

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
 OF THE
 TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
 RECORD OF MEETING
 Second Quarter, Fiscal Year 2008

Meeting Date: December 18, 2007
 Meeting No.: 15

Place: TCEQ Campus, Bldg F
 Room: 3202A

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MEETING ATTENDANCE

<u>Subcommittee Members</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Bruce Lesikar (Co-Chair)	Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE)
Kathy McCormack (Co-Chair)	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Al Cherepon	TCEQ
Cary Betz	TCEQ
Linda Ruiz McCall	Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
Mel Davis	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
Lynne Fahlquist	United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Michael Hare	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
Danelle Farmer	Syngenta
Denise Gentsch	Syngenta

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. December 18, 2007 Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Meeting Agenda
2. September 26, 2007 Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Meeting Record
3. Draft Press Release: Plugging Abandoned Water Wells
4. Draft Press Release: Operation and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Systems
5. Draft Press Release: Capping of Water Wells for Future Use
6. Pesticides and Well Water Quality
7. What is the relation between water levels in wells and groundwater quantity ?
8. Why monitor groundwater levels ?
9. Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD) email suggesting two Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) topics (Municipal Setting Designations (MSDs) and the threat of aquifer contamination by the oil and gas industry, mainly by waste disposal wells)
10. TCEQ MSD webpage (<http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/remediation/msd.html>)
11. TCEQ publication GI-326, *Municipal Setting Designations – A Guide for Cities* (http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-326.html)
12. What is a Municipal Setting Designation ?
13. TGPC Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee webpage (<http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/subcommittees/POE/POE.htm>)
14. TGPC POE Subcommittee Outreach Events – Status Report
15. Online Resources for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) handouts (http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/subcommittees/POE/LinksTGPCmaps_brochures18Dec2007.pdf)
16. 2008 Water-related Conferences in Texas
17. TGPC Website Activity Statistics Report
18. Excerpt from November – December 2007 *The Aquifer Monitor*, “State science teachers encouraged to explore water resources with students” (<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/GWRD/pdfdocs/news111207.pdf>)

MEETING RECORD OF DECEMBER 18, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Bruce Lesikar (TCE), Co-Chair of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:08 AM CST. POE Subcommittee members were introduced. There were no concerns with the record of the previous meeting.

2. REVIEW AND DISCUSS DRAFT EDUCATIONAL TRIFOLD BROCHURES, FACT SHEETS, AND POPULAR PRESS ARTICLES

Drinking Water Problems: MTBE

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) had no update on this document.

Drinking Water Problems: Benzene

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) had no update on this document.

Abandoned Water Well Closure

For TCE's two draft press releases on Plugging Abandoned Water Wells and Capping of Water Wells for Future Use, Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) suggested adding website and phone number information for the listed agencies and organizations. Kathy McCormack reminded everyone that feedback on all of the draft FAQs would still be welcome after the meeting and should be directed to kmccorma@tceq.state.tx.us.

Pesticides and Well Water Quality

For the Pesticides and Well Water Quality draft FAQ, Bruce Lesikar (TCE) suggested that the list of pesticide management bullets be broken out into its own FAQ, and that backflow prevention and chemical storage be mentioned.

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) and Bruce Lesikar (TCE) suggested that the POE Subcommittee develop two separate FAQs on this subject targeting the agricultural community and landowners. Al Cherepon (TCEQ), the author of this draft FAQ, agreed to do this.

Denise Gentsch (Syngenta) suggested that the Region O (Llano Estacado) Regional Water Planning Group (http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/RWPG/planning_page.asp) may be a good resource for this subject.

Water Wells – Quantity

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) had a few grammatical and clarification suggestions for the FAQs titled, “What is the relation between water levels in wells and groundwater quantity ?” and “Why monitor groundwater levels ?”. There was no additional discussion of these documents.

Wastewater

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) and Cary Betz (TCEQ) had some grammatical and clarification suggestions for the Operation and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Systems draft press release. There was no additional discussion of this document.

Municipal Setting Designation

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) asked about the target audience for this draft FAQ. Bruce Lesikar (TCE) responded with suburban landowners in and near municipal areas with contaminated groundwater, Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs), and water well drillers; Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) added that developers are also part of the target audience.

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) suggested that perhaps the real question that the public is asking is not “What is a MSD ?”, but, “How does a MSD in my area affect my ability to have a water well ?”.

Denise Gentsch (Syngenta) suggested that this FAQ should be broken up into several paragraphs and that an example MSD should be provided (or a list of all of the MSDs should be provided). Kathy McCormack (TCEQ), the author of this draft FAQ, agreed to follow up on all of these suggestions.

Oil & Gas Waste Disposal Wells and Water Quality

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) recommended that the POE Subcommittee ask Leslie Savage (Railroad Commission of Texas) for assistance with this FAQ.

For all of the FAQs discussed above, Linda McCall (TWDB) suggested that they should include pictures and, if possible, links to on-line video clips.

3. STATUS REPORTS

Recent and Upcoming Outreach Events – TCE Water Well Screening Events, TCE Abandoned Water Well Closures, TGPC Booth

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) presented the Outreach Events Status Report which is now available on the TGPC website

(<http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/subcommittees/POE/POE.htm> under “Additional Resources”):

- TCE Water Well Screening Events
 - Two since the previous POE Subcommittee meeting (117 samples)
 - One planned through January 2008
- TCE Abandoned Water Well Closures
 - None since the previous POE Subcommittee meeting
 - One planned in Menard County, but no date set
- TGPC Booth
 - Three since the previous POE Subcommittee meeting (680 attendees)
 - None planned at this time

Denise Gentsch (Syngenta) suggested that the POE Subcommittee should apply for a grant in order to develop TAKS-approved teacher/student curriculum. Linda McCall (TWDB) indicated that after development of the *Major Rivers* curriculum (for fourth and fifth grade) in alignment with the state’s learning standards, development of the *Raising Your Water IQ* curriculum in 2004 for middle school students was funded through a \$80,000 – \$100,000 grant. Linda McCall pointed out that TWDB is currently working on finding funding sources for development of a high school curriculum, but that TGPC’s information is appropriate for adults, and having TGPC material at the Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST) in November 2007 was exactly what the high school teacher attendees needed in order to become better informed about groundwater so that they would feel confident enough to teach it to their students.

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) informed the POE Subcommittee that the list of Links for TGPC Handouts is also available on the TGPC website (<http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/subcommittees/POE/POE.htm> under “Additional Resources”).

Reprinting of *Protecting the Environment Using Integrated Weed Management in Lawns* (TCE publication L-5324)

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) had no update on this document.

Reprinting of Various Drinking Water and OSSF Fact Sheets

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) had no updates at this time.

Publication of Best Management Practices to Prevent Pesticide Contamination of Water Resources Trifold Brochure

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) reported that a draft should be available by the next POE Subcommittee meeting.

4. DISCUSS EFFECTIVENESS OF TGPC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Drinking Water and OSSF Fact Sheets

There was no additional discussion of this agenda item.

TCE Water Well Screening Events

There was no additional discussion of this agenda item.

TCE Abandoned Water Well Closures

There was no additional discussion of this agenda item.

TGPC Booth

There was no additional discussion of this agenda item.

TGPC Website

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reviewed TGPC website activity since the previous POE Subcommittee meeting (September 26 – December 16, 2007; 82 days). Metrics included:

- Number of unique visitors (5,367) and average visitors/day (65)
- Number of page views (12,583) and the Top 5 daughter pages viewed:
 - Meetings, Home page, Water Wells, Contamination, and Groundwater Information
- Number of file downloads (290 .pdf files 5,631 times) and the Top 5 .pdf files downloaded:
 - TCE publication L-5342 (On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems), Seymour Aquifer Water Quality White Paper, Groundwater Awareness Week 2007, August 2007 TGPC Meeting Minutes, TCE publication B-6087 (Groundwater Conservation Districts: Success Stories)
- Referring URLs (Google – 54%, Yahoo – 16%)
- The Top 5 Google key phrases:
 - leaching chambers, texas groundwater, texas groundwater protection committee, septic systems texas, and groundwater contamination
- The Top 5 Yahoo key phrases:
 - groundwater contamination, prevention of water pollution, ground water contamination, texas railroad commission oil and gas, and ways to give awareness about conserve water

Michael Hare (TDA) asked whether the TrafficFacts website statistics package monitoring TGPC website activity could distinguish between visitors that are real people vs. “spiders” (computer programs that search websites for information). Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) responded that TrafficFacts does distinguish between unique visitors and visitors (unique and returning visitors), but it doesn’t specifically identify any

visitors as “spiders”. However, TrafficFacts’ Most Active Visitors report provides a list of individual visitors by Internet Protocol (IP) address and host name; clicking on the IP address brings up a Visitor Detail report showing the visitor’s Internet Service Provider (ISP), geographical location, and activity statistics.

Linda McCall (TWDB) asked whether a search engine feature could be added to the TGPC website, and Denise Gentsch (Syngenta) asked whether a definition list (or glossary) could be added to the TGPC website. Al Cherepon (TCEQ) also suggested that an acronym list might be helpful.

5. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE

The next POE Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2008, 10:00 AM, in TCEQ’s Building F, Conference Room 2210.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

With a theme of “Celebrating the International Year of Planet Earth”, Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) announced that the Houston Geological Society (HGS) would be hosting The Geological Society of America (GSA), Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies (GCAGS) with the Gulf Coast Section of Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM) 2008 Joint Meeting on October 5 – 9, 2008 in Houston, Texas (<https://www.acsmeetings.org/2008/>).

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) announced that the names of two organizations would be changed as of January 1, 2008:

- Texas Cooperative Extension would be changed to Texas AgriLife Extension Service (<http://texasextension.tamu.edu/>); and,
- Texas Agricultural Experiment Station would be changed to Texas AgriLife Research (<http://agresearch.tamu.edu/>).

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) referred the POE Subcommittee to the handout regarding 2008 Water-related Conferences which is also now available on the TGPC website (<http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/subcommittees/POE/POE.htm> under “Additional Resources”).

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURN

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:31 AM CST.