



2006 Regional Water Planning Process Survey
SUMMARY OF BRAZOS G INTERESTED PARTY RESPONSES
January 20, 2006

I. 2006 Regional Water Planning Process

1) What do you think went right in the 2006 Water Planning Process?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Public was allowed to provide input to the planning process and time frame for the plan was met.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Very little from a GCD prospective. We did however learn from the process that our efforts to change the plan will require a less subtle approach. Scientific input seemed to be disregarded.
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD – Water demand projections were made.
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – It forced many of us to think about the water situation in Texas and how important water is.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Presenting the plans at public hearings in different parts of the Region G service area (the meetings in March & April 2005); Opportunities for public comment at meetings.
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – I believe the strong point has been improved communication. While it still is lacking in totality and timeliness, it is greatly improved.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Not enough involvement with Brazos G to comment.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Asked for input from all relevant organizations.

2) What do you think went wrong in the 2006 Water Planning Process and how would you improve it?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Water planning should be “bottom up” in nature. Therefore, the groundwater availability numbers provided by GCDs should be the numbers reflected in the Regional Plan. The 79th Legislative Session has mandated this for future planning.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Despite stating that it wanted to communicate with the GCDs, Region G made it clear that it did not want to hear from them and fundamentally considered the GCDs a nuisance. Region G appeared to look at total water needs, deducted what could be supplied by surface water, and assumed the rest could come from ground water as long as the aquifers weren't pumped dry. Ground water was treated as a depletable resource, not one that must be sustained for future use; sustainability was defined as not drying up the aquifers within the 50-year planning horizon. There appeared to be no recognition that, unlike surface water resources, ground water supplies would not be restored during the next rainstorm or even the next wet climatic period, but took thousands of years to accumulate in the various aquifers, particularly the Gulf Coast aquifers. Regions G's primary consulting entity, HDR, used an outdated basis for determining ground water availability, and appeared to misuse the GAMs.
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD – Water supply projections were inflated to meet demand resulting in depletion of aquifers in our area.
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – RWPG studies cover a broad area and the results are generalized. When there is a conflict with the RWPG data and data resulting from studies that have been conducted by a local entity, the RWPG data should not take precedence over the local data. In most cases the local data is more accurate.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Not separating out Texas A&M University in College Station as its own WUG; More publicity about the planning process, how it works, and what it means for individual Texans, would be helpful. This is something that each WUG can help with. Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Water Resource Institute, and similar entities, are also potential means of educating the public; Disputes between groundwater availability estimates from groundwater districts vs. from the Regional Planning Group (Lee County example; already solved by legislation passed in 2005).

- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – It takes too long to get information to be discussed at meetings. Then to get information to the Board. By the time I have been able to get information, react to it, it is too late as any proposed action has already been taken and is irreversible.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Not enough involvement with Brazos G to comment.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Didn't listen to all input from relevant organizations, or for some reason couldn't or wouldn't make requested changes to the plan.

3) Do you think this planning cycle was successful?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Generally; however, we are spending taxpayers' money for plans that are limited by the lack of a statewide water distribution infrastructure. Have we got the proverbial “cart before the horse”?
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – No
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - No
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Generally yes.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Yes
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Better than the last one, but input for action is still too slow.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Not enough involvement with Brazos G to comment.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Don't know what your goals were and if you accomplished all of them.

4) Is the five (5) year planning cycle an appropriate time frame?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – To cut costs, it could be ten (10) years. It could be returned to a five year cycle if future developments warrant it.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Yes. But demand figures are usually out of date.
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Yes
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Yes, but it would be good to somehow shorten the period from which data is collected and the process finished, so that when the plan is adopted the data is somewhat still accurate.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Yes
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – I think it could be longer. The real test will be how many significant changes are made between the two plans submitted. If they are minor and infrequent, it could be extended.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Not enough involvement with Brazos G to comment.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Yes

5) Faced with less water planning funds, what creative ways would you pursue the next planning cycle?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Make it a ten year planning cycle, cut the number of regional planning meetings, consolidate to have fewer regions and use a rigorous RFP process to hold down the costs of consulting engineers.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – No
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD – Unfamiliar with how Region G is funded.
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Rely more on data provided from local entities, such as municipalities and groundwater conservation districts. In many cases, they have spent considerable money having studies done for their jurisdiction. For the RWPG's to spend additional funds that generally produce less accurate results is a waste of money.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Blank

- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Attempt to cut down on administrative overhead. This sometimes easier said than done.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Blank
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Don't have any suggestions.

6) How can the funding mechanism for regional planning be improved?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – If you mean more funds, it probably won't happen. The focus needs to shift towards looking at ways to cut the cost of the regional planning process while making more efficient use of existing funds.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – No
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Blank
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Blank
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Blank
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – With more input and support from the public, they could be effective in lobbying their respective representative and senators. Also there could be a "tax" placed on those who profit from the planned water planning. For instance, you provided for a method for the BRA to obtain water to sell to others, make them pay for this privilege.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Ideally, the State recognizes the importance of sustainable water supplies and the need for proper planning. State funds are always in demand for a multitude of worthy needs so the State should evaluate priorities and perform a needs assessment.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Don't have any suggestions.

7) From your perspective, what is the mission of regional water planning?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – To provide input to the Statewide Water plan assuring the most efficient use of water resources to meet the needs of all Texans.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – The mission of regional planning should be to collect information from the various water entities within the region, particularly river authorities and GCDs, address supply versus demand issues within the region, address differences in perspectives and constraints on supplies, and formulate alternatives to deal with these issues in cooperation with the water entities. Differences that cannot be resolved should be explained. The regional planning groups should be the compilers and the integrators, not the drivers. Its perspective should be from that of supply, not demand. Demands that cannot be met from available supplies should be addressed through innovative and fair-minded thinking, not heavy handed suppression of conflicts, particularly to advance special interest agendas.
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD – To plan for a sustainable supply of water for projected growth.
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Identifying current and future supply/demand and strategies to ensure there is adequate water available for the region's future needs.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Evaluating patterns of water use, sources of water, economic and environmental impacts of water use and development, and developing a plan for long-term sustainable management of water resources.
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – To assure that there is adequate supply to meet the critical, not desired, demand. They should spend less time making sure that large cities within the region, and without, to obtain water for economic development. Let the developers and the taxing entities that profit, pay the cost.
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank

- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – To consider water usage/demand from a regional perspective and ensure adequate resources are available for both current and future demands. If a water conservation district(s) exists within the region, it (they) should play an integral role in the planning process.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – To try to ensure that the various municipalities in the region have a sufficient water supply in the future.

8) Is the regional water planning accomplishing this mission?

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – I honestly don't know. I wish there was an evaluation tool to measure the results of regional planning. I expect much of the progress in using water efficiently can be contributed to local initiatives rather than regional planning. Regional planning will be enhanced once the "hardware" (statewide distribution system) is in place.
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – No
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - No
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Generally yes, but it should not establish policy. It is a planning group. Plans either are implemented or left on the shelf at the discretion of those for whom the plan is made.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Mostly yes. The difficulty is that the regional and state water plans aren't "law" and therefore, a particular WUG isn't necessarily forced to follow recommended water management strategies.
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – VERY LIMITED
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Not enough involvement with Brazos G to comment; appears water conservation districts are used minimally.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – I really don't know because I don't see that information.

II. Potential New Issues for Future Planning Efforts

(Good: Good Idea; **Bad:** Bad Idea; **Blank:** No opinion)

1) Consider and plan for two scenarios for population projections, high and low.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Bad
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Blank
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Blank
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Good
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Bad

2) Account for University or other institutions with their own water supplies separate from Municipal water supplies.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Good
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Bad
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Good
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Good

- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Good
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Good, but might want to put some minimum cutoff so that you're not including suppliers that are insignificant to the region.

3) Change regional water plan funding to spread across legislative budget bienniums.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Blank
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Blank
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Blank
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Good
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Blank
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Blank

4) Create a senate of Regional Water Planning Group delegates at the state level to establish direct communication between Regions and Legislators.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Bad
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Blank
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Bad; This will tend to grant more power and influence to the RWPG's, thereby changing their role.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Blank
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Bad
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Good
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Blank
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Blank

5) Redefine the role of regional water planning groups during non-census planning cycles, to consider environmental, regional economy, mitigation, regional facilities, partnering, permitting and design aspects.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Bad
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Good, maybe.
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Blank
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Bad
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Blank
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Bad; *It is difficult to make a good vs. bad “vote” when there is such a long list of additional functions to consider. Some of the items, such as permitting and design aspects, appear to be repetitive functions of the TCEQ. Also, if regional planning groups must have expertise on issues such as economics and mitigation, there is a potential to spend more dollars towards hiring consultants rather than funneling those funds towards needed projects. To compound this concern, it appears funding may be going down and not up. Here again, water conservation districts should be consulted.
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Good

6) Encourage the TPWD to play a more active role in determining scopes of work for environmental assessments of water management strategies and water management plans.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Good
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Good
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Good
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Bad
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Bad
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Bad
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Blank

7) Continue funding updates to the groundwater (TWDB) and surface water (TCEQ) availability models.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Good
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Good
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Good
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Blank
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Good
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Good
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Blank

8) Reevaluate criteria and assumptions for applying surface water and groundwater availability models in planning.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Blank
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Good
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Good
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Blank
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Good
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Good
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Blank

9) Encourage enforcement of water quality standards and funding for water quality monitoring.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Good
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Good
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Good
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Good
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Bad
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Good
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Bad
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Good

10) Bridge the role for Regional Water Planning Groups from reconnaissance level studies to implementation of projects.

- Joe B. Cooper, Middle Trinity GCD – Bad
- Joe Cooper, Lost Pines GCD – Bad
- Keith Hansberger, Lost Pines GCD - Bad
- Cheryl Maxwell, Clearwater Underground WCD – Bad; Do not think the RWPG's should have this authority.
- Jennifer Nations, City of College Station – Blank
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Bad
- James Roming, City of Bruceville-Eddy - Bad
- Hugh Walker, City of Bryan – Blank
- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Blank

11) Others: (please list)

- Riki Young, Fort Hood – Take a much more active role in supporting/promoting water conservation and sustainability programs through the various water suppliers in the region.
- Nicholas Roberts, Bell-Milan Land and Water Rights Association – Need more participation by people with experience in the areas of interest. For instance, there are a lot of highly qualified, full time farmers and ranchers to represent agriculture. Yet the persons appointed to the Board are "part-time" farmers and ranchers. They may be qualified, but the appearance is that if you are a successful business man, or political ally, you become an adequate representative for any group. This same problem exists in City and County representation. Most, if not all, represent large population areas.

There are some folks in Texas who live in rural Texas also. There needs to be more study of the effects of plans on the economy, environment, and social effects of proposed plans.