



**ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD WATER TREATMENT PLANT 4 COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES November 09, 2011 AT 10:00 A.M. 505 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD 11<sup>th</sup> FL.  
CONFERENCE ROOM THE CAVERN**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Board members:** Bob Anderson, Mary Gay Maxwell, Mary Ann Neely and Robin Gary

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**CALL TO ORDER**

**The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m.**

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL**

Speaker should sign up to speak prior to the meeting called to order; you will receive a three-minute Time allotment to address your concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

**There were no citizens signed up to speak under citizen communication.**

**2. APPROVAL OF THE WTP4 COMMITTEE MEETINGS MINUTES FROM**

a. July 27, 2011

**The minutes of the July 27, 2011 meeting were approved Board member Mary Gay Maxwell motion and Board members Mary Ann Neely's second. [Vote 3-0].**

**3. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

Topic of the meeting will be the Jollyville Transmission Main project and issues associated with it, including drought impacts on endangered species, water flow, and fire danger resulting from the drought conditions. The water treatment plant project will not be discussed at this meeting.

**This item was conducted as posted. Summary of meeting notes attached.**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.**

**Summary Notes  
WTP#4 Committee meeting  
November 9, 2011**

This is a preliminary summary of the meeting held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011. All of the committee members were present with a large number of Watershed Protection Staff, Water Utility staff, and contractors, Lauren Ross, Ray Brainard, and Dave Anderson specifically.

The introductory comments made by Mary Gay Maxwell included several key points, including:

- Her opinion that the route chosen for the JTM is the wrong route because of the extreme sensitivity of the Bull Creek Watershed and the fact that it provides the cleanest water in Austin;
- Her request that the first items to be addressed would be addressing the three main concerns related to the drought as expressed in the Board's letter to Council:
  - 1) Measures being taken to prevent fire at the JTM site;
  - 2) Information as to how the drought is affecting the salamander;
  - 3) Effects of the drought on the Golden Cheeked Warbler.

Staff and contractors responded to the three items in detail:

- As for the efforts regarding fire prevention, the staff has ensured that stringent measures are being applied in order to maximize the fire safety at the Four Points Shaft site;
- The salamander discussion revealed that there is not enough data regarding the long term survival of the species to make conclusions as to how extreme the impact might be due to the severe drought, even though there is currently some evidence of reduction in the population at two springs sites; and
- The dependency of the Golden Cheeked Warbler on adequate water supplies as well as on diverse vegetation to provide a viable food source is likely to result in lower numbers of birds that can survive the migration south. There is not enough data to actually conclude how much the birds will suffer from the drought. The earliest that can be known will be in March of 2012.

In addition to providing information regarding the concerns resulting from the drought, Lauren Ross, a contractor who is also a water engineer with many skills relating to the aquifer, provided more detailed information on the shaft construction process as it relates to the impact on the aquifer. She also explained the differences between the Northern Edwards Aquifer portion that creates Bull Creek and the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer that feeds Barton Creek.

Essentially, the two differ in the way the Karst Limestone functions. At Bull Creek the Edwards formation is more sponge-like without large conduits for the water. It has lower flow into the creek than in the Barton Springs segment.

There was much more, but these are some of the highlights of our meeting. We will continue to meet to discuss the project as it progresses, due to the seriousness of the potential impacts to the watershed. Other committee members might comment here.

**WTP#4 Subcommittee Meeting**  
**Additional comments**  
**Robin Gary**

**Biologists from the City of Austin and the BCCP stated that both the Golden cheek warbler and Jollyville salamanders are extremely dependent on spring flow for their health and survival. Consulting engineers and staff hydro geologists and environmental commissioning team members began discussions on the monitoring network in place to verify that construction activities do not disrupt spring flow. The monitoring network carefully monitors groundwater levels in numerous wells. My comment to this is that while the monitoring devices and data feeds are state-of-the-art, the background data establishing the link between groundwater levels and springflow is severely deficient. I request additional information on the correlations done between levels monitored in the wells and discharge measured at the known salamander springs. Without these correlations, the relationship between the monitoring sites and the critical habitat cannot be proven; and therefore the applicability of the monitoring network could be called into question**