

## **10. Plan Approval Process and Public Participation**

This section describes the plan approval process for the Region C Water Plan and the efforts made to inform the public and encourage public participation in the planning process. Special efforts were made to inform the general public and water suppliers and others with special interest in the regional water plan and to seek their input.

### ***10.1 Regional Water Planning Group***

The legislation for Senate Bill One and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) planning guidelines establish regional water planning groups to control the planning process<sup>(1)</sup>. The regional water planning groups were to include representatives of eleven specific interests:

- General public
- Counties
- Municipalities
- Industrial
- Agricultural
- Environmental
- Small businesses
- Electric generating utilities
- River authorities
- Water districts
- Water utilities

Table 10.1 lists the members of the Region C Water Planning Group, the interests they represent, and the counties in which they reside. For most of the third round of planning, Jim Parks was the Chair of the Region C Water Planning Group, Jody Puckett was Vice-Chair, and Russell Laughlin was Secretary. A number of planning group members did not seek reelection to the Region C Water Planning Group as their terms expired during this planning cycle. They were: Robert Johnson, Brad Barnes, Roy Eaton, Dale Fisseler, and Elaine Petrus. Members elected to fill their respective positions were: Jody Puckett, Tom Woodward, Bill Lewis, Frank Crumb, and Steve Berry. At the end of the last planning cycle,

George Shannon passed away, and the planning group elected Jack Stevens to fill his position. In addition, group member Irvin (Marsh) Rice passed away during this planning cycle, and the group elected his alternate, Bill Ceverha, to fill his position.

**Table 10.1  
Current Members of the Region C Water Planning Group**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>County</b>
Jim Parks, Chairman	Water Districts	Rockwall
Jody Puckett, Vice Chair	Municipalities	Dallas
Russell Laughlin, Secretary	Industry	Tarrant
Steve Berry	Environmental Interests	Tarrant
Bill Ceverha	Public	Dallas
Jerry Chapman	Water Districts	Grayson
Frank Crumb	Municipalities	Tarrant
Bill Lewis	Small Business	Denton
G.K. Maenius	Counties	Tarrant
Howard Martin	Municipalities	Denton
Jim McCarter	Water Utilities	Navarro
Paul Phillips	Municipalities	Parker
Gary Spicer	Electric Generating Utilities	Dallas
Bob Scott	Environmental Interests	Tarrant
Connie Standridge	Water Utilities	Freestone
Jack Stevens	Water Districts	Tarrant
Danny Vance	River Authorities	Tarrant
Mary Vogelson	Public	Dallas
Tom Woodward	Agricultural Interests	Wise

### **10.2 Outreach to Water Suppliers, Water User Groups, and Regional Planning Groups**

The Region C Water Planning Group made special efforts to contact water suppliers and water user groups in the region and neighboring regional water planning groups to obtain their input in the planning process. Water suppliers and water user groups were surveyed on a number of occasions to solicit information on their current situation and their future water plans. Region C coordinated with Regions D, G, H, and I regarding shared resources and water user groups that were located in multiple regions.

Five of the largest wholesale water providers in the region (Dallas Water Utilities, Tarrant Regional Water District, North Texas Municipal Water District, Fort Worth, and Trinity River Authority) were represented on the water planning group. In addition, the

planning group encouraged the Region C consultants to keep in touch with wholesale water providers and other water suppliers as planning proceeded. Water suppliers were included on the mailing list for Region C newsletters (discussed below under outreach to the public). Other specific measures to obtain input from water suppliers and from other regional water planning groups are discussed below.

## Questionnaires

A number of questionnaires have been sent to the Region C water user groups and wholesale water providers. Appendix D includes copies of the questionnaires that were mailed in early 2009 to all Region C county judges, cities with populations over 500, regional water suppliers, retail water suppliers (supplying over 0.25 mgd), and groundwater conservation districts located in Region C. The questionnaires sought information on population and demand projections, current water supplies, future water management strategies, conservation, and other water planning issues. Following the deadline for this questionnaire, the consultants spent a considerable amount of time calling each entity whose survey response had not been received. The consultants attempted to call each of these entities up to two times. The follow-up phone calls resulted in increased participation rate and additional information acquired. The overall response rate for the population and water planning issues questionnaire was 59 percent.

In the fall of 2009, another questionnaire was sent via email to water user groups for whom Region C recommended changes to population and/or demand projections. This questionnaire asked for either agreement or further input regarding the entities' revised projections.

