

## Region D water planning group ok's work plan *New board members placed*

By [LORI COPE](#) | *East Texas Edition*

August 24, 2006 - A main order of business for the Northeast Texas Regional Water Planning Group (NETRWPG for Region D) on Aug. 16 was to approve their next step in the state's development of the "Water for Texas - 2007" plan.

After public and NETRWPG board input, a proposed Scope of Work was approved that prioritizes Region D's activities for the next two years.

Ray Flemmons, a consultant to the NETRWPG, detailed the Scope of Work, or prioritized work plan, that will be submitted to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). TWDB is responsible for doling out the \$6.6 million allocated for the state's 16 regional water planning groups to complete their work. The regional water planning groups will compete for the funds, and each group's submitted Scope of Work is important in the TWDB's decision-making process.

Region D's plan calls for the development, management, and conservation of the region's water resources, but "we want to be able to amend the water plan," Flemmons said. The Region D water plan was approved by the TWDB earlier this year. The future amendments to the plan will be based on further evaluation, and re-evaluation of the approved plan, based on population growth and, thus, increased water demand.

First on the prioritized work plan is "research alternative solutions to meet water demands, including external demands in Region D from Regions C and I. Region C includes the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, and Region I includes the southeastern Texas area that includes Nacogdoches and Lufkin. TWDB has approved their plans, as well.

Flemmons also touched on the subject of "potential litigation" in regards to Region C's plan including the construction of water sources within Region D, such as Marvin Nichols Reservoir; and cited the query of whether or not Region D could "charge for water" that passed through pipelines within Region D on its way to other regions.

Second on the prioritized work list would be a focus on groundwater management. The board issued comment about the possibility of establishing a Groundwater Management Area (GMA) whose elected leaders would set policy on how the area's groundwater would be managed.

A TWDB spokesperson told board members, though, that TWDB management has said the establishment of GMAs would likely not be something they'd consider "favorable for funding." However, the prospect of being able to govern the region's underground water resources drew comments from the board, as well as Max Shumake of DeKalb during the meeting's public comment portion concerning this listing on the proposed Scope of Work plan. "We need to get our groundwater under our control," Shumake offered. "There is

no GMA in our region, but maybe there should be.”

Two established GMAs are in proximity to Region D. Jim Thompson, the NETRWPG board chairman, noted it would be important to supply information about Region D’s goals and plans to those GMAs for their decision-making process. Two Region D board members (newly-elected Sharon Nabors, and Max Bain) were approved to attend the GMA 8 and GMA 11 meetings, respectively.

Third on the prioritized list is “further evaluation of sub-regional water supply master plans.” This goal involves the possibility of “combining clusters of smaller, geographically proximate Water User Groups (WUGs) into a single large entity.”

Also, the re-evaluation of per capita consumption of water within the region, was moved to the fourth position on the Scope of Work plan. Board member Beth Wisenbaker of Hopkins County posed this adjustment to the plan, and the board approved it. Wisenbaker noted the region is possibly growing faster than estimated and “we don’t want to project that we don’t have a need” for the available water resources.

The proposed Scope of Work will be adjusted and submitted to TWDB by the Sept. 14 deadline, Flemmons told the board.

Another key item on the Aug. 16 meeting agenda was the appointment of successors for voting member positions. Eight seats were decided upon. Elected to remain on the board were members George Frost of Bowie County, Mendy Rabicoff of Gregg County, Jim Thompson of Cass County, and John Durgin of Van Zandt County. Board member Williams Justiss of Lamar County nominated Sharon Nabors to fill his seat, and the board approved. Board member Mike Dunn of Hunt County moved from the region, and two nominations were issued for his seat: Jimmy Clark of Commerce and James C. Patterson of Greenville. Clark was elected to serve on the board.

Two board members had filled the maximum terms, and therefore could not be re-elected. For the board seat held by Gary Jackson of Smith County, Bob Staton was elected to serve; and for the seat held by Wisenbaker of Hopkins County, Bob Patterson was elected.