

## RWPG Chairs Conference Call Meeting Notes

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**Type of Meeting:** RWPG Chairs Conference Call (CCC)

**Date of Meeting:** December 9, 2024

**Location of Meeting:** Microsoft Teams

**TWDB Staff in Attendance:** Temple McKinnon, Sarah Lee, Sabrina Anderson, Ryke Moore, Lann Bookout, Kevin Smith, 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:** December 18, 2024

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### 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 – Kyle Miller (Chair) and Stacey Green (Red River Authority)

C – Kevin Ward (Chair), Alexis Long, and Glenn Clingenpeel (Trinity River Authority)

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

E – Dave Hall (Vice-Chair)

F – Cole Walker (Chair)

G – Gail Peek (Vice-Chair) and Pamela Hanneman (Brazos River Authority)

H – Mark Evans (Chair)

I – John Martin (Chair)

J – none

K – David Van Dresar (Chair)

L – Curt Campbell (Chair) and Caye Castillo (San Antonio River Authority)

M – Jim Darling (Chair) and Melisa Gonzales (Lower Rio Grande Development Council)

N – none

O – Ken Rainwater (Chair) and Chelsey Baldivia (South Plains Association of Governments)

P – none

#### 2. Sixth Cycle of Regional Water Planning Activities

##### a. *Initially Prepared Plan and final Regional Water Plan Processes*

Sarah Lee discussed the initially prepared plan (IPP) and final plan process [flowchart](#) that was provided to RWPGs in October. Ms. Lee went over the IPP submittal deadline, requirement for consultants to complete data entry by the IPP deadline, and the subsequent 60-day deadline for notification of potential interregional conflicts following IPP submittal. Ms. Lee discussed the TWDB review period of 120 days and that the TWDB intends to provide planning groups with a

copy of the draft preliminary IPP comments prior to finalizing prior to distributing TWDB's final comments. Ms. Lee then discussed the requirements for RWPGs to hold a public hearing on the IPP which requires a 30-day public notice period prior to the hearing date and a 60-day public comment period following the hearing date.

To address public comments, planning groups will have to summarize any public comments and their response to comments in the final regional water plans. Planning groups must also include a copy of the final TWDB comments and a response to each comment documenting how they are addressed in the final plan.

Ms. Lee then discussed the [public notice summary document](#) that was distributed in October. There are different public notice requirements for the meeting where the IPP is adopted, the IPP public hearing, and the meeting where the final regional water plan is adopted. Ms. Lee highlighted that for RWPGs that recommend a strategy that is sourced in another region, the region recommending the strategy must notify the other RWPG of these meetings and the public hearing. The IPP public hearing requires a large mail out for the public notices, as in past cycles. TWDB is working with TCEQ to obtain updated contact lists and will inform RWPGs when those are available. Additionally, the IPP hearing public notice requires posting the 30-day notice in a newspaper of general circulation and distributing hard copy or electronic copies of the IPPs to certain locations required in each county in the region.

Ms. Lee provided an overview of the [interregional conflict process](#), including definitions of an interregional conflict and the deadline for RWPGs to submit an assertion to the TWDB and other affected RWPG. Once an assertion of a potential conflict has been submitted, the TWDB Executive Administrator will take a recommendation to the TWDB Board to determine if there is a conflict. If a conflict is identified, the TWDB Executive Administrator may initiate a resolution process. If the conflict is not resolved through negotiations, the TWDB Executive Administrator may then recommend a resolution to the TWDB Board, and following a public hearing held by the TWDB, the TWDB Board may make a final determination to resolve the conflict.

*b. Data entry progress*

Temple McKinnon stressed the importance of planning groups staying on top of data entry activities, due to the upcoming tight timelines of the IPP and final plans. Regions that are not completing their data entry in a timely manner may be affecting the work of neighboring regions. TWDB requests consultants to be responsive to TWDB data related questions and let us know when they will be able to provide a response if not immediately. TWDB staff is assisting all 16 regions with the data entry process.

Ms. McKinnon reminded the group that conservation strategies this cycle must be separated into either a water loss mitigation strategy or water use reduction strategy. Planning group consultants have been sent a reminder about this as well as a progress update of their data entry checks.

Additionally, Ms. McKinnon discussed the requirement to include a hyperlink to certain regional water plan database reports in the Executive Summaries of the IPPs and final plan via the TWDB's Secure Agency Reporting Application. These reports will be made available to the public by January 21, 2025.

*c. Proposed 2022 State Water Amendment No 3*

Ms. Lee informed the group of the upcoming amendment to the 2022 State Water Plan which will include the four amendments to the 2021 regional water plans to address infeasible water management strategies as well as amendments to the 2021 regional water plan to add or revise strategies and projects. The new/revised strategies and projects will be eligible for the 2025 SWIFT funding cycle. TWDB will be holding a public hearing on the proposed state water plan amendment on December 18, 2024. TWDB will seek Board approval of the state water plan amendment at the January 16, 2025 Board meeting.

**3. Best Practices for RWPGs**

- a. Ms. Lee reminded the group of the recommendation from the Interregional Planning Council to include a discussion of best practices for RWPGs at least annually on a Chairs call. TWDB will include this as a standard agenda item on Chairs calls moving forward. Best practices discussed on this call included:
  - i. RWPGs holding more than one public hearing on the IPP: Mark Evans, Region H Chair, discussed the value of holding multiple hearings in a diverse region. Region H is also considering holding two public hearings in person and one virtual public hearing.
  - ii. RWPGs holding sub-regional meetings: Gail Peak, Region G Vice-Chair, discussed Region G's practice of holding sub-regional meetings, which have proven to be very useful and informative for public officials in the regional areas. These meetings create a smoother process and allow for additional feedback.
  - iii. Ben Weinheimer, Region A Chair, inquired about the timing of when regions hold their public hearings. This varies among regions, with some holding them in the evenings, and some holding them at regular planning group meeting times.
  - iv. Jim Darling, Region M Chair, asked how many other groups use Council of Governments as their administrative entity and shared the value of utilizing the COG to distribute information to the local cities.
  - v. Ms. Lee also discussed the optional use of the TWDB IPP review checklist as a potential best practice. This checklist was distributed to planning group consultants in October and lists all rule and contract requirements TWDB staff will be reviewing. Some planning groups in the past have included a copy of the checklist as an appendix to their plan, documenting where the requirements are assumed to be met. This is beneficial to both the planning group and TWDB to document and find required information in the plan.
  - vi. Ms. Peak also shared that this cycle, smaller communities and communities that have not participated in the past are getting more involved with the

- planning group.
- vii. Ken Rainwater, Region O Chair, shared that Region O also uses a COG for their administrative entity and they have been very valuable in getting communities to respond and result in more effective communication.
  - viii. Dave Hall, Region E Vice-Chair, also shared that Region E uses the Rio Grande COG for their administrative entity and they have effectively helped the region interact with local communities.

#### **4. Chairs Discussion**

No additional discussion.

#### **5. Wrap-up and next call topics and date**

TWDB will hold the next call in Spring 2025. Sarah will distribute a doodle poll with potential meeting dates in the new year.