

The Brazos Watermaster will be physically present at the location listed below and this meeting location is accessible to the public. The public may also attend this meeting via teleconference or videoconference.

Brazos Watermaster Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: July 18, 2024
Time: 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Brazos River Authority Offices, 4600 Cobbs Drive, Waco, Texas, 76710

Attend In-Person

Attend the meeting in-person at Brazos River Authority Offices, 4600 Cobbs Drive, Waco, Texas, 76710

Attend by Video Teleconference

Use the following link to join using Microsoft Teams: <https://bit.ly/3VvRnjW> please RSVP by email to brazoswm@tceq.texas.gov and join the meeting by 1:15 p.m.

Attend by Telephone

Toll Number: +1 512-826-8070
Conference ID: 896 710 636#

AGENDA

1. Call to Order (Brad Brunett)
2. Welcome from Brazos River Authority (Brad Brunett)
3. Introductions (BWAC, Staff, Public) (All)
4. Review & approve minutes of July 11, 2023, BWAC Meeting (All)
5. Update from TCEQ Staff (Molly Mohler)
 - a. Update from Deputies
 - b. Staffing Update
6. Water Supply Presentation (Aaron Abel)
7. Old Business (All)
8. New Business (All)
 - a. Discuss appointment to BWAC-David Sauer replaced Eric Wilson
 - b. Officer Election
 - c. Review proposed Brazos Watermaster budget for fiscal year 2025
 - d. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget to the TCEQ Commission.
9. Open Discussion (All)
10. Discuss next meeting, details and possible topics. (All)
11. Adjourn (All)

Brazos Watermaster Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2024

1:30 PM

Brazos River Authority Office

4600 Cobbs Drive

Waco, Texas 76710

Attendance Sheet/Record

List of Brazos Watermaster Advisory Committee (BWAC) Members (attendance Status):

Ryan Bayle – Luminant Power Environmental Manager (Absent)
Brad Brunett – Brazos River Authority (Present)
Carl Burch – NRG Energy Environmental Manager (Present)
Ralph Duggins – Individual Water Rights Holder (Joined Virtually on Teams)
C.R. “Hoppy” Eason Jr. – Individual Water Rights Holder (Present)
Timothy D. Finley – Dow Chemical Company (Present)
Alan Gardenhire – SLR Properties (Present)
Kenneth King – Individual Water Rights Holder (Present)
Kenton Moffett – City of Temple – Asst Public Works Director (Joined Virtually on Teams)
Rodney Stephens – North Leon Irrigation Corporation - President (Present)
Kevin Taylor – Somervell County Water District (Present)
David Turk – Palo Pinto MWD #1 (Present)
Chet Warren – City of Waco Water Utility Services Environmental Administrator (Present)
Brent Wheeler – Individual Water Right Holder (Joined Virtually on Teams)
ADDED: David Sauer – Gulf Coast Water Authority Affiliation (Present)

TCEQ staff present:

Kim Nygren – Water Availability Division - Deputy Director (Present)
Jose “Pepe” Davila – Watermaster Section Manager (Present)
Molly Mohler – Brazos Watermaster (Present)
Nancy Ragland – Assistant Brazos Watermaster (Absent)
Iliana Spaeth – Watermaster Liaison (Present)
Stephen Kinal – Watermaster Liaison (Joined Virtually on Teams)
Mary Ellen Tate – Administrative Assistant (Absent)
Kathy Alexander – Water Availability Division Policy and Technical Analyst (Present)
Jade Rutledge – Water Availability Division Special Assistant (Present)

Program Deputies

Ashton Parsley – Watermaster Deputy – Stephenville East (Present)
Sean Jurkis – Watermaster Deputy – Central Brazos (Present)
Carlos Paris – Watermaster Deputy – Waco East (Present)
Mike Caldwell - Watermaster Deputy – Stephenville West (Present)
Guy Falzarano – Watermaster Deputy – Lower Brazos (Present)
Michael Raynaud -Watermaster Deputy – Waco West (Present)
Alejandro Laje -Watermaster Deputy – Technical (Present)
Taylor Stockton – Watermaster Deputy – Waco West Area?? (Present)

General Public attending: Aaron Abel (BRA), Peyton Lisenby (BRA), Destiny Rauschhuber (BRA), Hallie Nevins – Consultant

AGENDA

Item 1: Call to Order

(Brad Brunett)

At 1:30 pm Brad Brunette called the meeting to order and thanked Alan Gardenhire for facilitating the meeting last year in his absence. Brad noted that the Brazos is good condition from both a flow and a reservoir level perspective. He noted that the basin was fortunate to be in much better shape than river basins in the areas to the West.

