

**August 6, 2020 Meeting Materials for the
General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee of the
Interregional Planning Council**

1. Agenda
2. Meeting presentation
3. Draft July 28, 2020 meeting minutes
4. Draft Action Plan
5. Draft Recommendations on Enhancing Engagement
6. RWPG Non-Voting Members July 2020
7. Draft Recommendations on Reimbursement of Administrative Costs
8. Draft Recommendations on Open Meetings Act Modification of Video-Conference Restrictions
9. Draft Best Practices Committee Report to the Interregional Planning Council - August 12, 2020

1. Agenda

General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee of the Interregional Planning Council

August 6, 1:30PM

Meeting will be conducted via GoToWebinar and can be accessed with the link below.

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/14159918714188814>

Webinar ID: 895-931-739

PLEASE SEE: <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/ipc/committees.asp>

**The Chairman of this Committee may choose to address the items identified in this agenda in an order outside of the pre-arranged numbering.*

1. Call to order and welcome
2. Public comment
3. Consider minutes from July 28, 2020 Committee meeting
4. Discussion and Action, as appropriate – Action Plan for Committee Work and status of assignments
5. Discussion and Action, as appropriate – General Best Practices for Future Planning
6. Consideration and Action, as appropriate – Committee reports and recommendations to the Interregional Planning Council regarding General Best Practices for Future Planning
7. Discuss next steps: methods to move forward including scheduling of Committee meetings, background materials needed for future meetings or discussion and steps that can be accomplished before future meetings
8. Discussion of agenda for future meetings
9. Public comment
10. Adjourn

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print or Braille, are requested to contact Melinda Smith at melinda.smith@twdb.texas.gov or at (512) 463-6478 two (2) work days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Direct links to this information can be found on our website at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/ipc/committees.asp>

To view/listen to the General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee Meeting on Thursday, August 6, 2020, please use GoToWebinar. If you are a visitor for this meeting and wish to address the Committee, you will have an opportunity to do so under agenda items number 1 and 9 through the GoToWebinar application.

Additional Information may be obtained from: Elizabeth McCoy, Regional Water Planner, Texas Water Development Board, 512/475-1852 elizabeth.mccoy@twdb.texas.gov

Emergency Mtg: No

2. Meeting presentation

Interregional Planning Council

General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee

August 6, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Call to order and welcome

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Limit comments to 3 minutes each.
- Please state your name prior to commenting.
- Those on video Go To Webinar – Click “raise hand” on your screen.
- Those with telephone access – The organizer will unmute phone attendees to provide public comment.

3. CONSIDER
APPROVAL
OF MINUTES

Consider approval of minutes from the July 28, 2020 Committee meeting

4.
CONSIDERATION
OF AN ACTION
PLAN

Status of action plan assignments

5. DISCUSSION OF GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

Topics identified for recommendations:

- Simplified Planning
- RWPG Membership Engagement
- Communication between TWDB, RWPGs, and Members
- TCEQ as an Ex-Officio Member
- Reimbursement of Labor Costs for RWPG Administrative Agents
- Open Meetings Act Modification for Video-Conferencing
- Improving the Regional Water Planning Process

6. CONSIDERATION
OF
RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE COUNCIL

- Review draft recommendation summary report for 8/12 Council meeting

7. NEXT STEPS

- Next meeting: August 20, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.
- Background materials needed
- Assignments/accomplishments for next meeting

8. AGENDA FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Public comment
- Approve committee minutes
- Status of assignments
- Consider committee reports and recommendations
- Discuss next steps

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Limit comments to 3 minutes each.
- Please state your name prior to commenting.
- Those on video Go To Webinar – Click “raise hand” on your screen.
- Those with telephone access – The organizer will unmute phone attendees to provide public comment.

ADJOURN

3. Draft July 28, 2020 meeting minutes

General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee of the Interregional Planning Council Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2020, 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

held via GoToWebinar Videoconference

Committee decisions bolded and italicized in document

Participation: Committee Members present 5 of 5: Steve Walthour (Region A), Russell Schreiber (Region B), Allison Strube (Region F), Kelley Holcomb (Region I), and Tomas Rodriguez (Region M).

Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance: None

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Board Members and Staff: Sarah Backhouse, Elizabeth McCoy, and Bryan McMath.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Committee Chair Steve Walthour (Region A) called the meeting to order. Sarah Backhouse (TWDB) called roll and determined that a quorum was present.

2. Public Comment – No public comments were offered.

3. Consider Minutes from the July 21, 2020 Committee Meeting

The committee considered the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

5. Discussion and Action, as appropriate – General Best Practices for Future Planning

Mr. Walthour proposed moving consideration of agenda item 4 later in the meeting. Members agreed. Mr. Walthour presented a draft write up on the topic of simplified planning. Mr. Walthour asked Kelley Holcomb (Region I) if the format of the draft write up was an acceptable way for the committee to layout issues and recommendations. Mr. Holcomb agreed with the proposed format.

Mr. Walthour reviewed simplified planning problems, goals, and recommendations. He noted that from a groundwater management area perspective there are often things that don't change much from year to year. He proposed that every fifth year of the regional water planning process funds be spent on special studies. Mr. Holcomb observed that changing the planning period to every 10 years could create issues with engagement in the planning process for regions that have less activity. He added that in the five-year cycle there seems to be two periods. In the first three years things are in auto pilot mode, and the last few years are busy with data review and completion of the regional water plans. Mr. Holcomb wondered if the proposed changes to the planning cycle might exacerbate this process. Mr. Walthour noted that recommendations to change the 5-year planning cycle to a 10-year cycle was included in several of the 2021 Initially Prepared Plans (IPP).

