

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 13, 2014
 Time: 1:35 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.
 Location: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 Conference Room – Building 6
 1340 Airport Commerce – Austin, TX

Meeting chaired by: C.E. Williams, Presiding Officer
 Meeting Facilitators: TWDB support staff

<i>Institutional Water Users</i>	Alternate Allison Nathan	<i>Refining & Chemical Manufacturing</i>	Karl Fennessey
<i>Landscape Irrigation & Horticulture</i>	Brad Smith	<i>Environmental Groups</i>	Ken Kramer
<i>Professional Organizations Focused on Water Conservation</i>	Carole Baker	<i>Higher Education</i>	Alternate Calvin Finch
<i>Regional Water Planning Groups</i>	C.E. Williams	<i>Water Control & Improvement Districts</i>	Alternate Dean Minchillo
<i>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>	Cindy Loeffler	<i>Groundwater Conservation Districts</i>	----
<i>Municipal Utility Districts</i>	Alternate Mark Froehlich	<i>Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</i>	Alternate Steven Bednarz
<i>Electric Generation</i>	Gary Spicer	<i>Texas Department of Agriculture</i>	David Villarreal
<i>Mining and Recovery of Minerals</i>	CJ Tredway	<i>TWDB</i>	Robert Mace
<i>Agricultural Groups</i>	----	<i>TCEQ</i>	Chris Loft
<i>Rural Water Users</i>	Alternate Fred Aus	<i>Federal Agencies</i>	John Mueller
<i>River Authorities</i>	Jim Parks	<i>Irrigation Districts</i>	Wayne Halbert
<i>Municipalities</i>	Alternate Ruthanne Beilue		

Approval of Minutes from the November 19, 2013 Meeting

The Council took up and approved minutes from the prior meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Presentation and Discussion on HB 4 Implementation and Rule Development

*Delayed

Discussion and Possible Action on Blue Legacy Awards Nominations, Promotion and Presentation

CE, Chair, proposed altering the structure and presentation of the Blue Legacy Awards. There were previous ideas on the Agricultural Awards in cutting them to two awards (industrial side and active agricultural producers). The hope is that altering the structure will result in more applicants. Also, the idea to combine all awards into one presentation rather than rotating throughout the year was brought up in order to highlight the Council and bring more attention to the award program.

Members of the Agricultural Workgroup agreed with struggling with the dilemma of awarding: both options are a good way to proceed in the future along with stronger outreach during session.

Discussion on incorporating the awards with Texas Water Day with the Water Foundation during the Legislative Session in late March to early April. The Council agreed to adding the awards to the Texas Water Day and also working to move the day to earlier in the session.

There was a question about the Municipal Awards. The Council went over the current categories for the Municipal Blue Legacy Awards. There was an idea to incorporate rural communities with an additional category and population size criteria. Concern on adding awards brings on larger cost and logistics. Would like to continue to think about other awards they could add or alter and have workgroups continue to brainstorm.

There was a reminder to continue to raise money for the award program among the Council.

There was a motion to move the date of awarding the Blue Legacy Awards to Texas Water Day and altering the Agricultural Blue Legacy Award to one producer and one non-producer and add an award for communities with fewer than 10,000 in population.

Discussion and Action on Outline Draft of the Legislative Report

The Council turned to discussion and action on the 2014 Legislative Report outline and assignments.

There was question on the second topic under Charge 1: “The Water Conservation Advisory Council will obtain summaries from cities and water providers on the implementation of water conservation campaigns.”

The Council wants to make sure they are not necessarily duplicating any work and additionally looking at several campaigns. Additionally, there were questions about who necessarily would be reporting on this particular issue. Annual reports turned into the Texas Water Development Board are the general source of this information. There was a suggestion to change “campaigns” to “programs and plans”. The change was approved.

Annual reports from the Regional Water Planning Groups will be behind the timeline for the Legislative Report but some of the data could be included.

Charge 1, Section 2: Lara Zent, Fred Aus and Ken Kramer

Charge 1, Section1: Ken Kramer and Denise Hickey.

GPCD Tool: The New Mexico GPCD Cal when making recommendations for BMPs and would like to update and would like to include some discussion on the availability on the tool by TWDB.

Presentation and Discussion on HB 4 Implementation and Rule Development

Todd Chenoweth, Senior Advisor to the Executive Administrator, Texas Water Development Board opened with an introduction and offered up the presentation as an open forum for discussion and questions.

How are we going to access the SWIFT money, what’s the process?

(Todd Chenoweth) The statute says TWDB has until 2015 March to adopt Rules but the Board is working fast to have the rules adopted by December of 2014 so the rules would be proposed in June of 2014. They would also like to give stakeholders a lot of opportunity for input before the Rules are posted. The Board and Board staff have set up a schedule where they will host three Board work sessions around the state to receive input from the public. There are also a series of staff led stakeholder meetings throughout this spring. TWDB also has a webpage devoted to SWIFT in order to receive comment and disperse information to the public.

(Todd Chenoweth) In order to get access to the money, the Rules must be completed. The rules are on a schedule to be completed this December. TWDB wants to continue to hold a lot of dialogue.

Suggestion was made about how the RRC hold their hearings for formal comment.

(Todd Chenoweth) At the last stakeholder meeting, it was brought up if the public would rather have a list of issues and a staff draft position for reaction or would like a general conversation. There is positive feedback about hosting an open dialogue at the stakeholder meetings.

(Todd Chenoweth) Hope to have the entire stakeholder meetings wrapped up by the end of March with the goal of having draft Rules together. If they are together in time, there could be public comment on them.

What are the key issues related to water conservation and SWIFT?

