

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION (POE) SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE (TGPC)
RECORD OF MEETING
Fiscal Year 2006

Meeting Date: July 13, 2006
Meeting No.: 08

Place: TCEQ Campus, Bldg F
Room: 3202A

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MEETING ATTENDANCE

Subcommittee Members

Affiliation

Bruce Lesikar (Chair)	Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE)
Michael Hare	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
Chris Ramser	Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District (Clearwater UWCD), Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD)
Steve Musick	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Mary Ambrose	TCEQ
Kathy McCormack	TCEQ
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ
Lynne Fahlquist	United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Claude Ross	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
	Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Radu Boghici	Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)

Public

Steve Box	Environmental Stewardship
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MEETING HANDOUTS

1. July 13, 2006 Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Meeting Agenda
2. May 24, 2006 Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Meeting Record
3. Draft TGPC POE Subcommittee Educational Outreach Plan
4. Draft Report to the 80th Legislature – TGPC POE Subcommittee Accomplishments List
5. Draft Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Recommendations for the Legislative Report
6. TGPC Website Statistics (Jan 1 – May 23, 2006)
7. TGPC – Summary Paragraph for Publication in Other Newsletters/Websites
8. 2006 – 2007 Water-related Conferences in Texas

MEETING RECORD OF JULY 13, 2006

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) called the meeting to order at 1:11 PM. Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee members and visitors were introduced.

2. REVIEW RECORD OF MAY 24, 2006 MEETING

There were no concerns with the record of the previous meeting.

3. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF USDA NRCS AND THE TEXAS RC&D COUNCILS

Claude Ross, USDA NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program Manager, made a presentation to the POE Subcommittee entitled, “Resource Conservation & Development – Partnerships Serving America’s Communities”.

The NRCS (<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/>) emphasizes land conservation, water management, economic development, and community sustainability, tries to leverage limited federal dollars, and seeks a balance between rural development and conservation of natural resources. Examples of NRCS projects include:

- Providing assistance with post-Rita disaster recovery and the fires in the panhandle;
- Addressing salt cedar issues in the Rio Grande and Pecos River basins;
- Land conversion;
- Community assessments and leadership programs;
- On-line access, especially for Spanish-speaking customers along the Rio Grande River.

There are 23 RC&D Councils in Texas

(<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd/generalRCDinfo.html>,

<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd/rcdocs/rcdgeninfo.pdf>) comprised of local government, Soil and Water Conservation Districts

(<http://www.tssweb.state.tx.us/swcd/association.html>), community-based organizations, nonprofits, local businesses, and individuals which interact with the USDA, NRCS, and other Federal and State organizations. Each Council develops its own five-year strategic plan.

4. EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PLAN

Review Groundwater Educational Outreach Issues A – J

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reviewed the draft Plan. Progress has been made on four of the 10 Issues. Note that the underlined Champions listed below are the group leaders for each Issue.

Issue A – Urban Landowner Pesticide Application and Groundwater

Lynn Fahlquist (USGS), Michael Hare (TDA), Al Cherepon (TCEQ)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. The POE Subcommittee agreed that this topic should include nutrients and urban chemicals (i.e., pesticides), but not agricultural chemical usage.

Issue B – New Rural Landowners and Groundwater Wells (Obtaining a Water Well, Rules of Thumb for Pump and Water Well Care and Maintenance)

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS), Mary Ambrose (TCEQ), David Gunn (TDLR)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) suggested that a good website for information is <http://www.wellowner.org/>. Steve Musick (TCEQ) felt that additional information on this Issue may be available from the Texas Ground Water Association (<http://www.tgwa.org/>).

Issue C – Abandoned Water Well Closure (Capping and Plugging)

David Gunn (TDLR), TAGD representative

No input has been received yet for this Issue. Bruce Lesikar (TCE) volunteered to assist with this Issue.

Issue D – Groundwater Conservation Districts (The GCDs Themselves and/or Their Customers)

GCD Newsletters

Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD)

Input has been received. Steve Musick (TCEQ) volunteered TCEQ staff to assist with this Issue.

