

GROUNDWATER ISSUES SUBCOMMITTEE
 OF THE
 TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
 RECORD OF MEETING
 Fourth Quarter Meeting, Fiscal Year 2020

Meeting Date: June 10, 2020
 Meeting No.: 22

Place: teleconference
 Room: N/A

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEETING ATTENDANCE 2

MEETING HANDOUTS 3

MEETING RECORD OF JUNE 10, 2020..... 4

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS4

2. STATUS REPORTS4

Agricultural Chemicals Task Force4

TGPC Publications.....5

3. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE5

4. DISCUSS CURRENT GROUNDWATER ISSUES5

Hydraulic Fracturing5

Oil and Gas Produced Water.....5

Emerging Contaminants.....6

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)6

Abandoned Water Wells6

Wellhead Impacts After Natural Disasters6

Brackish Groundwater6

Desalination6

Endangered Species6

Coal Ash from Power Plants.....6

Anthropogenic Mixing of Groundwater7

Others7

5. BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION.....7

TGPC GWI Subcommittee *Charge*7

Discussion of White Papers Under Development.....7

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS.....8

7. PUBLIC COMMENT8

8. ADJOURN8

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Subcommittee Members

Kathy McCormack (Co-Chair)
Leslie Bruce (Co-Chair)
Rebecca Storms
Evelyn Reátegui-Zirena
David Villarreal
T.J. Helton

David A. Van Dresar
John Tracy
Kimberly Horndeski
Ken Rainwater
Diane Boellstorff

Lynne Fahlquist

Affiliation

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC)
Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD)
Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research)
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
Texas Tech University (TTU)
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension)
United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Agency Staff

Abiy Berehe
Alan Cherepon
Patty Ging
James Harcourt
Cindy Hooper
Peggy Hunka
Cindy Loeffler
Leah Martinsson
Kelly Mills
L. Scott Underwood
Jessica Uramkin

Affiliation

TCEQ
TCEQ
USGS
RRC
TCEQ
TCEQ
TPWD
TAGD
TCEQ
TCEQ
TCEQ

Program

Water Availability Division
Water Availability Division

Water Availability Division
Water Availability Division

Water Availability Division
Water Availability Division
Water Quality Planning Division

Interested Parties

N/A

Affiliation

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee Meeting Agenda, June 10, 2020
2. TGPC GWI Subcommittee Meeting Record, March 4, 2020
3. TGPC Agricultural Chemicals (AgChem) Task Force (TF) Status Report, June 10, 2020
4. Summary of 2020 EPA/States/Tribes Pesticides Grants Mid-Year Meeting, May 11 – 12, 2020
5. TGPC Publications Status Report, June 10, 2020
6. Brush Country Groundwater Conservation water well plugging program, TCEQ e-clip, May 25, 2020
7. TGPC GWI Subcommittee Charge, July 10, 2019
8. Draft outline of *How is Groundwater Quality Affected by Wellhead Impacts from Flooding during Natural Disasters?* white paper

The following item was also on display on the handout table:

1. N/A

MEETING RECORD OF JUNE 10, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ), Co-Chair of the TGPC GWI Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:04 PM CDT. GWI Subcommittee members were introduced. The representatives from the Bureau of Economic Geology of The University of Texas at Austin (UTBEG) and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) were not present at the meeting.

2. STATUS REPORTS

Agricultural Chemicals Task Force

Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) reported on the Agricultural Chemicals Task Force:

- The Cooperative Pesticide Monitoring Program sampling had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The TCEQ Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD) had been updated through 2019;
- The mid-year U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/States/Tribes Pesticide meeting was held on May 11-12, 2020 as a videoconference and hosted by TDA; and,
- The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Revision 1.0 had been completed and provided to the U.S. EPA for review and approval. Major items included a budget revision to show the \$6,000 reduction over the next two years, and to indicate in the grant Work Plan that the continued and sizable budget reduction would impact deliverables, specifically that groundwater monitoring by TCEQ would no longer be possible – the only possibility for monitoring during Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 – 2021 would be the Cooperative Pesticide Monitoring Program. The \$1,059 (15%) State match reduction for FY 2020 and FY 2021 was provided as a late pen and ink change to Revision 1.0 and would be shown again in Revision 2.0 when it was scheduled and completed later in 2020.

Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) also provided a summary of important discussion items at the U.S. EPA/States/Tribes Pesticide meeting.

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) indicated that they had drafted safety guidance for all agency field staff and it was in the final stages of approval. It contained guidance on wearing personal protective equipment (PPE, e.g., gloves and masks), disinfecting equipment and vehicles, and social distancing. Once final approval was received, approval for staff to resume routine fieldwork was expected.

Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) asked about a recent fish kill complaint in Cypress that was submitted through a U.S. EPA pesticide reporting portal. Although low dissolved oxygen levels in surface water due to a nearby herbicide application can result in fish kills, it was unknown whether this was the cause of the incident.