Mr. Walthour offered that recommendations on simplified planning would likely require legislative action, for example striking the language on simplified planning, or allowing the TWDB to make the decision on whether RWPGs can implement simplified planning.

Mr. Walthour reviewed a problem and goal statement on the topic of communication with RWPGs and members and presented the following recommendation addressed to the TWDB. Mr. Walthour noted he read through the Best Practices Guide and agreed with Mr. Rodriguez that a lot of problems would go away if everyone read and followed the document. Mr. Walthour noted that the TWDB is providing a lot of material that is not seen by RWPGs. The TWDB should invest in professional assistance to utilize electronic media platforms.

Tomas Rodriguez (Region M) noted that TWDB staff does a good job of getting information out to the RWPGs. He offered a correction to a statement from the previous meeting, Region M hosts member orientation training once per planning cycle not annually. Mr. Rodriguez added that TWDB should keep offering orientation training. For Region M, TWDB staff has done a good job providing information, and the region's administrator has done a good job passing information on to RWPG members.

Russell Schreiber (Region B) agreed with Mr. Rodriguez. Mr. Schreiber added that he didn't receive any orientation or training when he joined the Region B RWPG 12 years ago. He added that if he had known the Best Management Practices Guide and New Member Guide were available, he would have included this information in packets for new members and linked to these documents on the RWPG website. He offered that making these documents more available to people make it more likely for them to review and understand the process. Mr. Holcomb added that you can't make individuals read the information or participate. People seem to be afraid to ask questions. He proposed a recommendation that TWDB develop an educational protocol for all RWPGs to go through in the first years of the planning cycle. Mr. Schreiber agreed with the recommendation. Mr. Walthour noted that TWDB staff don't need to work harder. Information is available it is just not being received and absorbed by the RWPGs.

On the topic of improving the regional water planning process, Mr. Walthour noted that something is needed to get all RWPG members more engaged. He added that there are parts of the regional water planning process that could be streamlined.

Mr. Walthour then proposed that it could be beneficial for RWPGs to have the ability to hold remote or virtual meetings. This could allow more members of the public to participate and provide comment via electronic media. He recommends adding this as an item for the committee to review.

Allison Strube (Region F) agreed that member engagement is an issue and added that getting feedback from all members not just RWPG chairs would be beneficial. Mr. Holcomb added that improving the regional water planning process has been a struggle since the third planning cycle. He suggested the regional water planning process has become very prescribed and added that the topic of how to bring in new ideas is a fundamental problem that needs to be solved.

Mr. Walthour proposed that engagement is the number one problem in planning. Mr. Schreiber agreed. Mr. Walthour added that the RWPG consultants who make presentations and members who understand the topic being discussed, not the whole RWPG, are the ones who are most engaged.

Mr. Schreiber noted that Region B has public comment opportunities at every meeting but receives no public comments. When the IPP is provided to the public for comment, the public is generally unaware of the IPP unless it includes a controversial project, for example Lake Ringgold in Region B. It seems the public doesn't know about the regional water planning process unless it is in their backyard, and then the public becomes engaged. He added that he is not sure how to solve this problem. People expect

water planners and providers to develop a plan to meet their needs. The public doesn't view planning as their problem.

Mr. Schreiber agreed with Mr. Holcomb that he doesn't know how to get the RWPGs and public more involved in the process. Mr. Holcomb added that the special studies funded in previous cycles brought in new ideas and people. There was increased interest and discussion around the studies. He added that in Region I special studies increased attendance and participation.

Mr. Schreiber proposed that adding an economic development representative to the regional water planning process may increase engagement. Mr. Walthour added that RWPGs need to be as transparent as possible and suggested that regional water planning is about local economies and the future. Mr. Schreiber suggested sending RWPG meeting invitations to economic development representatives could be beneficial. Mr. Walthour noted that Region A has a problem filling membership positions and there may be persons not even aware of the planning process that would be perfect for the position.

Mr. Walthour introduced the topic of engagement. He proposed having the option for video conference RWPG meetings could improve engagement. He also noted that several IPP Chapter 8 recommendations requested TCEQ participation at RWPG meetings to streamline the process. Mr. Holcomb reviewed his write up on engagement. The document summarizes the committee's discussion on the topic. Mr. Holcomb added that he liked the idea of increasing economic development involvement. This could help RWPGs think outside the box.

The committee then reviewed 2021 IPP Chapter 8 recommendations on best practices for Regions A, B, F, I, and M. The following recommendations were discussed:

- TCEQ should be made an ex-officio member of the RWPGs. This could also help address recommendations that TWDB and TCEQ coordination on water availability modelling for planning. It was noted that it could be beneficial for other agencies, such as the Railroad Commission, to be made ex-officio members of certain regions.
- Continued funding by the State of the regional water planning process on a five-year cycle
- Flexibility in determining water plan consistency
- Standardized process for regional water plan development. Mr. Holcomb suggested that if the state is going to spend millions of dollars on regional water planning, the process should be done in a way that where possible planning data could be rolled up into the state and federal water permitting process.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that Region M has included several Chapter 8 recommendations for how the state can assist the region, including a request for more involvement from the International Boundary Water Commission to protect water rights in the region. He noted that the regional water plans can help municipalities develop their own water plans. Mr. Walthour noted that Region M recommendations requested TCEQ should work with Region M. Mr. Rodriguez discussed problems Region M has with the conversion of water rights. He noted that Region M has a TCEQ member that attends RWPG meetings.

