



REGION E – FAR WEST TEXAS WATER PLANNING GROUP
 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
 November 7, 2024
 12:00 P.M. (MDT) / 1:00 P.M. (CDT)
 Big Bend Telecom
 808 N 5th Street
 Alpine, TX 79830

| <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> | ✓, virtual |
| Summer Webb | <i>Groundwater Districts</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Albert Miller | <i>Water Utilities</i> | X |
| Becky Brewster | <i>Municipalities</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Haley Davis | <i>GMA #4</i> | X |
| David Etzold | <i>Real Estate</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Sterry Butcher | <i>Public</i> | X |
| Rick Tate | <i>Agriculture</i> | X |
| Randy Barker | <i>Groundwater Districts</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Jeff Bennett | <i>Environment</i> | ✓, physically present |
| Tim Leary | <i>Agriculture</i> | ✓, physically present |
| Sean Woodard | <i>Industries</i> | ✓, physically present |
| Gerry Grijalva | <i>Water Districts</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Arlina Palacios | <i>Public</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Avi Nash | <i>Counties</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Omar Martinez | <i>Water Districts</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Dan Dunlap | <i>Small Business</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Jay Ornelas | <i>Water Districts</i> | ✓, physically present |
| John T. Kennedy | <i>Economic Development Rural</i> | ✓, physically present |
| Raquel Onsurez | <i>Electric Generating Utilities</i> | X |
| Jose Landeros | <i>Tourism</i> | ✓, virtual |
| Roberto Ransom | <i>Economic Development Urban</i> | X |
| Thomas Black | <i>Economic Development Rural</i> | ✓, virtual |

| <u>Non-voting Member</u> | <u>Agency</u> | <u>Present(✓)/Absent(X)/ Alternate Present (*)</u> |
|--|---|--|
| Heather Rose | Texas Water Development Board | ✓, physically present |
| Others Present: | | |
| Jennifer Jackson, Carollo, virtual | Jon Albright, Freese & Nichols, virtual | |
| Kristal Williams, Freese & Nichols, virtual | Annette Gutierrez, RGCOG, virtual | |
| Peggy O'Brien, RGCOG, physically present | Becky Gates, Carollo, virtual | |
| Aaron Burciaga, RGCOG, physically present | Danielle Fagan, Freese & Nichols, virtual | |
| Juan Fernandez, El Paso Bureau of Reclamation, virtual | Gerry Melendez, El Paso Tourism, virtual | |
| Dr. Tom Fullerton, UTEP, virtual | | |

1. Welcome –Chairman Scott Reinert

Chairman Reinert, with a quorum present, called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm CDT.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Recognition of Guests and Designated Alternates

Welcome was extended to Juan Fernandez, El Paso Bureau of Reclamation and to Gerry Melendez, El Paso Tourism.

4. Review and approve the minutes for the General Committee Meeting held on October 15, 2024

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

5. TWDB General Updates, by Heather Rose

Heather summarized the remaining timeline for the planning cycle: Region E submits to TWDB its adopted IPP by March 3, 2025. TWDB has 120 days for comments (TCEQ and Parks will also have opportunity to comment). Simultaneously during this period, RWG will post a public hearing notice (minimum of 30 days prior) during which time the IPP will be available at public locations (e.g., libraries and courthouses) in each county in the region. A public hearing will be held at which public oral and written comments will be accepted. Within 60 days following the hearing there will be a written public and agency comment period. The RWG will consider all comments and submit their final plan by October 20, 2025. Checklist of requirements are on the TWDB website to be sure everything is completed.

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

Jennifer Jackson summarized the status of the schedule to meet the deadlines. Agreed to take the month of December. Chapters 1, 3 and 4 have already approved with flexibility to modify. Draft chapters 9 and 10 reviewed and to be approved today. Circling back today on Chapters 2 and 7 which include new information from Dr. Fullerton's study. The group is making good progress and is on track. Use of the

Management Supply Factor as a tool to create a water supply buffer for each WUG which will account for uncertainties and enable the creation of a more custom plan.

7. Consider, discuss and review the TWDB approved population projections in comparison to the draft UTEP population projections.

