

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2027



TEXAS
WATER
TRADE

LETTER FROM THE CEO



With deep gratitude to our founders, Board of Directors, staff, partners and supporters, and with an enduring commitment to the water resources of Texas, I am pleased to introduce a vision for the next three years of Texas Water Trade. Completing our sixth anniversary as an organization, we've taken stock of our achievements and strengths and identified key areas where Texas Water Trade can continue to contribute to Texas' water future. Think of this as a "headwaters" document; just as the headwaters of a stream or river start on high ground as rain, or flow from an aquifer-fed spring to eventually become a waterway, this document serves as the base from which our strategies, programs, performance metrics, and indeed, everything, will flow over the coming years.

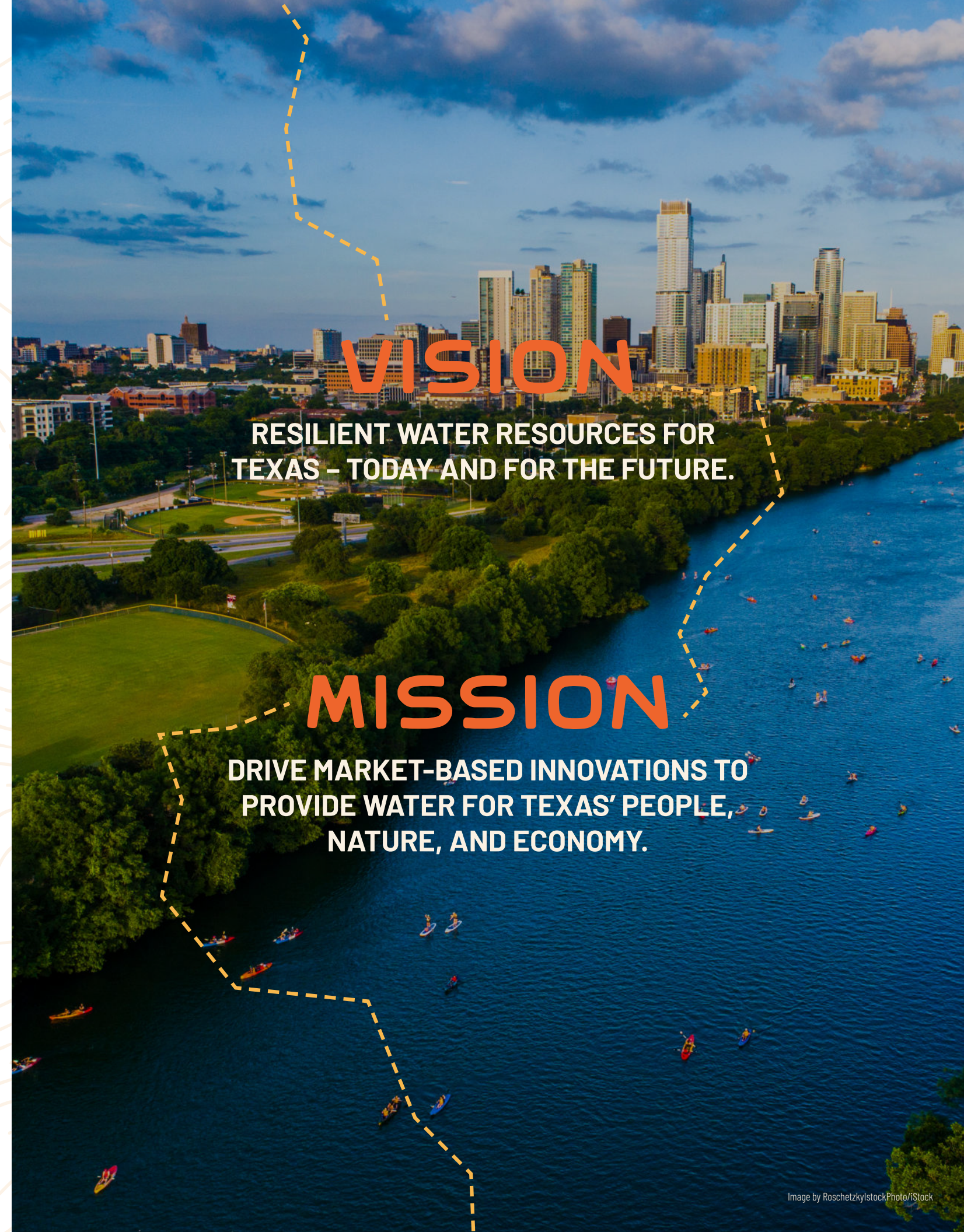
Texas' intricate and connected system of water – rivers, streams, lakes, springs, groundwater, and bays and estuaries – nourishes the people, places, and wildlife at the heart of our great state. Water fuels Texas' economic prosperity, the state's growth, and its continued evolution. Texas water leaders must ensure that Texas has the water it needs for the future. That's a tall order. Our water laws and policies date back to the late 1800s, and droughts will ALWAYS be a fact of life. Texas Water Trade develops and demonstrates novel and effective approaches to Texas' water challenges. We've prioritized working closely with partners from all sectors across the state to co-develop innovative approaches that optimize the use of markets and uncover win-win solutions.

