

Texas Water Conservation Resource Query System (Library)
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www.SaveTexasWater.org

The greatest level of success in water conservation can only be achieved when information is put in the hands of the largest number of stakeholders. Having a resource library that contains information about water conservation that all can access and use is seen as a key element to a successful water conservation program in Texas. This work product is aimed at defining the parameters for organizing water conservation information resources that all stakeholders can access **and** developing a process for pushing new information out to relevant stakeholders. Obviously, this resource query system (library) must capture any new technologies so they can be shared quickly with all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the resource query system (RQS) cannot be simply a database for collecting and storing information, it must also be a comprehensive search engine and a forum for getting the information in the hands of those who can use it.

The key elements of a RQS for water conservation are:

1. Easy Search Capability – the utility of the system will depend heavily on having a search function that is easy to use and will enable the user to quickly drill down to find the information he is seeking.
2. Single gateway to all water conservation resources – Water conservation is not only a Texas issue, good information about water conservation is universal. Therefore, it will be imperative that the RQS provide access to all available resources in Texas state government, other states, colleges and universities, various associations and interest groups and the public. The more comprehensive the population of available resources, the greater the utility and acceptance of the RQS.
3. Good identification of resource source – Peer review of information is virtually impossible so it will be necessary to provide specific identification of all resources so that the user can make an informed decision on the validity of the information, the application to his interests, and who to contact about the information.
4. Registry to enable anyone to identify subjects of interest – Persons with specific information needs for water conservation need to be able to register those needs so that they can be notified when existing information is revised or new information becomes available.
5. Process to capture new technologies – Successes and new water conservation techniques need to be quickly identified and distributed to interested parties. Water conservation, like so many processes, is an iterative process that can be refined and improved over time. The quicker that we are able to share successes **and failures**, the shorter the time it takes to achieve the greatest measure of success. The RQS needs to be able to document these successes and failures and quickly notify all interested persons when new information is available.

6. Discussion forums to enable information exchange – The ability to seek knowledgeable input and help on specific needs will greatly enhance the utility of the RQS. When a user is unable to find exactly what he is seeking or needs clarification of information that he has found, a discussion forum provides a way of getting help from willing experts and from those with water conservation experience. A discussion forum also provides a means by which a user can provide feedback on information he finds in the systems that will enable the person who published it to correct or update it.
7. Marketing effort to generate awareness of the RQS – Once the RQS is activated, information about it needs to be advertised in all public awareness programs within state governments, colleges and universities, associations and the public media.

What information should be flagged:

- Source of the information and contact if possible
- Topics (key words) and abstract
- Target user groups
- Water Conservation categories (a list of categories needs to be developed for the RQS and posted on the website probably as the first cut at refining a search).

Source of Information:

The TWDB staff has begun to develop a comprehensive listing of websites of water related studies. This effort is initially focused on Texas information but can be expanded to include other states, federal agencies, colleges and universities and various associations and interest groups.

We recommend adding a question on the Council survey being considered as follows:

“The council is attempting to develop a recommendation for a water conservation resource query system (RQS) aimed at facilitating the timely search and exchange of water conservation information. To facilitate the development of this recommendation, please provide those websites or other resource links that you have found to be useful.”

Cost to Develop and Maintain:

Once we have a good description of the RQS, some estimates of the cost to develop and implement the RQS needs to be made. Also, annual maintenance of the system will need to be estimated. All this needs to be part of any funding proposal the Council decides to recommend.