Item 2: Welcome from Brazos River Authority

(Brad Brunett)

Brad welcome everyone to BRA facility and Waco.

Item 3: Introductions (BWAC, Staff, Public)

(All)

As has been the norm at BWAC meeting, the meeting kick off with a few minutes for all in the room to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

Item 4: Review & approve minutes of July 11, 2023, BWAC Meeting

(All)

At 1:37 pm - Brad Brunette opened discussion on review of July 11, 2023 meeting minutes. After short review, no issue or concerns for meeting minutes were raised.

- Kenneth King moved to approve the meeting minutes
- Rodney Stephens seconds the meeting minutes
- Meeting minutes were approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Item 5: Update from TCEQ Staff

(Molly Mohler)

Item 5a Update from Deputies

Individual deputies introduced themselves, provided a little individual background and noted the area that they serve. Many of the deputies went on to provide a little information on the conditions and developments in the respective region that they serve.

Item 5b. Staffing Update

Molly Mohler provided the following staff update. She noted that the program is currently fully staffed. She stated that the program received a new vehicle bringing the total to 8 vehicles. This additional vehicle was purchased with funds already collected. Additionally, the program was able to retain the truck that was scheduled to be surplus. The added vehicle will assist with three staff members sharing two vehicles instead of one. She provided the data below on complaint and actions taken by staff over the past years compared to prior years.

Statistics

	This Year = (to date)	Last Year	Year Before
Complaints	25 (14 Open)	40	34
FC	2	3	4
NOVs	5	6	1
NOEs	0	3	1
Issues BWM Found	4	7	4

Item 6: Water Supply Presentation

(Aaron Abel)

Aaron Abel provided a presentation on the current conditions in the Brazos River Basin, noted that the Brazos River Authority (BRA) supplied water out of 3 reservoirs that BRA own and operate as well as 8 United States Army Corp of Engineer (USACE) reservoirs. Aaron’s presentation also highlighted details of a recent flood event (May 2024) that impacted Lake Limestone and the downstream watershed. This was the same event that impacted Lake Livingston.

Aaron went on to discuss projections for future conditions in the basin and a transition of global climate conditions to La Nina which tend to produce drier conditions in Texas. He shared images of BRA graphics that describe the conditions of basin reservoirs and noted that with recent rains several reservoirs were still making flood water releases from USACE flood pool storage. He noted that BRA had already released 1.3 million acre-ft from its 3 reservoirs already this year.

Aaron noted that some areas, but not all, of the basin had seen 2x normal rainfall year to date partially due to Hurricane Beryl.

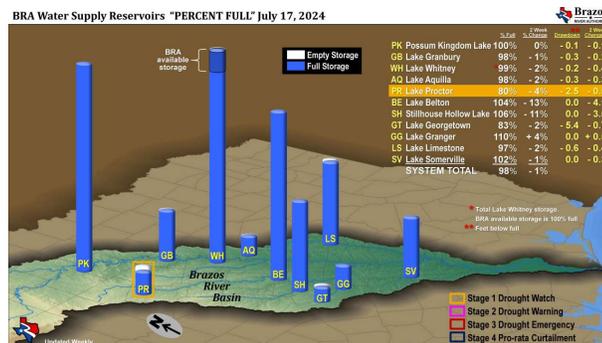
Aaron’s slides highlighted the improvement in US Drought Monitor conditions. He noted conditions are improved on the west side of the basins where Belton and Stillhouse Hollow reservoir had experienced record lows in 2023.

