

Responsibilities and Best Practices for Liaisons and Regional Water Planning Groups (RWPGs)

TWDB planning rules require RWPGs to assign liaisons to all adjacent RWPGs. This document summarizes best practices for RWPG liaisons as well as requirements from Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) rules and guidance documents. RWPG liaisons serve as voting members in their primary region and as non-voting members of the adjacent region to which they are assigned as a liaison. Responsibilities of RWPG liaisons can vary by region, but generally include the following:

- Attend neighboring RWPG meetings, as assigned, and act as a liaison for their primary RWPG
- Become informed on planning activities in their assigned region(s)
- Provide updates at meetings, as requested, on planning activities in their primary or assigned liaison regions
- Look for opportunities for interregional coordination and collaboration

1 Best Practices

1.1 Liaison Best Practices

Attending an RWPG Meeting as a Liaison

- Make note of actions taken by the RWPG to report back to your RWPG. Examples of actions to note include plan amendments, water management strategy recommendations, and new member and officer elections.
- Come prepared to report on significant actions recently taken by your RWPG. This can be useful to augment the report given by the liaison to your RWPG or to answer additional questions about your RWPG.
- Come prepared to ask questions or initiate coordination between regions, as tasked by your RWPG.

Attending your RWPG Meeting

- Prepare notes for your RWPG and give during liaison report item on meeting agenda. Report should summarize actions taken by liaison planning group at its most recent meeting(s) and significant agenda items for next the meeting (if known).
- Between meetings, send any communication (agendas, minutes, etc.) received from your liaison RWPG to your RWPG. Coordinate with your RWPG Chair and Sponsor (designated Political Subdivision) on who to send communications to and how it will be distributed.

1.2 RWPG Best Practices

- Fill vacant liaison positions promptly. Liaisons should understand the duties and be willing to participate in their liaison RWPG meetings. Travel expenses are eligible for reimbursement, if approved by the RWPG and grant funds have been allocated to Voting Member Travel in the regional water planning contract expense budget.
- Forward meeting notices and agendas to neighboring planning groups via their liaisons. Liaisons should then pass along this information to their respective RWPGs.
- Create standing agenda item for reports from the RWPG's liaisons to other regions.

- Acknowledge visiting liaisons and answer their questions as necessary. Engage them and ask questions as appropriate.
- RWPG should provide direction to liaisons regarding communications to other RWPGs.
- An RWPG’s liaison may be used to initiate coordination and gather information from another RWPG. Examples of coordination efforts that could occur throughout the planning cycle include:
 - Early in the planning cycle, the TWDB provided RWPGs lists of water management strategies and projects that serve multiple regions. Each RWPG should evaluate the list and begin coordination if potential conflicts or opportunities for collaboration/regionalization are identified.
 - During development of population and demand projections, identify split water user groups and coordinate with other regions as needed.
 - During development of source availability and existing supply volumes, identify shared sources and coordinate with other regions as needed.
 - During evaluation of water management strategies and projects, identify strategies or projects that that provide supplies in multiple regions and strategies or projects located in another region. Coordinate with other regions as needed.
 - At any of these stages, an RWPG’s liaison may be used to initiate coordination and gather information from another RWPG.

1.3 Liaison Guidance from TWDB’s Administrative Guidance for RWPG Sponsors

Section 3.1 of the [Administrative Guidance for Regional Water Planning Group Sponsors](#) provides the following guidance on communication with RWPG members, including liaisons:

- Coordinate with adjacent RWPGs to keep liaison information current. Each RWPG must have a liaison that serves as a non-voting member to each adjacent region. Forward meeting notices and agendas to neighboring planning group liaisons. Liaisons should then pass along this information to their respective RWPGs.
- During development of the draft RWPG meeting agenda, it is recommended that the RWPG include a standing agenda item for updates from liaisons.

2 RWPG Coordination and Liaison Requirements in TWDB Rules

The following are excerpts from current TWDB regional and state water planning rules that direct the coordination between RWPGs and define the roles of RWPG liaisons. Citations are hyperlinked to provide additional context, and a list of current RWPG liaisons is attached as Table 1.

2.1 Guidance Principles for State and Regional Water Planning

RWPGs shall actively coordinate water planning and management activities to identify common needs, issues, and opportunities for interregional water management strategies and water management strategy projects to achieve efficient use of water supplies. The Board will support RWPGs coordination to identify common needs, issues, and opportunities while working with RWPGs to resolve conflicts in a fair, equitable, and efficient manner. [\[31 TAC § 358.3\(20\)\]](#)

2.2 RWPG Coordination and Notice Rule Requirements

Planning groups are required by rule to provide notification or submit additional documentation to other planning groups for the following activities:

- Planning group liaisons, which serve as non-voting members to assigned regions, will be provided notice of all planning group meetings and activities that are required under [31 TAC §357.21\(e\)](#) to be sent to non-voting planning group members.
- When holding pre-planning public meetings to obtain public input on development of the next RWP, holding hearings on the IPP, or making revisions to RWPs based on interregional conflict resolutions, an RWPG must give notice to each adjacent RWPG. [\[31 TAC §357.21\(h\)\(5\)\(A\)\]](#)
- If a recommended or Alternative WMS that is located outside of the RWPG is being considered, the RWPG where the recommended or Alternative WMS is located must also receive notice of any meeting or hearing where action or public input may be taken on the recommended or Alternative WMS. [\[31 TAC §357.21\(e\)\(1\)\]](#)
- For hearings on declarations of intent to pursue simplified planning, if an RWPG shares a water supply source, WMS, or WMSP with another RWPG, the RWPG declaring intent to pursue simplified planning must notify the RWPG with shared source, WMS, or WMSP. [\[31 TAC §357.21\(e\)\(2\)\]](#)
- In the instance of a recommended WMS proposed to be supplied from a different regional water planning area (RWPA), the RWPG recommending such strategy shall submit, concurrently with the submission of the IPP to the EA, a copy of the IPP, or a letter identifying the WMS in the other region along with an internet link to the IPP, to the RWPG associated with the location of such strategy. [\[31 TAC §357.50\(b\)\]](#)
- In the instance of a substitution of an Alternative WMS or a proposed amendment with a recommended WMS to be supplied from a different RWPA, the RWPG recommending such strategy shall submit, concurrently with the submission of the substitution or proposed amendment to the EA, a copy of the substitution or proposed amendment to the RWPG for the location of such strategy. The provisions of sections 357.50(d), (e), (f), and (h), and 357.62, related to Interregional Conflicts, shall apply to substitution or amendment to the RWP in the same manner as those subdivisions apply to an IPP. [\[31 TAC §357.51\(f\)\]](#)

