



REGION E – FAR WEST TEXAS WATER PLANNING GROUP
 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
 October 15, 2024
 1:00 P.M. (MDT) / 2:00 P.M. (CDT)
 Tech20 Center, Waco Room
 10751 Montana
 El Paso, TX 79935

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present (✓)/Absent (X) / Alternate Present (*)</u>
Chairman Scott Reinert	<i>Water Utilities</i>	✓, physically present
Vice-Chairman Dave Hall	<i>Public</i>	✓, physically present
Secretary, Teresa Todd	<i>Counties</i>	X
Summer Webb	<i>Groundwater Districts</i>	✓, virtual
Albert Miller	<i>Water Utilities</i>	X
Becky Brewster	<i>Municipalities</i>	X
Haley Davis	<i>GMA #4</i>	X
David Etzold	<i>Real Estate</i>	✓, physically present
Sterry Butcher	<i>Public</i>	✓, virtual
Rick Tate	<i>Agriculture</i>	X
Randy Barker	<i>Groundwater Districts</i>	X
Jeff Bennett	<i>Environment</i>	X
Tim Leary	<i>Agriculture</i>	✓, virtual
Sean Woodard	<i>Industries</i>	✓, virtual
Gerry Grijalva	<i>Water Districts</i>	✓, virtual
Arlina Palacios	<i>Public</i>	✓, virtual
Avi Nash	<i>Counties</i>	X
Adriana Pulecio proxy for Omar Martinez	<i>Water Districts</i>	✓, virtual
Dan Dunlap	<i>Small Business</i>	✓, virtual
Jay Ornelas	<i>Water Districts</i>	✓, virtual
John T. Kennedy	<i>Economic Development Rural</i>	✓, virtual
Raquel Onsurez	<i>Electric Generating Utilities</i>	✓, virtual
Jose Landeros	<i>Tourism</i>	X
Roberto Ransom	<i>Economic Development Urban</i>	✓, virtual
Thomas Black	<i>Economic Development Rural</i>	✓, physically present

<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(✓)/Absent(X)/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Heather Rose	Texas Water Development Board	✓, virtual
Others Present:		
Jennifer Jackson, Carollo, virtual	Jon Albright, Freese & Nichols, virtual	
Kristal Williams, Freese & Nichols, virtual	Annette Gutierrez, RGCOG, physically present	
Peggy O'Brien, RGCOG, physically present	Becky Gates, Carollo, virtual	
Aaron Burciaga, RGCOG, virtual	Dawn Walker-Hughes, El Paso Water Utilities Public Service Board, physically present	
Jennifer Barr, El Paso Water Conservation, physically present		

1. Welcome –Chairman Scott Reinert

Chairman Reinert, with a quorum present, called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm MDT.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Recognition of Guests and Designated Alternates

Welcome was extended to conservation experts Dawn Walker-Hughes and Jennifer Barr and Becky Gates from Carollo and Adriana Pulecio, proxy for Omar Martinez. Also welcomed was the newest member of the group: Thomas Black.

4. Review and approve the minutes for the General Committee Meeting held on September 10, 2024

Chairman Reinert asked if there were any comments. Since there were none, Dave Hall made a motion to approve the minutes. Dan Dunlap seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved.

5. TWDB General Updates, by Heather Rose

Heather Rose presented to the upcoming timeline to the group: today approve Chapters 1, 3 and 4 and look at draft 7, 9 and 10. IPP due to TWDB on March 3, 2025, with final plan due October 20, 2025.

The 2021 Regional Water Plan implementation survey workbook was sent to consultants which is required to document the implementation status of recommended strategies and projects in the 2021 plan. Survey results will be included as part of Chapter 9 in the 2026 plan.

In July 2024 TWDB's Water Supply Planning and Groundwater divisions held an orientation meeting for the planning groups' groundwater management area (GMA) representatives. Also gave an overview of the GMA and regional water planning process timelines, how information from each of the processes is considered, roles of representatives, and an update on planning activities. A recording of the meeting is available online. There is a new TWDB Executive Administrator Bryan McMath, and New Board Member Tonya Miller.

There is a Financial Assistance Workshop Thursday, November 7, 2024 1:30 p.m. MDT at Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at El Paso 1380 A&M Circle El Paso, TX 79927. It will be a repeat of the presentation that was given at our General Meeting on September 10, but if you are interested in

attending you may contact TWDB's Outreach Team for more information by visiting:
<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/financial/index.asp> Or emailing: financial_assistance@twdb.texas.gov

6. Report from Carollo on the schedule of Regional Water Planning

Jennifer Jackson summarized the status of the schedule. She advised the group that she did not receive any further feedback on Chapters 1, 3 and 4, which are to be approved at this meeting, and was interested to do a preliminary review of Chapters 7, 9 and 10. Jennifer shared about the timing of the pending results of the UTEP Population Study and how it will impact the Initial Proposed Plan (IPP) and proposed options to help plan in light of uncertainties in the region.

