

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

Meeting Date: May 24, 2006  
Meeting No.: 07

Place: TCEQ Campus, Bldg F  
Room: 2210

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## MEETING ATTENDANCE

<u>Subcommittee Members</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Bruce Lesikar (Chair)	Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE)
Michael Hare	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
Mel Davis	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
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
Lynne Fahlquist	United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Ned Meister	Texas Farm Bureau

<u>Agency Staff</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ

## MEETING HANDOUTS

1. May 24, 2006 Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Meeting Agenda
2. March 20, 2006 Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee Meeting Record
3. Draft TGPC POE Subcommittee Educational Outreach Plan
4. 123 Log Analyzer Report for Texas On-Site Wastewater Treatment Research Council
5. Draft Report to the 80th Legislature – TGPC POE Subcommittee Accomplishments List
6. Increasing Public Outreach on Groundwater Issues (Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee recommendations in the previous Legislative Report)
7. Texas Groundwater Protection Committee brochure (TCEQ publication GI-88), revised May 2006
8. Photo of TGPC booth at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair & Conference May 9 – 11, 2006
9. Handout from the TGPC booth (list of publications supporting the TGPC, additional groundwater-related publications, the TGPC home page, and a summary of the TGPC Quadrennial Review and Readoption of Rules and Proposal to Revise Rules)
10. List of TGPC booth “Lessons Learned”
11. Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) Abandoned Well Determination Checklist

## **MEETING RECORD OF MAY 24, 2006**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee members and agency staff were introduced.

### **2. REVIEW RECORD OF MARCH 20, 2006 MEETING**

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

### **3. EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PLAN**

Review Draft Plan

Almost half of the meeting was spent discussing the draft Educational Outreach Plan.

Steve Musick (TCEQ) introduced the Plan and reviewed its outline. Initial Areas of Concern were broken out by topic:

- Public Education Initiatives
- Abandoned Water Well Closure
- Groundwater Conservation Districts' Educational Efforts
- Access to Agency and Program General Information
- TEX\*A\*Syst, Farm Pollutant Inventory and Management, Well Head Protection, Pesticide Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Pesticide Waste Collection Programs
- On-Site Wastewater Treatment/Disposal Systems Education
- Education for Private Water Well Owners, Drinking Water "Right-to-Know", Secondary Constituents Causing Odor/Taste/Staining Problems
- Groundwater Levels/Supply
- Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC)
- TAGD, Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs)

In addition, suggested educational techniques and materials, outreach targets (audience, geographic location, and seasonal/temporal), and outreach and funding partners were listed.

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) provided several "Lessons Learned" related to his public outreach experience with On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF):

- Homeowners won't come to a meeting. They only seek information when they have a problem. Direct delivery at meetings is not an efficient use of time. You have to look for "teachable moments", and how you're going to be there with your information at those teachable moments.

- There are three ways to reach homeowners – through the Health Department (the homeowner’s local, authorized agent and permitting authority), contractors (e.g., OSSF installers and water well drillers), and websites.
  - Sometimes the Health Department refers homeowners to the TCE county agent.
  - Once you’ve educated the contractors, you also need to educate the public so that they can communicate with each other, and the public can verify what the contractor is telling them.
  - Having a “Frequently Asked Questions” webpage provides an easier and quicker means of disseminating information compared to formal publications, and if it includes various topic areas, newsletter editors can pick up specific information for their articles.
  - In addition, creating video clips of three minutes or less on specific topics to go along with the “Frequently Asked Questions” text does not require extensive scripts, production effort, or costs.
- If you want to target a classroom setting or special interest group, you should try to reach the Texas Master Gardeners (<http://www.texasmastergardeners.com/>) or Texas Master Naturalists (<http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/>). Then those individuals may go back to their homeowner associations or other civic groups and ask them to bring in groundwater speakers for their next meeting.
- To reach greater than 50% of the rural landowners in Texas, groundwater information (a paragraph, article, or a link to these on the TGPC website) could be shared with the following organizations for use in their newsletters and on their websites:
  - Texas Farm Bureau (<http://www.txfb.org/>)
  - Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (<http://www.thecattlemagazine.com/>)
  - Texas Wildlife Association (<http://texas-wildlife.org/>)
  - Electric cooperatives (they also serve suburban homeowners)
  - TCE county agents (they also write columns in rural/local newspapers)
- The urban audience is not only the homeowner, but also the retail worker and sales person in the large commercial distribution centers who often field homeowner’s questions. Michael Hare (TDA) suggested that there be agriculture-related training programs for corporate employees similar to the City of Austin Grow Green program (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/>). Ned Meister (Texas Farm Bureau) also suggested that groundwater training be linked to pesticide Continuing Education Unit (CEU) training.