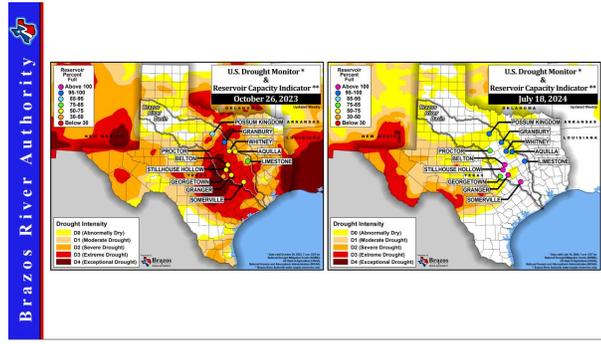
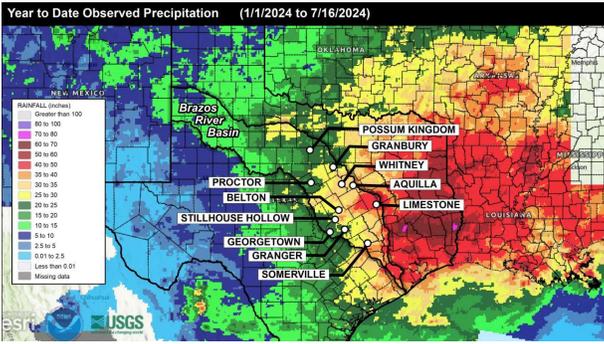
Slide images from Aaron’s presentation are captured below.



Water Supply Update

Presented by
Aaron Abel
Water Services Manager





Lake Limestone Historic May 2024 Flood Event

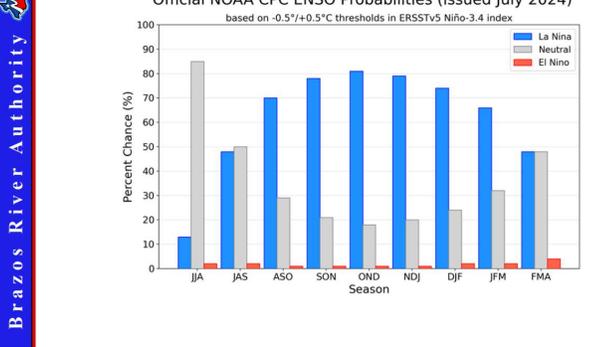
Widespread 6 to 10+ inches fell upstream between Wednesday, May 1, into Thursday, May 2

Inflows peaked at over 90,000 cubic feet per second on the morning of May 2

New record release on the morning of May 2 with an approximate release rate of 78,000 cfs

New record high lake level of 365.22 feet above mean sea level (morning of May 2) – 2.22 feet above full

All-time record streamflow and river heights established as the flood wave moved downstream through the central and lower portions of the Navasota River.



La Niña and what it could mean

2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook

Named storms: 17 - 25

Hurricanes: 8 - 13

Major hurricanes: 4 - 7

Season probability

Be prepared: Visit hurricanes.gov and follow @NWS and @NHC_Atlantic on X.

May 2024



Ralph Duggin asked what the status of the proposed reservoir (Cedar Ridge) that Abilene wants to build. Brad Brunett stated he hadn't heard anything recently on the status. Kim Nygren stated there is a permit pending with TCEQ for the proposed reservoir. TCEQ has seen significant increase in public interest and possibility for contested permits. Question was asked what pending applications for impoundments within the basin. Kathy Alexander stated that majority of

pending applications were to move diversion points. On TCEQ website under Water Rights, there is a list of pending water rights application, by river basin as well as a copy of the file.

Item 7: Old Business

(All)

At 2:13 pm, Brad opened discussion on old business, there were not old business items to discuss.

Item 8: New Business

(All)

At 2:14 pm, Brad opened discussion on new business with items below discussed.

Item 8a: Discuss appointment to BWAC-David Sauer replaced Eric Wilson

Molly introduced, or better stated re-introduced, David Sauer to the group as Eric Wilson's replacement. It was good to see David back with the group as he has served on the board for many years prior to his retirement from Gulf Coast Water Authority (GCWA).

