

Minutes of the March 28, 2002 Meeting of the
Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group for the
Senate Bill 1 Regional Water Planning Program for Region "N"

This meeting of the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group (Coastal Bend RWPG) was held in the auditorium at the TAMU Research and Extension Center, 10345 Agnes Street, Corpus Christi, Texas 78406.

Ms. Carola Serrato of the Coastal Bend RWPG called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

A visual attendance was noted. Voting members of the Coastal Bend RWPG in attendance included Mr. Scotty Bledsoe, Mr. Greg Carter, Mr. Bernie DeLaune, Dr. Patrick Hubert, Mr. Bernard Paulson, Mr. Mark Scott, Ms. Carola Serrato, and Mr. Fausto Yturria. Dr. Jennifer Smith-Engle supplied a proxy for Dr. Jim Tolan to be her designated alternate; Mr. Ariel Garcia supplied a proxy for Mr. Con Mims to be his designated alternate; Mr. Billy Dick supplied a proxy for Mr. Ed Garaña to be his designated alternate; and Mr. Jerry Kane supplied a proxy for Mr. Max Castenada to be his designated alternate. A quorum was determined to be present.

Non-voting members in attendance included Mr. Ralph Boeker, Mr. Mims, Dr. Tolan, and Mr. Jon Sunday. Guests included Mr. Ray Allen, Mr. Castaneda, Mr. Ken Choffel, Mr. Garaña, Mr. Ron Massey, Ms. Maggie Moorhouse, Mr. Jim Naismith, and Mr. Tom Reding, Jr.

Ms. Serrato asked for approval of the minutes of the February 21, 2002 meeting of the Coastal Bend RWPG for the Senate Bill 1 Regional Water Planning Program for Region N. There was a motion by Mr. Yturria, provided there were no additions or corrections. It was seconded by Mr. Scott. There was no discussion and the minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Serrato asked Mr. James Dodson and Mr. Choffel to present the Recommended Scope of Work and Budget for Planning Activities to revise the Coastal Bend Regional Water Plan. Mr. Dodson brought to the group's attention to a revised Appendix B, different from the one that the members had received in their packets. The main change is how the budget is broken out among the various tasks. Mr. Dodson briefly discussed the scope of work and budget for the supplemental money, and that the staff's recommendation is to focus the group's efforts on the first task and reserve some of the others for consideration for the additional funding that will become available in January.

Mr. Dodson then asked Mr. Choffel to present any additional information about how the tasks were structured. Mr. Choffel said that there were a few changes based on new information. Item one of the Supplemental Water Management Strategies combines several strategies that were discussed at the previous meeting, and therefore reduce the cost by \$27,000. Items 3A and 3B, visual models of reservoir systems, are now affordable to do because of faster computers. Mr. Choffel summarized that the funding for Item one was what was being requested in the first round of supplemental funding, and the remaining items could be discussed or added to by the group for the second round of funding.

Mr. Dodson asked Mr. Choffel to explain the money available for supplemental funding and how they calculated how much might be available for Region N. Mr. Choffel explained that of the \$1.9 available, using 3.35% (Region N's portion of the formula funding), that would be approximately \$64,000 of additional funding. Another way to look at it would be to divide the money equally between the 16 regions, or about \$120,000. The board will be looking for critical needs and decide across the state where the money should go.

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Mr. Choffel then opened the floor for questions. Mr. Bledsoe asked about the groundwater availability model (GAM). The TWDB has developed new models that will be available in January. The rules state that the new models have to be used unless a region has better data. The Coastal Bend region has already put in a lot of money and effort to develop a detailed five-layer model of the Gulf Coast Aquifer. A subcommittee was also formed to look at various draw-down scenarios for water supply. Those numbers were used to determine availability for each of the 11 counties. Mr. Choffel feels very confident in those numbers and is asking TWDB for permission to continue to use those numbers, and not spend more money running the new GAM model. Mr. Choffel inquired of Mr. Boeker to confirm whether that information would be considered by TWDB and if the board would favorably consider the request.

Mr. Carter commented that the \$28,000 in the budget to run the new model needed to stay in case the region did have to use the new model. Mr. Dodson explained that prior to TWDB awarding the contract, there will be a negotiating period where the budget dollars can be moved between tasks. Once the contract is signed, an amendment to the contract is required if more than 35% is moved between tasks.

Ms. Serrato asked for public comment on the scope of work and budget. There was none. Ms. Serrato then asked for a motion to approve the scope of work and budget. Mr. Bledsoe made the motion, it was seconded by Mr. DeLaune. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Serrato asked for a motion authorizing the Nueces River Authority, on behalf of the Coastal Bend RWPG, to submit an Application to TWDB for a Regional Water Planning Grant to revise the Coastal Bend Regional Water Plan. Dr. Hubert made the motion, it was seconded by Mr. Yturria. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Serrato then asked Mr. Dodson and Mr. Boeker for their report on administrative issues. Mr. Dodson presented some information on population and water demand projections that will be used in the next round of planning. Region N met with TWDB the previous week. Mr. Choffel, Mr. Castenada, and Mr. Dodson attended the meeting. Mr. Dodson went over the preliminary numbers that TWDB is proposing to use in the region. Mr. Dodson asked for feedback from entities. Mr. Dodson stressed that the numbers are only at the county level. The region will work with water user groups at the city level, and possibly more defined levels. The city level numbers may be available by mid-May. TWDB is making population projections for counties, not cities. Mr. Dodson reviewed a table of population projections through 2060 by county based on rate of migration, births, and deaths. A "mostly likely" migration scenario was used for each county based on historical information.