Over the last several years, Texas Water Trade has played a leading role in the restoration of water flows reaching drought-stricken areas of the coast to support critical wildlife habitat and paved the way for groundwater replenishment in West Texas while supporting the goals of local farmers. Our successful track record has helped us recruit leading water experts in Texas to join, support, and better Texas Water Trade. Looking into the future, we're doubling down on these strengths, our innovative spirit, and our dedication to meaningful collaboration to scale our successes to meet the moment and continue moving Texas' water story in the right direction.

As you look through our goals and objectives for the next three years, I hope you'll see yourself in them and join us in the pursuit of resilient water resources for Texas – today and for the future.

A stylized black ink signature of Scott Moorhead.

Scott Moorhead, CEO



CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Developed a first-in-class groundwater forbearance agreement in partnership with the state's second-largest pecan producer resulting in ~1,500 acre-feet of water saved and dedicated to remaining in the Edwards-Trinity aquifer for 15 years, protecting water users throughout the system.

Developed and introduced the Net Zero Water concept in Texas, including distribution of a public toolkit and dedicated capacity to catalyze onsite water reuse strategies to protect local water supplies and address water scarcity.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Texas Water Trade is made strong by the unique expertise and perspectives of our staff, board, partners, and collaborators, who come together with shared purpose, principles, and direction:

We're in this together. The scale of water challenges in Texas calls for meaningful partnerships with stakeholders representing varied interests across the state. Providing technical support, expertise and resources, we build partnerships that lead to the co-development of successful projects.

We pursue win-win outcomes. Water is the lifeblood of Texas. We develop and prioritize approaches to secure its quality and availability into the future in ways that support the success of diverse stakeholders.

Our work is informed by the best available information. We rely on science and data to inform our decisions. We advance evidence-based methodologies to maximize measurable impacts for natural systems and economic opportunity.

We think and act outside the box. We develop market-based approaches to address the state's water needs. We pilot and perfect tools and approaches and share them widely with others for greater impact.

We serve all Texans. All Texans should benefit from the state's water resources. We aim to prioritize strategies that allow us to support underrepresented water users by sharing our expertise and leveraging our network to better equip these groups to tackle their water concerns.



Established Vida Water, a wholly owned subsidiary of TWT, focused on providing affordable and reliable drinking water solutions for Texans.

Secured water through multiple contracts with NGO partners to deliver thousands of acre-feet (almost 2.6 B gallons) of water along the Texas coast for wetland and habitat enhancement in critical estuaries, supporting numerous species of great conservation need.