Another questionnaire was sent to all water user groups and wholesale water providers via email shortly after the publication of Region C's Initially Prepared Plan. This questionnaire asked for either agreement or further input on the entities' recommended water management strategies.

Lastly, a questionnaire was e-mailed to water user groups and wholesale water providers in August 2010. This questionnaire was developed by TWDB and sought input regarding the financing options each entity will likely pursue to develop the strategies outlined in this plan. This questionnaire was in the form of an interactive on-line survey.

The results of this survey have been compiled and are discussed in Chapter 9 and in Appendix X of this report.

### Meetings with Wholesale Water Providers and Other Suppliers

The consultants met in person with many of the wholesale water providers and with water user groups that were interested in meeting. The consultants spoke with wholesale water providers by phone when the provider thought that an in-person meeting was not necessary.

Throughout the planning process, the consultants met with the following water suppliers on one or more occasions to discuss current water supplies, current customers, population and demand projections, recommendations in the 2006 Plan, future water supplies, water treatment plant capacity and planned expansions, and additional wholesale customers:

- Athens MWA and City of Athens
- Corsicana
- Denton
- Dallas Water Utilities
- Fort Worth
- Grand Prairie
- Greater Texoma Utility Authority
- Irving
- North Texas Municipal Water District
- Rockett SUD
- Tarrant Regional Water District
- Trinity River Authority
- Upper Trinity Regional Water District
- Walnut Creek SUD
- Waxahachie
- Weatherford.

Consultants also contacted groundwater conservation districts located in Region C and obtained pertinent information regarding those entities.

The meetings with the providers listed above provided a better understanding of the current water supplies and the manner in which they are used, the current customers, current infrastructure limitations, potential future customers, and planned water supply and infrastructure improvement projects. These meetings were useful in determining recommended strategies for the Region C Water Plan.

In addition to all of these meetings for the Region C Plan, additional meetings were held in conjunction with the individual county studies that were a part of this round of planning. These county studies covered Cooke, Grayson, Fannin, Freestone, Kaufman, and Navarro Counties. Individual meetings were held with the majority of the water suppliers in those counties at the beginning of those studies. Public meetings were held in each of those counties prior to the publication of the Initially Prepared Plan.

### **10.3 Outreach to the Public**

#### Newsletters

The Region C Water Planning Group published newsletters throughout this third round of the Regional Water Planning process to keep the public informed on the progress of the planning process, as well as to educate the public about water management strategies under consideration, water conservation issues and other water-related topics. The newsletters were sent to:

- Water right holders
- County judges
- Mayors and officials of cities in the region
- Other water planning regions
- Texas Water Development Board staff
- Approximately 200 media representing more than 175 media outlets in North Central Texas
- Any person who asked to be on the mailing list.

A total of 6 newsletters have been distributed on behalf of the Region C Water Planning Group during the second round of water planning, with another newsletter scheduled for distribution in Fall 2010. Appendix Y includes copies of the Region C newsletters.

## Media Outreach

The media outreach plan for Region C called for using a number of communication vehicles to keep the media, and hence the public, informed of the progress and activities of the Region C Water Planning Group:

- **Newsletters.** Newsletters were sent to approximately 200 media representing more than 200 media outlets in North Central Texas, as well as to members of the general public on the mailing list.
- **Media-Only briefing.** Members of the media with an interest in water planning issues were invited to a media-only briefing in September 2009 at the Dallas offices of Alan Plummer Associates, Inc. During the meeting, media heard from the RCWPG chair, vice-chair, and lead consultants on key water management strategies under consideration, projected water needs and supplies, steps involved in the water planning process and other critical issues. Media were invited to participate in a question-and-answer session following the presentation. Representatives of *The Dallas Morning News*, *Star-Telegram*, *Fort Worth Business Press* and two broadcast TV stations attended the briefing, and after the briefing, a copy of the presentation was distributed to the full Region C media list and posted to the Region C website.
- **Public hearings.** The media were invited through printed public meeting notices and press releases to attend the public hearings regarding the approval of the scope of work and the Initially Prepared Plan.
- **Press materials.** Updated press kit materials on Region C's water planning effort were developed during the third round of Regional Water Planning and provided to media throughout the planning period. The updated fact sheet was also translated into Spanish and made available to Hispanic media, and all materials were also posted on the Region C Web site. The press kit includes frequently asked questions and answers, a summary of the planning process, list of key water management strategies under consideration, Regional Water Planning fact sheet, list of RCWPG members and contact information, copies of the newsletters, and a glossary of key water planning terms.
- **Press releases and media advisories.** Press releases and/or media advisories were issued prior to every meeting of the RCWPG during the third round of regional water planning. These notices alerted the media of the opportunity to attend and cover these public meetings, as well as requesting the media to include meeting notices in their public calendars to encourage public attendance and participation.
- **Ongoing media relations.** Among other key media outlets, reporters from *The Dallas Morning News*, *Star-Telegram* and *Fort Worth Business Press* have been proactive in attending the public meetings and have diligently covered the issues and activities surrounding the Region's water planning efforts. Significant coverage of Region C water planning efforts has also appeared in countless other community newspapers, magazines, websites and blogs.