Mr. Dodson pointed out that after a period of time, the population projection declines, which makes the water supply projections more difficult. In the case of Aransas County, this is due to the current migration is primarily older people, so that in the future, the death rate eventually becomes greater than the birth and migration rates. Each city will be able to review the numbers and propose adjustments as long as the county totals don't change. This information is based on the 2000 Census and the State Demographer's office, which is much more recent than the population figures used in the first round of planning. For these reasons, Mr. Dodson thinks that these numbers are good and will be used for the next round of planning. Mr. Dodson pointed out

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that the numbers show that Region N is growing at a more modest rate than many of the other regions.

Mr. Choffel pointed out, assuming that the average lifespan is 80 years, that in the 2060, the year to which the next regional water is forecasting to, no one at this meeting would still be alive.

Mr. Boeker reemphasized that the numbers may be able to be adjusted between categories, but that TWDB does not want the totals to change, and that the final numbers will be approved by the end of the year.

Mr. Dodson said that the other side of the equation is the per capita water use. Using the 2000 Census and the 2000 reports on water use reports, TWDB will calculate per capita water use. During the first round of planning, the per capita usage was expected to decrease due to conservation methods. Now, the strategy is to keep the per capita use constant so you have straight-line projection for water demand, and move conservation into the category of a water management strategy. Therefore, the regions will have a choice of what level of conservation will be implemented in the area and apply that to the water plan.

Mr. Dodson pointed out that this area is already very water efficient and would soon reach of point of diminishing returns if the trend continued. Other areas of the state have more latitude in this regard.

Mr. Carter asked about the per capita use numbers coming from TWDB. Mr. Dodson explained that TWDB gets water use reports from all water suppliers in the state. Mr. Dodson also pointed out that the per capita use would reflect drought year water usage, so these numbers need to be looked at closely. This area was one of the few areas that did not go into a drought management measures due to the water available from the Mary Rhodes Memorial Pipeline. Therefore, the per capita use numbers for this area may be relatively high compared to others.

Ms. Serrato asked how detailed it would be for the rural counties. Mr. Boeker said that it would go done to the level of a utility serving a population of 500 and by volume. Mr. Dodson pointed out that the region would have more water user groups.

Dr. Hubert asked where the Baffin Bay Water Corporation would be categorized. Mr. Dodson explained that it would depend on whether they were above the population or volume threshold. Mr. Dodson explained that the last round of planning only went down to the level of municipal use. This time, TWDB is going down a level, as long as the water supplier falls above the threshold. Mr. Boeker said that he would have list of all the water user groups at the next meeting. Mr. Dodson explained that some of the population numbers will be shifted out of "County-Other" to a specific water user group.

Mr. Dodson then reported on the infrastructure finance report. Senate Bill 2 requires recommendations on how communities with identified water demands in the future would be able to pay for them. There were 23 entities in the region with water supply shortages within the planning period. Some were aggregates groups, with no one entity that fit the aggregate category to which to send a survey. For others, the RWPG was able to suggest water management strategies that did not involve capital expense. Therefore, only five entities received survey

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forms. The forms were mailed about three weeks prior. The due date was March 29 (the day after this meeting), and only one had been returned so far. The others would be sent reminders. The public and the RWPG need to provide input to develop broader policy recommendations to provide to the state as to how they should address the infrastructure financing issue. The deadline for the draft report is April 30, 2002. Mr. Dodson suggested that the April RWPG meeting be announced as a public meeting on this topic. The final draft is due June 1, 2002.

Mr. Dodson then discussed the local administrative expense budget. The City of Corpus Christi has already paid their share for this year. The letters of allocation to the other entities will be sent out. Mr. Dodson explained that since the City of Corpus Christi provides water to 75% of the citizens in the 11 county area, they pay 75% of the administrative costs. Those costs are passed on the user through the raw water costs. Of the total, \$2000 - \$3000 still have not been collected.

Mr. Boeker reminded Ms. Serrato of the upcoming all chairs conference call.

Ms. Serrato asked for any public comment. There were questions about the two-way pipeline. Mr. Choffel explained that it would only be used during times of flood. Water would only be pumped when flow is above a median flow. It would also depend on the level of Lake Corpus Christi.

There was a question about Task 7, items 2 and 5. Mr. Dodson explained that this is a result of SB 2, where the regions need to do a broader assessment of the impact of the entire regional water plan.

Mr. Joe Cole asked why there is a public perception that there is too much fresh water flowing into the bay. Ms. Serrato referred him to the Nueces Estuary Advisory Council, and stated that this meeting is not the right forum for this discussion. Mr. Dodson said that the issue was addressed as policy recommendations and water management strategies in the Regional Water Plan. He also explained the passthru strategy. Mr. Massey then explained the history of the operating plan. Ms. Serrato then asked that the discussion be continued after the meeting.

A question was posed about the status of the Rincon Bayou Project and the water survey at Lake Corpus. The first phase, the overflow channel, has been completed. The second phase is in progress. As for the lake survey, the field work has been completed and the information is with TWDB.

The next meeting date was set for April 18, 2002.

Ms. Serrato asked Mr. Mims to speak about changes within the Nueces River Authority. He informed the group that Mr. Dodson would no longer be employed by the Nueces River Authority. He would be working in the private sector. Mr. Mims and the group thanked Mr. Dodson for his years of public service.

Mr. Yturria made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Bledsoe seconded. Ms. Serrato adjourned the meeting at 2:56 pm.

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Minutes prepared by: Ms. Rocky Freund and Ms. Carola Serrato

Minutes Submitted by: _____
Patrick Hubert, DVM
Secretary, Coastal Bend RWPG

Date