

LCRA Press Release

Public input helps shape LCRA's long-term water supply planning

By James Kowis, LCRA, manager of water supply planning

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On behalf of LCRA I want to thank everyone who participated in the community conversations about water supply this summer. Your input has helped shape the types of water supplies that LCRA will study in our effort to plan for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

More than 220 people attended three community conversations about water supply held in Burnet, Wharton and Austin. These were unique opportunities for neighbors to sit down together and discuss their values about water supply and wishes for future generations. Also, nearly 500 interested stakeholders participated in the process through our Web site.

In all, participants suggested 189 water supply options and gave more than 150 values that they hold regarding water supply. LCRA staff has compiled and analyzed the public input. The three water supply options mentioned most often were conservation, desalination and reuse. The values that were mentioned most often were clean water, protection of the environment, recreation and lifestyle and availability.

I gave a report to the LCRA Board of Directors about the public input this month. We reviewed the list of water supply options that LCRA will study in our long-term plan, the Water Supply Resource Plan. To review a copy of this list or to learn more about the planning process, please visit our Web site at www.lcra.org/watersupply/index.html.

LCRA is preparing the Water Supply Resource Plan so we will have a roadmap for how to meet needs for water in the future. The plan will show how much water is available and when and where it can be provided in the future.

Today, LCRA's customers rely on the Highland Lakes and water rights that allow water to be taken from the lower Colorado River. All of LCRA's water supplies provide ample water for today's needs -- even during times of drought. As our population and businesses grow, we will need to pursue additional water supplies. That's why LCRA is pursuing this planning effort now, so we can support vibrant, healthy and growing communities for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We truly appreciate everyone's participation and input. Your ideas have contributed greatly to the process. We will have a draft Water Supply Resource Plan prepared by spring 2009 and will ask for your review and feedback.

James Kowis is the manager of water supply planning for LCRA. He has worked on water planning issues throughout the state during his 30-year career in public service.

Citizens told LCRA these values related to water supply were the most important.

1. Clean water, protection of environment
2. Recreation and lifestyle
3. Availability
4. High quality water supply
5. Management of growth
6. Affordability
7. Jobs and economic growth