Item 8b: Officer Election

Discussion on election officers was opened with a little background. Brad inquired about individuals who might be interested, or at least willing, to be an officer. Chet Warren noted that he would be willing to serve but there was not an upswell of interest. It was noted that the by-laws limit the term of officer in a specific position. The specific constraint is that officers cannot spend more than one 2-year term in a specific position. It was noted that current officer's sunset at EOY 2024.

After some additional discussion, and confirmation by Tim and Alan that they would be willing to continue to serve, David Sauer suggest a slate of officer that would move Alan from vice chair to chairman, Tim from secretary to vice chair with Chet stepping in as secretary. This was briefly discussion with no objection.

Rodney Stephens made a motion to approve David Sauer's proposed slate of officers. David Sauer seconded the motion. The members voted unanimously to adopt the proposed slate of officers as noted below.

- Alan Gardenhire - Chair
- Tim Finley - Vice Chair
- Chet Warren -Secretary

Item 8c: Review proposed Brazos Watermaster budget for fiscal year 2025

TCEQ staff, Pepe and Molly, shared background the proposed budget noting items related to reserve funds, salaries, and operational cost changes. The need for salary adjustments at a state level to address retention issues was discussed in some detail. The fact that the reserve was projected to be around \$274 K on September 1, 2024; with a target of \$540 K was discussed with some detail. The following summary of the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget was presented along with the resulting rates, as described.

Brazos Watermaster Operations

Annual Appropriation Information

Brazos Fund Balance as of 9/1/23: \$ 331,662.24

FY24 Assessment Compared to Proposed FY25 Assessment

Budget Categories	FY24 Assessment	Proposed FY25 Assessment	Difference between FY25 to FY24
Salaries	\$659,396.02	\$710,588.37	\$51,192.35
Longevity	\$15,254.80	\$12,920.40	(\$2,334.40)
Salary Enhancements	(1) \$25,276.85	\$14,211.77	(\$11,065.08)
Fringe	(2) \$192,106.99	\$193,171.82	\$1,064.83
Additional Insurance and Retirement	(3) \$10,498.92	\$11,065.81	\$566.89
SORM	(4) \$638.88	\$634.38	(\$4.50)
SWCAP	(5) \$4,785.58	\$4,989.50	\$203.92
LAR Capital	(6) \$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional/Temp Services	(7) \$59,567.28	\$66,172.32	\$6,605.04
Travel In-State	(8) \$21,000.00	\$20,500.00	(\$500.00)
Travel Out-of-State	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Training	\$750.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,250.00
Rent - Building	(9) \$33,703.68	\$33,703.68	\$0.00
Postage	\$600.00	\$1,850.00	\$1,250.00
Phone/Utilities	\$10,100.00	\$14,350.00	\$4,250.00
Supplies - Consumables	\$1,960.00	\$2,200.00	\$240.00
Other Operating Expenses	(10) \$3,000.00	\$2,650.00	(\$350.00)
Fuels/Lubricants	\$28,000.00	\$28,000.00	\$0.00
Rent - Machine & Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Facilities, Furniture & Equip	(11) \$13,500.00	\$15,700.00	\$2,200.00
Capital Equipment - Non LAR	(12) \$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$1,080,138.99	\$1,134,708.05	\$54,569.05

FY25 Proposed Assessment Calculation

FY25 Operating Budget Needs:		\$1,134,708.05
Assessment Needed Based on Collection Rate:	100%	\$1,134,708.05

Historical Assessment Comparison

	FY23	FY24	FY25
Total Assessment:	\$980,708.29	\$1,080,138.99	\$1,134,708.05
Municipal Rate (per A-Ft)	\$0.1877	\$0.2081	\$0.2193

Notes:

