

## Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) Chair Conference Call

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**Type of Meeting:** RWPG Chair Conference Call

**Date of Meeting:** May 25, 2011

**Location of Meeting:** Conference call

**Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Staff in Attendance:** Carolyn Brittin, Dan Hardin, Matt Nelson, Temple McKinnon, David Meeseey, Angela Kennedy, Wendy Barron, Sabrina Anderson, Lann Bookout, Virginia Sabia

**Number of Planning Group Members in Attendance:** Chairs and Political Subdivision

**Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance:** None

**Report filed by:** Virginia Sabia

**Report filed on:** May 31, 2011

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**Meeting General:** Carolyn Brittin confirmed attendance of regional representatives:

Chairs: Region A - C.E. Williams, Region B - Curtis Campbell, Region C - Jim Parks,, Region D - Bret McCoy, Region F - John Grant, Region G - Scott Diermann, Region H - Mark Evans, Region I - Kelley Holcomb, Region K – John Burke, Region L - Con Mims, Region M - Glenn Jarvis, Region N - Carola Seratto and Scotty Bledsoe, Region O - Bo Brown, and Region P – Harrison Stafford. Region E and J were not present.

Political Subdivisions: Region A - Kyle Ingham, Region L - Steve Raabe and Erin Newberry, and Region O - Jim Conkwright and Mike McGreggor.

### **Action Items:**

- June 22, 2011 staff will request TWDB authorization to execute the Fourth Cycle contracts.
- Contracts for the Fourth Cycle must be executed by August 31, 2011.
- TWDB Project Managers will provide additional guidance after the June 22, 2011 TWDB meeting regarding allowance for shifting funds between tasks. For instance, Tasks 2A and 2B funds may be shifted.
- Non-municipal projections will be released after September 1.
- Steam-electric demands are available immediately since they rely on recent study results and negotiations from the last planning cycle.
- The draft Mining study is available for review on the TWDB website. Please provide comments to TWDB. TWDB hopes to complete the final report by June 30, 2011: [http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/wrpi/rwp/documents/DraftReport\\_TWDB\\_MiningWaterUse.pdf](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/wrpi/rwp/documents/DraftReport_TWDB_MiningWaterUse.pdf)
- Municipal projections will be available spring of 2012.
- Tools such as “Survey Monkey” will be utilized to facilitate submittal of region-specific comments and supporting data about projections.

- The 2009 Water Use Survey results and Gallons Per Capita Daily (GPCD) will be posted on the TWDB website by August 2011.
- Draft Rule Revisions will be distributed for stakeholder comment in Fall 2011. Public comment will be taken on the revised draft following stakeholder input. TWDB will approve rule revisions in Spring 2012.
- Regions should submit requests for revisions to hydrologic assumptions, to TWDB (after receiving RWPG authorization) prior to supply analysis.
- TWDB is developing a new online database, referred to as DB17. Regions are strongly encouraged to offer feedback. TWDB will solicit consultant comments about how the database should be developed.
- The database will be complete late summer 2012 and consultant training opportunities will be offered as the database is made available for use.
- Regions are asked to provide any ideas or concerns they have for improving process in the Fourth Cycle.
- TWDB staff is considering how to reduce costs and still meet statutory and rule requirements for public notifications.
- A draft of the 2012 State Water Plan will be presented to the TWDB in August 2011.
- Staff will present 2012 State Water Plan policy discussion to TWDB for consideration in June and July 2011.
- TWDB will receive comments on the draft 2012 State Water Plan in September and October 2011. This will include public meetings in some regions and a public hearing in Austin.
- The final 2012 State Water Plan will be presented for TWDB approval in November 2011 and delivered to the Governor and Legislature by January 5, 2012.
- Staff is soliciting regional feedback on the possibility of visiting fewer regions for the roadshow soliciting public comment.
- In November 2011 TWDB staff will consider the need for planning another Chair Conference Call and solicit feedback.

