

Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group

Public Hearing

7:00 P.M., June 18, 2015

Texas Tech University International Cultural Center

601 Indiana Avenue, Lubbock TX

1. Call To Order and Welcome.

The public hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group Chairman H. P. (Bo) Brown Jr.

Chairman Brown welcomed the audience for tonight's hearing.

He introduced the following members of the Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group: Jason Coleman, Harvey Everheart, Ronnie Hopper, Don McElroy, Dr. Ken Rainwater, and Aubrey Spear. Non-voting members in attendance were Sarah Backhouse, Amy Ewing, and Beth Salvas.

A quorum of the regional water planning group is not required to be in attendance at the hearing.

Other guests signing in for tonight's hearing were Neil Blandford, Ray Brady, J. O. Dawdy, Roger Dockery, Lindy Harris, Carmon McCain, Dr. Judy Reeves, Keith Sides, and Kelly Young.

Chairman Brown also introduced Cathy Sosebee, certified court reporter, who is transcribing the proceedings of the hearing.

A brief overview of the agenda and procedures for the hearing was provided.

2. Introductory Statements

Chairman Brown introduced Carmon McCain of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District staff. HPWD is the political subdivision administering the Llano Estacado Regional Water Management Planning Group. Mr. McCain provided the following information for the official record.

Tonight's public hearing is being held in accordance with Title 31, Part 10, Chapter 357, Subchapter B, Rule § 357.21 of the Texas Administrative Code.

30-day advance notice of this public hearing was:

- Posted May 6, 2015 with the Office of the Texas Secretary of State, the Lubbock County Courthouse, HPWD office, and on the HPWD/LERWPG websites.
- Mailed to County Clerks and County Judges in the LERWPG region on May 11.

- Published in the Sunday, May 17 legal notice section of the *Amarillo Globe-News* and the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, two newspapers with general circulation in the region.

30-day advance notice of this public hearing was provided on May 11, 2015 to:

- Mayors of municipalities in the region with a population of 1,000 or more and/or a county seat.
- County judges of the counties in the region.
- Each special or general law district or river authority with surface water management responsibilities.
- Each retail public utility that serves any part of the region.
- Surface water rights holders for those with diversions in the region.

Copies of the Initially Prepared Plan were available for public inspection 30 days in advance of this hearing at:

- Each county clerk's office within the LERWPG region.
- The primary public library in each county.
- High Plains Underground Water Conservation District office (2930 Avenue Q, Lubbock).
- LERWPG web site (www.llanoplan.org).
- HPWD web site (www.hpwd.org).

Notice of tonight's public hearing was also:

- Provided to media within the 22-county LERWPG region via a news release. (May 11, 2015)
- Provided to the public via articles published in the May 8 and June 12 electronic versions of *The Cross Section*, newsletter of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District. (1,725 recipients each issue)
- Provided to the public via an article published in the May 2015 print version of *The Cross Section*, newsletter of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1. (686 recipients)

Chairman Brown told the group that the purpose of tonight's public hearing is to receive oral and/or written comments regarding the content of the initially prepared

2016 Llano Estacado Regional Water Plan. No action will be taken tonight regarding approval of the plan.

The deadline to submit written comments about the initially-prepared plan is 5:00 p.m., Monday, August 17, 2015. They should be submitted to Jason Coleman, General Manager, High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1, 2930 Avenue Q, Lubbock TX 79411-2499 or to jason.coleman@hpwd.org.

3. Public Comments

Chairman Brown then asked for comments from the public about the initially prepared 2016 Llano Estacado Regional Water Management Plan.

Comments of Dr. Judy Reeves, Bedford, TX.

Dr. Reeves is a hydrogeologist who has spent most of her career working on aquifers in the Southern High Plains.

Her comment on the initially prepared plan is that there is a discontinuity between the goals of the regional water plan and several of the groundwater conservation districts. She noted that there is a process in the Texas Water Code to seek resolution of the conflict between the groundwater conservation district's goals ("desired future conditions") and that of the regional water planning group. She will cite this in her written comments to follow.

Chairman Brown asked for any additional comments. There were none.

4. Overview of the 2016 initially prepared LERWPG plan

Chairman Brown introduced Amy Ewing and Beth Salvas who provided an overview of the 2016 initially prepared plan. Both are with Daniel B. Stephens and Associates in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Ms. Ewing gave a brief explanation of the regional water planning process. She noted that regional water plans are completed every five years. The State of Texas compiles information from the 16 regional water plans to produce the State Water Plan.

The 2016 Llano Estacado Regional Water Management Plan contents are:

- Executive Summary
- Chapter 1 Description
- Chapter 2 Demand
- Chapter 3 Water Availability and Supply
- Chapter 4 Water Needs
- Chapter 5 Water Management Strategies
- Chapter 6 Impacts
- Chapter 7 Drought

- Chapter 8 Unique Sites
- Chapter 9 Financing
- Chapter 10 Public Participation
- Chapter 11 Implementation

Ms. Salvas discussed average water use within the region from 2003 to 2012. There was just less than 3.8 million acre-feet of water used during this time. Agricultural production is the largest water user while municipal water use is the second largest. The majority of the water is supplied by groundwater.

Ms. Salvas discussed population trends for the region. It is estimated that Region O will have a 33 percent increase in population by 2070. As a result, the Region O area would make up 1.6 percent of the state population at that time.

She also discussed estimated water demands on an annual basis from 2020 to 2070. Water demands are expected to be about 3.7 million acre-feet per year in 2020 and will slowly decline to 3.2 million acre-feet in 2070.

Water demands are examined by different water user groups (“WUGs”), irrigation, municipalities, livestock, industrial, manufacturing, mining, and steam-electric power generation. Municipalities include all cities and communities. If they are greater than 500 in population, the regional water planning group must look at the community-specific data. If the communities are less than 500 in population, then they are combined within a county and referred to as “County-Other.”

The initially prepared plan contains 71 municipalities and 21 county-others. There are two municipalities listed twice since they split county boundaries.

The planning group evaluated several water management strategies for each water user group—based on yield, reliability, cost, environmental impacts, and implementation issues. The decade of implementation, and estimates for cost/yield of each recommended strategy are included in the initially prepared plan.

Municipal water conservation, agricultural water conservation, local groundwater development, and water reuse were all recommended.

In addition, there were recommended strategies for the City of Lubbock, the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority, and the South Garza Water Supply.

Ms. Ewing and Ms. Salvas then asked for questions from the audience.

Mr. Kelly Young asked if the modeling included costs for water rights purchased from private landowners.

Ms. Ewing responded that the local groundwater development strategies include well costs, transmission line costs, and other items. She will check to see if water rights are included.

Mr. Young said 99 percent of the water is privately-owned. The water is included as though it were already a public water supply...when, in fact, it is not. It is a potential public water supply.

Mr. Spear said the City of Lubbock is the largest municipal water user in the region. It has all the water rights needed for all the strategies that they have. Because of this, the City of Lubbock does not anticipate purchasing groundwater rights or surface water rights.

Chairman Brown thanked Ms. Ewing and Ms. Salvias for their presentation.

Chairman Brown introduced Ms. Sarah Backhouse, the Region O project manager for the Texas Water Development Board. He invited her to offer any comments she might have. Ms. Backhouse had no comments at this time.

Chairman Brown thanked the audience for their attendance and participation. Once again, he reminded everyone of the August 17 deadline to submit written comments about the initially prepared plan.

There being no other comments, Chairman Brown adjourned the public hearing at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ H. P. (Bo) Brown Jr., LERWPG Chairman

These minutes were approved at the September 10, 2015 regular meeting of the Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group.