projects for the 2016 Plan will be prioritized with the same parameters that were used for the previous Plan. Ms. Walker added that RWPG prioritization only counts as 15% of the total score for SWIFT fund allocation. Barbara Johnson remarked that 15% seems low and suggested requesting a higher percent; Chairman Burke replied that he did bring that up at the meeting and did not receive any interest.
- b. Legislative and Policy Committee – Walker met with TWDB to discuss SWIFT funding for conservation and reuse projects with no capital costs associated. She will send information she receives back from TWDB on to the RWPG. Meeseey added that a large entity could borrow money on behalf of small communities, which happens already with farmers in the Pan Handle region. Walker also noted that several communities can apply together, which would score higher. Barbara Johnson announced that the committee will meeting soon.
- c. Water Modeling Committee – Teresa Lutes reported that the committee has reviewed the draft results from the consultant work on extending WAM hydrology through 2013. The committee also discussed concepts for incorporating additional safety factors for the drought into this planning round of the Plan to help address drought response and uncertainties. Next steps for the Modeling Committee include meeting in February to develop recommendations to bring to the LCRWPG. These suggestions may include additional ways to address the ongoing drought in the current plan as well as other recommendations that could be incorporated into the 2021 regional plan. Donna Klaeger, John Burke, David Wheelock, and Teresa Lutes discussed what it would take to include 2014 data in the model; it was concluded that there is not time to include final data before the Plan is due, but that the Modeling Committee can recommend safety factors and additional water management strategies to address uncertainties and needs related to the ongoing drought. Chairman Burke suggested possibly including the data in the final plan even if there is not time to include it in the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP). Ronald Gertson and Jennifer Walker expressed potential concerns over possible over-planning concepts.
- d. Water Management Strategies Committee – Jim Barho provided an update on the committee’s efforts. Jim related that the committee would like to stress that it is the responsibility of the entity that is submitting a strategy to gather and prepare data and provide analysis, not the consultant’s responsibility. The group agreed that the cut-off date for new WMS’s would be effective as of this meeting date January 14, 2015.
- e. Drought Committee – David Wheelock reported that the committee has begun meeting; they will be undertaking an assessment of entities’ preparedness for emergency water shortages.

15. Consultant Status Report. Take action as necessary. – Jaime Burke, AECOM

- a. Summary of Major Items at October Region K meeting:
 - i. Presentations from: GBRA, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, WaterSmart Software, and City of Wharton.
 - ii. Actions: New voting members were elected, Technical Memo was ratified, motion to submit letter to TWDB and Texas Groundwater Alliance, and approval for AECOM to run WAM with updated hydrology.
 - iii. Committee updates: Prioritizations due date postponed to Dec. 1, 2015, Drought Committee met after LCRWPG meeting, Nominating Committee was created.
- b. Work Progress since last meeting:
 - i. Updated availability modeling and needs analysis
 - Drought of record did not change, the driest year was 2011, small decrease to firm yield, and large decreases to irrigation divisions ROR (creates need for additional strategies).

- Irrigation shortages to Colorado, Matagorda, and Wharton Counties.
 - Municipal shortages to Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Colorado, Fayette, Gillespie, Hays, Llano, Mills, San Saba, and Travis counties.
 - Mining and Steam Electric shortages to Bastrop, Burnet, Fayette, Hays, Matagorda, and Travis Counties.
- ii. Strategy development
- Preparing table of potential WMS with criteria analysis for LCRWPG consideration.
 - Received guidance from WMS Committee on municipal conservation, agricultural conservation, and drought management. Also received guidance on Bastrop County needs.
- iii. Chapter progress and drafts
- Chapters 2, 3, 7, and 8 are under review or review is needed by Committees.
 - Chapters 1 and 4 are nearly complete and ready for RWPG review.
 - Chapters 5, 10, and 11 are being developed and updated.
 - Chapters 6 and 9 have not yet been started.
- c. Schedule and Upcoming Work/Deliverables: Upcoming work includes strategy evaluation and list preparation. Virginia Wilkinson will be leaving AECOM January 21st. IPP drafts due for RWPG review in March before the April 8 deadline (unless an additional meeting is called on April 22) for the RWPG to consider authorizing consultant to submit to TWDB on May 1. DB17 due July 1, Final Plan now due December 1, 2015.
16. Next meeting: Meetings will be held monthly starting on February 18th, with a potential additional meeting on April 22nd.
17. New / Other Business: Water Modeling Committee will meet on February 2nd; WMS Committee will meet February 4th.
18. Public Comments: all public comments were regarding agenda item 8, the proposed Hays County Water Management Strategy (WMS).
- a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Stephen Ramirez, Save our Springs Alliance, encouraged a thorough discussion among the group.
19. Adjourned at 1:45 PM.