

REGION E – FAR WEST TEXAS WATER PLANNING GROUP  
 MEETING MINUTES  
 Thursday, February 17, 2022  
 1:30 P.M. (MDT)  
 400 North Harrison Alpine, TX 79832  
 Range Animal Science Center Room 130

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present (✓)/Absent (X) / Alternate Present (*)</u>
Jesus Reyes, Chair	<i>Water districts</i>	✓, physically present
Scott Reinert	<i>Water Utilities</i>	
Dave Hall	<i>Public</i>	✓, physically present
Teresa Todd	<i>Counties</i>	✓, physically present
Janet Adams	<i>Groundwater Districts</i>	✓, physically present
Commissioner Albert Miller	<i>Water Utilities</i>	✓, physically present
Mayor Becky Brewster	<i>Municipalities</i>	✓, physically present
Mayor Summer Webb	<i>GMA #4</i>	✓, physically present
David Etzold	<i>Real Estate</i>	✓
Omar Martinez for Brad Newton	<i>Economic Development</i>	✓, physically present
Sterry Butcher	<i>Public</i>	✓
Rick Tate		X
Randy Barker	<i>Groundwater Districts</i>	✓
Jeff Bennett	<i>Environment</i>	✓, physically present
Tim Leary	<i>Agriculture</i>	✓, physically present
Sean Woodward for VJ Smith	<i>Industries</i>	✓, physically present
<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(✓)/Absent(X)/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Kevin Smith for Elizabeth McCoy	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	✓
William Finn	General Land Office/Region 14 Liaison	✓
Others Present:		
Annette Gutierrez, RGCOG	Andrew Feigenbaum, WSP	
Sarah Backhouse, TWDB	Jennifer Herrera, WSP	
Katie Dahlberg, TWDB		

1. Welcome – Chairman Jesus “Chuy” Reyes

Chairman Chuy Reyes welcomed the group and received confirmation that a quorum was present. The meeting started at 1:37 pm.

2. Recognition of Guests and Designated Alternates

3. Review and approve the minutes for the General Meeting held on October 21, 2021.

Dave Hall made a motion to accept the Minutes from October 21, 2021 with the corrections to the roster as indicated. Jeff Bennett seconded the motion. Chairman Chuy Reyes called for a vote and the motion was approved.

4. Chairman – Update on the RWPG Chairs’ Conference Call

Chairman Reyes could not attend the most recent conference call because he was visiting with Commissioner Kathleen Jackson, Commissioner, TWDB. Commissioner Jackson was in town to announce awards that were being made to several communities in El Paso County. Kevin Smith, TWDB, stated there will be summary information from the conference call on their website.

5. Member Updates

Chairman Reyes informed the group that the El Paso County Water Improvement Irrigation District #1 (EPCWID#1) will more than likely start their irrigation similar to last year where they will start in June and hopefully go up to August. He said it has been a trying year. He also mentioned cotton yields have been selling higher recently and because of that the farmers want to start planting in April. EPCWID#1 will provide return flow water to the farmers in March. Return flow water is water that has been received from El Paso Water’s sewer treatment water plant. Chairman Reyes also discussed the failure of El Paso Water’s sewer line where raw sewage was being diverted into the Rio Grande River. EPCWID #1 had to cut their irrigation season short in August due to the sewer break. Since that time, EPCWID #1 has been assisting El Paso Water with their cleanup efforts. EPCWID #1 has pumped out water from the Rio Grande to the Riverside Canal about 1.5 miles to the Roger Bustamante treatment plant. He noted El Paso Water had difficulty in repairing the line because of the pandemic and the strain it has put on the global supply chain in terms of getting the parts needed. On behalf of El Paso Water, Scott Reinert thanked Chuy for their efforts.

Jeff Bennett mentioned that he and the Rio Grande Joint Venture are coordinating an investigation into base flows in the Big Bend segment of the Rio Grande. Project partners include the International Boundary and Water Commission, National Park Service, and Sul Ross State University. They will start gathering discharge measurements starting March 26<sup>th</sup>. He said this is during low flow during the season and these low, steady flows will allow for synoptic measurements that will allow for determining total groundwater inputs. He said that previous seepage runs indicate that groundwater contributions can be estimated to be approximately 200,000 acre-feet. As there are not significant water rights users, this water is delivered into the Amistad reservoir. Because the groundwater has lower total dissolved solid concentrations than the surface water entering the top of the segment, the groundwater plays an important role in maintaining low TDS concentrations in the reservoir. Previous investigations also indicate a spring complex that is not gaged as it is below Foster’s Weir, the last IBWC gage before Amistad

Reservoir. He said they have conducted the study previously in 2006 and 2011, with the Park Service and the U.S. Geological Service. He hopes to report good numbers to the group.