Local GCD Symposiums

Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD)

Input has been received. There were no comments during the meeting.

Major Rivers Program

Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD)

Input has been received. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) suggested that Al Cherepon (TCEQ) be added to this team considering his background in science education. The cost of this program for 1,122 students in Bell County was approximately \$1.30 per student. Steve Musick (TCEQ) suggested that the TGPC write a letter of support for this program and address it to the TAGD Education Chair. The letter would need to outline how this

program will meet Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test objectives. Stacy Pandey (TWDB) can provide the handout material (curriculum, brochures, etc.).

Issue E – Access to TGPC Agencies’/Organizations’ Groundwater Program Information and General Groundwater Information

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ), Mary Ambrose (TCEQ)

Input has been received. Steve Musick (TCEQ) felt that this was really two sub-issues:

- Encouraging each agency to make groundwater information available and develop educational material about their groundwater programs;
- Using the TGPC website to serve as a link to this information so that it is more easily accessible to the public.

Issue F – Tex*A*SYST (Farm Pollutant Inventory/Management and Groundwater)

Steve Musick (TCEQ), Joe Peters (TCEQ), Monty Dozier (TCE)

Input has been received. Claude Ross (USDA NRCS) indicated that RC&D Councils have followed up their well screenings with the Tex*A*SYST program.

Issue G – On-Site Wastewater Treatment/Disposal Systems Education (Including First Time Owners)

Bruce Lesikar (TCE)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. There were no comments during the meeting.

Issue H – Education for Private Water Well Owners: Quality

Drinking Water “Right-to-Know”

Steve Musick (TCEQ), Al Cherepon (TCEQ), Kathy McCormack (TCEQ)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. There were no comments during the meeting.

Secondary Groundwater Constituents Causing Odor/Taste/Staining Problems

Steve Musick (TCEQ), Al Cherepon (TCEQ), Kathy McCormack (TCEQ)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. There were no comments during the meeting.

Problems Most Encountered by Water Well Owners

Steve Musick (TCEQ), Al Cherepon (TCEQ), Kathy McCormack (TCEQ)

Input has been received. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) noted that <http://www.wellowner.org/> may have more information on this Issue. Steve Musick (TCEQ) felt that this Issue was actually part of Issue B.

Identification of the Most Common Groundwater Contaminants (and their Sources) for Rural and Urban Water Well Owners

Steve Musick (TCEQ), Al Cherepon (TCEQ), Kathy McCormack (TCEQ)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. There were no comments during the meeting.

Issue I – Education for Private Water Well Owners: Quantity
Groundwater Levels/Supply

Al Cherepon (TCEQ), Radu Boghici (TWDB)

Input has been received. There were no comments during the meeting.

Issue J – Groundwater and Oil & Gas Wells

Plugging Abandoned Oil & Gas Wells

Leslie Savage (RRC)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) volunteered to assist with this Issue.

Converting Abandoned Oil & Gas Wells into Water Wells

Leslie Savage (RRC)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) volunteered to assist with this Issue and asked whether Barry Miller (TAGD) should also assist with this Issue. Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD) also volunteered to assist with this Issue.

Water Wells Supporting Oil & Gas Wells

Leslie Savage (RRC)

No input has been received yet for this Issue. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) and Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD) volunteered to assist with this Issue.

The goal is to present the final Educational Outreach Plan at the First Quarter 2007 TGPC meeting (tentatively scheduled for October 18, 2006). Final submissions are therefore due by mid-August 2006. Steve Musick (TCEQ) suggested that a timeline be created for this Plan.

Discuss Potential Projects for Fiscal Year 2007

Steve Musick (TCEQ) announced several potential projects for Fiscal Year 2007 during the meeting:

- Water Well Sampling by Monty Dozier (TCE) and its associated outreach events (five total in Fiscal Year 2007);
- A Drinking Water Fact Sheet for BTEX constituents;
- On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) – possible topics include homeowner maintenance and graywater usage;
- Well capping;
- With the City of Austin, looking at the use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizer in the Barton Springs watershed.