TGPC Publications

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) reported on the following TGPC publications:

- Groundwater Assessment for the *2020 Texas Integrated Report for Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d)* (“*Texas Integrated Report*”, N/A)
 - The Groundwater Assessment was completed in March 2020 and transmitted to TCEQ’s Water Quality Planning Division;
 - TCEQ adopted the Draft 2020 Texas 303(d) List on March 25, 2020 and the U.S. EPA approved it on May 12, 2020;
 - The full report was available online at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/assessment/20twqi/20txir>; and,
 - The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) groundwater database was used extensively for this report.
- *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2019* (“*Joint Report*”, SFR-056)
 - The 2019 *Joint Report* was being finalized.
- *Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee: Report to the 87th Legislature* (“*Legislative Report*”, SFR-047)
 - The TGPC Legislative Report Subcommittee was reactivated at the TGPC meeting on January 15, 2020 and two meetings had been held in order to prepare the report; and,
 - The report was anticipated to be published and distributed to the Texas Legislature by December 2020.
- *Landowner’s Guide to Plugging Abandoned Water Wells* (“*Plugging document*”, RG-347)
 - The TGPC Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee had updated the links in the document, which was last revised in March 2010, and the updated document would be added to TCEQ’s website soon; and,
 - The POE Subcommittee intended to review the document for possible substantive updates, as well.

3. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE

The next TGPC GWI Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at 1:00 PM CDT. It was unknown whether it would be an in-person meeting, teleconference, or videoconference.

4. DISCUSS CURRENT GROUNDWATER ISSUES

Hydraulic Fracturing

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Oil and Gas Produced Water

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Emerging Contaminants

David Villarreal (TDA) reported that disinfectant persistence in water, the heavy use of antimicrobials and pharmaceuticals and their accumulation in water, and the survivability of viruses, protists, bacteria, and fungal spores in surface water and groundwater had been topics of discussion in other recent meetings that he had attended.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) noted that their contract for an ASR study was underway and the final report would be delivered to the Texas Legislature by December 15, 2020. Additional discussion of this topic occurred during the Business portion of the meeting.

Abandoned Water Wells

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reviewed a recent article about the Brush Country Groundwater Conservation District's (GCD's) water well plugging program. David Van Dresar (TAGD) added that other GCDs had similar programs. A list of those GCD programs could be found on the TGPC website (<https://tGPC.texas.gov/water-wells/#7>).

Wellhead Impacts After Natural Disasters

Discussion of this topic occurred during the Business portion of the meeting.

Brackish Groundwater

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Desalination

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Endangered Species

Kimberly Horndeski (TPWD) reported that:

- They were working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to develop a standard protocol for freshwater mussel sampling which was expected to be complete within a few months; and,
- The U.S. FWS recognized their 2019 Recovery Champions, and two were identified in Region 2 (which include Texas), Doug Duncan and the Houston Zoo (<https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/recoverychampions/index.html>).

Coal Ash from Power Plants

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Anthropogenic Mixing of Groundwater

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Others

Rebecca Storms (TWDB) reported that they were initiating a new monitoring program for springs in 2020 once fieldwork was approved to resume. Its purpose was to establish a consistent program to monitor and inventory springs across the state and to sample a select group of springs on an annual basis. TWDB would be collecting the normal suite of groundwater quality analyses in addition to isotopes, atrazine analyses in cooperation with TCEQ, and discharge rates. One of the goals was to help inform groundwater-surface water interactions that could be incorporated into regional water planning and groundwater availability modeling. Some of the criteria TWDB was evaluating for selection of the springs network included springs that were under stress or potentially stressed, not already part of a routine monitoring program, accessible, had cultural significance and threatened/endangered species, or ecosystem considerations.

Kimberly Horndeski (TPWD) reported that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Water Resource Subcommittee would be identifying locations throughout the state for source water protection funding for both groundwater and surface water. The deadline for the priority areas was July 31, 2020. Aspects being considered that pertained to groundwater included aquifers designated as “sole source” and known areas of aquifer depletion or Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs).

5. BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

TGPC GWI Subcommittee *Charge*

As required by the GWI Subcommittee’s *Activity Plan* (https://tgpc.texas.gov/gwissues/activity_plans/TGPC_GWI_FY2020_2021_ActivityPlan_10Jul2019.pdf), Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) presented the current *Texas Groundwater Protection Committee Groundwater Issues Subcommittee Charge* (“*Charge*”) for its annual review and discussion. The *Charge* had been updated in 2019, and no additional changes were proposed.

Discussion of White Papers Under Development

Ken Rainwater (TTU) indicated that he hoped to have a draft of the ASR white paper for the next GWI Subcommittee meeting. He noted that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) had published a report on managed aquifer recharge in April 2020.

Diane Boellstorff (AgriLife Extension) reviewed an initial outline of the *How is Groundwater Quality Affected by Wellhead Impacts from Flooding during Natural Disasters?* white paper. GWI Subcommittee members provided feedback in the discussion that followed, and an updated outline or initial draft of the white paper would be presented at the next meeting.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jessica Uramkin (TCEQ) announced that they had posted their Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) for nonpoint source projects under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) Grant Program on June 1, 2020, proposals were due by July 17, 2020, and more information could be found on their website (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/nonpoint-source/grants/grant-pgm.html>).

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) thanked the GWI Subcommittee members for their support and participation in the meeting.

8. ADJOURN

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:09 PM CDT.