Mr. Walthour asked members to prepare summaries of any policy recommendations they would like to discuss at the next meeting. Mr. Walthour will prepare information on adding TCEQ as an ex-officio member. Mr. Schreiber added that a common Chapter 8 recommendation was a request for additional funding to reimburse RWPG administrators. Some planning groups struggle to find administrative agencies because the work is unfunded. Mr. Holcomb agreed that administrative funding is an issue in

Region I as well. Mr. Schreiber will prepare a write up on this topic for the next meeting. Mr. Walthour suggested that local funds collected for administration could be better spent on special studies.

On the topic of the Best Management Practices Guide for Political Subdivisions, Mr. Walthour agreed with Mr. Rodriguez that if people read the document, it would solve many problems. Mr. Walthour offered to prepare a best practice recommendation for RWPGs on use of the Best Management Practices Guide and New Member Guide.

Mr. Walthour introduced the topic of TCEQ distribution system requirements in relation to planning. Mr. Schreiber proposed removing the topic from the committee's list. Members briefly discussed the topic and agreed.

On the topic of Region M best practices on communication, Mr. Walthour noted the Region M procedure looks like it came out of the Best Management Practices Guide. Mr. Rodriguez agreed that Region M has followed the Best Management Practices Guide process, and it has worked well. Region M has obtained funds from water rights holders in the region to pay for administrative staff to disseminate information to RWPG members.

Mr. Walthour asked members if he could prepare a recommendation on use of video conferencing to improve transparency and engagement. Members agreed.

6. Consideration and Action, as appropriate – Committee reports and recommendations to the Interregional Planning Council regarding General Best Practices for Future Planning

Mr. Walthour will provide a report on behalf of the committee to the full Council at July 29, 2020 Council meeting. Members discussed the committee report. The committee report will provide a general update of the committee's work, including discussion topics and potential recommendations developed to date and a timeline for development of the committee's report. Mr. Walthour posed a question on whether the committee's problem and goal statement needs updating and will task the Council if the committee is on track. The committee then considered agenda item 4.

4. Discussion and Action, as appropriate – Action Plan for Committee Work and Status of Assignments

Mr. Walthour reviewed the committee action plan and member assignments. He requested members prepare write ups of assigned topics following the Council report format. At next meeting the committee will discuss recommendations and provide TWDB supporting documents for staff to prepare a draft committee report.

Mr. Holcomb asked if recommendations for TCEQ as an ex officio member should also potentially include recommendations for other agency representatives. Sarah Backhouse (TWDB) noted that planning groups have the ability to add voting and non-voting members that are not currently outlined in statute as long as minimum requirements are met. She offered to provide the committee information on how many RWPGs have TCEQ as a non-voting member. Ms. Backhouse added that if the Council recommends TCEQ be added as a standard non-voting member for all RWPGs this could potentially be done as an agency rule changes in coordination with TCEQ. It is also in statute which voting and non-voting members all RWPGs are required to have represented.

Mr. Holcomb agreed that knowing which regions have TCEQ and other agencies as non-voting members would be helpful. He noted that some legislative and agency coordination would be required on this

issue. This could be a recommendation directed to the legislature. Mr. Walthour asked if there is anything that prohibits RWPGs from having a Railroad Commission representative attend meetings and provide information. Ms. Backhouse clarified that she is not aware of anything that prohibits this. It was noted that if agency participation is outlined in rule or statute, agency representatives are more likely to consistently attend meetings. The committee agreed to discuss this topic further.

The committee discussed the timeline for developing its report. Members will have write ups on assigned topics prepared for discussion at the August 6 meeting. TWDB support staff will then prepare a draft committee report for committee review at the August 20 meeting. The committee will finalize its report at the meeting on September 10 and then submit the report to the Council. Ms. Strube agreed to the schedule and offered to work with TWDB as needed on report preparation.

Mr. Walthour noted that the August 20 committee meeting may be a long meeting. Members asked for clarification on the format for their write ups. Mr. Walthour clarified that write ups should follow the Council report format and include a narrative, not just bullet points. Ms. Backhouse agreed to send out the committee problem and goal statements for members to reference when preparing their write ups.

7. Discussion of Next Steps

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on August 6, 2020. Mr. Walthour asked members to be prepared to wordsmith draft recommendations. Members were requested to provide their assignment documents to TWDB early so members will have time to review the documents prior to the meeting. Ms. Backhouse asked member to reach out to TWDB if they need any background materials.

Mr. Rodriguez asked for confirmation on his assignments. Mr. Walthour requested that Mr. Rodriguez prepare a recommendation on use of the Best Management Practices Guide and New RWPG Member Guide. It was confirmed that GoToWebinar information will be sent out prior to the next meeting.

8. Discussion of Agenda for Future Meetings

The agenda for August 6, 2020 meeting will include consider approval of minutes, status of assignments, consider committee reports and recommendations, and discuss next steps.