Jennifer did a preliminary comparison of the population projections by the RWPG and UTEP and graphed the total population projects for 2030 – 2080. RWPG numbers were higher in 2030, 2040 and 2050 and decades that were further out (2060, 2070, 2080) were less than UTEP's projections. Will learn which methodologies were used when Dr. Fullerton joins the meeting and, in light of uncertainties in planning so far out, using MSF will be wise to build up enough of a buffer of water to be able to handle what happens.

8. Consider, discuss and review the draft Management Supply Factors by WUG.

Jennifer explained the formula that is used to come up with a recommended additional supply when there is uncertainty around population data to build up a buffer amount of supply that goes beyond meeting immediate needs. Can modify on an entity-by-entity (WUG-by-WUG) basis to create a custom fitted plan for the region.

9. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve the draft IPP Chapters 9 and 10 and authorize Carollo to work with WUGs and/or the TWDB on any final modifications.

Chapter 9 survey level of progress of previous strategies and compares 2021 and 2026 plan. Heather is providing feedback as sections are ready for review so TWDB input is included (e.g., economy of scale (e.g., strategies that serve more than one WUG), rules are being followed, incentivized strategies for region as a whole, etc.). Added that Region E recognizes community-based strategies where possible into the future. New column in several tables in the plan – where there are shortages and what strategies are tied to fixing the deficits.

Chapter 10 discusses public involvement, updating planning group members, and regional detail to meet new requirement of providing summary of rural outreach (10.1.2) which is based on information received from WUGs.

Jennifer recommends the group approve these chapters. John Kennedy made a motion to approve Chapters 9 and 10. David Etzold seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved.

10. Discussion with Dr. Fullerton of UTEP regarding his draft population projections.

Dr. Fullerton summarized the steps he took to generate the forecast information in each county: resident births and deaths, per capita incomes (impacts fertility rates), net migration (impacted by labor market equations). Projected values were similar but not identical (county by county). Methodologies differed (i.e., using Utility-based boundaries (TWDB) v. County/Census-based boundaries (WUGs)). Projections flip midway because of the use of different boundary methods. 2.1.2 included Dr. Fullerton's summary as an Appendix to account for predicted growth in addition to TWDB's data. References will also appear in Chapters 7 and 8. Including both data sets is a good strategy to plan for the uncertainty around each.

11. Consider, discuss and review draft Chapters 2, 7 and 8 of the 2026 Far West Texas Water Plan.

Jennifer recapped where Dr. Fullerton's letter (2.1.2) is included and explained how the data was collected, the second opinion/additional study, to provide economic and policy factors that can account for population increases (and water demand) in addition to TWDB's calculations. Jennifer asked the group to review and provide more feedback.

Chapter 7, focused on drought, had good feedback from the members re: stream flow indicator section (e.g., breaches of levies in the western section) and uncertainties occurring in times that were worse than the drought of record. MSF tool can be used here, too. New subsection will be added to explain how the region will be plan for uncertainties that go beyond the identified water need. Asked the group to review the draft chapter which includes additional drought adaptation strategy that John Kennedy and Jeff Bennett suggest stream and watershed restoration to manage recharge and add to Chapter 5. Point out any drought response efforts that are not helpful and socio-economic impacts of drought. Chapter 8, policy/recommendation and ecologically unique river and stream segments. Jennifer encouraged feedback. She included storm water and flood planning process information and asked those involved to share more about the goals and key components that came from that planning.

12. Report from FNI on the status of the Task 5B scope of work.

Freese & Nichols sent surveys to collect data from all WUGs. Incorporating stakeholder data into the analysis is very important for funding and strategy creation. FNI asked the group to reach out to the WUGs that haven't responded yet (Anthony, Horizon, EPCWID#1, EPC SEP, Dell City and Valentine). This survey information is needed by November 21.

13. Report from Carollo on other regional planning efforts

Jennifer requested feedback 2, 7 and 8 by Christmas.

14. Consider and Discuss/confirm a date for the next regular meeting

The next two General Meetings before the IPP deadline in March will be on Thursday, January 23, 2025 and February 27, 2025 (both in person, with hybrid option, at the RGCOG offices in El Paso) at 12pm MDT / 1pm CDT. Dave Hall made a motion to confirm the next two meetings. Thomas Black seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved.

15. Adjourn

David Etzold made a motion to adjourn. Dave Hall seconded the motion. Chairman Reinert called for a vote and the motion was approved. Meeting was adjourned at 3:21 pm CDT.