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Subject: Regional Water Planning Newsletter - January 2024
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Regional Water Planning Newsletter – January 2024

Good afternoon RWPG Stakeholders,

Please see below the January newsletter with updates from the TWDB Regional Water Planning program.

Upcoming TWDB and other resources for RWPGs

TWDB staff have been continuing our work on developing a variety of resources to assist planning groups with plan development. These resources and anticipated release dates are noted below.

Rural outreach

The TWDB will provide two resources to assist RWPGs with their rural outreach efforts. These include a *County water supply planning information & resources document* for each county in Texas and list of rural entities that meet the criteria of being classified as rural based on Senate Bill 469, 88th Legislature.

The county water supply information document will include highlights from the 2021 Regional Water Plan such as water supply sources, water needs, and recommended strategies within that county, a list of municipal water user groups, including which are considered rural, and a list of potentially vulnerable systems. TWDB anticipates releasing these materials by February 2024.

Conservation resources

Conservation resources to be released this spring include a conservation resource guide that will provide information on how to access conservation resources and how they can be used to support regional water plan development. The resource guide will discuss how data such as water use surveys, water loss audits, water conservation plans, and conservation plan annual reports can be used to support the evaluation of conservation strategies and the development of the conservation subchapter of the plan. Supporting conservation data such as GPCDs and water loss audit data will be released on dashboard platforms, allowing planning groups to view and download the data at their convenience.

Drought resources

TWDB staff continues to coordinate with the Drought Preparedness Council (DPC) to ensure that the DPC provides timely recommendations to planning groups for consideration in the 2026 Regional Water Plans. It is anticipated that the DPC will provide their recommendations to planning groups in the Spring.

TWDB coordinated with the TCEQ to develop a list of entities that are required to submit drought contingency plans to the TCEQ. This list was provided to planning groups this week and is intended to assist planning groups with the requirement in [31 TAC §357.34](#) to describe drought management measures for each water user groups which is required to submit a drought contingency plan to the TCEQ.

TWDB staff is updating the drought management costing tool for use this cycle and the anticipated release date for the updated tool is March 2024.

Uniform costing model

TWDB is under contract with HDR, Inc to update the uniform costing model for use this planning cycle. This spreadsheet-based tool is required to be used by planning groups to estimate the cost of water management strategy projects if project-specific costing information is not available. The updated tool will be finalized in March 2024 and made available to planning groups.

Amendment guidance

The TWDB has recently updated the guidance document [Amending an Approved Regional Water Plan](#). Planning groups pursuing a plan amendment should refer to this document which includes details on the process that planning groups must follow for each type of plan amendment (substitution, minor, or major). The updated guidance also provides additional details on the proposed and final materials that must be developed and submitted to the TWDB.

Interregional Planning Council

The Interregional Planning Council (Council) will hold its next meeting on February 8, 2024. The Council's report to the TWDB is due March 4, 2024, and the Council will consider adopting the report at the February meeting. Information on upcoming meetings and resources, including meeting agendas and a draft report can be found on the [Council website](#).

Marvin Nichols Reservoir feasibility review

Pursuant to House Bill 1, 88th Regular Session, the TWDB is conducting a project feasibility review of the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir project to be located on the Sulphur River and upstream of the confluence of the White Oak Creek in Franklin, Titus, and Red River counties. This feasibility review will analyze the implementation timeline, associated costs, land acquisition considerations, and economic impact of the proposed project. A report regarding the findings of this review will be prepared and submitted by the TWDB to the Legislative Budget Board and governor no later than January 5, 2025.

Following a public input period that closed December 1, 2023, the TWDB is reviewing submitted material and drafting the feasibility review report. A draft feasibility review report will be posted on the [TWDB website](#) for public comment once available.

Texas Water Fund updates

The TWDB is seeking public input to assist in implementing the Texas Water Fund, a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund to be administered by the TWDB.

TWDB is seeking input through April 30, 2024 via three surveys available [online](#) and written feedback via email (TexasWaterFund@twdb.texas.gov). In addition to the surveys, TWDB will be accepting public comment on the Texas Water Fund at TWDB Board meetings through March and stakeholder meetings in March and April. More information is available in the [Proposition 6 and Texas Water Fund Frequently Asked Questions and Implementation Timeline](#).

