

RWPG Chairs Conference Call Meeting Notes

Type of Meeting: RWPG Chairs Conference Call (CCC)

Date of Meeting: January 16, 2024

Location of Meeting: Microsoft Teams

TWDB Staff in Attendance: Matt Nelson, Temple McKinnon, Sarah Lee, Ron Ellis, Lann Bookout, Kevin Smith, Elizabeth McCoy, Heather Rose, Michele Foss, John Maurer

Number of Planning Group Members in Attendance: 13 regions represented

Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance:

Report filed by: Sarah Lee

Report filed on: January 23, 2024

Agenda Items Discussed:

1. Introductions and Opening Comments

Sarah Lee (TWDB) introduced TWDB staff presenting and noted RWPG attendance. Sarah informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded and written notes will be provided.

Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) participants:

A – Ben Weinheimer (Chair) and Jarian Fred (Panhandle Regional Planning Commission)

B –Randy Whiteman (Chair) and Stacey Green (Red River Authority)

C –Kevin Ward (Chair), Howard Slobodin, and Glenn Clingenpeel (Trinity River Authority)

D – Jim Thompson (Chair) and Kyle Dooley (Riverbend Water Resources District)

E – Dave Hall (Vice Chair) and Annette Gutierrez (Rio Grande Council of Governments)

F – Cole Walker (Colorado River Municipal Water District)

G – Wayne Wilson (Chair) and Pamela Hanneman (Brazos River Authority)

H – Mark Evans (Chair)

I – John Martin (Chair)

J – none

K –none

L – Tim Andruss (Chair) and Caye Castillo (San Antonio River Authority)

M – Manuel Cruz (Lower Rio Grande Development Council)

N – Scotty Bledsoe (Chair)

O – Ken Rainwater (Secretary-Treasurer)

P – none

2. Sixth Cycle of Regional Water Planning Activities

Sarah Lee provided an update on the following current and upcoming planning activities.

- a. Upcoming materials for RWPGs: TWDB has been developing a variety of resources for planning groups that will be released this spring, including:

- i. A water supply planning and information resource document for each county in Texas, intended to assist RWPGs with their rural outreach efforts required under Task 10. The county water supply information document will include highlights from the 2021 Regional Water Plan such as water supply sources,

- water needs, and recommended strategies within that county, a list of municipal water user groups, including which are considered rural, and a list of potentially vulnerable systems. These documents will be posted on the TWDB website for anyone to download and utilize. TWDB will also provide a list of entities classified as rural in accordance with SB469, 88th R.S.
- ii. Conservation resources including a conservation resource guide, that will provide information on how to access conservation resources and how they can be used to support regional water plan development. The guide will discuss how data such as water use surveys, water loss audits, water conservation plans, and conservation plan annual reports can be used to support the evaluation of conservation strategies and the conservation subchapter of the RWP. Water loss audit and GPCD data will also be made available via data dashboards.
 - iii. Drought related resources including a list of entities required to provide drought contingency plans to the TCEQ. This list is intended to assist planning groups with the requirement to describe drought management measures for each water user group which is required to submit a drought contingency plan to the TCEQ. TWDB staff is updating the drought management costing tool, which may be used by planning groups to develop costs for drought management strategies. TWDB has also been coordinating with the Drought Preparedness Council, which is required to provide planning groups recommendations for their consideration each planning cycle. The Drought Preparedness Council approved their recommendations for planning groups in November 2023 and the TWDB has provided the Drought Preparedness Council with planning group contact information.
 - iv. TWDB contracted with HDR last year to update the uniform costing model, a tool planning groups are required to use for costing water management strategy projects. Once a final version is available, a webinar demonstrating the updates will also be provided.
- b. Technical memorandum review timeline: Technical memorandums are due March 4, 2024 and must include the required components listed in Exhibit C in order to be considered administratively complete. RWP staff will review deliverables for completeness and provide an acceptance or rejection letter within 30 days. TWDB will provide a unique submittal folder link to each planning group in early February. Staff from TWDB's Water Science and Conservation office will also be reviewing the source availability data and methodologies presented in the technical memorandum and TWDB will provide informal comments to planning groups based on this review in early summer.
 - c. RWP amendment guidance and infeasible amendment timeline: TWDB staff has been updating the [amendment guidance document](#) which will provide more specific information on what documents need to be submitted with each type of amendment. In an effort to streamline work effort associated with amendments, TWDB will provide updated data reports for planning groups to include in their adopted amendment materials, and the planning group will have the discretion whether to populate changes throughout the entire plan. Clarification was provided regarding funding available for plan amendments. TWDB funds may *only* be used for

regional water plan amendments associated with the infeasible water management strategy review task. Work associated with other amendments adding or revising a strategy or project must be funded locally. For planning groups that will have infeasible amendments, those adopted amendments are due to the TWDB by June 5, 2024. At the latest, planning groups need to take action to initiate the amendment process at the same meeting they approve the technical memorandums. TWDB can assist with agenda item language. The timing of submissions will depend on the type of amendment, and planning groups should work closely with their TWDB planner.

- d. Notice to proceed process: Review of process for Task 5B, which requires a region-specific scope of work developed by each planning group consultant team. This has a notice to proceed restriction, meaning consultants cannot proceed with any work on Task 5B until the planning group approves a region-specific scope of work and the TWDB will not reimburse for the task until a TWDB notice to proceed is issued. Consultants must present the region scope of work at a planning group meeting for approval, which is then submitted to the TWDB for review and incorporation into the planning contracts via a contract amendment. This process is similar to last planning cycle. It is an option for consultants to submit a full region-specific scope of work at once or break into multiple notice to proceed requests.
- e. Socioeconomic impact analysis process and timeline: Overview of the updated process sent via email January 9. This cycle, the TWDB will proactively provide socioeconomic analysis reports for each region. Regions do not have to take formal action to request a report or submit a request to the TWDB. TWDB anticipates releasing reports in August 2025 for inclusion in the final regional water plans. Planning groups may conduct their own analysis if they choose.
- f. Upcoming regional water planning rule revision: RWP staff will present a rule proposal for 31 Texas Administrative Code 357.34, to the TWDB Board on February 8. This rule proposal will implement House Bill 1565, 88th R.S. The requirements (implementation status of large projects) from the bill were discussed in detail at the September Chairs call. The requirements are already incorporated into the planning contract scope of work and guidance documents for this planning cycle.

Sarah also provided an update on TWDB's implementation of the Texas Water Fund. The TWDB posted an updated [FAQ document and outreach timeline](#) on the website. The agency has also released three [surveys](#) for obtaining stakeholder feedback, which will be accepted through the end of April.

3. Interregional Planning Council

Temple McKinnon provided an update on the work of the Interregional Planning Council and reminded the chairs that the Council is made up of a representative and alternate from each planning group that is appointed by the TWDB Board. The Council last met on November 30 and approved a final draft of their report. TWDB has been assisting in finalizing the report and the Council intends to adopt the final report at their February 8 meeting. The due date of the report (March 4, 2024) coincides with the due date of the technical memorandum deliverable so that planning groups have time to incorporate any relevant recommendations into the 2026 Regional Water Plans.

4. Chairs Discussion

None.

5. Wrap-up and next call topics and date

The next call will be scheduled for April 2024. Sarah Lee will distribute a doodle poll with potential meeting dates.