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) asked how new home/landowners would learn about drilling new wells. Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD) said that the EPA has a document that may be helpful (“Drinking Water From Household Wells”, EPA publication 816-K-02-003, January 2002, <http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/waterwells.htm>, second bullet under “Private Wells”) and that the Texas real estate industry may provide some information on drilling a new well to new landowners. Steve Musick (TCEQ) said that there may be some information on the National Ground Water Association’s website (<http://www.ngwa.org/index.cfm>). After the meeting, Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) highlighted another informative website, <http://www.wellowner.org/>.

Ned Meister (Texas Farm Bureau) reported that they will be establishing a Small Farm and Ranch Management Advisory Committee this fall, and that this may be an appropriate outreach target.

Al Cherepon (TCEQ) suggested that the TGPC could help Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) set up their own websites, or see if the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) could help them, but we would need to find out how many GCDs want this assistance, first.

The POE Subcommittee agreed to assign specific topics in the Educational Outreach Plan to various Champions to work up and return prior to the next meeting:

- Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) – New Rural Landowners and Groundwater Wells (Obtaining a Water Well, Rules of Thumb for Pump and Water Well Care and Maintenance)
- Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) and Michael Hare (TDA) – Urban Landowner Pesticide Application and Groundwater
- Bruce Lesikar (TCE) – On-Site Wastewater Treatment/Disposal Systems Education (Including First Time Owners)
- Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD) – Groundwater Conservation Districts (the GCDs themselves and/or their customers)

Additional topics and group members were assigned after the meeting, with feedback due by June 30, 2006. The final version of this Educational Outreach Plan is due in October 2006 and will be mentioned in the next *Legislative Report*.

#### *TGPC Website Statistics*

- The summary of a website statistics report for the Texas On-Site Wastewater Treatment Research Council (<http://www.towtrc.state.tx.us>) was shared at the meeting as an example of what would be provided for the TGPC website by the host supplier (The Wilkins Group, Inc., <http://www.wilkins.com/index.htm>) at no cost. After the meeting, analysis of the TGPC's website activity for the first five months of 2006 revealed:
  - An average of 118 visitors per day
  - 27% of visitors bookmarked the website
  - Total PageViews = 15,924
    - Water Wells, Septic Systems, and Groundwater Contamination were the top three daughter pages viewed
  - Total File Downloads = 5,513
    - Groundwater Awareness Week, TCE OSSF Leaching Chambers, and Groundwater Classification System were the top three files downloaded

Discuss Potential Projects for Fiscal Year 2007

Discussion of this topic was postponed until the next POE Subcommittee meeting.

#### 4. REPORT TO THE 80TH LEGISLATURE

##### Review Subcommittee Accomplishments List

The draft list was reviewed and a few updates were made:

- The Spanish version of the Arsenic Drinking Water Fact Sheet should be published in July 2006.
- The proof for the English version of the Radionuclides Drinking Water Fact Sheet is complete, and it should be published in August 2006. A Spanish version is also planned for this Fact Sheet, but there is currently no target date.
- The Drinking Water Standards Drinking Water Problems Fact Sheet was removed from the list because it was not sponsored by the POE Subcommittee.
- There are no plans for Spanish versions of the Homeowner's Guide to Evaluating Service Contracts or Soil Particle Analysis Procedure On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems Fact Sheets, but a Spanish version of the Graywater Fact Sheet is needed.
- There is currently no target date for the final versions of drinking water curriculum materials (a presentation and guidance document) for TCE county agents.
- Steve Musick (TCEQ) suggested that Tables I and II (Water Well Screening Program Results and Abandoned Well Closure Demonstrations Results, respectively) be summarized.
- Listing the TGPC website and its on-going revisions was also suggested.

##### Discuss and Take Possible Action on Legislative Issues and Recommendations

Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) reported that, in June, Frank Fuller (TCEQ) would be requesting recommendation ideas for the next *Legislative Report* from all TGPC Subcommittees. This will allow compilation of a list of recommendations that can be presented at the July TGPC meeting and finalized at the first quarter 2007 TGPC meeting.

