

Minutes
Plateau Water Planning Group
REGULAR MEETING
Initiated and Chaired at
Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC)
125 Lehmann Drive - Auditorium
Kerrville, Texas
June 22, 2023
10:00 AM

Notice having been given, a Regular Meeting of the Plateau Water Planning Group (PWPG) was held on Thursday, June 22, 2023, beginning at 10:00 A.M. The meeting was initiated and chaired at GBNRC, 125 Lehmann Drive, Ste. 100, Kerrville, Texas. **Present in person**: Jonathan Letz, Kerr County; Tara Bushnoe, Kerr County; Charlie Wiedenfeld, Kerr County; Scott Loveland, Kerr County; Gene Williams, Kerr County; David Mauk, Bandera County; Brian Leiker, Real County; Wes Robinson, Kinney County; Genell Hobbs, Kinney County; David Jeffery, Bandera County; Homer Stevens, Bandera County; Lann Bookout, Texas Water Development Board; Andrew Feigenbaum, WSP; Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA (hosted the meeting); Jody Grinstead and Saheli Majumda, WSP. **Present via Zoom**: Max Martin, Edward/Val Verde/Kinney County; Feather Wilson, Bandera County; Tully Shahan, Kinney County; Tony Smith, Carollo Engineering; Frances Lovett; Diana Nichols; Tomas Rodrigues; Sarah Robertson, Texas Parks and Wildlife; and Carol Faulkenberry, Texas Department of Agriculture.

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Certification of Quorum in Compliance with Texas Open Meetings Law.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

II. Public Comments.

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of minutes from the April 20, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Motion by Charlie Wiedenfeld to approve the April 20, 2023 minutes; second by David Jeffery. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

IV. Reports.

a. Report from Chair.

Chairman Letz stated that the account has a balance of \$10,486.07

He gave a brief update regarding the Interregional Planning Council meeting

b. Report from Secretary.

No report was given.

c. Report from Political Entity.

Tara Bushnoe stated that invoicing for Task 10 funding for Admin expenses and website maintenance have been submitted and will be reviewed by the group later in the meeting. She also informed the Group that the audio improvements have been done (under budget) and based on how it works today, one or two additional items might need to be purchased.

d. Report from Liaisons.

Feather Wilson gave a brief report on Region L

e. Report from GMA representatives.

No reports were given.

V. **Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve invoices.**
Motion by Tara Bushnoe to approve the following invoices: GMR transcripts - \$239.25; audio visual equipment - \$845.40; WSP (4-1-23 to 5-5-23) - \$7,991.23 and WSP (5/6/23 to 6-2-23) - \$10,072.83; second by Gene Williams. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

VI. **Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve administrative expenses, and certify that the expenses are eligible for reimbursements and are correct and necessary.**

Chairman Letz explained that TWDB expanded the reimbursement rules to include administrative costs (including fees to prepare transcripts) and website costs. Until this point Kerr County absorbed the cost for administrative duties performed by Jody Grinstead and UGRA hosted the website free of charge. Now those entities can seek reimbursement. The current invoices submitted cover costs from September 2021 to May 2023. **Motion by Wes Robinson to pay invoices in the amount of \$6,342.50 to Kerr County (\$5218.50 Admin Costs and \$1,123.75 transcript reimbursement) and \$500.00 to UGRA (for hosting website); second by Tara Bushnoe. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.**

VII. **Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Updates.**

Mr. Bookout informed the group that the consultants will be working on a task (implemented by the Legislature two years ago) that requires regional planning groups to determine the feasibility of projects in the last plan (2021 Plan). He briefly explained the process and stated the analysis must be finished by March 4, 2024. The amendment process for 2021 will begin by June 4, 2024. He reviewed the criteria to be used to evaluate the infeasibility of a project. A brief discussion ensued regarding possible projects in each county. Andrew Feigenbaum spoke briefly regarding the process WSP will follow to report the information.