- (1) Salary Enhancements are calculated at 2% of FY25 budgeted salaries. These are projections only; actual expenditures will vary based on salary actions approved by management.
- (2) Fringe includes employee benefits such as health insurance, social security insurance, and retirement. Fringe is calculated at 26.2% of total salaries. Fringe will vary year-to-year based on actual costs.
- (3) Additional Health Insurance (130) and Retirement (0.5%) as required under Article IX, Sections 17.04 and 17.08 of the General Appropriations Act.
- (4) State Office of Risk Management (SORM) is a fee that is charged annually to the TCEQ. The amount is estimated during budget development and actual expenditure may vary.
- (5) Statewide Cost Allocation Plan (SWCAP) is a fee that is charged annually to the TCEQ for central services. The amount is estimated during budget development and actual expenditure may vary.
- (6) Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR) Capital includes all items exceeding \$100,000 in total agency cost (for example: vehicles, computers, monitoring equipment), and must have legislative approval.
- (7) Professional/Temp Services includes but is not limited to software development costs, summer interns, and temporary employees.
- (8) Travel In-State maximum amounts are established at an agency level; an increase in WM travel funding cannot be accommodated without a corresponding decrease in travel funding in another agency program.
- (9) A proportionate share of the annual TCEQ Regional Office building rent is charged to the Watermaster Program.
- (10) Other Operating Expenses includes items designated by the Texas Comptroller's Office that do not fall into any remaining budget category (for example: annual vehicle inspection fees, vehicle decals, etc.).
- (11) Facilities, Furniture & Equipment (FFE) includes but is not limited to non-LAR equipment less than \$5,000 in cost, non-consumable supplies, vehicle maintenance and repairs, etc.
- (12) Capital Equipment - Non LAR includes capital items with a cost between \$5,000 and \$24,999.

Item 8d: Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget to the TCEQ Commission.

David Sauer opened the discussion with a question about vehicle replacement criteria? Pepe indicated that the vehicle replacement criteria are: 100 K miles and 9 years. Molly stated that the oldest vehicle was a 2016, next was a 2018, five vehicles were purchased in 2021, and the newest one is a 2023. She noted that vehicles can be moved between staff who drive various miles in an effort maximize life.

Brad Brunett asked about staffing levels? Molly shared that, at present, they are feeling good about staffing when the program is in fact fully staffed. Molly noted that the team size seems to be appropriate given the Legislative Budget Board requirement for sites and number of complaints the program has seen since inception.

Alan asked a question about professional service fees? Molly indicated that these costs are for software support not temporary employees. It was noted that the proposed increase comes after many years with no increase in this area.

Brent asked about future shifts in professional fee cost. Pepe indicated that, at moment, he was not aware of any drivers for cost adjustments in the near future. Kim indicated that the program has been fortunate to be able to keep long standing IT resources/staff.

Brent asked about salary increases for the new year. Kim stated that the increase was for legislatively mandated salary increase of 5% for September 1st as well as programmatic and targeted increases for staff.

Alan asked about reserve fund and level of concern for not having the targeted 6-month operational budget (~\$540 K) and if this was an operational issue? Kim indicated that the bulk of the revenue is not received until January or February of every year; therefore, watermaster operations rely on the targeted fund balance for approx. the first half of the fiscal year. The targeted 6-month balance is a goal. It is expected to slowly add some yearly fund savings to get to the goal.

With no additional questions, the proposed 2025 rates were presented as described in the budget table.

“The BWAC supports the Brazos Watermaster Program’s request to the TCEQ Commissioners to support the proposed FY2021 budget of \$1,134,708.05 and resulting municipal assessment rate of \$0.2193 per acre-foot.”

Brad Brunett requested a motion to support the budget.

David Sauer moved support/recommend the proposed budget.

Kenneth King seconded.

The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Item 9: Open Discussion

(All)

No items were raised in open discussion.

Item 10: Discuss next meeting, details and possible topics.

(All)

The group discussed next meeting with a decision to meet in January only if need.

Item 11: Adjourn

(All)

The meeting was adjourned by Brad Brunette at 2:57 pm

*Adopted and Approved in Session of the Brazos Watermaster Advisory
Committee on the 22th day of July, 2025.*



Alan Gardenhire, BWAC Chair

Tim Finley, BWAC Vice-Chair



Chet Warren, BWAC Secretary