- **Editorial board meetings.** Editorial board meetings were held with *The Dallas Morning News* and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in March and April, 2010, around the time that the Initially Prepared Plan was first made available for public review. The purpose of the editorial board meetings was to encourage the media to write editorials about the importance of regional water planning and to encourage the public to review and provide feedback on the Initially Prepared Plan. Both newspapers did publish such editorials. Additionally, both publications provided other coverage of regional water planning issues during the public comment period, and the *Star-Telegram* published an op-ed from Region C Water Planning Group Chairman Jim Parks.

The Region C Water Planning Group and its efforts have netted a significant amount of press coverage since the third round of water planning began. The following are some of the media outlets that have produced stories on the Region C planning process in the last few years:

- *Allen American*
- *Athens Daily Review*
- *Azle News*
- *Bonham Daily Favorite*
- *Bridgeport Index*
- *Carrollton Reader*
- *Celina Record*
- *Colleyville Courier*
- *Collin County Business Press*
- *Coppell Gazette*
- *Corsicana Daily Sun*
- *Country World News*
- *D Magazine*
- *Dallas Business Journal*
- *Dallas Morning News*
- *Denton Record-Chronicle*
- *Flower Mound Leader*
- *Fort Worth Business Press*
- *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*
- *Fort Worth Weekly*

- *Frisco Enterprise*
- *Gainesville Daily Register*
- *Greenville Herald Banner*
- KDFW Fox 4 TV
- KRLD News Radio 1080 AM
- KTVT CBS-11 TV
- KXAS NBC-5 TV
- *Lewisville Leader*
- *Little Elm Journal*
- *Longview News Journal*
- *Lufkin Daily News*
- *McKinney Courier-Gazette*
- *Mesquite News*
- *Nacogdoches Daily Sentinel*
- *Oak Cliff Tribune*
- *Plano Star-Courier*
- *Rowlett Lakeshore Times*
- *Sanger Courier*
- *Sherman Herald-Democrat*
- *Southlake Times*
- *Texarkana Gazette*
- *The Colony Courier Leader*
- WBAP 820 AM
- WFAA Channel 8
- *Wise County Messenger*
- *Wylie News.*

#### Region C Web Site

In order to make the *Initially Prepared 2011 Region C Water Plan* more accessible to the public, the draft plan was made available on the Region C web site, [www.regioncwater.org](http://www.regioncwater.org), in April 2010. The web site has been used extensively throughout the third round of regional water planning, with all key documents uploaded to the site for public review. The

site has also provided updates on upcoming meetings and key dates in the water planning process, as well as contact information for RCWPG members and consultants.

Members of the public have had the opportunity to sign up for the newsletter mailing list through the web site, and to view current and past issues of the RCWPG newsletter. Members of the press have also been able to access press kit materials and submit requests for press kits or interviews via the web site.

#### **10.4 Public Meetings and Public Hearings**

##### Initial Public Hearing

As required by Senate Bill One rules, the Region C Water Planning Group held an initial public hearing to discuss the planning process and the scope of work for the region on June 2, 2008. The scope of work was approved by the Region C Water Planning Group. The public were notified by the notice that was published in accordance with Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) guidelines <sup>(1)</sup>. A public hearing was held on August 7, 2006 regarding the scope of work for the special studies that were performed in the 2007-08 Biennium.

##### Regular Public Meetings

The Region C Water Planning Group held regular meetings during the development of the plan, receiving information from the region's consultants and making decisions on planning efforts. These meetings were open to the public, and proper notice was made under Senate Bill One guidelines <sup>(1)</sup>. All of the Region C Water Planning Group meetings were held at the Trinity River Authority (TRA) Central Wastewater Treatment Plant in Grand Prairie, a central location in the region. The water planning group met regularly, approximately every two to three months.

##### Public Hearing on Initially Prepared Plan

The public hearing on the *Region C Initially Prepared Water Plan* was held on May 25, 2010, at the Bob Duncan Community Center in Arlington. Official public notice was posted in accordance with the TWDB requirements <sup>(1)</sup>. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting, 12 speakers provided verbal comments, four of which were in support of the plan.

One speaker expressed significant concerns regarding the IPP, two speakers wanted more conservation in the plan, and five speakers expressed concern about the location of Fort Worth reuse projects.

## Public Input

The Region C Water Planning Group encouraged the public to participate in the planning process by providing an opportunity for the public to speak to the Group. The public was allowed to address the planning group on each action item prior to the Group taking action. The public was also invited to speak on any topic prior to the conclusion of each meeting. Summaries of the public comments were posted on the Region C web site following each meeting.

The public was invited to speak to the Planning Group at all of the public hearings. Oral comments at the public hearing regarding the Initially Prepared Plan were recorded by a court stenographer and made available on the Region C web site. These comments are summarized and included in Appendix AA of the final report, along with the planning group's response to each speaker. Written comments were also accepted by the planning group. Written comments on the Initially Prepared Plan have been included in Appendix AA of this plan. Responses to the written comments are found in Appendix BB.

### **10.5 Study Commission on Region C Water Supply**

In 2008, the Study Commission on Region C Water Supply was formed as a result of Senate Bill 3 to study potential alternative strategies to the Marvin Nichols Reservoir, a large reservoir planned for Northeast Texas. The Study Commission is composed of the following members, with three members representing Region C and three representing Region D:

#### Region C Representatives

- State Representative Jodie Laubenberg
- Region C Water Planning Group Chairman Jim Parks
- State Senator Florence Shapiro

#### Region D Representatives

- Thomas Duckert, Environmental Health & Safety Manager, International Paper

- State Representative Stephen Frost
- Region D Water Planning Group Chairman Richard LeTourneau

The group was charged with several tasks, including reviewing water supply alternatives available to Region C, analyzing the socioeconomic effect of reservoir development on the area where the water supply is located and determining whether water demand in Region C may be reduced through additional conservation and reuse measures, among other items.

Phase I of the Study Commission's efforts focused on an examination of existing studies and data gaps, with respect to five alternative water sources: Lake O' the Pines, Lake Texoma, Marvin Nichols Reservoir, Toledo Bend Reservoir and Lake Wright Patman. A draft report summarizing existing data, socio-economic studies and data gaps related to the alternative water sources was presented to the Commission in September 2009 to the Commission. In November 2009, the Commission met to finalize the Phase I report and lay out its proposed scope of work for Phase II.

Phase II of the Commission's efforts, which is now underway, will continue the work of Phase I and more closely examine the potential alternative water supply strategies, with a deadline of October 2010 for approval of the Commission's final report.

In addition to the examination of various water supply alternatives, the Study Commission will also examine the following issues during Phase II:

- the impacts on various entities of using the alternative strategies;
- the possibility of reducing water demand in Region C through additional conservation and reuse measures;
- measures that would need to be taken to comply with mitigation requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in connection with any proposed new reservoirs, including identifying potential mitigation sites;
- whether the mitigation burden may be shared by Regions C and D in proportion to the allocation to each region of water in any proposed reservoir;
- innovative methods of compensation for affected property owners, including royalties for water stored on acquired properties and annual payments to landowners for properties acquired for the construction of a reservoir to satisfy future water management strategies;
- the minimum number of surface acres required for construction of proposed reservoirs in order to develop adequate water supply; and

- identification of the location of proposed reservoir sites and proposed mitigation sites in Regions C and D, using satellite imagery with sufficient resolution to permit land ownership to be determined.

The Region C Water Planning Group has been closely monitoring the work of the Study Commission throughout the planning period, and received regular status reports on the Study Commission's progress at each of the Planning Group's public meetings.

More information about the Commission's ongoing efforts can be found at:

<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/wrpi/rwp/committee/rgc/rgc.htm>.

**CHAPTER 10**  
**LIST OF REFERENCES**

- (1) Texas Water Development Board: *Chapter 357, Regional Water Planning Guidelines*, Austin, effective date of subsections, *Section 357.3* December 6, 2004; *Section 357.4* March 11, 1998; *Section 357.5* February 18, 2008; *Section 357.6* July 11, 2001; *Section 357.7* February 18, 2008; *Section 357.10* February 18, 2008; *Section 357.11* January 2, 2002; *Section 357.12* February 18, 2008; *Section 357.16* February 18, 2008.