These potential projects will be discussed further at the next POE Subcommittee meeting.

5. REPORT TO THE 80TH LEGISLATURE

Review Subcommittee Accomplishments List

Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) asked Bruce Lesikar (TCE) to confirm that all publications listed as POE Subcommittee Accomplishments were supported by the TGPC. After the meeting, Bruce Lesikar (TCE) updated the list of TCE publications and provided hyperlinks to the drinking water curriculum guidance document for TCE county agents.

Review Subcommittee Legislative Recommendations

Steve Musick (TCEQ) volunteered to send the draft recommendation for Groundwater Quality Education Programs to Dr. C. Allan Jones (who drafted this recommendation for the previous *Legislative Report*) and copy Bruce Lesikar (TCE) who would then present the recommendation before the TGPC. Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) reminded Bruce Lesikar (TCE) that a cost for this recommendation should be included.

Take Possible Action on Legislative Issues and Recommendations

No additional action was taken.

6. STATUS REPORTS

TGPC Website Statistics

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reviewed a summary of TGPC website statistics and a summary paragraph about the TGPC that could be published in other newsletters and websites. Before and after the meeting, Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) sent this summary paragraph to Kaye Northcott (Texas Electric Cooperatives), Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD), Mike Barnett (Texas Farm Bureau), Julie Kelly (Office of Rural Community Affairs), and Steve Musick (TCEQ) to forward to Laura Raun (Texas Ground Water Association).

TGPC Booth at TCEQ PDW Conference, Aug 15 – 16, 2006

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reminded everyone that there will be a TGPC booth at the TCEQ Public Drinking Water (PDW) Conference on August 15 – 16, 2006. TCEQ staff will be at the booth and number of agency maps and publications will be available to the conference attendees.

Drinking Water Fact Sheets

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) reported that the Spanish version of the Arsenic Fact Sheet was published in June 2006 and the English version of the Radionuclides Fact Sheet will be published by the end of August 2006.

Abandoned Well Closures

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) reported that Monty Dozier (TCE) has ordered a down-hole camera. The camera will be used to inspect a currently idle well – if the casing is in good condition, it can be capped for possible future use; if not, the casing must either be repaired or plugged.

Open Meetings and Open Records Training of Subcommittee Members

Eight out of 11 (73%) of the Subcommittee's members have completed their Open Meetings training.

Free training regarding Open Meetings and Open Records is available at the Texas Attorney General's website (<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/>). A free copy of the training videos on DVD can also be obtained by calling 1-800-252-8011. TGPC members and all of its Subcommittee members are required to take the Open Meetings training, only.

At the end of the Open Meetings video there is a verification code and instructions for obtaining the certificate of completion. Copies of the Certificate of Course Completion will be kept on file by the TGPC and should be sent to Cary Betz, TCEQ, Mail Code 147, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087 or emailed to Mary Ambrose, mambrose@tceq.state.tx.us.

Members serving on the POE Subcommittee as of January 1, 2006 have a full year, until January 1, 2007, to complete the required training. POE Subcommittee members who become active after January 1, 2006 have 90 days from their first meeting to complete the training.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) reported that there will be a conference sponsored by the River Systems Institute this fall in Austin. Details will be forthcoming at <http://rivers.txstate.edu/>.

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) reported that the Texas Water Monitoring Congress will be held in Austin on September 13 – 15, 2006 (http://www.txwmc.org/2006_Congress/TWMC_2006.htm). There will also be a "Connecting the Dots" Public Outreach Symposium (http://www.txwmc.org/2006_Congress/Conncting_the_Dots_symposium.pdf) sponsored by Texas Watch the day before this conference.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

9. ADJOURN

The next POE Subcommittee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 19, 2006, 10:00 AM, in TCEQ's Building F, Conference Room 3202A.

Bruce Lesikar adjourned the meeting at 3:19 PM.