(Todd Chenoweth) The Legislature gave TWDB the task of developing the point system for the projects along with the factors to consider. Out of the SWIFT/SWIRFT funds, at least 20% must be available for water conservation and reuse. There will be a point system that ranks projects for consideration with conservation being a part of that.

(Todd Chenoweth) The challenge is to come up with a definition of water conservation and a rule for these projects. There may be an opportunity for a water conservation strategy not identified as specifically conservation but still meets the component to be considered. There will be several ways to achieve the point system.

Concern that something is conservation but not a major component of a project qualifying for the SWIFT conservation set aside that may take a large portion of the 20%. What criteria does conservation component get ranked? If it were a small percentage of a project, thought would be that just that portion would get funded from the 20%. There is concern among the group about this aspect.

What were the five factors mentioned or the factors mentioned for the SWIFT?

(Todd Chenoweth via Carole Baker & Jim Parks) Prioritization by Regional Water Planning Groups: Decade of need, feasibility of project, viability of project, sustainability and cost effectiveness.

(Todd Chenoweth) The Factors Considered by TWDB: whether the project will serve a large population, diverse urban and rural population, regionalization, percentage of water supply needs of the local water users, local financial contribution, financial capacity to repay, ability to leverage with local and federal funding, emergency need for the project, readiness to proceed with the project, effect on water conservation and priority given by regional water planning group.

(Todd Chenoweth) There are a number of different ways for stakeholder input and we are taking

comments from anyone. Council members are welcome to submit comments either as individuals or as a group.

Is there any effort for budgets and design that might meet the ready for action in the field?

The Council feels that they are at somewhat of a disadvantage without a lot of specific water conservation strategies. It will have to be worked on in the current regional water planning process. There is opportunity for a partnership from the Board and the regional water planning groups to develop a definition of water conservation to highlight the activities already in the plans.

On the Ag Conservation side there seems to be a large list of strategies and a complicated manner to get the money to the Ag producers. Some of these programs are already working on this issue but the Ag sector really needs to figure out a way to have access to the money.

There's a lot of discussion on conservation in the plans and there is discussion on types of plans that account for some water savings with some savings accounted for. There may not be a particular activity in detail but there will be some on appropriate activities.

One way for conservation to compete could be on cost effectiveness as something that is an offset as compared to other projects. The difficulties in establishing hard numbers with which to compute cost effectiveness, as well as the need for good data, were also discussed. There is a strong comparison of creating public awareness program as compared with a much more expensive project.

What is the situation with capital money?

(Todd Chenoweth) This is only for a loan program with good terms and competitive rates. If it is seen as maintenance, it may be harder to get local approval from the political subdivision.

The statute doesn't specifically allow for improvements to private property in the case of the ag producer. There would need to be a political subdivision to act as a banker as is the case in many parts of Texas. These projects are not necessarily in the state water plan but included in a long list of possible programs.

There was discussion from Council members on different projects within their areas or districts in which they felt like the SWIFT would be a great opportunity for funding.

Discussion concluded. The Council returned to the 2014 Legislative Report discussion and assignment of duties. The Council picked up at Charge 2.

Charge 2, Section 1: Robert Mace

Charge 2, Section 2: Bill Hoffman

Charge 3, Section 1: Robert Mace

Charge 4, Section 1: Carole Baker

Charge 5, Section 2: C.E. Williams and Denise Hickey

Discuss the progression of the awards and the future.

Charge 6, Section 1: Ken Kramer and Robert Mace

TWDB is to review loans as part of this particular charge.

Charge 7, Section 1: Chris Loft and Robert Mace

Issues to be Considered

This portion of the report refers to issues that the Council considers and can include discussion that comes up in their charges.

Public Awareness, Section 1: Robert Mace and Carole Baker

Enhanced Data Collection & Analysis, Section 1: Robert Mace and Karen Guz

Enhanced Data Collection & Analysis, Section 2: Karen Guz and Ruthanne Beilue

Enhanced Data Collection & Analysis, Section 3: Brad Smith

Water Conservation Incentives, Section 1: Calvin Finch, Lara Zent, and Fred Aus

Water Conservation Incentives, Section 2: Steve Bednarz and John Foster

Water Conservation Incentives, Section 3: C.E. Williams and Wayne Halbert

Water Conservation Incentives, Section 4: Robert Mace

Water Conservation Incentives, Section 5: Robert Mace

Water Conservation Incentives, Section 6: John Mueller and Robert Mace

Energy Water Nexus, Section 1: Bill Hoffman and Allison

Energy Water Nexus, Section 2: Bill Hoffman and CJ Tredway

Water Conservation Advisory Council, Section 1: Carole Baker

Best Management Practices Guide, Section 1: Karen Guz, Nora Mullarkey and Ruthanne Beilue

Research & Education, Section 1: Calvin Finch

Research & Education, Section 2: Nora Mullarkey and Ruthanne Beilue

Drought Planning, Section 1: Calvin Finch, Karen Guz and Jim Parks

Agricultural Water Conservation, Section 1: Wayne Halbert and John Mueller

Agricultural Water Conservation, Section 2: Robert Mace, Jay Bragg and Karen Guz

Agricultural Water Conservation, Section 3: Jay Bragg, Karen Guz and Robert Mace

Reports from Workgroups

Agricultural: Will conduct a conference call in the coming weeks.

Commercial & Institutional: No Report.

Industrial: No report.

Municipal: No Report

Public Awareness: A lot of outreach for Water IQ around the state from TWDB staff.

Wholesale: No report.

Announcements of Conferences and Events

February 25 - Keeping Your Head Above Water

Discussion and selection of dates and locations of future meetings

Next meeting is scheduled for April 8th at 1 pm.

Discussion on turning in the content to support staff for compilation prior to the 8th meeting. Group agreed to turn in content by March 14th to TWDB support staff.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM.