

TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
RECORD OF MEETING
 Second Quarterly Meeting, Fiscal Year 2020

Meeting Date: January 15, 2020
 Meeting No.: 129

Place: TCEQ Campus, Bldg F
 Room: 2210

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MEETING ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Kelly Mills

Larry French

James Harcourt

David Villarreal

Leah Martinsson

John Tracy

Rebecca C. Smyth

David Gunn

Affiliation

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)

Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC)

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)

Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD)

Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research)

Bureau of Economic Geology of The University of Texas at Austin (UTBEG)

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)

Agency Staff

Sainath Babu

Natalie Ballew

Abiy Berehe

Leslie Bruce

Alan Cherepon

Andrea Croskrey

Grant J. Gibson

Cindy Hooper

Peggy Hunka

Allison Jenkins

Cindy Loeffler

Kathy McCormack

John Meyer

Michael Parr

Swati Rawat

Andy Teeple

L. Scott Underwood

Affiliation

TCEQ

TWDB

TCEQ

RRC

TCEQ

TWDB

TCEQ

TCEQ

TCEQ

TCEQ

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)

TCEQ

TWDB

TCEQ

TCEQ

United State Geological Survey (USGS)

TCEQ

Program

Toxicology Risk Assessment and Research Division

Water Availability Division

Toxicology Risk Assessment and Research Division

Water Availability Division

Environmental Law Division

Toxicology Risk Assessment and Research Division

Water Availability Division

Interested Parties

Eric Pastor

Bill Stevens

Affiliation

Golder Associates

Texas Alliance of Energy Producers

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. Agenda for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting on January 15, 2020
2. Record for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting on October 23, 2019
3. Summary of Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee Meeting, December 4, 2019
4. Summary of Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee Meeting, December 2019
5. Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report, Table of Contents, Draft 01/15/2020
6. Drought 2019 – U.S. Drought Monitor, Texas, January 7, 2020; Public Water Supply Systems Affected, January 8, 2020; TCEQ List of Texas PWSs Limiting Water Use to Avoid Shortages, January 8, 2020; U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook, December 19, 2019 – March 31, 2020
7. TCEQ Rules Update, 01/15/2020
8. 2020 Water-related Conferences in Texas, January 2020

The following items were also on display on the handout table:

1. TGPC Public Information Act Policy

MEETING RECORD OF JANUARY 15, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Kelly Mills (TCEQ), Designated Chairman of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC), called the meeting to order at approximately 1:06 PM CST. TGPC members then introduced themselves. The representatives from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) were not present at the meeting, and the representative from AgriLife Research was not present at the beginning of the meeting.

2. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Groundwater Issues

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) reported that the TGPC GWI Subcommittee last met on December 4, 2019, and 10 state and federal agencies and organizations were represented.

The current Agricultural Chemicals Task Force Status Report (available on the TGPC GWI Subcommittee webpage, <https://tgpc.texas.gov/tgpc-subcommittees/tgpc-groundwater-issues-subcommittee/>, under the “Additional Resources” heading) was reviewed with the following highlights:

- The proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Pesticide Monitoring Plan would be limited to the Cooperative Pesticide Monitoring Program due to ongoing grant budget reductions by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The update and quality assurance and control activities on the TCEQ Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD) had been completed for all 2019 groundwater monitoring samples from TCEQ, the Cooperative Pesticide Monitoring Program, and the USGS, and it was sent to the U.S. EPA in October 2019; and,
- The Pesticides of INterest Tracking System (POINTS) Pesticide Assessment Database was updated in November 2019 for FY 2019.

The current TGPC Publications Status Report (also available on the TGPC GWI Subcommittee webpage) was reviewed with the following highlights:

- Groundwater Assessment for the *2020 Texas Integrated Report for Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d)* (“*Texas Integrated Report*”, N/A):
 - Preparation of the groundwater assessment portion of the *2020 Texas Integrated Report* had begun and staff planned to complete the report by April 1, 2020.
- *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2019* (“*Joint Report*”, SFR-056):
 - Staff would start the preparation of the 2019 *Joint Report* in early January 2020.

The following current groundwater issues were discussed:

- Hydraulic Fracturing;
- Oil and Gas Produced Water;
- Emerging Contaminants;

- Abandoned Water Wells;
- Wellhead Impacts After Natural Disasters;
- Brackish Groundwater; and,
- Endangered Species.

Ken Rainwater (TTU) reviewed the outline of the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) white paper. Member feedback was provided during the meeting and an update would be presented at the next meeting.

The next TGPC GWI Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for March 4, 2020.

John Tracy (AgriLife Research) arrived at approximately 1:07 PM CST and was present for the remainder of the meeting.

Public Outreach and Education

Peggy Hunka (TCEQ) reported that the TGPC POE Subcommittee met last on December 4, 2019, and seven state agencies and organizations were represented.

The current Outreach Events Status Report (available on the POE Subcommittee webpage, <http://tgpc.state.tx.us/tgpc-subcommittees/tgpc-public-outreach-and-education-subcommittee/>, under the “Additional Resources” heading) was reviewed:

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) Water Well Screening Events
 - There were five upcoming water well screening events.
- TGPC Exhibit Booth
 - There had been one event since the previous TGPC POE Subcommittee meeting with 180 views.

Diane Boellstorff (AgriLife Extension) reviewed the Texas Well Owners Network (TWON) schedule of completed, confirmed, obligated, and suggested water well one-day training events and workshops which showed that there had been over 10,011 samples or attendees at TWON events since April 2011.

The Google Analytics activity report on the TGPC website for September 3 – December 3, 2019 was reviewed.

Diane Boellstorff (AgriLife Extension) reviewed the work performed on updating their *Drinking Water Problems: Arsenic* fact sheet.

Leslie Bruce (RRC) provided an update on the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) titled *What Should I Know About My Water Well and Why?*

Peggy Hunka (TCEQ) presented a revision to the *Landowner’s Guide to Plugging Abandoned Water Wells* (TCEQ publication RG-347) for approval. It was decided to accept those changes, but also to review the document for other updates.

The next TGPC POE Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for March 4, 2019.

3. PRESENTATION

Andrea Croskrey (TWDB) provided the status of their brackish groundwater mapping project in aquifers of the upper coastal plains in central Texas. After introducing their Brackish Resources Aquifer Characterization System (BRACS) program and giving an overview of their study area (parts of 14 counties), which included eight Eocene stratigraphic units (Yegua, Cook Mountain, Sparta, Weches, Queen City, Reklaw, Carrizo, and Wilcox) and five aquifers (Yegua, Sparta, Queen City, Carrizo, and Wilcox), their methods and mapping results were presented. Their conclusions were:

- Resistivity logs can be used to estimate water quality;
- The quality of the calculations depends on correlations, parameters, water quality type, and complete log headers;
- Four of the five aquifers had mixed/stacked water quality regions;
- All five aquifers in the study area had millions of acre-feet of brackish groundwater; and,
- The study provided a regional understanding of sand and salinity distribution.

4. BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2019 -- Format and Content Approval

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) presented the draft Table of Contents for the *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2019* (“*Joint Report*”). There were no substantive changes from last year’s report. David Villarreal (TDA) proposed, James Harcourt (RRC) seconded, and all remaining TGPC members approved the draft Table of Contents and format for the *2019 Joint Report*, allowing TCEQ staff to make any non-substantive changes required for publication on the TCEQ website.

Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee - Report to the 87th Legislature -- Reactivation of Legislative Report Subcommittee and Appointment of Members

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) announced that it was time for the TGPC Legislative Report Subcommittee to be reactivated in order to prepare the *Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee – Report to the 87th Legislature* (“*Legislative Report*”). Leah Martinsson (TAGD) proposed, Larry French (TWDB) seconded, and all remaining TGPC members approved reactivation of the Legislative Report Subcommittee.

Abiy Berehe (TCEQ) would Chair the Legislative Report Subcommittee and its first meeting was scheduled for March 4, 2020. Kelly Mills (TCEQ) requested that all TGPC members identify their representative to the Legislative Report Subcommittee.

