



Chapter 10 Plan Adoption and Public Participation

This chapter describes the various public participation, information, outreach, and education activities conducted by the Panhandle Water Planning Group (PWPG). All activities and events discussed in this section were performed in direct support of the regional water planning effort and serve to support the PWPG's dedication and commitment to ensuring that the public is provided with timely, accurate information regarding the planning process and that opportunities to provide input to the planning process are available as often as possible.

The chapter also details the plan adoption process followed by the PWPG. The process explains the required hearing, receipt of comment, comment response, and final adoption of the PWPA's Regional Water Plan.

10.1 Panhandle Water Planning Group

The PWPG was created in accordance with and operates under the auspices of SB1, and updated under subsequent legislation. The enabling legislation and TWDB planning rules and guidelines established the basis for the creation and composition of the regional planning groups. The original statute listed eleven required interest groups that must be represented at all times on the planning groups. To these original eleven interest groups, the PWPG has elected to add an additional group to adequately ensure that the interests of the region are fully protected. In 2011, groundwater management areas were added as a required interest category. The following lists the thirteen interest groups represented by the 22 voting members of the PWPG:

- General Public
- Counties
- Municipalities
- Industrial
- Agricultural
- Environmental
- Small Business
- Electric Generating Utilities
- River Authorities
- Water Districts
- Water Utilities
- Groundwater Management Areas
- Higher Education (added interest)

Table 10-1 lists the voting members of the PWPG, their respective interest groups, and their principle county of interest. Table 10-1 also lists the six former members of the PWPG who also participated in the planning process for the 2016 PWPA Plan. The PWPG appreciates the contributions of these individuals and would like for their efforts to be recognized along with the current members.

Table 10-1: Panhandle Water Planning Group - Voting Members

Interest	Name	Entity	County (Location of Interest)
Public	Janet Guthrie	City of Canadian/Hemphill County	Hemphill
Counties	Judge Vernon Cook	Retired (Roberts County)	Roberts
Municipalities	Emmett Autrey	City of Amarillo	Potter and Randall
	David Landis	City of Perryton	Ochiltree
Industries	Bill Hallerberg	Retired (Potter County)	Potter
	Jay Weber Sandy Keys Denise Jett (Ret)	ConocoPhillips	Hutchinson
	Ben Weinheimer	Texas Cattle Feeders Association	Serves entire region
Agricultural	Joe Baumgardner	Farmer	Collingsworth
	Janet Tregellas	Farm/Ranch	Lipscomb
	Nolan Clark	Retired (USDA-ARS)	Serves entire region
Environmental	*VACANT*		
	Grady Skaggs (Ret)		
	Tonya Kleuskens Cole Camp (Ret)	Farmer	Potter
Small Businesses	Rusty Gilmore	Water Well Driller	Dallam
Electrical Generating Utilities	Rick Gibson (Ret)	Xcel Energy	Potter (serve entire region)
River Authorities	Jim Derington	Palo Duro RA	Hansford
Water Districts	Steve Walthour	North Plains GCD	Moore and 7 other counties in the region
	Bobbie Kidd	Greenbelt M and I Water Authority	Donley and 3 other counties in the region
	C.E. Williams	Panhandle Groundwater Conservation Dist. No. 3	Carson and 8 other counties in the region
	Kent Satterwhite John Williams (Ret)	Canadian River Municipal Water Authority	Hutchinson and 3 member cities in the region
Water Utilities	Dean Cooke Charles Cooke (Ret)	TCW Supply	Hutchinson
Groundwater Management Areas	Danny Krienke	GMA#1	Ochiltree and 17 other counties
	Amy Crowell	GMA#6	Collingsworth, Childress and Hall
Higher Education	John Sweeten	Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Amarillo	Entire Region

Ret – Retired during the planning cycle.

In addition to the 23 voting members, the PWPG has six key stakeholder positions in accordance with the appropriate regulations governing the process. Table 10-2 lists the six key stakeholder positions on the PWPG and their respective interests:

Table 10-2: Panhandle Water Planning Group Other Key Stakeholders

PWPG Member	Position	Interest Group	Membership
Sarah Backhouse Doug Shaw (former)	Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)	TWDB (Rules)	Non-Voting
Matt Williams	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)	TDA (Rules)	Non-Voting
Bobbie Kidd	Region B Liaison	Water Districts	Voting
Kent Satterwhite	Region O Liaison	Water Districts	Voting
Troy Headings	USDA/NRCS	Agricultural	Non-Voting
Charles Munger	Texas Parks & Wildlife	TPWD (Rules)	Non-Voting
Troy Headings Cleon Namkin (Deceased)	USDA/NRCS	Agriculture	Non-Voting

10.2 Panhandle Water Planning Group Public Information and Education Commitment

The PWPG is firmly committed to ensuring the activities of the Planning Group are open and accessible to all interested parties. In addition, the PWPG has worked diligently to ensure that the public throughout the region is afforded every opportunity to participate in Planning Group activities and to receive timely information regarding the planning process. Participation in the Regional Water Planning effort by local entities and the public was excellent throughout the process. Public Participation opportunities were afforded to the region through the following broad categories.

Special Regional Water Planning Presentations – Working primarily through the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC), the PWPG provided speakers to interest groups throughout the planning process. PWPG members also provided presentations to various civic organizations throughout the planning process. Presentations were given throughout the region and even into adjoining regional water planning regions.

Media – Media throughout the region were provided notification of all Planning Group activities. Media outlets participated in various planning activities throughout the process, with PWPG representatives appearing at media events as well as routine press in regional newspapers. In addition, regional radio stations provided recaps of PWPG activities on occasion. PRPC Staff has conducted interviews with local television and newspaper outlets in conjunction with many regular meetings and public hearings for the PWPG.

Electronic Communication – Web Access to Planning Information - The PWPG has developed and placed on-line a dedicated project website www.panhandlewater.org. The site is updated on a regular basis and provides the general public with quick, reliable access to planning data at any time. Each meeting is posted on this site ahead of the scheduled meetings and all presented meeting materials are made available on the site within 5 workings of each meetings' conclusion. Additionally, each full and committee meeting of the PWPG has been posted electronically with the Texas Secretary of State for easy public access to the notifications.

Public Information Meetings – The PWPG held all meetings in accordance with the open meetings act and encouraged public attendance at the meetings.

Symposiums and Forums – PWPG membership has provided technical expertise to several symposiums and forums during the planning process. Included among these are Water Conservation Symposium, the High Plains Irrigation Annual Conferences and the Agricultural Water Planning Summit and other public forums.

Required Public Meeting – One public meeting was conducted to solicit input and comments on the scope of work for development of the updated regional water plan. This meeting was held in Amarillo at the PRPC office on May 9, 2011.

Required Public Hearing – This meeting will be held in the summer of 2015.

Panhandle Water Planning Group Meetings – The PWPG conducted numerous public meetings over the past five years as necessary to develop the 2016 Panhandle Water Plan. In addition, subcommittee meetings were held on specific technical and planning topics. All meetings of the PWPG are conducted as in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and public attendance has been good. Though not required, the PWPG Chair includes a public comment item on each agenda to provide even more opportunities for public input into the process.

10.3 Surveys

Throughout the planning process, the PWPG conducted multiple surveys and reached out individually to specific water users with needs, wholesale water providers and groundwater conservation districts. One survey was sent to all municipal water users, wholesale water providers and county judges to solicit input on population and water demands, current water sources and drought planning. Other surveys collected information on proposed water strategies, existing water rights and potential emergency interconnections. Future surveys will solicit information on strategies in the 2011 Plan that have been implemented and potential financing options for strategies that are included in the 2016 Plan.

10.4 Panhandle Water Planning Group Functions

Members of the PWPG have been quite active and very committed to the planning process. Through the course of the functions detailed below, Planning Group members have contributed approximately 777 non-reimbursed hours of time. In addition, PWPG members have traveled over 32,000 miles. This level of participation by these Planning Group members speaks very highly of not only the commitment of the people of the region to the water planning process but also to the intense effort and dedication to the process. Based on miles traveled and hours contributed to the effort over \$56,000 in personal contributions have been granted to this cycle's planning process. As mentioned previously, the PWPG has not reimbursed any members for the time they have committed to the process and none of the miles traveled have been reimbursed through use of local funds. This fact becomes quite important when the membership of the PWPG is analyzed. The majority of these members work in the public sector or are retired experts, so the donation of time and travel by these individuals with restricted budgets is of great value to the region.

10.5 Panhandle Water Planning Group Meetings

Through the 60 month planning process, the PWPG has conducted 14 formal, Planning Group meetings. Attendance at the meetings by the 23 voting members of the PWPG has been excellent, with appropriate quorums in attendance far exceeded at all meetings. PWPG meetings have been conducted in the central location of the planning area in Amarillo at the office of the political subdivision, the PRPC. Frequency of PWPG meetings has averaged almost one per quarter. The frequency of PWPG meetings has declined in the third and fourth planning cycles for two reasons compared to the first two planning cycles. First, PWPG members and consultants have a greater understanding at this point of how to meet planning objectives more efficiently now that they have three cycles of experience. Second, the GMA process has shared some of the responsibility in groundwater modeling and setting desired future conditions. GMA 1 has held over 10 meetings in the same 60 month period and is monitored very closely by PWPG membership with regular reports presented at PWPG meetings.

10.6 Panhandle Water Planning Group Committee Activities

To further enhance the regional planning process, the PWPG has established a committee structure to assist in evaluating planning progress and to provide recommendations to the PWPG. The committees, as authorized, serve only in an advisory capacity. In addition, committee membership includes, where appropriate, PWPG members as well as nonmembers.

Historically, the PWPG has utilized up to five committees for a myriad of purposes. However, in this cycle the PWPG utilized only three committees with the Executive Committee serving multiple purposes previously handled in multiple Committee settings.

Early in the fourth cycle of the planning process the Modeling Committee met once to review the availability figures issued by the TWDB and provide recommendation to the full PWPG voting membership. The Modeling Committee met once in the first year of the fourth cycle of regional water planning.

The Agriculture Committee met five times in the fourth planning cycle to review multiple aspects of the planning process since agriculture demand constitutes such a large portion of water usage in the region. The first meetings of the Agriculture Committee focused on reviewing, revising, and recommending agriculture demand numbers for the TWDB to more accurately account for agriculture demand in the region. Middle Agriculture Committee meetings focused on how to prioritize the Agriculture Strategies in the 2011 Regional Plan including potential grouping of strategy suites. The later Agriculture Committee meetings focused on the development of Agriculture Strategies for the 2016 Panhandle Regional Water Plan.

The Executive Committee of the PWPG has served multiple functions though out the fourth planning cycle. The Executive Committee has continued to function in the role of conducting administrative reviews for member nominations and contractual requirements. Additionally, the Executive Committee functioned as the consultant review body as the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission went through the procurement process for professional services in the development of the fourth plan. The Executive Committee also acted in this cycle at the request of the voting membership of the PWPG in an oversight role for the Scope of Work development and Public Participation activities. Throughout the five year process the Executive Committee met eleven times over the 60 month planning period.

10.7 Interregional Coordination

As part of the planning process, the PWPG determined that coordination with adjacent Region B and Region O water planning groups was necessary. The PWPG appointed a board member to be the liaison between each respective region and charged them with the assignment of attendance of their region's meetings. Coordination was made with the notice and exchange of meeting agendas and when necessary, attendance and participation in their meetings was provided by additional PWPG Board members and staff. At every regular meeting of the PWPG, the liaison reported to the Board the activity of their respective planning group's activity. Communication among the Board Chairmen and Board members was also utilized and allowed for a secondary line of exchange of information to take place.

10.8 Local Participation in the Regional Water Planning Process

Participation by local entities in the Regional Water Planning process was quite commendable. Local funds were necessary to provide for the maintenance and operation of the PWPG, fiscal accountability, meeting costs, posting costs, etc. The PWPG estimated that \$73,000 annually in local funds would be needed to cover these costs. Working through the public participation committee, the original formula from the first round of planning was updated in the fifth cycle and implemented to attempt to keep up with inflation and spread these costs equally throughout the region. Possible participants were divided into the following categories: municipalities, counties, water utilities, groundwater districts, surface water districts, and solicited contributions. Entities and organizations in each of these categories were contacted by mail requesting their pro-rata share of the local planning cost. Solicitations were made once, and these various entities and organizations provided approximately \$350,000 for regional water planning over the 5 year planning cycle. Ninety percent of funds solicited were received over the planning cycle. The PWPG believes this is a strong indicator of the local commitment to water resource planning throughout the region.

The PWPG would like to thank and recognize all those entities and organizations who contributed funds to the regional water planning effort.

In addition to the local funds received, the PWPG adopted a policy whereby all local water use groups are considered to have participated in the Regional Water Plan by virtue of their inclusion in and review of the Plan.

10.9 Plan Adoption Process

In accordance with Texas Administrative Code Chapter 357 and the relevant rules governing the water planning process, the PWPG conducted a formal process for the adoption of the Regional Water Plan. Activities under this section are primarily along two main lines. The first series of activities are directly related to the adoption of the Initially Prepared Plan and the second series of activities are related to final adoption of the completed Regional Water Plan. The Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) was considered for approval on April 20, 2015.

10.9.1 Public Hearing

<To be included in the Final Plan>

10.9.2 Initially Prepared Plan Adoption

<To be included in the Final Plan>

10.9.3 Response to Comments

<To be included in the Final Plan>

10.9.4 Final Regional Water Plan Adoption

<To be included in the Final Plan>

10.10 Conclusion

The PWPG has maintained a high level of commitment to public participation throughout the planning process. The PWPG believes that public information and participation activities are at least as important to the success of regional planning initiatives as is the data accumulated and analyzed. A key recommendation of the PWPG is to continue to fund and encourage public information activities throughout all subsequent planning processes.