Mr. Bookout stated that TWDB asked for additional funding to support work planning groups will have to do (i.e. the termination of infeasible water management strategies) which was not funded at the time the Legislature passed that requirement. Therefore TWDB will be amending the contract in August or September to put additional funds into the contract. The planning group will need to approve the political subdivisions execution of the contract at a future meeting.

VIII. **WSP Presentation – Review, Discuss and Potentially Take Action**

a. **Update on Regional Water Planning Schedule**

Andrew Feigenbaum introduced Saheli Majumda to the planning group. Ms. Majumda reviewed what was covered at the last meeting. At that meeting the group considered maximum annual historical water use estimates from 2010 to 2020 for all non-municipal water use. For irrigation, and livestock it was recommended that the water demands be adjusted to use the maximum annual historical water use for all counties. For manufacturing, there were no revisions suggested. For mining there were no demands projected for Kinney County and Real Counties; no revisions suggested for Bandera, Edwards, and Val Verde Counties; and for Kerr County a maximum historical water use was suggested. Steam-electric power was not discussed as there isn't any use of that in this region. WSP submitted the approved revision to TWDB on April 26th; ahead of the July 14, 2023 deadline.

a. **Population and Municipal Water Demand Projections**

Ms. Majumda stated that the deadline for the population and municipal water demand projections is August 11th. She stated that the draft county population in the regional water plan was estimated from the Texas Demographic Center's 2022 calculable population projections, which includes declines in populations. The projections given represent the

permanent residents but not the seasonal or transient population. TWDB provided the data and WSP adjusted numbers based on a full migration scenario (1) or a half migration scenario (.5). WSP used a conservative approach and the scenario which projected the highest population was adopted as the population projection for each county for the next five decades. They conferred with TWDB to discuss their approach and TWDB concurred with the methodology. The .5 migration scenario was selected for Edwards, Kinney, Real and Val Verde Counties, and 1.0 migration scenario was selected for Bandera and Kerr Counties.

Mr. Letz questioned the population numbers as there were extremely different than ones he had seen at other meetings. Ms. Majumda stated that WSP must use the data provided by TWDB. She noted that the difference between the 2021 Plan and the 2026 Plan include drastic differences due to the fact that this is the first time that population projections include declines in population. A brief discussion ensued regarding the accuracy of the population numbers. The planning group believes that populations were increasing in all counties in the region. Mr. Feigenbaum agreed that the numbers need to be evaluated and it is an imperfect system. He suggested that recommendations be made to TWDB on behalf of the stakeholders indicating the type of growth they are seeing more recently. Mr. Letz stated that due to the demographics of this region they cannot plan for some of the strategies; so for smaller counties the entire process is worthless. Mr. Smith reminded the group that when submitting comments to TWDB they group can recommend revisions and identify studies which can lay the groundwork for water management strategies.

Mr. Mauk pointed out that this portion of the Hill Country is in a Priority Groundwater Management Area (PGMA); therefore it has already been identified by the State of Texas as an area that has water issues. Mr. Feigenbaum reiterated that the recommendations that are included in the projections reflect the most conservative approach for every county.

Ms. Majumda reviewed the population projections handouts (1 and 2) with the group. She spoke briefly regarding the Municipal Water Demand Projections. She stated that the Gallons per Capita Daily (GPCD) in the 2026 Regional Water Plan were drafted for water user groups by carrying over the GPCD from the last regional water plan, minus the estimated accumulated Plumbing Code Savings. She noted that the numbers listed account for the transient and seasonal population. She stated that the consultants compared the 2026 Draft GPCD value with two additional values: the 2021 GPCD values and historical maximum water use estimates from 2010 to 2020.

Ms. Majumda discussed Handout 3 which showed the GPCDs for the different water user groups. A discussion ensued regarding the wide range in GPCD values.

