RWPG Chairs Conference Call Meeting Notes

Type of Meeting: RWPG Chairs Conference Call (CCC)
Date of Meeting: March 24, 2026
Location of Meeting: Microsoft Teams
TWDB Staff in Attendance: Kate Raetz, Temple McKinnon, Sarah Lee, William Alfaro, Lann Bookout, Elizabeth McCoy, Heather Rose, Michele Foss, Brittany Condry, Noah Powell, Gerald Wells
Number of Planning Group Members in Attendance: 13 regions represented
Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance: TWDB Chairwoman L'Oreal Stepney
Report filed by: William Alfaro
Report filed on: April 17, 2026

Agenda Items Discussed:

1. Introductions and Opening Comments

William Alfaro, Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), opened the meeting, noted that it was being recorded, and reminded participants that attendance would be documented through the Microsoft Teams attendance report. He acknowledged TWDB staff in attendance.
Chairwoman L'Oreal Stepney provided opening remarks, thanking RWPG chairs and members for their continued service and emphasizing the importance of regional water plans in informing state leadership and legislative decision-making.

Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) attendees:
A – Ben Weinheimer (Chair) and Jarian Fred (Panhandle Regional Planning Commission)
B – Kyle Miller (Chair) and Stacey Green (Red River Authority)
C – Dan Buhman (Chair), Kevin Ward, and Alexis Long (Trinity River Authority)
D – Howdy Lisenbee (Chair) and Kyle Dooley (Riverbend Water Resources District)
E – none
F – Audra Hoback (Colorado River Municipal Water District)
G – Wayne Wilson (Chair) and Pamela Hannemann (Brazos River Authority)
H – Mark Evans (Chair) and Aubrey Spear (San Jacinto River Authority)
I – John Martin (Chair)
J – none
K – Annette Keaveny (Lower Colorado River Authority)
L – Curt Campbell (Chair), Caye Castillo, and Avianca De La O (San Antonio River Authority)
M – Jim Darling (Chair) and Valerie Ramos (Lower Rio Grande Development Council)
N – Scott Bledsoe (Co-Chair), John Chisholm, and Travis Pruski (Nueces River Authority)
O – Ken Rainwater (Chair) and Shannon Bradshaw (South Plains Association of Governments)
P – none

2. Seventh Cycle of Regional Water Planning Activities

William reported that the Request for Applications (RFA) for the Seventh Cycle of Regional Water Planning was posted on March 2, 2026, with applications due April 2, 2026, and noted that planning group sponsors have been emailed additional information and direct links. The RFA, which includes application instructions and a Grant Application Checklist, is available on the TWDB website. He also highlighted that several supporting documents are posted on the Regional Water Planning RFA webpage, including the Grant Application Checklist, Draft Initial Scope of Work, Draft Task Budget by Region, and the Draft Working Schedule, all of which are draft materials that will be updated throughout the planning cycle.

William explained that contracts will be sent to sponsors on September 1, 2026, with the goal of completing all executions during the first week of September. TWDB expects to seek Board approval in June. He noted that RWPGs have already designated and authorized their Political Subdivisions. Planning groups are working on other related activities, including selecting technical consultants and holding a pre-planning public meeting. Initial contracts will fund three tasks, non-municipal demand projections, population and municipal demand projections, and administration and public participation.

William reviewed key dates in the Draft Working Schedule, including deadlines for applications, contract execution, draft water user group (WUG) lists, draft projections, Board adoption of projections, the Technical Memorandum, the Initially Prepared Plan, and the Final Plan. He noted that the regional water planning technical stakeholder meeting is anticipated for October 2026 and will focus on lessons learned from the 2026 Regional Water Plans and potential improvements for the 2031 cycle. He also reminded planning groups that April 30, 2026 is the final deadline for submitting payment requests for reimbursement.

3. Update on Ongoing Studies to Support Planning

Temple McKinnon provided a brief update on several studies underway with the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology (BEG) that will support future population and water demand projections.

- Non-surveyed groundwater use: She reported that BEG is developing county-level gallons per capita per day (GPCD) estimates for groundwater use not captured through the water use survey. BEG will conduct a survey to support this study that will be distributed in April. The final report is expected in November 2026.
- Projection accuracy analysis: She explained that this study evaluates the accuracy and uncertainty of past TWDB population and municipal demand projections and will recommend improvements to make the process more accurate and efficient. Results are expected this summer and will inform the 2031 Regional and 2032 State Water Plans.
- Outdoor water use update: She noted that BEG is updating residential outdoor water use estimates using data from the 2011–2015 and 2022 droughts. The updated report is due August 2026 and will inform GPCD estimates used in the development of municipal demands for the 2031 regional plans.

She added that results from these studies will be shared with technical consultants later in

the year and incorporated into future projection development.

4. State Water Plan Development

Temple outlined TWDB's two-phase approach to development of the next State Water Plan. She explained that an initial plan focused primarily on required datasets and tables will be presented to the Board in April 2026 to meet SWIFT-related timelines. A more traditional narrative-based State Water Plan will follow as an amendment later in the year, ahead of statutory deadlines.

Temple reviewed anticipated public comment periods, public hearings, and Board action timelines for both phases and noted that regional plan data already approved by the Board will form the foundation of the State Water Plan content.

5. Guidance Principle Review

William described the upcoming review of State Water Planning Guidance Principles, which is required every five years by statute. He explained that TWDB will initiate internal review efforts and solicit early stakeholder feedback during Summer 2026. Input will be requested from regional planning group members, sponsors, non-voting members, technical consultants, and state agencies.

William and Sarah Lee noted that feedback gathered during the technical stakeholder meeting planned for October 2026 will inform potential revisions to guidance documents and rules, followed by a formal rulemaking process with public comment.

6. Best Practices for RWPGs

William facilitated an open discussion among chairs on best practices and lessons learned as planning groups transition from the Sixth to Seventh Cycle. Chairs shared experiences related to public meetings, regional coordination, and evolving water supply challenges. James Darling (Region M) discussed unique planning challenges along the Rio Grande related to treaty obligations, drought conditions, and increasing reliance on alternative water supplies such as groundwater and reuse. Temple noted that this discussion item stems from recommendations of the Interregional Planning Council and serves as an ongoing forum.

7. Next call topics and date

William invited chairs to suggest topics for future calls. Staff indicated that a summer meeting would be appropriate to provide updates on Seventh Cycle contract execution and the guidance principle review process. Proposed dates and agenda topics will be shared with chairs at a later time.

Wrap-Up

William thanked participants for their time and continued leadership in the regional water planning process. He encouraged chairs to contact TWDB staff with any questions related to closing Sixth Cycle contracts or initiating Seventh Cycle activities.