

Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting

February 18, 2015
LCRA Dalchau Service Center
3505 Montopolis Drive
Austin, Texas
10:00 a.m.

Members Signing In:

Jim Barho, Environmental
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
Teresa Lutes, Municipalities
Billy Roeder, Agriculture

Robert Ruggiero, Small Business
James Sultemeier, Counties
Jim Totten, GMA 12
Paul Tybor, GMA 7
Jennifer Walker, Environmental
David Wheelock, River Authorities
David Bradsby, Non-voting, TPWD
David Meesey, Non-voting, TWDB
David Villarreal, Non-Voting, TDA
Dave Lindsay, Recreation Alternate
Brent Batchelor, Agriculture Alternate

Voting Members Absent:

Jim Brasher, GMA 15
Brenton Lewis, Municipalities
Bill Luedecke, GMA 8
Doug Powell, Recreation, alternate attended

Haskell Simon, Agriculture, alternate attended
Byron Theodosis, Counties
David Van Dresar, Water Districts

Consultants/Support/Visitors/Other:

Doug Prinz, City of Elgin/LPGCD
Sue Brashar, City of Elgin
Vicky Kennedy, Travis County
Aaron Wendt, TSSWCB
Wes Birdwell, Halff Associates/City of Wharton
Charlie Flatten, HCA
Stefan Schuster, MWH

Jonathan Klenman, Aqueous
Danielle Martin, AW
Gary Gold, AW
Jeff Fox, AW
Jaime Burke, AECOM
James Kowis, AECOM

Quorum:

Quorum: Yes
Number of voting members or alternates representing voting members present: 20
Number required for quorum per current voting membership of 25: 13

Formal Actions Taken:

- 1. Approved motion to approve the January 14, 2015 meeting minutes with addition of wording to reflecting the deadline discussion for water management strategy proposals to be considered for this planning cycle.
2. Approved motion to request in writing that TWDB provide a socio-economic analysis for Region K, as required for the regional planning process.
3. Approved motion to authorize the Region K political subdivision to hold a public input meeting on the Initially Prepared Plan after May 1, 2015.

Regular Meeting:

- 1. Call to Order – Chairman John Burke
2. Welcome and Introductions – John Burke
3. Attendance Report –Teresa Lutes called attention to the attendance report and asked the planning group members to review the report for accuracy.
4. Consent Agenda:

- a. Approval of Minutes from the January 14, 2015 meeting – The Planning Group approved a motion to approve the January 14, 2015 meeting minutes with addition of wording to reflecting the deadline discussion for water management strategy proposals to be considered for this planning cycle.
- b. Financial/Budget Report – David Wheelock reported the Members' Fund has \$13,142, and the Grant Fund has \$176,713 as of the end of January.
5. Environmental Flows 101 presentation – Jaime Burke introduced Joe Trungale, Consulting team hydrologist. Joe Trungale gave a history of regional and state flow studies for lakes, rivers, bays and estuaries, and the resulting environmental flow recommendations that have come from them, including Senate Bills 2 and 3, and their likely influence on the pending WMP. Mr. Trungale reviewed the variable levels of natural flow regimes and flow recommendations for the Colorado River and Matagorda Bay. Ron Fieseler and David Lindsay discussed study sites for the SB2 process and its applicability to rivers and tributaries with natural flow conditions. Jim Barho, David Bradsby, and Jennifer Walker discussed these studies and their relevancy to the current drought and prolonged extreme dry conditions and the impact to environmental flows. Trungale stated that SB3 tries to resolve some of the issues with unstudied sites and recent drought by accelerating the process using available data and involving stakeholder groups in a workplan process. David Wheelock asked for a brief summary of how to use this information for planning and what differences there may be this cycle from the last one. Mr. Trungale noted the incorporation of the LCRA Water Management Plan (WMP) as a water management strategy and evaluation of new water management strategies (WMS) as important, and the SB3 processes being in place for the first time this cycle.
6. Texas Water Development Board Communications – David Meesey reviewed the Emergency Infrastructure Interconnect requirement: RWPGs must summarize information on existing water facilities that may be used for water interconnects and provide that to TCEQ confidentially and separately from the Plan by February 20th. David Meesey also reminded the group of upcoming deadlines: the IPP must be approved before it is due to TWDB on May 1, the date to apply for the 5th cycle of Regional Water Planning funding is March 3, and consultants need to be procured before any technical work can be done for the next planning cycle.
7. Highland Lakes Drought Update – David Wheelock updated the group on current drought conditions: combined storage is at 36%, January inflows were 26% of average January inflows, although rainfall was above average, which is forecast to continue throughout spring. Barbara Johnson and Dave Lindsay recommended doing research on comparing current to historical inflows. Mr. Wheelock responded that he plans to work on it when other priorities have been completed.
8. LCRA Water Management Plan Update – David Wheelock reported that LCRA is performing several drought response activities, including emergency applications pending at TCEQ for relief from the LCRA 2010 WMP for interruptible supply and reduced Blue Sucker flows; temporary agricultural run of river use at upstream locations. Mr. Wheelock noted that no releases have been made by LCRA through Tom Miller dam since November 4th, and that once per week watering restrictions are in place. Jennifer Walker and Barbara Johnson asked about the Board meeting taking place today, David Wheelock clarified that they are talking about a hydrologic drought of record today, not the DWDR declaration that is defined in the Plan. David Wheelock mentioned that there is a very small probability of reaching 600,000 AF combined storage level the end of spring in the March or April timeframe. Barbara Johnson asked if the LCRA Board could declare a DWDR prior to reaching the 600,000 storage level to which David Wheelock responded that he thinks they probably could but the LCRA Board was not discussing that at today's Board committee meeting.
9. David Meesey recommended that the group take action to submit a letter to TWDB. Jim Barho motioned to request in writing that TWDB provide a socio-economic analysis for Region K, as required for the regional planning process. Ronald Gertson asked if any other group does it this way; Mr. Meesey responded that Region K is the only one. The motion passed unanimously.
10. David Meesey announced the meeting should be held shortly after the RWPG adopts the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP). David Wheelock motioned to authorize the Region K political subdivision to hold a public input meeting on the Initially Prepared Plan after May 1, 2015; the motion passed unanimously.
11. Committee Updates/Reports.