7. Update from Carollo on the discussion had with the TWDB regarding the timing of the UTEP Population Study, impacts to the IPP deliverable and consideration of the Management Supply Factor as an option

Jennifer provided an update that she is awaiting a draft update from UTEP, but Dr. Fullerton shared a spreadsheet that included populations from 1985 – 2075. The collection methodology is still unknown but when she receives the final report, she proposes the group include it as an appendix to the IPP and have the group plan conservatively within their scope and guidelines can use Management Supply Factor (MSF) which allows planning groups to address uncertainties (e.g., population projections, water demands, climate variability, drought) and continue to plan conservatively without hindering the final report. The MSF will be used for every WUG so each entity can be reflected accurately (total volume of existing water supply + amount of water supply divided by the water demand for that particular WUG). This creates a water supply buffer that can account for additional water supply to address a larger population if needed. Jennifer and Heather confirmed MSF does not impact funding eligibility or scoring. It helps the group to plan in a more detailed way with a safety net so that strategies can cover needs by building in uncertainties.

8. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve the draft IPP Chapters 1, 3 and 4 and authorize Carollo to work with WUGs and/or the TWDB on any final modifications

Jennifer reviewed a summary of the contents of each Chapter. All feedback and redline revisions have been received and accepted. Chapters 1 and 3 are final and ready for approval. Chapter 4 has 7 tables: 4 are complete; remaining 3 will be finished when data is provided by the pending MSF. Dave Hall suggested adding sources of water that serve needs, in addition to the name of each WUG and the water need. Jennifer will add before the final IPP is submitted. Jennifer recommended these Chapters where all data has been received be approved and focus on drafts of other Chapters. Dave Hall made motion for the group to approve Chapters 1, 3 and 4. David Etzold seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved.

9. Consider, discuss and review draft Chapters 7, 9 and 10 of the 2026 Far West Texas Water Plan

Jennifer reviewed all three Chapters and requested group members to download and comment on all.

Chapter 7 was a big undertaking because the last cycle included detailed responses to Regional Drought (Planning, Triggers, Existing and Planned Responses, Emergency Interconnects, Regional and Local Drought Responses, Municipal and Utility Drought Contingency Plans). Tables ended at 2019 and there is a lot of new data to include. Table 7-1 Palmer Severity (long term drought is cumulative 9/2019 – 2024. 7-2 Precipitation Data for Quadrangles: TWDB provides precipitation data 602 (El Paso and Hudspeth) 704 (Brewster, Presidio and Jeff Davis). Culberson not included but Jennifer was able to tapestry it for the region as a whole in Table 7-2. 2022 drought rivaled 2011 and the new plan will reflect that. This region is the best prepared in the state due to being in the most arid area, so when drought comes it is managed.

Figure 7-3 captures into 2024 what Elephant Butte storage in acre feet. Drought of record in 1950's but reoccurring low levels are evident in the interim until now. Figure 7-4 decreased peak flows after

construction of Elephant Butte. Stream flow info 2008 were due to hurricanes. Figure 7-5 plots average discharge plotted 1941-2023 average. 7-6 Groundwater Level Indicator shows 2004-2023 Daily Groundwater Elevation and Daily Precipitation and daily response time of the Igneous Aquifer Level. This aquifer is very responsive to these rainfall events. Triggers in Table 7-1 highlights some changes in the drought contingency plan since the last one – still waiting on a few more updates. Table 7-2 shows Existing and Potential Emergency Interconnects – major facilities that can interconnect with other utilities that will help bring on additional water supply during a state of emergency in Table 7-3. As wells get plugged or no longer selected to be active monitoring well, included TWDB data so active monitoring wells now updated.

Chapter 9 details Implementation and Comparison to the Previous RWP and Progress on Regionalization. Small changes and new content brief discussion re: implementation of strategies from the 2021 Plan. Additionally, results from the Infeasible Water Strategy survey were included. Table 9-1 presents the survey results in brief and additional comment column was added to include all projects that have been funded by TWDB with a project number, is another layer of information. Also collecting information from each WUG around previous plans for Recommended and Alternate strategies and prices using TWDB's costing tool. This last piece is on hold until Chapter 5 is finalized.

Chapter 10 discusses the group, the management, the cadence of Region E's meetings, etc.

Jennifer will need feedback on these chapters by October 31, to compile, post by November 4 to approve at the next meeting on November 7.

10. Report from Carollo on other regional planning efforts

Jennifer updated the group on Chapter 5 updates and Appendix 5B are in progress, updating as project sponsors and WUGs respond. Carollo has also developed a table that documents potentially feasible WMSs (TWDB's 24 recommended strategies to meet deficits in the region) and has provided needs and strategies that have been evaluated as either Non-Potentially Feasible or Potentially Feasible strategies and the Appendix checks the boxes.

There are 8 new WUGs with water deficits in this plan that will need strategies developed for them. Will include the summary template at the end of Chapter 4 and segue into Chapter 5 that sets out strategies that are feasible.

11. Consider FWTWPG membership dues for FY 25 and FY 26 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2026)

Annette Gutierrez asked that the group's consideration to approve an overall increase of 6.8% for a total amount of \$64,892 and proportionately distribute among the entities. Underground Water Districts/Counties that were paying \$300 will now be asked to pay \$500, with El Paso County WID#1 remaining at \$2,500. All entities on this list are active participants. Dave Hall advised the group that the Executive Committee agreed to recommend they approve these increases. David Etzold seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved.

12. Consider and Discuss/confirm a date for the next regular meeting (November 7)

The next General Meeting will be on Thursday, November 7, 2024 (in person, with hybrid option, at Big Bend Telecom in Alpine) at 1pm MDT / 2pm CDT.

13. Adjourn

Summer Webb made a motion to adjourn. David Etzold seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved. Meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm MDT.