Billy Finn from IBWC informed the group they have a new Commissioner, Dr. Maria-Elena Giner. They are also having a Stakeholders meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> in Del Rio if anyone is interested. He mentioned Dr. Giner has experience on both sides of the border through BECC. Since she is an Engineer by trade, the staff has been working quickly on her initiatives. They are happy to have her.

6. Election of Officers for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary

Becky Brewster made a motion to appoint the current Officers for this calendar year. Albert Miller seconded the motion. Chairman Chuy Reyes called for a vote and the motion was approved.

7. Nominations for FWTWPG Members

Dave Hall made a motion to accept the nominees presented. Becky Brewster seconded the motion. Chairman Chuy Reyes called for a vote and the motion was approved.

Ms. Gutierrez also asked for the group to allow her to repost the nominations for counties, generating utilities, and tourism. Dave Hall made a motion to repost the positions as requested. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. Chairman Reyes called for a vote and the motion was approved.

8. Review of Bylaws

Annette Gutierrez mentioned several items for the group to consider revising in the future. She mentioned the notification period of thirty to forty-five days for nominations and the inclusion of notifying water rights holders of the nominations. Mayor Becky Brewster mentioned many of these items were included at the request of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Annette told the group she would get with Elizabeth McCoy to discuss these items and meet with the Executive Committee to discuss any proposed changes.

9. Texas Water Development Board Update

Kevin Smith, TWDB, provided an update to the program. He informed the group there have been amendments made to the regional water planning rulemaking process. The board will adopt the final rules in the spring of 2022. He also covered an update to the draft demand projections. He noted the deadline to request revisions for non-municipal demands will be July of 2023. He also discussed regional water planning contract amendments. It is anticipated to occur in the summer of 2022. The amendment will include the anticipated total project cost, the full scope of work, as well as updated contract guidance documents.

10. TWDB presentation on Projections Methodologies for the 2026 Regional Water Plans

Katie Dahlberg, Manager for Projections & Socioeconomic Analysis Water Supply Planning, provided an overview of the projections methodologies that are being used for the 2026 Regional Water Plans. The overview included the projections process, the projections data release schedule, and, finally the projections methodologies that were used for both non-municipal water demands and population–municipal water demand.

11. WSP Update on Regional Water Planning Schedule

Jennifer Herrera, WSP, introduced Andrew Feigenbaum, who will be a support to Jennifer and Region E. Andrew informed the group that previously he worked on the remediation side for several years before moving to clean water. He worked with El Paso Water in 2014 on some projects with Hudspeth County. He said he was looking forward to meeting everyone. Jennifer next provided an update on the schedule for the group. She highlighted what has occurred so far as the group started its planning schedule. She highlighted tasks 1 – Planning Area Description, 2A – Non-Pop Water Demand Projections, 2B – Pop Water Demand Projections, 8 – Unique Sites & Policy Recommendations, 9 – Infrastructure Financing Analysis, and 10 - Public Participation & Plan Adoption have been funded. She also mentioned the group should receive funding for the remaining tasks by this summer.

She also informed the groups of the following dates:

- January 2022 – TWDB released the draft water demand projections for livestock, manufacturing & Steam Electric water use categories
- March 2022 – TWDB to distribute WUG list, historical population & GPCD for municipal WUGs
- July 2023 – Deadline for RWPGs to request changes to WUG list & historical data for municipal WUGs
- August 2022 – TWDB to distribute draft irrigation & mining water demand projections

12. Consider and discuss draft non-municipal water demand projections: Livestock; Manufacturing; and Steam-Electric Power

Jennifer Herrera presented additional information on the draft non-municipal water demand projections: Livestock; Manufacturing; and Steam-Electric Power. No action was taken.

13. Set date for next meeting

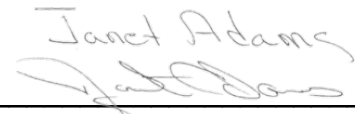
The group decided to meet on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 pm in Clint and on May 12<sup>th</sup> either in Alpine or at the High Frontier. There will also be an Executive Committee meeting at 11:30 am on May 12<sup>th</sup>, central time.

14. Adjourn

Albert Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Bennett seconded the motion. Chairman Chuy Reyes called for a vote and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 3:22 pm.

04/21/2022

Date



Janet Adams