Ms. Majumda discussed the methodology used to calculate the Draft Water Demand Projection. She noted that the Draft Water Demand Projection on water demand is a function of Population Projection, GPCD and Plumbing Code Savings. She went on to discuss each county individually. A discussion ensued regarding the accuracy of the numbers. The planning group members believed that the estimates were too low in nearly every area. Mr. Feigenbaum pointed out that the numbers are derived from the 2021 Plan, taking the highest value of GPCD from 2010 to 2020 and the most recent census data. Mr. Letz stated that the numbers given by the TWDB are not realistic. Mr. Robinson stated that the issue was with the methodology used to develop the numbers. Mr. Martin stated that there is disagreement regarding the projections themselves as well as the source of the data that being received. The data is not only inaccurate, it is also underestimated in many cases. He noted that if this information is implemented permanently into the Plan, then the assumption is that the majority of the planning group members approve of the information being distributed and they do not. Mr. Smith stated that the numbers are derived from water use survey data from the entities in each area. A brief discussion ensued regarding the accuracy of the surveys.

Mr. Letz questioned what would happen if the planning group didn't approve the numbers – or voted against them. Mr. Smith noted that the planning group has the opportunity to make recommendations for revisions to the draft numbers received from TWDB. If recommendations are not made then TWDB will only have the original draft numbers to use. Mr. Letz stressed that these same issues have been brought up for as long as the planning group has been in existence and TWDB has done nothing to resolve them. Ms. Majumda suggested sending revisions to TWDB with quantified data which might bring changes to the Plan. A brief discussion ensued regarding the methodology approved by TWDB, the process to offer revisions to the Plan, and the lack of participation with the water surveys.

Mr. Martin noted that if this region is misrepresented it's natural to assume that other rural areas of Texas are misrepresented as well. Concluding that the entire water plan for the State of Texas moving forward for the foreseeable future is completely inaccurate. Mr. Feigenbaum stated they are seeing the same issues in at least six other regions right now.

Dave Mauk stated that he believes that TWDB has an exempt number for each county for the managed available groundwater through the GMA process. Mr. Williams stated that Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District worked out a formula with TWDB on exempt use for exempt wells that they accepted and have in their database. The formula is: 50 gallons a day per person, 2.2 people per well, which is 330 gallons a day per well. That's about 2,500 acre feet in Kerr County are exempt use.

The planning group disagreed with the projections for every county in the region. Mr. Letz noted that for this plan shows we're using less water than we did in the last plan for every decade. Ms. Majumda agreed that that was the projection. Mr. Smith agreed and stated that they are using the most conservative information from the data they have. Mr. Martin stated that the entire process is flawed and it agreed that it would be best to not approve the Plan.

Motion by Charlie Wiedenfeld to disapprove submitting numbers to the TWDB; second by Wes Robinson. Mr. Robinson suggested that the Group go on record as protesting the numbers, notifying TWDB in writing, and making the public aware that the methodology being used is flawed. Mr. Feigenbaum stated that values needed to be sent to TWDB for approval before the August 11th deadline. Mr. Letz stated that TWDB might use their numbers, without any revisions, if the planning group does not submit revisions; and if so, the planning group can state publically that they did not approve the numbers because they were wrong. Mr. Smith noted that if TWDB goes with their own numbers they will be significantly lower than the draft numbers presented today. Mr. Wiedenfeld noted that this was supposed to be a group that the data starts from the bottom up, not the top down and if TWDB wants to use their numbers then the planning group is not responsible. Mr. Letz stated if feedback was received back from TWDB saying they are looking at the numbers then another meeting can be called before the August 11th deadline. ***The motion passed. *At the 8/2/23 meeting Scott Loveland stated that he abstained from the vote. Therefore the minutes were corrected to reflect that he abstained and the vote was not unanimous.**

Mr. Letz stated that he would contact the Chairman of the TWDB and inform them of the issues the planning group has with the suggested numbers. Mr. Martin suggested preparing a Resolution with signatures of the voting members of the planning group to TWDB expressing the frustration of the planning group and the reasons they have disapproved the numbers. Mr. Letz stated that he would prepare a resolution, and/or a letter, and internally submit it to the group prior to sending it out. He suggested that the letter also be sent to our Legislators.

IX. Set next meeting date.

The next meeting was set for September 14th.