Launched the Texas Water Market Makers Initiative, a collaborative platform propelling or launching local partnerships to bring water transactions to life across five distinct watersheds, and its companion Flows Fund, a reserve of targeted funds to kickstart environmental water transaction opportunities.

A photograph of a wetland scene. In the foreground, several black-necked stilts with white bodies and black heads are standing in shallow water. Behind them, two roseate spoonbills with long, flat bills and pinkish-red plumage are also in the water. The background shows tall green reeds on the left and a calm body of water under a clear sky. A dark blue, wavy-edged graphic overlay is positioned in the upper right corner, containing white text.

“Water supply challenges impact ALL TEXANS. We believe that all Texans can, and MUST, be part of the solution.”

- Scott Moorhead

THE BIG PICTURE

Water shapes everything in Texas. Rivers and streams connect our communities and underpin the historical arcs of agriculture, fishing, municipal development, industry, recreation, and culture. Groundwater gives life to our cherished springs while quietly providing millions with drinking water, enabling farming and ranching, and supporting industrial growth, energy production and generation. The pearls of Texas – the bays and estuaries lining the Texas Gulf Coast – rely on freshwater inflows mixing with ocean water to serve as nursery grounds and habitat for the fish, shellfish, and wildlife that feed the country and support a vibrant economy.

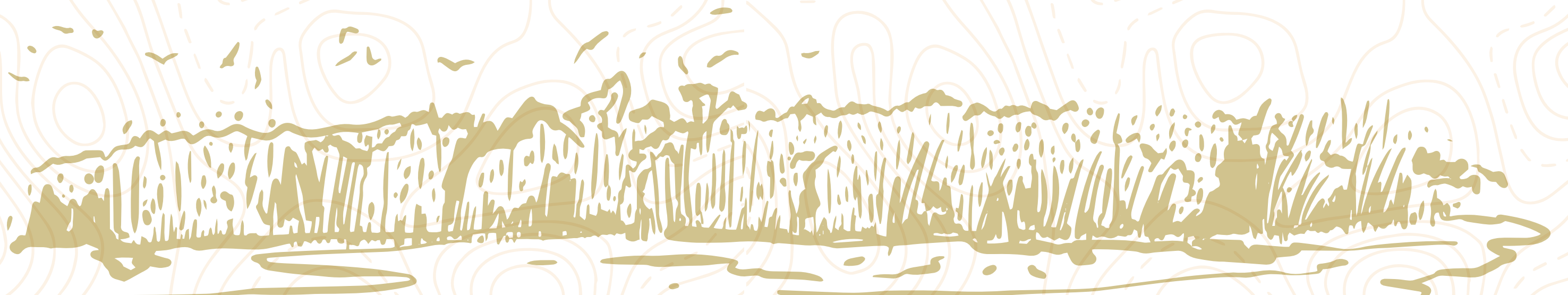
In the 2022 State Water Plan, Texas projected a 73% population increase over the next 50 years, with a 63% increase in municipal water demand and an 18% decrease in water supply. In a drought-prone state, with changing rainfall patterns and more extreme temperatures, the math is clear: water scarcity is a challenge in the Lone Star State.

From the Lower Rio Grande Valley to Corpus Christi, Central and West Texas, and across the Panhandle, diverse water uses such as drinking water, agriculture, and industry, as well as our bays, springs, rivers and natural landscapes are impacted. With so much at stake, it has never been more important for entities focused on Texas' water challenges to accelerate sound frameworks and strategic innovations in shaping our future.

TEXAS WATER TRADE IS UNIQUELY EQUIPPED TO ADVANCE A SET OF IMPACTFUL SOLUTIONS

Founded in 2018, Texas Water Trade is the state's go-to organization for accelerating innovative market-based strategies that address Texas' interconnected water scarcity concerns. We assemble diverse coalitions and bridge interests to deliver shared solutions. We use science and data to promote on-the-ground impacts, and we partner with a broad base of water players to make a difference for Texas' people and nature. Professional engineering expertise on our team promotes strategies to relieve pressure on community water supplies and balance ongoing economic growth.