9. Public Comment – No public comments were offered.

10. Adjourn – Mr. Walthour adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:15 p.m.

4. Draft Action Plan

Draft Action Plan – General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee

Expected Outcome: *Identify General Best Practices recommendations for the full Council to consider and compile the committee’s report section.*

Action Steps	Responsible	Deadline	Resources	Potential Barriers	Result
<i>What Will Be Done?</i>	<i>Who Will Do It?</i>	<i>By When?</i>	<i>What do you need to complete this step? (e.g., documents or data)</i>	<i>What could get in the way of task completion?</i>	<i>What is the outcome of the task?</i>
Research topics of simplified planning and membership engagement	Steve (simplified planning), Kelley (engagement)	7/28/2020			Inform discussion at committee meetings
Review Chapter 8 policy recommendations	Full Committee	7/28/2020-completed			Inform discussion at committee meetings
Provide steps for information dissemination to membership	Tomas	7/28/2020-completed			Inform discussion at committee meetings
Research TCEQ drinking water rule in relationship to planning	Russell	7/28/2020 - dropping			Inform discussion at committee meetings
Draft recommendation on video conferencing	Steve	8/6/2020			
Draft recommendation on admin funding	Russell	8/6/2020			

Provide list of non-voting member agencies by region	TWDB	8/6/2020			
Complete initial draft of committee report section	TWDB	8/20/2020			Draft document for committee to review and discuss
Review and edit draft committee report section	Full Committee	8/27/2020			Finalize committee report
Submit committee report to IPC	Full Committee	9/10/2020			Deliver document to full IPC
Present committee report to IPC	Committee Chair	9/15/2020			Approval of committee report by full IPC

5. Draft Recommendations on Enhancing Engagement

**Committee on
General Best Practices for Future Planning**

Draft Recommendation for
Enhancing Membership and General Public Engagement
August 4, 2020

Challenges

- General communications related issues
- Information overload
- TWDB develops and makes available significant amounts of information and material that is valuable to the planning process, however, it doesn't appear to be making its way to the RWPG members or the general public
- Lay-person issues
 - Highly technical and complex subject matter
 - Members of the public don't have the knowledge base to readily consume the information provided
 - The time investment required and availability and access to public meetings

4. Recommendations

- a. Texas Water Development Board
 - Provide policy recommendations developed by the Interregional Planning Council to all RWPGs to inform their planning process.
 - Provide a distilled policy recommendations report from all adopted regional water plans, sorted by topic, to the RWPGs and the Council.
 - Provide an update to the above report, at an appropriate time in the planning cycle, of the implementation status of recommendations to the RWPGs and the Council.
 - Consider engaging a media consultant to develop better methods of coordination among the RWPGs
 - Develop standardized, easy to adopt practices and protocols that apply to all regions
- b. Legislature
 - Funding for better methods of disseminating of information
 - Authorization for one way conferencing or webinars
- c. Regional Planning Groups
 - More focus on new member orientation
 - Utilize educational programs and speakers in each RWPG
 - Develop better methods to encourage public participation

- Surveys
- Targeted email blasts
- Website updates for all RWPGs

d. Future Interregional Planning Councils

- Work sessions to “deep dive” into more complicated topics
- Requirement for Chairs to meet on an annual basis at minimum

6. RWPG Non-Voting Members July 2020

Regional Water Planning Group Non-Voting Members as of July 2020

Non-Voting Region	Liaison Voting Member Region	Name	Entity	Comment
A		Caleb Hunter	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
A		Carol Faulkenberry	Texas Department of Agriculture	
A		Steve Amosson	Texas A&M	
A		Paul Baumgardner	Advanced BioGenetics & Life Sciences, LLC	
A		Troy Headings	Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)	
A		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
A	O	Kent Satterwhite	Canadian River MWA	(& Liaison to Region A)
A, J, M		William Alfaro	Texas Water Development Board	
B		Cliff Moore	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
B		Richard Bilinski	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	
B		Robert Mauk	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
B		Allen Pappas	Sheppard AFB / Pacific Architects & Engineers Division	No longer WPM, but recommended still sending emails till position filled
B		David Kercheval	Texas Department of Agriculture	
B		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
B	A	Bobbie Kidd	Greenbelt Municipal Water Authority	(& Liaison to Region B)
B	C	Jack Stevens	Tarrant Regional Water District	(& Liaison to Region B)
B	G	Mike McGuire	Rolling Plains GCD (GMA 6)	(& Liaison to Region B)
B, C, N		Kevin Smith	Texas Water Development Board	
C		Adam Whisenant	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
C		Darrell Dean	Texas Department of Agriculture	
C		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
C	B	Tracy Mesler	Upper Trinity GCD (GMA 8)	(& Liaison to Region C)
C	D	Sharon Nabors	Public	(& Liaison to Region C)
C	G	Gary Spicer	Luminant	(& Liaison to Region C)
C	H	Kevin Ward	Trinity River Authority	(& Liaison to Region C)
D		Sandy Cash	Upper Trinity Regional Water District	
D		Ron Ellis	Texas Water Development Board	
D		Wayne Harris	Luminant	
D		Larry LeBeau	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
D		Darrell Dean	Texas Department of Agriculture	
D		Manuel Martinez	Tx Dept Agriculture	