### **Discussion/other Items:**

#### **Schedule for development of 2016 regional water plans:**

- Matt Nelson reviewed the timeline and scope of work summary for the fourth cycle of regional water planning. Stars next to the item denote that the item is funded; other scope items may be funded by future allocations. Task 4A (identification of Water Needs) will be calculated by TWDB based on data provided by the regions in the online database. Contracts must be executed by August 31, 2011.
- The schedule for identifying water management strategies does not include full evaluation of all strategies. Current supplies will not be impacted by Senate Bill 3 (SB3) environmental flow requirements, only Water Management Strategies (WMS.)

#### **Contract execution and activities eligible for reimbursement:**

- June 22, 2011 staff will request TWDB approval of the contracts. Approximately 10% additional funds will be available from lapsed funds from the 2011 Regional Water Plans. This will be included in the contract and distributed proportionally to current funding allocations.
- TWDB Project Managers will provide additional guidance after the June 22, 2011 TWDB meeting regarding allowance for shifting funds between tasks. For instance, Tasks 2A and 2B funds may be shifted.
- Jim Parks asked if newsletters are no longer reimbursable. Ms. Brittin confirmed that is the case.

### **Revisions to Planning Guidance Document**

- Mr. Nelson explained the primary revisions to the Planning Guidance Document will better align the planning process and WMS analysis with federal permitting requirements. These changes will include a two-tier needs analysis approach utilizing the online database, strategies for water loss, and calculation of region-determined safety factors for strategy supplies.
- Kelley Holcomb asked if this would be a more “National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-like process.” Ms. Brittin noted these efforts aim to minimize the gap between the planning process and NEPA process, but emulating the NEPA process in regional water planning would not be practical.
- Mr. Parks noted that the safety factor implies a standard requirement for each entity. Ms. Brittin clarified the safety factor would be selected by the RWPG and entity rather than requiring a specific safety factor be met.

### **Population and demand projections process**

#### **General process and timeline:**

- Ms. Brittin noted that demands would be adopted by the TWDB after regions provided feedback. Previous planning cycles used an iterative process in which the TWDB adopted projections and then revised projections based on feedback.
- Mr. Parks noted that the bulk of Region C projections are municipal and he was concerned about the compressed timeline for regional feedback. Dan Hardin responded that the State Data Center schedule is driving part of the schedule and TWDB staff will utilize tools such as “Survey Monkey” to solicit feedback prior to projection releases. It was also noted that population and municipal demands would be developed simultaneously, thus streamlining the process. Dan Hardin outlined the process and approximate timeline for developing population and demand projections.

#### **Non-Municipal Projections**

- Non-municipal projections will be released after September 1.
- Steam-electric demands are available immediately since they rely on recent study results and negotiations from the last planning cycle.

- The base number for irrigation projections will change, however the rate of change of irrigation projections will likely remain the same as previous cycle projections.
- The draft mining study is available for review on the TWDB website. Please provide comments to TWDB by May 31, 2011. TWDB hopes to complete the final report by June 30, 2011:  
[http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/wrpi/rwp/documents/DraftReport\\_TWDB\\_MiningWaterUse.pdf](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/wrpi/rwp/documents/DraftReport_TWDB_MiningWaterUse.pdf)
- Oil and gas estimates are included in the draft mining demand report, however it should be noted that required industry reporting of these estimates may be invalid in some areas. Scotty Bledsoe inquired if information from groundwater districts can be used to complete data. Ms. Brittin confirmed this was possible and emphasized a need to stay flexible in efforts to adjust the data and developing demands.
- Manufacturing demand research is being completed by TWDB and will reflect some impacts from new technologies.
- Ms. Brittin emphasized that projections are to some degree art as well as science, and so TWDB is open to receiving input from regions regarding how to adjust appropriately.