2.3 Liaison Membership Rule Requirements

Regional water planning group liaison member requirements are outlined in [31 TAC §357.11\(e\)\(3\)](#). An excerpt is provided below. The intent of § 357.11(e)(3) is for RWPGs to assign liaisons to all adjacent RWPGs with assigned liaisons then becoming a non-voting member of the other planning group. A list of current RWPG liaisons is provided in Table 1. From §357.11(e)(3):

The RWPGs shall add the following non-voting members, who shall receive meeting notifications and information in the same manner as voting members:

- (1) Staff member of the Board to be designated by the EA;
- (2) Staff member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department designated by its executive director;
- (3) Member designated by each adjacent RWPG to serve as a liaison;**
- (4) One or more persons to represent those entities with headquarters located in another RWPA and which holds surface water rights authorizing a diversion of 1,000 acre-feet a year or more in the RWPA, which supplies water under contract in the amount of 1,000 acre-feet a year or more to entities in the RWPA, or which receives water under contract in the amount of 1,000 acre-feet a year or more from the RWPA;

- (5) Staff member of the Texas Department of Agriculture designated by its commissioner; and
- (6) Staff member of the State Soil and Water Conservation Board designated by its executive director.

2.4 State Water Implementation Fund (SWIFT) Program Incentives for Regionalization

Although not a requirement, [31 TAC §363.1304](#) gives incentives in the SWIFT application process for applications that serve multiple populations or multiple entities. Subsections (3) and (4) of §363.1304 are cited below. RWPGs can coordinate, through liaisons or otherwise, to identify regionalization opportunities, so entities can take advantage of SWIFT funding incentives. From §363.1304:

- (3) Projects that will serve a diverse urban and rural population:
 - (A) serves one or more urban populations and one rural population, 10 points; and
 - (B) for each additional rural population served, 4 points up to a maximum of 30 points; or
 - (C) serves only an urban population, or only a rural population, zero points.
- (4) As specified in the application, projects which provide regionalization:
 - (A) serves additional entities other than the applicant, 5 points per each political subdivision served for a maximum of 30 points; or
 - (B) serves only applicant, zero points.

Table 1: Regional Water Planning Group Liaisons as of March 31, 2023

Voting Region	Non-voting Region (Liaison to)	Name	Executive Committee
A	B	Bobbie Kidd	-
A	O	Kent Satterwhite	-
B	A	Carrie Dodson	-
B	C	Tracy Mesler	-
B	G	Carrie Dodson	-
B	O	Carrie Dodson	-
C	B	Doug Shaw	-
C	D	Ronna Hart	-
C	G	Gary Spicer	-
C	H	Kevin Ward	chair
C	I	Connie Standridge	-

Voting Region	Non-voting Region (Liaison to)	Name	Executive Committee
D	C	George Ostott	-
D	I	Vacant	-
E	F	Vacant	-
E	J	Vacant	-
F	E	Vacant	-
F	G	Vacant	-
F	J	Vacant	-
F	K	Vacant	-
F	O	Vacant	-
G	B	Lynn Smith	-
G	C	Gary Spicer	-
G	F	Dale Adams	-
G	H	Zach Holland	-
G	K	Gary Newman	-
G	L	Jim Briggs	-
G	O	Vacant	-
H	C	Kevin Ward	chair (Region C)
H	G	Brad Brunett	-
H	I	Vacant	-
H	K	Vacant	-
I	C	John Martin	chair
I	D	John McFarland	-
I	D	David Montagne	-
I	H	David Alders	at-large
I	H	Scott Hall	-
J	E	Vacant	-

Voting Region	Non-voting Region (Liaison to)	Name	Executive Committee
J	F	Vacant	-
J	K	William F. (Feather) Wilson	-
J	L	Vacant	-
J	M	Vacant	-
K	F	Vacant	-
K	G	Terry Bray	-
K	H	Vacant	-
K	J	Paul Tybor	-
K	L	Ronald G. Fieseler	at-large
K	P	Daniel Berglund	-
L	J	John Byrum	-
L	K	Diane Wassenich	-
L	M	Vacant	-
L	N	John Byrum	-
L	P	Tim Andruss	-
M	E	Vacant	-
M	J	Tomas Rodriguez, Jr.	-
M	L	Donald K. McGhee	secretary
M	N	David Fuentes	-
N	K	Vacant	-
N	L	Carl Crull	-
N	M	Chuck Burns	-
O	A	Kent Satterwhite	secretary
O	B	Vacant	-
O	F	Melanie Barnes	-
O	G	Jeff Sammon	-

Voting Region	Non-voting Region (Liaison to)	Name	Executive Committee
P	K	Vacant	-
P	L	Patrick Brzozowski	secretary