Non-Voting Region	Liaison Voting Member Region	Name	Entity	Comment
D		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
D		David Alford	GMA 11	
D		Kyle Dooley	Riverbend Water Resources District	
D		Meg Shelton	Sulphur River Basin Authority	
D		Ronna Hartt	Upper Trinity RWD	
D	C	Tom Kula	North Texas Municipal Water District	(& Liaison to Region D)
D	I	David Montagne	Sabine River Authority	General Manager (SRA liaison to Reg D)
D	I	John McFarland	GMA 11- Pineywoods GCD	
E		Filiberto Cortez	Bureau of Reclamation - El Paso Field Division	
E		Robin Barthen	Texas Department of Agriculture	
E		William Finn	IBWC, Mexican Section (CILA)	CILA=Commission Internacional De Limites y Agua; Ingeniero = Engineer
E		Zhuping Sheng	Texas A&M Agricultural Research & Extension Center at El Paso	
E		Raymond Bader	Texas AgriLife Extension Service	
E		Michael Lemonds	General Land Office (GLO)	
E		Russell Martin	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
E		William (Billy) Finn	International Boundary & Water Commission (IBWC)	U.S. Section
E		Hector Garza	U.S. Geological Survey	
E		BJ Tomlinson	Fort Bliss Army Base	
E		Ryan Slocum	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
E		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
E, F, L		Elizabeth McCoy	Texas Water Development Board	
F		Billy Hopper	Public	
F		Joe David Ross	Texas A&M Angora Test Breeders	
F		Cindy Weatherby	Santa Rita UWCD	
F		Winton Milliff	Coke County UWCD	
F		Sue Young	Lone Wolf GCD	
F		Michael McCulloch	Pecos County Water Improvement District #3	
F		Nathan Rains	Texas Parks & Wildlife	
F		Tom Hoysa	Public	
F		Tisha Burnett	Glasscock GCD	
F		Leatrice Adams	Permian Basin UWCD	
F		David Huie	Hickory UWCD No. 1	
F		Jon Cartwright	Public	
F		Larissa Place	Texas Department of Agriculture	
F		Diana Thomas	Sterling County UWCD	
F		Ryland Howard	Retired	

Regional Water Planning Group Non-Voting Members as of July 2020

Non-Voting Region	Liaison Voting Member Region	Name	Entity	Comment
F		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
F	G	Dale Adams	Wes-Tex GCD (GMA 7)	(& Liaison to Region F)
F	J	Lee Sweeten	Edwards County Commissioners Court	county commissioner (& Liaison to Region F)
F	O	Melanie Barnes	Texas Tech University	(& Liaison to Region F)
G		E.W. Wesley	Texas Department of Agriculture	
G		David Kercheval	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)	
G		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
G	B	Mike McGuire	Rolling Plains GCD	(& Liaison to Region G)
G	C	Gary Spicer	Luminant	(& Liaison to Region G)
G	H	Brad Brunett	Brazos River Authority	
G	O	Jeff Sammon	Brazos River Authority	(& Liaison to Region G)
G, O, P		Jean Devlin	Texas Water Development Board	
H		Larry Jacobs	Montgomery County SWCD	
H		Jennifer Bailey	Texas Department of Agriculture	
H		Wayne G. Ahrens, P.E.	West Harris County Regional Water Authority	
H		Melinda Silva	North Fort Bend Water Authority	
H		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
H		Wayne Ahrens	West Harris Co. Regional Water Authority	
H		Bill Balboa	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	
H		Rick Gangluff	South Texas Project Electric Generating Station, Lower Colorado RWPG	
H		Charles Shumate	North Fort Bend WA	
H		Charles Shumate	North Fort Bend Water Authority	
H	C	Kevin Ward	Trinity River Authority	(& Liaison to Region H)
H	G	Wayne Wilson	Wilson Cattle Company	(& Liaison to Region H)
H	G	Zach Holland	Bluebonnet GCD (GMA 14)	(& Liaison to Region H)
H	I	David Alders	Carrizo Creek Corporation	(& Liaison to Region H)
H	I	Scott Hall	Lower Neches Valley Authority	(& Liaison to Region H)
H, I, K		Lann Bookout	Texas Water Development Board	
I		Terry Stelly	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
I		James Alford	Trinity County	
I		Cynthia Duet	Louisiana Governor's Office Coastal Activities	
I		Walter Glenn	South East Texas Groundwater Conservation District	
I		Joel Hale	Rusk Co.	
I		Ben Stephenson	City of Dallas Water Utilities	
I		Rick Cambell	Shelby County	

Regional Water Planning Group Non-Voting Members as of July 2020

Non-Voting Region	Liaison Voting Member Region	Name	Entity	Comment
I		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
I	C	Connie Standridge	City of Corsicana	(& Liaison to Region I)
J		Chad Norris	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
J		Weidenfeller Ken	Texas Department of Agriculture	
J		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
J	K	William F. Wilson	Strata Geological Services	(& Liaison to Region J)
J	M	Tomas Rodriguez, Jr.	Retired, Engineer	(& Liaison to Region J) Retired
K		David Bradsby	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
K		David Kercheval	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)	
K		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
K		Davis Bradsby	Texas Parks and Wildlife	
K		Russ Robertson	Texas Department of Agriculture	
K		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board	
K	G	Gary Newman	Trio Development, LLC	(& Liaison to Region K)
K	J	William F. (Feather) Wilson	Strata Geological Services	(& Liaison to Region K)
K	N	Carola Serrato	South Texas Water Authority	(& Liaison to Region K) & she is also GM for Nueces WSC & Ricardo WSC
L		Marty Kelly	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
L		Iliana Delgado	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
L		Jami McCool	Texas Department of Agriculture	
L		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
L	G	Jim Briggs	Georgetown	(& Liaison to Region L)
L	J	Joseph McDaniel	Aqua Texas	
L	K	Ronald G. Fieseler	Blanco-Pedernales GCD (GMA 9)	(& Liaison to Region L)
L	M	Donald K. McGhee	Hydro Systems, Inc.	(& Liaison to Region L)
L	N	Carl Crull	Crull Engineering, LLC	(& Liaison to Region L)
L	P	Patrick Brzozowski	Lavaca-Navidad River Authority	(& Liaison to Region L)
M		Robert Mendiola	South Texas Development Council	
M		David Negrete Arroyos, Ing.	Commission Nacional Del Agua (CONAGUA)	Asst. Director of Regional Hydric Planning
M		Richard Tomlinson	Dept. of Defense, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers U.S. Corps of Engineers	
M		John Keiser	South Texas Development Council	
M		Ernesto Reyes	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	