### **Municipal Projections**

- Municipal projections will be available spring of 2012. Municipal projections are a product of population and GPCD. The Census will be considered the “gold standard” for populations and overall the 2010 Census counted smaller population in most regional projections from the last plans. In population projections, regions will be limited by regional control totals and the TWDB will select the most reliable county totals as well.
- Tools such as “Survey Monkey” will be utilized to facilitate submittal of region-specific comments and supporting data about projections.
- Participants inquired if projections could be shifted between county totals and what other criteria are valid for adjustments. Mr. Hardin said the criteria are potentially flexible but TWDB needs supporting data to justify changes. Ms. Brittin stated TWDB would remain flexible on county totals.
- GPCD numbers should utilize the most recent data year possible. Ms. Brittin noted that this will rely on the total water usage reported in Water Use Surveys.
- Mr. Holcomb inquired if the Water Use Survey captured small county-other entities. TWDB noted it depends on the response rate. In general Water Use Survey results reflect responses from 75% of entities totaling 90% of state-wide water use.
- Mr. Parks noted that the Guidance Document specifies 2006 or 2009 would be used as a dry-year base for water demand projections and expressed concern that other years would be more representative of dry years in Region C. Ms. Brittin said there is still room for negotiations by individual regions. Dan Hardin emphasized the preference to capture the most recent conditions possible in designating dry year.
- Mr. Parks asked how regions should proceed in negotiating dry year base. Ms. Brittin suggested a meeting on a regional basis with TWDB staff. Regions were reminded that

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) must all also approve the selected dry year numbers.

- The 2009 Water Use Surveys and GPCDs will be posted on the TWDB website by August 2011.

### **Rule Revisions**

- Temple McKinnon outlined the rule revision process and timeline. The goal of the revisions will be to eliminate redundancy, simplify process, better define planning requirements, and align data presentation with Federal permitting requirements.
- A draft of rule revisions will be made available in September/October 2011 to stakeholders. A 30-day public comment period will be held on the revised draft following stakeholder input. Rule Revisions will be considered for approval by the Texas Water Development Board in Spring 2012.

### **Modifications to Water Availability Model (WAM) Run 3, groundwater models, and firm yield for supplies**

- Mr. Nelson reminded regions that if they intend to use revised hydrologic assumptions, the request must be sent with RWPG authorization to request TWDB approval. This is the same process as previously used but offered as a reminder. This action should be taken prior to supply analysis.

### **Online Database (DB17) Development**

- TWDB is developing a new and improved online database, referred to as DB17, which should be easier to use and resolve many consultant concerns. Regions are strongly encouraged to offer feedback. TWDB will solicit consultant comments about how the database should be developed.
- The database will be complete late summer 2012 and consultant training opportunities will be offered as it is made available for use.

### **Future funding**

- Current legislative appropriations have reduced funds for regional water planning by \$200,000 per biennium and may be further reduced by \$700,000 per biennium. It is unclear what future appropriations will be.
- The source of funding for regional water planning has been changed from General Revenue to the life-limited Texas Water Resources Finance Authority (TWRFA.)
- This future uncertainty in funding is a key reason that contracts will contain notice-to-proceed items.

### **Process Improvements**

- Mr. Nelson expressed staff intention to improve the regional planning process with additional training for database use and reimbursement, communications, and streamlining the process.
- Regions are asked to provide any ideas or concerns they have for improving process in the Fourth Cycle.

#### **State Water Plan**

- Mr. Hardin provided a status of development of the 2012 State Water Plan. Writing of the water plan is in-progress and a draft will be presented to the TWDB in August 2011.
- Staff will present policy discussion to TWDB for consideration in June and July 2011.
- Draft regional summaries will be provided for regional comments soon.
- TWDB will receive public comments on the draft in September and October 2011. This will include public meetings in some regions and a public hearing in Austin.
- The final 2012 State Water Plan will be presented for TWDB approval in November 2011 and delivered to the Governor and Legislature by January 5, 2012.
- Staff is soliciting regional feedback on the possibility of visiting fewer regions for the roadshow soliciting public comment.
- Mr. Parks pointed out that Region C recently spent \$4,000 to advertise a public meeting but no members of the public attended. Mr. Brittin explained staff is considering how to reduce costs and still meet statutory and rule requirements for public notifications.

#### **Next Chairs Conference Call**

- Chairs agreed the conference call was helpful but only necessary to have on an as-needed basis.
- In November 2011 TWDB staff will consider the need for planning another Chair Conference Call and solicit feedback.

The Chair Conference Call concluded at 3:00 PM. *The next Chair Conference Call is not yet scheduled.*