Mary Ambrose (TCEQ) suggested, and the POE Subcommittee agreed, that urban/suburban fringe education and on-site sewage facility (OSSF, aka septic system) education should be listed as POE Subcommittee recommendations in the *Legislative Report*.

Steve Musick (TCEQ) volunteered to outline a list of POE Subcommittee recommendations and he would consult with others on the Subcommittee in the drafting of this list.

## 5. STATUS REPORTS

TGPC Booth at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair (May 9 – 11, 2006)

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reported on the successful TGPC booth at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair. The booth was staffed by representatives from TCEQ, TWDB, and the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC). Approximately 197 people visited the booth (10% of the total conference attendance). The major “Lesson Learned” was the need for more handouts, especially maps.

Drinking Water Fact Sheets

See section 4. REPORT TO THE 80TH LEGISLATURE, above.

*TCE On-line Bookstore Activity for Drinking Water Fact Sheets*

After the meeting, Travis Miller (TCE Professor, Extension Program Leader, and Associate Head for Soil and Crop Sciences) reported the following on-line bookstore activity for the Drinking Water Fact Sheets:

Fact Sheet	Language	Number	Qty Downloaded in 2005	Qty Downloaded Jan – May 2006	Qty Shipped (Hard Copies) Jan – May 2006
Arsenic	English	L-5467	21	378	37
Perchlorate	English	L-5468	12	0	30
Perchlorate	Spanish	L-5468S	0	21	--
Nitrate	English	B-6184	0	36	--
Nitrate	Spanish	B-6184S	0	0	--

Abandoned Well Closures

There was no discussion of this topic.

Open Meetings and Open Records Training of Subcommittee Members

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) and Ned Meister (Texas Farm Bureau) reported that they had completed this training. Chris Ramser (Clearwater UWCD) reported that he will be attending a meeting in July to watch the training DVD.

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](mailto: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.

## 6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mel Davis (TSSWCB) announced that the annual meeting of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Districts is still scheduled for October 23 – 25, 2006, but it has been moved from Fort Worth to Arlington, Texas.

Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) announced that the TCEQ Public Drinking Water (PDW) Conference ([http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water\\_supply/pdw/conference.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/pdw/conference.html)) is scheduled for August 15 – 16, 2006 in Austin. After the meeting, arrangements were made to have a TGPC booth at this conference.

Ned Meister (Texas Farm Bureau) announced that the Texas 4-H Roundup is scheduled for June 5 – 9, 2006 in College Station.

Bruce Lesikar (TCE) announced that May 25, 2006 is the application deadline for the Texas State Youth Water Camp (for Groundwater Conservation District high school students) to be held July 9 – 13, 2006 in Monahans.

### *EPA/TSSWCB Watershed Outreach*

After the meeting, Mel Davis (TSSWCB) provided the following information on the Envirocast 319 Project with Channel 11 in the Dallas – Fort Worth Metroplex. This watershed project is funded for the next 12 months. CBS Channel 11 will do regularly scheduled informative stories called E-Life on polluted runoff, watersheds and the environment during their evening Weather broadcasts. The website <http://ktvt.iewatershed.com/> has a link, just beneath Kristine Kahanek's picture, that should open up a video explaining the project ("Video Introduction by Kristine Kahanek, Chief Meteorologist, CBS11"). Randall (Randy) Rush, NPS Project Officer, State Tribal Programs Section, US EPA Region 6 reported:

"E-Life, also known as Envirocast will debut this evening. EPA Water Division staff have been working in conjunction with the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) to broaden our audience in receiving our water quality message. This project is funded in part with a CWA Section 319h grant from EPA to TSSWCB. Channel 11 and StormCenter have been contracted to do environmentally educated based segments and tips during the Weather segment of the evening Newscast. In addition, a Website has been designed. See the Web-site address below, and check out KTVT CBS11 tonight and throughout the year. Local News runs

5:00 PM, 6:00 PM, and 10:00 PM. Let me know what you think too. Be sure and check out the site <http://ktvt.iewatershed.com/>. More content being loaded everyday...”

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURN

The next POE Subcommittee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, July 13, 2006, 1:00 PM, in TCEQ’s Building F, Conference Room 3202A.

Bruce Lesikar adjourned the meeting at 12:19 PM.