Regional Water Planning Group Non-Voting Members as of July 2020

Non-Voting Region	Liaison Voting Member Region	Name	Entity	Comment
M		Jose Maria Hinojosa Aguirre, Ing.	IBWC, Mexican Section (CILA)	CILA=Commission Internacional De Limites y Agua
M		Amy Settemeyer	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
M		Willy Cupit	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
M		Juan Uribe	International Boundary & Water Commission (IBWC)	
M		Jayne Harkins	International Boundary & Water Commission (IBWC)	
M		Nelda Garza	Texas Department of Agriculture	
M		Jose "Lupe" Luna	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
M		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
M	N	Chuck Burns	Willacy Co.	(& Liaison to Region M)
N		Jim Tolan	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
N		Nelda Barrera	Texas Department of Agriculture	
N		Tomas Dominguez	USDA-NRCS	
N		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
N		Allen Smith	USDA-NRCS	
N	L	John Byrum	Nueces River Authority	(& Liaison to Region N)
N	M	David Fuentes	Hidalgo County	(& Liaison to Region N)
O		John Clayton	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
O		Jason Lindeman	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
O		Carol Faulkenberry	Texas Department of Agriculture	
O		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)
O	A	Kent Satterwhite	Canadian River MWA	(& Liaison to Region O)
O	B	Carrie Dodson	Gateway GCD (GMA 6)	(& Liaison to Region O)
O	G	Tommy O'Brien	City of Abilene	(& Liaison to Region O)
P		Richard Young	Greenleaf Nursery Co.	
P		Josh Harper	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	
P		Jami McCool	Texas Department of Agriculture	
P		Rusty Ray	Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)	(same staff member for all 16 RWPGs)

7. Draft Recommendations on Reimbursement of Administrative Costs

Interregional Planning Council Best Practices for Future Planning Committee

Russell Schreiber- Draft

July 22, 2020

Reimbursement of Regional Water Planning Administrative Agency Labor Costs

Existing Practice

Section 3.3 of the “Best Management Practices Guide for Regional Water Planning Group Designated Political Subdivisions” does not allow the administrative agency for the regional water planning group to recover its labor costs. Direct non-labor costs are reimbursed; however, these agencies expend exorbitant amounts of time performing the required administrative work that is associated with the regional water planning process.

Problem

The current practices actually discourage political subdivisions from taking on the role of the administrative agency for regional water planning. It should not cost the Administrative agency money to perform this vital function.

As listed under Section 2.1 and Section 3.1 of the “Best Management Practices Guide for Regional Water Planning Group Designated Political Subdivisions” the regional water planning administrative agency is required to:

- Apply for designation as the political subdivision
- Apply for grant funding
- Procure and execute contracts with technical consultants
- Provide public notice for all RWPG meetings and ensure all meetings comply with the Open Meetings Act
- Maintain membership contact information and provide this information to the TWDB
- Maintain the By-laws
- Submit IPP and draft plans to the TWDB
- Hold the public meeting for the plan
- Process all pay requests for reimbursement from the TWDB
- Act as the communications link between the RWPG , the TWDB, the consultants, and neighboring planning groups
- Develop each RWPG meeting agenda
- Maintain the RWPG web site
- Disperse meeting materials provided by the consultants to the RWPG and TWDB

Goal

Allow for the administrative agency to recover some or all of its labor costs and be made whole. This agency should not be penalized for accepting the responsibility of administering the regional water planning process.

Recommendations

The TWDB should consider establishing a process, protocol, and documentation to be provided to the administrative agency for reimbursement of labor costs. It is likely these costs will vary from one planning group to another and obviously funding a variable cost could be problematic. An alternative to reimbursement of all labor costs, and the budgeting issues that could arise, would be for the TWDB to establish a cap for this expense, based on historical labor costs provided by each administrative agency. Also the TWDB could consider reallocating the reimbursement for travel costs for RWPG members, since it appears very few members utilize these funds, and use those funds to cover the labor costs of the administrative agency.

This issue may require legislative action to fund this recommendation.

8. Draft Recommendations on Open Meetings Act Modification
of Video-Conference Restrictions

Existing Practice: The State of Texas has many open government laws to help make the work of the state transparent to the public. The primary open government laws are the Texas Public Information Act and the Texas Open Meeting Act. The Texas Water Development Board and each RWPG and any committee or subcommittee of an RWPG are subject to Chapters 551 (Open Meetings Act) and 552 [Public Information Act], Government Code. Under the current law, the public and governmental entity representatives travel to the physical address of the meeting to participate (other than viewing) in the meeting.