State Revolving Fund applicants with water conservation and water loss mitigation projects are specifically encouraged to apply by March 1, 2024, as noted in the FAQ document linked above.

Other TWDB program updates

Agricultural Water Conservation grants

TWDB will be accepting applications for the Agricultural Water Conservation Program through April 3, 2024. The TWDB plans to award up to \$1.5 million in grants from the Agricultural Water Conservation Fund for fiscal year 2024 funds. More information on eligible projects and the application process may be found [online](#). In order to be eligible for Agricultural Water Conservation grant funding, the application must demonstrate that the grant will assist in the implementation of a water conservation water management strategy identified in the most recent approved regional water plan or state water plan, in accordance with [31 TAC §367.5\(a\)\(11\)](#).

Brackish Resources Aquifer Characterization System (BRACS)

TWDB's [2023 Annual Report to the 88th Texas Legislature on Brackish Groundwater Production Zone Designation](#) provides a summary of the status of brackish aquifer studies and brackish groundwater production zone designations. In the past year, TWDB completed brackish aquifer studies for the [East Sparta Aquifer](#) and the southern portion of the [Trinity Aquifer](#). Report summaries are posted at the top of each study webpage.

TWDB is currently working on brackish aquifer studies for the [Edwards-Trinity \(Plateau\)](#), [Woodbine](#), and [Eastern Carrizo-Wilcox and Queen City](#) aquifers.

Once a brackish aquifer study to determine the extent and volume of brackish groundwater in an aquifer is completed, work begins on [brackish groundwater production zone](#) designations. The TWDB plans to hold a stakeholder meeting to introduce proposed zones in the southern portion of the Trinity Aquifer this winter.

SWIFT 2024 funding cycle

Abridged applications for [SWIFT 2024 funding cycle](#) are due to the TWDB by February 1, 2024. To be eligible for SWIFT program financial assistance, projects must be recommended in the 2022 State Water Plan.

Water Loss, Use, and Conservation webinars

TWDB's Technical Assistance for Water Loss Control program is providing water loss, use, and conservation webinar opportunities through March 2024. More information about the webinars and registration are available [online](#).

Water Use Survey

The annual Water Use Survey is open through March 1, 2024. Recipients of the survey are required to complete the survey in accordance with Chapter 16 of the Texas Water Code. More information is available [online](#).

Texas Water Service Boundary Viewer (TWSBV) editor

The TWSBV is open for editing through July 1, 2024. The TWSBV is a statewide public water system service area mapping application that strives to collect and provide the most up-to-date and best data available on the water service areas for all community PWS within Texas. More information is available [online](#).

Reminders and previous updates:

- The Technical Memorandum, a mid-point contract deliverable, is due to the TWDB **March 4, 2024**. Deliverable content requirements are outlined in [Exhibit C, Section 2.12.1](#). Technical Memorandums must include all required components to be considered administratively complete.
- The 2026 Regional Water Plan Working Schedule was updated in March 2023 and is available [online](#).
- The regional and state water planning rules pamphlet – that conveniently condenses all the key water planning statute and rules for use by RWPGs, Sponsors, and their Consultants - was updated as of May 2022 and is available [online](#).
- Visit the TWDB's *Sixth Cycle of Regional Water Planning Documents* webpage to view communications from TWDB during this planning cycle, project documents including a working schedule, contract documents, and administrative documents. These documents may be found [online](#).
- Visit the TWDB's [Regional Water Planning Educational Information webpage](#) to view educational documents related to regional and state planning.
- The TWDB receives and maintains a database of all the RWPG member email addresses from the region's sponsor. Sponsors should provide any updated email addresses to your TWDB Regional Water Planner to ensure our membership database is up to date and that all RWPG members receive these newsletters etc. For regions that have members without email addresses, please forward these communications to those members by mail or another effective means.

Contact TWDB RWP staff:

Please contact the TWDB's Regional Water Planning staff for additional information:

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For more information regarding the TWDB Regional Water Planning Program, please visit [our website](#).

Note: This email was sent to all RWPG members, sponsors, and technical consultants. A copy of this newsletter will be posted on the regional water planning newsletter [webpage](#).

Best,

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