Our model of **innovate – demonstrate – educate – replicate** drives us to test creative strategies, share and promote lessons learned, and collaborate and scale with diverse stakeholders and water users across Texas.



LEAD EFFORTS TO GET THE FLOWS RIGHT

A direct route to strengthen the water landscape in Texas is to protect, secure, or beneficially use water where it is most needed by entering into voluntary agreements with rights holders. Texas has abundant freshwater resources. However, due to changes in rainfall patterns, declining groundwater aquifers, and alteration of our rivers, that water is not always where it's needed to meet the demands of people or our natural systems.

Texas Water Trade is the state's premier organization leading the use of market-based innovations and other voluntary water transactions to protect the right amount of water in the right place at the right time to benefit diverse users and nature. Sometimes this means simply keeping water in place – in aquifers or rivers – to support the water needs of a particular place or species. In other cases, these transactions may involve securing more senior water rights upstream for application further downstream, perhaps to benefit a coastal or estuarine environment via small, targeted volumes or “focused flows” – a term coined by Dr. Paul Montagna of the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Over the next three years, Texas Water Trade will build on the success of our Texas Water Market Makers Initiative to scale up the use of these transactions with local partners. We will also advance understanding of the intrinsic value of water, and how to comprehensively evaluate the cost/benefit considerations of pursuing an environmental water transaction to better equip decisionmakers and stakeholders.

Launched in 2020, Texas Water Market Makers created a collaborative framework for Texas Water Trade and regional partners to implement market-based strategies and tools to restore quantifiable amounts of water to important bays and stream reaches in Texas. Through this initiative, we deployed technical expertise and financial resources to projects that provided temporary or permanent environmental flows by reducing the water consumption of current users or through the modification of current management systems.

GOAL ONE

Increase the application of water transactions and water management best practices to preserve water and move it where it is needed most to sustain and nourish Texas' wildlife, nature, communities, and economy.

Objective 1.1: Build on TWT's leadership and successful track record of leveraging market-based transactions to support, equip, and collaborate with partner organizations across the state to implement on-the-ground water transactions and best practices for the benefit of people and wildlife – locally, downstream, and along the coast.

Objective 1.2: Promote the role of state and regional water trusts and work to ensure that any interested stakeholder and user group can utilize their water rights in support of ecological needs while maintaining their economic interests and unique role in Texas' identity.

Objective 1.3: Cultivate the enabling conditions (e.g. clear trading rules, shared information) needed to scale up the use of water markets and interventions that benefit Texas' environment and water rights holders.

GOAL TWO

Broaden the accessibility of water markets by showcasing data and case studies, and by developing new research to enhance the understanding and expertise of practitioners and stakeholders interested in the environmental water market field.

Objective 2.1: Develop and promote informational materials for interested stakeholders (such as water rights holders, state agencies, river authorities, NGOs, corporate entities, and practitioners), to include a Texas-specific water-transactions guide outlining the steps involved, the roles of different entities, regulatory considerations, case studies, and lessons learned.

Objective 2.2: Collaborate with Texas' leading research institutions to refine methodologies to more accurately value freshwater and its benefits to promote long-term safeguards for all users.



ADVANCE STRATEGIC WATER USAGE AND PLANNING

Balancing urban growth with smart planning and responsible water use is key to Texas' water security and is needed now more than ever. One Water – an integrated approach to water management that considers drinking water, stormwater, wastewater, and graywater altogether as one resource – is an increasingly popular model that many cities in Texas are eager to adopt. This approach invites urban development to contribute to water accessibility by leveraging water reuse at the local level. Our Net Zero Water design mindset deploys the theories and principles of the One Water approach by 1) prioritizing the use of water sources generated onsite within a building's footprint, and 2) reducing reliance on traditional supplies. In 2024, Texas Water Trade launched the award-winning Net Zero Water Toolkit – a public resource for property developers, owners/operators, and other land development professionals in Texas guiding design, permitting, and maintenance of onsite water reuse. Net Zero Water envisions a Texas where individual projects contribute greater portions of their water needs through the capture, storage, and treatment of compatible water sources found onsite, such as air conditioning condensate,

One Water is a transformative way of viewing, valuing, and managing water. The One Water approach manages all water—whether from the tap, a stream, a storm, an aquifer, or a sewer—in a collaborative, integrated, and holistic manner.