In March, Governor Abbott's office approved a request by the Office of the Attorney General to temporarily suspend a limited number of open meeting laws in response to the Coronavirus disaster. This action will allow governmental bodies to conduct meetings by telephone or video conference to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings (also called "social distancing") to slow the spread of the Coronavirus. During this time State and local government has continued to hold meetings using video conferencing where the public and can attend and participate by video conference.

Recommendation: Modify the Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act to allow Video Conferencing to increase governmental transparency and public participation from anywhere in the state.

- a. **Brief Observation:** Govern Abbott's temporarily suspend a limited number of open meeting laws in to allow governmental bodies to conduct meetings by telephone or video conference to advance the public health goal worked for allowing local and state government to continue to function. Once the disaster is over these options governmental bodies to conduct meetings by telephone or video conference will not be available. During this period any person regardless of where they are in the world has been afforded the opportunity to participate in public meetings and provide public comment if they wish making the open meetings process more transparent.
- b. **Succinct Recommendation:** The Legislature should amend the Open Meetings Act to allow state and local government to use electronic media such as video conferencing as an alternative to requiring the public and governmental official to be physically present to make public comment or consider actions during an open meeting.
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would allow state and local government to use electronic media such as video conferencing as an alternative in holding open would allow greater governmental transparency during consideration items on an agenda, the public an avenue for increased meeting participation, a more efficient process, reduce waste.

9. Draft Best Practices Committee Report to the Interregional Planning Council
August 12, 2020

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Best Practices Committee Report to the Interregional Planning Council – August 12, 2020

1. **Proposed Changes to Committee Problem and Goal Statement:** No changes proposed at this time.
2. **Draft Recommendation Summaries**

Recommendation 1: Simplified Planning

- a. **Brief Observation:** The simplified planning process under Texas Water Code (TWC) Section 16.053 is not functional. Requiring RWPGs to update groundwater and surface water availability values that have not significantly changed is a waste of volunteer regional water planning members’ time.
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:**
 - i. The Legislature should amend the language in TWC Sec. 16.053(i) to either:
 1. Discontinue the requirement to update groundwater and surface water availability values in the regional water plan if those availability numbers have not changed significantly,
 2. Allow RWPGs to petition the TWDB to implement simplified planning and authorize the TWDB to determine if simplified planning would be most effective,
 3. Require development of the state water plan every 10 years instead of every five years, with sponsorship of special studies between planning cycles, or
 4. Strike simplified planning from the statute.
 - ii. The TWDB should:
 - iii. The RWPGs should:
 - iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would allow full updates of the state water plan following updated census data, better align the regional water plans with the groundwater management area process, and potentially redirect State resources to solving water planning issues through funding special studies.

Recommendation 2: Enhancing Membership Engagement and General Public Engagement

- b. **Brief Observation:** RWPGs are experiencing a variety of communication and engagement issues. These include for example 1) information overload, 2) not receiving valuable information and material prepared by the TWDB, and 3) the public may not have the knowledge base to readily consume the technical and complex subject matter or have the time investment to attend public meetings.

Commented [SB1]: Should Recs 2 and 3 be combined? They are very similar.

Commented [SB2]: Sarah drafted based on Kelley’s “Challenges” section

c. **Succinct Recommendations:**

- i. The Legislature should:
 - 1. Provide funding for better methods of disseminating of information for the regional water planning process.
 - 2. Authorize the use of one-way conferencing or webinars.
 - ii. The TWDB should:
 - 1. Provide policy recommendations developed by the Interregional Planning Council to all RWPGs to inform their planning process.
 - 2. Provide a distilled policy recommendations report from all adopted regional water plans, sorted by topic, to the RWPGs and the Council.
 - 3. Provide an update to the above report, at an appropriate time in the planning cycle, of the implementation status of recommendations to the RWPGs and the Council.
 - 4. Consider engaging a media consultant to develop better methods of coordination among the RWPGs.
 - 5. Develop standardized, easy to adopt practices and protocols that apply to all regions.
 - iii. The RWPGs should:
 - 1. Provide more focus on new member orientations.
 - 2. Utilize educational programs and subject matter speakers in each RWPG.
 - 3. Develop better methods to encourage public participation:
 - Surveys
 - Targeted emails blasts
 - Website updates for all RWPGs
 - iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
 - 1. Hold work sessions to “deep dive” into more complicated topics.
 - 2. Require RWPG Chairs to meet on an annual basis at minimum.
- d. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation will enable RWPG membership and the public to be more engaged and increase their understanding of the process by both members and the public.

Commented [SB3]: Should this be captured under Rec 6?

Commented [SB4]: This is captured under Rec 3.

Commented [SB5]: Since we already have a BMP Guide, should this rec be to update that guide?
Should this be captured under Rec 3?

Commented [SB6]: Specify in person meetings?

