

## Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Workgroup Meeting and Conference Call  
Workgroup:

Date: November 30, 2023  
Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Location: Remote (GoToMeeting)

<b><u>Members/Alternates</u></b>	<b><u>Interested Parties</u></b>	<b><u>TWDB Staff</u></b>
Sarah Schlessinger Earl Foster Colin McDonald Jennifer Allis Joyce Warren Donna Howe Stacy Pandey Marisa Bruno	Ted Pick Brianna Fuller Christopher Charles Jessica Woods Kelly Albus Paula Szymanski Laura-Ashley Overdyke	John Sutton Sam Hermitte John Dupnik Laura Munguia Denise Livingston

Links from meeting conversation:

[Advancing Conversation by Understanding and Influencing Human Behavior](#)

[Unraveling Teaching, Learning, and Water Conservation Behaviors](#) - Rudi Thompson presentation

[Water is Awesome campaign](#)

[Property Code 202.007](#) – legislative recommendation

- I. Introduction of Participants - The meeting began at 11:00 a.m. Sarah Schlessinger asked participants to introduce themselves.
- II. Discussion on Statewide Water Awareness Campaign and Behavior Change Metrics  
Sarah Schlessinger invited a general conversation on the State’s public awareness campaign and began with a summary of the Water Conservation Advisory Council’s long-time advocacy of the need for a statewide public awareness ‘conservation’ campaign but has expanded to a larger awareness and prioritization of water. The floor was opened to discussion on support from the workgroup regarding implementation of a statewide public awareness campaign and methods of measuring behavioral change towards stewardship of our water resources.

Sarah invited open conversation to discuss, “How should we start to assess behavior change?”

Laura-Ashley Overdyke discussed behavioral change metrics in health and discussed the work of Patricia Marsky. Specialists are needed that can identify what moves behavior and test messaging. Are there similar behavioral professionals in the conservation arena?

- Need behavioral baseline.

- Test messaging, focus groups.
- Measures/baseline must be in place before sharing messages.
- Any scientific groups in conservation arena to measure behavioral change?

Other questions posed:

How should behavioral change be approached to measure the success of awareness campaigns?

What behavior are we trying to change?

Sarah gave a summary of past conservation efforts. Water IQ – The theory of Water IQ is ‘If you know where your water comes from you are more likely to protect it.’

A statewide awareness campaign developed on the basis that conservation is not the only action that Texans need to focus on but more regional specific actions/behaviors.

Types of actions participants are working towards.

- North Texas Municipal Water District – as wholesaler, working to provide members, customers (cities) materials they need to push behavioral change.
- [Water is Awesome](#) campaign.
- Citizen Science

Ted Pick recommended [Rudi Thompson](#) as possible behavioral change specialist. The study proved outreach and education had bigger impacts than social media.

Kelly Albus participated in the Rudi Thompson project. Intergeneration transfer – teaches behavioral change to youth. Found that the child to adult messaging was very impactful.

When the message came from youth, greater behavioral change.

Participants discussed that knowledge acquisition does not lead to behavioral change. Need to focus on behavioral change campaign versus awareness.

How do we measure success?

Joyce Warren discussed a sprinkler system check project done by Frisco and SAWS. The project created three random groups.

Group 1 received an offer for free sprinkler inspection – Least effective method.

Group 2 received information about conservation and why to conserve – Second most effective method.

Group 3 received information on the money you can save by conserving and a free moisture meter. Most effective method.

Breanna explained challenges with campaigns and measuring the impact.

- Cost of an awareness campaign.

- Increasing population creates constant moving target when trying to measure impacts. I.e., Don't Mess with Texas -anti litter campaign – how successful is campaign. If X population and X amount of litter is baseline, how successful is measurement of effectiveness if population increases along with increase in litter or other litter sources?
- Extensiveness and diversity of state poses challenges in spreading state-wide campaign effectively.

Laura-Ashley Overdyke further discussed the excessive cost of campaigns. A solution could be TikTok. For today's market, Tik Tok is low to no cost, popular and wide ranging.

What are the real drivers of conservation? Where can we effect the most change? Turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth is a good behavior but is not going to drive the conservation change needed. So, where do we want to focus our efforts?

Education and outreach are important for long-term behavioral change but where is the greatest loss coming from and where should we put our focus? Aging infrastructure, behaviors on how we value water. For example, we put a high value on green yards.

11:40 am Sarah asked that we continue to have conversations regarding the task of the awareness campaign component of SB 28 and how that is conducted: AI, outreach, TikTok, education. Please think of recommendations.

- III. Blue Legacy Awards – Donna Howe gave brief history of Blue Legacy Awards Joyce, Ted, Stacy, Donna, and Jessica volunteered to be on the subcommittee. Discussion was held on where to award the Blue Legacy Awards, typically TAWWA. Is there another venue that would work? I.e., Water for Texas conference, every other year. Ted suggested including recognition opportunities for commercial and educational institutions' efforts in conservation. Sarah requested the committee meet soon to discuss items in greater detail.
- IV. Legislative recommendations – Sarah highlighted the timeline of legislative report and invited committee to think about recommendations for the legislature.
  - a. Property Code 202.007 – add mandate that a Property Management Group cannot require, or fine, their residents regarding irrigation when their county is recognized as under drought by the Governor.
  - b. Corporate water stewardship is an underdeveloped practice in Texas. Full certification processes available, I.e., Alliance of water stewardship.
- V. Adjourn- The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.