- a. Legislative and Policy Committee – Jaime Burke communicated updates to Chapter 8, including SWIFT and other funding information, recommendations for growth, groundwater planning, and conservation, and recommendations for handling of the Conservation Messaging Coordination and brush control sections. Jim Barho and Ronald Gertson discussed including an Off-Channel Reservoir discussion in this chapter and its relevance to policy. Ronald Gertson commented that the group has traditionally approached development of this Chapter such a way that there is unanimous agreement from the entire group on the content to be included, and anything not unanimously supported is typically struck. It was noted that information on brush control should be included and a study on inflows could be beneficial due to the on-going drought; David Lindsay volunteered to draft language for the Committee to consider on the study of inflows.
 - b. Water Modeling Committee – Teresa Lutes reported that the committee met on February 2nd and is in the process of drafting recommendations to put before the entire group probably prior to the next meeting.
 - c. Water Management Strategies Committee – Jim Barho reported that the committee held their kickoff meeting on February 4th. The group is looking at reviewing working documents on strategies.
 - d. Drought Committee – David Wheelock stated that the committee will be meeting today after the group meeting.
12. Consultant Status Report
- a. Summary of Major Items at January Region K meeting: Donna Klaeger was elected to replace planning group member Bill Neve, LCRA was designated as the Region K political subdivision, information on the Hays County pipeline project was presented, Prioritization and Water Modeling Committees reported updates, and the extended hydrology modeling results were presented.
 - b. Chapter Update and Status: comments from the RWPG on Chapter 2 are due by the end of February, Chapters 3 and 8 are in Committee review, Chapters 1 and 4 are nearly complete, Chapters 5, 7, 10, and 11 are in progress, Chapters 6 and 9 have not yet been started. Jim Barho reminded the group to get comments in as quickly as possible to give the consultants more time to complete the Chapters.
 - c. Strategy Update and Status: plan to have most potential strategies evaluated before the WMS Committee meeting on March 5th, consideration by RWPG on March 11th, approvals for inclusion in the IPP by April 8th meeting. Jaime updated the group on the Hays County pipeline project, Wharton sustainable water supply, various LCRA and City of Austin strategies, region-wide strategies, various local strategies by county, and strategies for WUGs in multiple regions. Jaime stated that mining in Burnet County is a remaining issue that will need to be resolved.
 - d. Schedule and Upcoming Work/Deliverables: Chapter draft completion, RWPG chapter reviews, and strategy evaluation and preparation of list for RWPG evaluation. The RWPG will meet at least monthly until May 1. The IPP will be considered for approved by RWPG in April with an April 8th meeting planned and a tentative second April meeting planned for April 22nd if needed, prior to the May 1 deadline to submit to TWDB. A 30-day notice for a public hearing must be posted prior to the TWDB database (DB17) update due date of July 1. Final Plan and water management strategy prioritizations are due December 1.
13. Next meeting
- a. Agenda items – Ron Fieseler, John Dupnik, and David Meesey discussed potentially having an item on an upcoming agenda to discuss issues related to private-owner groundwater interbasin transfer between Regions K and L.
 - b. Date and Location: March 11 at LCRA Dalchau Service Center.
14. New / Other Business - none
15. Public Comments – none
16. Adjourned at 12:15 pm.