

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Workgroup Meeting and Conference Call
Workgroup: ET stakeholder group discussion

Date:

Time: 11:00 am

Location: TEAMS

Advisory Council	Interested Parties	TWDB Staff
John Bender	Guy Fipps	Denise Livingston
Dustan Compton	Ted Pick	Nathan Leber
David Villarreal	Bragg, Jay	Shae Luther
Earl Foster	Jason Afinowicz	Jaclyn Buck
Jennifer Allis	Daniel Nix	Yun Cho
Joyce Warren	Isabel Martinez	John Sutton
Whitney Milberger		Marla Heger
		Taylor Nickell

1. Introduction of Participants

2. Discussion of Evapotranspiration- Dustan Compton gave an introduction of the inclusion of evapotranspiration networks in previous reports, including:

- the purpose, importance, and uses of evapotranspiration data.
- historical and present evapotranspiration networks in Texas.

TexasET Network is a program ran through Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service. This program relies on fees and other support provided by station sponsors. (Contacts: Guy Fipps and Charles Swanson) – created the [Water My Yard program](#).

TexMesonet is a program developed by TWDB and partners across the state. TexMesonet establishes a unifying architecture for networks across Texas, aggregating data into [central location](#) that includes stations maintained by the National Weather Service (NWS) and several other regional and local entities. TWDB continues to strategically add its own managed stations to improve statewide coverage. (Manager Nathan Leber, TWDB)

The recommendation in the last report included the following bullet points:

- grant the TWDB the statutory authority as the lead agency to ensure the longevity and reliability of the statewide TexMesonet earth observation network;
- grant the TWDB the statutory authority to incorporate reference evapotranspiration in its mission to further develop and expand the TexMesonet;
- grant the TWDB the statutory authority to collaborate and contract with local, state and/or federal agencies and other entities, at TWDB’s discretion, to provide technical assistance and to develop and disseminate products to maximize the impact of the TexMesonet and a statewide evapotranspiration network for the people of Texas; and

- increase appropriations by \$900,000 for the biennium to the TWDB to provide sufficient funding for additional staff, resources and grants for partnerships to develop and support a statewide ET network within the TexMesonet.

[HB 2759](#) was deemed to satisfy the first three bullet points in the 2022 recommendation.

A question was asked regarding “Can Proposition 6 funds be used for ET?”. (In a follow-up email correspondence from TWDB staff, it was verified that the Texas Water Fund is not a funding source option for evapotranspiration networks or the TexMesonet.)

Discussion was held on what needs to go into recommendation for upcoming report. Part of the previous recommendation included funding to incorporate existing infrastructure and programs into TexMesonet to support the programs that are already out there.

The reasons for incorporation of existing infrastructure and programs is to

- expand what is already out there and being used.
- obtain long-term reliable support to keep network viable into the future.
- Bring all currently used systems under one TexMesonet umbrella to make a centralized repository

Cost of the ET network include

- Cost of the Texas A&M Agri Life Extension Service to provide the ET information to TexMesonet.
- Maintenance of existing and siting new stations.

Dr. Fipps discussed the need for a study of fetch – Fetch is the size of the continuous green area around the station. Many TexMesonet stations don’t meet the national requirements for fetch. Proposed applied research to better define what the fetch requirements are for the stations.

Water My Yard app uses ET data. Also, Texas ET will be releasing an app for Agriculture irrigators for their water requirements based on ET data

Differences between TexMesonet and ET network. Initial TexMesonet funding was in response to a flooding event and is focused on flood response and flood forecasting. So there is some overlap ability of TexMesonet and ET network stations but not in all locations.

Therefore, TexMesonet and ET Network stations currently have different requirements for siting. Staff managing the TexMesonet and Texas ET Network continue to work on sharing station data where applicable.

TexMesonet is up to 107 stations. TexMesonet recently entered into an agreement with West Texas Mesonet to supply their information. They provide extensive Panhandle coverage but not all sites are ET sites.

TexMesonet did obtain a couple of field staff positions since the last Legislature session.

HB 2759 contains a substantial “goals” list, however, due to limited resources, TexMesonet must set priorities. I.e., identifying weather forecast data gaps.

Discussion was held on building a recommendation based on additional resources. It was recommended that WCAC representatives participate in the next TWDB TexMesonet advisory committee to better understand the resource needs prior to the March/April WCAC meetings. Funding recommendations need to be approved by WCAC in the April meeting.

The previous funding request amount of \$900,000 is still a viable amount. The ET team will have to work through more specific details and include the research of FETCH component.

The Texas Groundwater Protection Committee would like to be advised of the proposed recommendation. It was asked of the participants to please consider supporting ET or promoting ET Network use through your Regional Water Planning Group and have it included in the next water plan update.

It was suggested to get the ET Network in front of the RWPGs to discuss ET support.

3. Other Business – Any other legislative recommendations or BMP ideas please send to Denise Livingston- denise.livingston@twdb.texas.gov

4. Adjourn