

GROUNDWATER RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:

9:00 AM, February 2, 2006

LOCATION:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Campus, Building F, 2nd Floor, Meeting Room 2210, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Austin, Texas 78753.

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

Regular business meeting

AGENCIES/ENTITIES REPRESENTED:

Bureau of Economic Geology [BEG]
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ]
Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS)
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board [TSSWCB]
Texas Water Development Board [TWDB]
United States Geological Survey [USGS]

ATTENDEES:

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| Bridget Scanlon | BEG, Co-chair of the GW Research Subcommittee of the TGPC |
| Mary Ambrose | TCEQ, Chairman of TGPC |
| Patricia Bobeck | TDSHS |
| Radu Boghici | TWDB |
| Alan Cherepon | TCEQ |
| Richard Eyster | TDA |
| Lynne Fahlquist | USGS |
| Chris Higgins | TSSWCB |
| Joseph L. Peters | TCEQ |
| John E. Williams | TCEQ |

MEETING SUMMARY:

Dr. Scanlon called the meeting to order at about 9:02 AM. The meeting started with self introductions of everyone present.

Dr. Scanlon mentioned that Dr. Ric Jenson of the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) had emailed, to all the GWRS members, a copy of the desalination research white paper that Dr. Jones had promised at our last meeting.

Dr. Scanlon reintroduced the topic of nitrate in groundwater which was discussed extensively at the last meeting as a potential project to be pursued by the GWRS for research. An idea discussed at the last meeting was to possibly fund nitrate research through a 319 grant. She

asked Mr. Higgins about the TSSWCB's status of pursuing 319 funding for nitrate studies. He answered that they were developing RFPs at the present time. Mr. Higgins told the subcommittee that the TSSWCB had two 319 projects. One was in the Ogallala and the other in the Seymour. The Ogallala project is looking at the effects of crop cover on the leaching of nitrate to the groundwater and the Seymour project is looking at the difference in leaching potential between drip irrigation and sprinkle irrigation.

Besides the Seymour and Ogallala, the other area in Texas with nitrate problems in groundwater is in the Southwest Gulf Coast. One of the questions here is the source of the nitrate.

The subject of discussion moved to desalination. This subject was also discussed at the last meeting. There should be opportunities for research in this area such as aquifer characterization for potential desalination. Also, research may need to be done to determine if desalination reject water could have some uses such as for enhanced oil and gas recover or would it just need to be injected. Dr. Scanlon brought up the possibility that some of the required research for desalination could be related also to CO₂ sequestration.

There was some discussion about method of funding. One possibility mentioned was through private foundations or organizations. The Office of Border Initiatives and other initiatives like Water 2025 were also mentioned as possible sources for research support.

Dr. Scanlon asked Mr. Eyster about the projects in which TDA was presently involved. He responded that they were heavily involved with drought issues. There were some rural communities that are in real danger of running out of water.

Ms. Ambrose brought up the subject of developing some predictive capabilities on the effects of droughts by studying drought records. Ms. Fahlquist responded that the USGS was doing some work in the High Plains on the effect of droughts on water supplies. Also, it was brought up that the TWSB with the GAM program do a lot of tracking of the effects of diminished rainfall.

Another need in this area is soil moisture monitoring. Remote sensing would be important in achieving this. The Center for Space Research (CSR) has setup a database giving the status of crops through remote sensing. Dr. Scanlon mentioned that Dr. Allan Jones and his remote sensing group are doing work with the Palmer Drought Index and with satellite imagery with the Center for Space Research. The work is based on the relationship between soil moisture, Evapotranspiration and precipitation.

Dr. Scanlon suggested that we could put a 319 project together for a joint effort between USGS, BEG, and Texas A&M, if we can put up the matching funds (a 40% match for 319 is required.), and target the Gulf Coast. Discussion followed on the fact that 319 funds can't be used on pure research but can be used on things like demonstration projects. An information component can be part of a 319. Dr. Scanlon asked if it would be possible to expand on some of the existing projects, like the Seymour and Ogallala projects, to extend it to groundwater. Mr. Higgins answered that it would be a possibility. He asked who would do the writing of the needed QAPP. Dr. Scanlon answered that the USGS or the BEG have had a lot of experience with writing QAPPs. Mr. Higgins suggested that it could be a joint project, for instance, between the

TSSWCB, the USGS, and the TCEQ.

Dr. Scanlon reiterated about the possibility of putting together one big proposal, where we would expand the Seymour and High Plains projects and add a component for the Gulf Coast. Ms. Fahlquist responded that she saw no problem in adding on to what the USGS was doing.

Ms. Ambrose asked Mr. Higgins whether the RFP's that their agency was preparing would be for September 2006 or September 2007. Mr. Higgins answered that it would be for September 2006.

Dr. Scanlon mentioned that, as far as the salinity projects, we should probably work with local groups to develop projects. The local groups could possibly apply for Regional Water Plan funds from the TWDB.

Dr. Scanlon said that she would follow up on checking with Texas A&M to see what they're doing on drought issues.

Dr. Scanlon summarized that she thought we should pursue the nitrate project with 319 funding and then also familiarize our selves with the desalination needs to see if there's any opportunity there. And maybe we can gather some background information on drought issues which may set the stage for determining if there are some issues or knowledge gaps that need to be addressed and thus a corresponding need or potential for future research.

Near the end of the meeting, Mr. John Williams, the TCEQ TGPC legal advisor, made a presentation on the Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act. The presentation was on the required training on these two acts and who is required to take it. The training is relatively simple and can be achieved by watching a DVD or taking the training over a website. The DVDs and the website training are provided by the Attorney General's Office. A certificate of completion is given upon taking the courses.

All committee and subcommittee members and their designees and alternates are encouraged and recommended to take the training and have their certificate on file with the TGPC by the next quarterly meeting.

Adjournment followed after Mr. Williams's presentation.

The meeting ended at approximately 10:01 AM.

Information Item: The decision was made at the TGPC meeting in the afternoon that the next meeting date for the TGPC, the ACS, and the GWRS will be April 20, 2006. The GWRS meeting will take place at 9:00 AM, at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Campus, Building F, 2nd Floor, Meeting Room 2210, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Austin, Texas 78753.

Minutes prepared by Joseph L. Peters, April 14, 2006