Commented [SB7]: Sarah drafted

Recommendation 3: Communication between TWDB, RWPGs, and Members

- a. **Brief Observation:** Members of multiple RWPGs are unaware of educational material, program resources, and assistance made available by the TWDB. TWDB correspondence is not always distributed to the membership or is simply not viewed because of email overload.
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:**
 - i. The Legislature should:
 - ii. The TWDB should:

1. Require RWPGs to receive orientation services provided by the TWDB at the beginning of each cycle,
 2. Require RWPG Chairs and Administrative Agents to follow recommendations in the Best Management Practices Guide document, and
 3. Invest in professional media consultants to assist TWDB in effectively delivering digital messages to RWPG members.
- iii. The RWPGs should:
1. Follow recommendations regarding communication with RWPG members as outlined in the Best Management Practices Guide.
 2. RWPG members should read the Best Management Practices Guide and New Member Guide.
- iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation will enable RWPG membership to make informed decisions by increasing members' understanding of the process and resources available.

Commented [SB8]: Sarah meeting with TWDB Communications Director on 8/13 to discuss internal options and will relay info back to committee.

Commented [SB9]: Sarah added this

Recommendation 4: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as an Ex-Officio Member

Commented [SB10]: Sarah drafted recommendation per Steve's request.

- a. **Brief Observation:** RWPGs often have discussion regarding public drinking water systems, surface water rights and availability, and permitting requirements, for example that could best be answered or followed up on by representatives from the TCEQ. TCEQ is not required by statute to have representation on RWPGs and currently has a representative assigned as a non-voting member to 5 out of 16 RWPGs (B, E, L, M, O).
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:**
- i. The Legislature should amend Texas Water Code Sec. 16.053(c) to add TCEQ has an ex-officio member of each RWPG.
 - ii. The TWDB should, in coordination with TCEQ, amend Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 357.11(e) to require RWPGs add a staff member from TCEQ as a non-voting member.
 - iii. RWPGs should consider adding TCEQ as an ex-officio member if changes to the TWC or TAC are not implemented.
 - iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would consistently provide RWPGs a subject matter expert and resource for water issues addressed by the TCEQ. This recommendation could increase coordination between the TWDB and the TCEQ on planning vs. regulation issues and requirements.

Recommendation 5: Reimbursement of Labor Costs for Regional Water Planning Administrative Agents

- a. **Brief Observation:** The role of the RWPG’s administrative agency includes a significant amount of administrative work. The agencies spend exorbitant amounts of time performing this role in which reimbursement of labor costs are prohibited by the TWDB.
- b. **Succinct Recommendation:**
 - i. The Legislature should provide additional funding for the regional water planning process to accommodate labor costs for administering RWPGs so that grant resources are not taken from required planning tasks.
 - ii. The TWDB should consider allowing for the reimbursement of labor costs for the RWPG’s designated administrative agency and consider establishing a cap for this expense, based on historical labor costs provided by each administrative agency. The TWDB should revise Texas Administrative Code Chapter 355 and regional water planning grant contract expense budget limitations to accommodate these expenses.
 - iii. The RWPGs should:
 - iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would encourage political subdivisions to take on the role of the administrative agency for regional water planning. The agencies would no longer be penalized for accepting the responsibility of administering the regional water planning process.

Commented [SB11]: Sarah reworked Russel’s note on Legislative Action. TWDB is planning to consider revising rules and potentially allowing for this in contracts next cycle, however, we do not know if there will be an increase in appropriations so this would likely come out of other funded tasks.

Commented [SB12]: Sarah removed write up regarding voting member travel expenses. Currently, it is up to each region to allocate travel expenses or not, TWDB does not weigh in on the expense budget allocations.

Reimbursement for labor costs will require a TWDB rule revision and contract expense budget revisions. Sarah added this into the recommendation

Recommendation 6: Open Meetings Act Modification of Video-Conference Restrictions

- a. **Brief Observation:** Governor Abbott temporarily suspended a limited number of open meeting laws to allow governmental bodies to conduct meetings by telephone or video conference during the COVID-19 pandemic in order for these entities to continue to function. Once the disaster is over options to conduct meetings by telephone or video conference will not be available. During this period any person regardless of where they are in the world has been afforded the opportunity to participate in public meetings and provide public comment if they wish making the open meetings process more transparent.
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:**
 - i. The Legislature should amend the Open Meetings Act to allow state and local governments to use electronic media such as video conferencing as an alternative to requiring the public and governmental officials to be physically present to make public comment or consider actions during an open meeting.
 - ii. The TWDB should:
 - iii. The RWPGs should:
 - iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would allow state and local government to use electronic media such as video conferencing as an alternative

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to holding in person only meetings. This would create a more efficient process by allowing greater governmental transparency during consideration of items on an agenda and provide the public an avenue for increased meeting participation.

Recommendation 7: Improving the Regional Water Planning Process

- a. **Brief Observation:** Modifications to regional water planning process does not adequately allow for all RWPG members to provide substantial input on how to make the process better because it is at the end of the cycle at a time when the RWPG is working on its final report. Chairs' conference calls are scheduled but cover so much information that Chairs don't have the opportunity to brainstorm new ideas, and prior work sessions held by TWDB are no longer held or results aren't formally documented. Additionally, over 300 RWPG members do not have direct input to improve the process. Only engaging a small subset of the RWPG leads to non-engagement by the rest of the membership.
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:**
 - i. The Legislature should:
 - ii. The TWDB should incorporate a set of management practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating waste in the regional water planning process. This includes reducing or eliminating non-value-added activities and engaging the RWPG membership to map out all critical steps in planning.
 - iii. RWPGs should:
 - iv. Future Interregional Planning Councils should:
- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would improve efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating waste in the planning process as well as improve productivity of the RWPG membership.

3. **Draft Recommendations Under Further Consideration (yet to be fully developed):**

None