1. BLACKWATER, 2. GRAYWATER, 3. EVAPORATIVE COOLING BLOWDOWN, 4. FOUNDATION DRAINAGE WATER, 5. STORMWATER 6. RAINWATER 7. AC CONDENSATE

harvested rainwater, and treated wastewater. Professional engineering expertise on our team allows us to offer unique and technical insights to stakeholders interested in pursuing onsite water reuse projects and the broader One Water community of practice in Texas.

GOAL THREE

Accelerate adoption of onsite water reuse projects across Texas to model sustainable water usage in new and redeveloped buildings and reduce the drawdown of local water resources to support these structures to better balance growth with water availability.

Objective 3.1: Contribute onsite water reuse engineering expertise and offer hands-on guidance consistent with TWT's Net Zero Water Toolkit to help shape public and private development plans in targeted regions of significant water stress.

Objective 3.2: Reduce real and perceived barriers to the use of innovative onsite water management strategies by showcasing successful case studies, proven incentive initiatives, and funding opportunities through collaboration with partners to develop and promote informational materials to be made widely available.

GOAL FOUR

Add strategic value to the Texas One Water community of practice with TWT's unique engineering and technical expertise focused on onsite water reuse as a key strategy in the overall One Water framework.

Objective 4.1: Participate in the development of sound methodologies to measure, analyze, and express the value of and benefits derived from onsite water reuse projects to educate specific audiences (e.g. engineering and development professionals) to catalyze changes in business strategy and prioritize innovative water-saving technologies.

Objective 4.2: Contribute technical expertise to the One Water community, water managers, regional water planning groups, technical assistance providers, and others in Texas by seeking out and participating in educational events to spread knowledge and solve problems.



Image by EJKrouse/iStock

EXPLORE AND ELEVATE CREATIVE APPROACHES TO WATER ISSUES

Texas Water Trade is rooted in the spirit of our state. Embracing innovation and growth while remaining faithful to our traditions is core to our identity. We are committed to advancing proven solutions while simultaneously seeking, developing, and supporting new ideas with partners from all sectors to solve the water challenges confronting Texas. We recognize that some water issues in Texas require a timely and all-hands approach, and where we can, Texas Water Trade will strategically deploy its assets to ensure Texas' people and nature have the water they need. Sometimes, this may require thinking beyond the typical NGO and non-profit models to facilitate an appropriate response. The ability to respond, stretch, and close gaps is a hallmark of Texas Water Trade that we are proud to continue.

GOAL FIVE

Where feasible and appropriate, leverage TWT's expertise, network, and resources to support efforts aimed at resolving acute and urgent water crises impacting Texas communities and natural areas by continuing to seek opportunities to explore and elevate new and potentially pioneering approaches to address Texas' water challenges.

Objective 5.1: Serve as the incubator for needed bridge solutions like Vida Water – an initiative working to serve disenfranchised communities with an in-home water filtration solution to close the gap between the lack of service and long-term connectivity, addressing the urgent need for access to potable water.

Vida Water is a wholly owned subsidiary of Texas Water Trade on a mission to provide affordable and reliable water solutions for Texans in need. Established in 2021, Vida Water has designed a service to give Texas families access to water filters that fit their budget and need for convenience. Vida Water deploys a team of experts including community plumbers, engineers, and water scientists to match households to the filter that fits their needs, and provide long-term maintenance services.





TexasWaterTrade.org