Current Groundwater Issues

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy Implementation

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Set Future Meeting Date

The next TGPC quarterly meeting was scheduled for April 8, 2020 at 1:00 PM CDT.

5. INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR GROUNDWATER-RELATED ACTIVITIES – STATUS UPDATE

Groundwater Contamination Notice Coordination (Texas Water Code §26.408)

Peggy Hunka (TCEQ) reported that their Impact Evaluation Team (IET) had met three times in the last quarter. Six groundwater contamination cases were reviewed and 27 notification letters were mailed to private water well owners.

Groundwater Management Areas

Leah Martinsson (TAGD) reported that the Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs) were working on their Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) and that there were 2 – 4 meetings of the various GMAs each month. Leah Martinsson added that they appreciated TWDB's support during this process, and that the TAGD Business meeting in January 2020 would include an agenda item related to facilitating communication between GMAs.

Regional Water Planning

Larry French (TWDB) reported that:

- TWDB would be considering approval of groundwater availability estimated for Region D by the Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) at the TWDB Board meeting on January 16, 2020;
- RWPGs were holding meetings to finalize and adopt their draft 2021 Regional Water Plans which were due to TWDB by March 3, 2020;
- Following submittal of the draft regional water plans to the TWDB, each RWPG would hold a public hearing on their draft plan, and final adopted 2021 Regional Water Plans were due to TWDB October 14, 2020; and,
- The next State Water Plan would be published at the beginning of 2022.

Groundwater Availability Modeling

Larry French (TWDB) reported that:

- An update to the Northern Edwards (Balcones Fault Zone) and Trinity Aquifer Groundwater Availability Model (GAM) was expected to be complete in March 2020;
- The new Blossom Aquifer GAM was expected to be complete in March 2020;
- The large Gulf Coast Aquifer System (central and southern portions) GAM had an expected completion date of February 2021;
- The update of the Trinity (Hill Country) Aquifer GAM and the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau), Trinity (Hill Country), and Pecos Valley Aquifers GAM were expected to be complete in early 2023;
- An update of the existing GAM for the southern portion of the Queen City, Sparta, and Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifers GAM was expected within the next few years;
- The conceptual model for the Cross Timbers Aquifer GAM was expected within a year; and,
- An update of the existing groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Queen City, Sparta, and Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifers GAM was expected to be complete in early 2021.

Nonpoint Source Pollution

There were no Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) representatives at the meeting. Leslie Bruce (RRC) asked whether TCEQ would be accepting grant applications this summer. After the meeting, it was found that TCEQ's Nonpoint Source Pollution Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) for Fiscal Year 2021 projects would open in June 2020. Additional information would be posted at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/nonpoint-source/grants/grant-pgm.html>.

National Groundwater Initiatives

There were no national groundwater initiatives discussed at the meeting.

Drought Status

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) referred TGPC members to the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor and TCEQ drought-affected Public Water Systems (PWSs) maps, as well as the TCEQ List of PWSs Limiting Water Use to Avoid Shortages (aka, the "180-day list"). As of January 7, 2020, 57 % of the state was classified as D0 through D3, down from 62 % at the last TGPC meeting, with a U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook forecast of persisting drought conditions in central and south Texas through March 31, 2020. As of January 8, 2020, of the 4,647 active community water systems in Texas, 1,061 were affected by drought (either voluntary or mandatory), and 755 of those used groundwater (either partially or exclusively). As of January 8, 2020, five PWSs in the state could be out of water in 180 days or less (the same number as at the last TGPC meeting).

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) announced that the TGPC had again prepared National Groundwater Awareness Week posters for its members. This year's event was scheduled for March 8 – 14, 2020, and the poster would be displayed in the Capitol rotunda during that week.

Rules Update

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) reported on current TCEQ rulemaking that was of interest to the TGPC:

- 2020-003-OTH-NR – Draft 2020 Texas Integrated Report;
- 2020-016-007-LS – HB 2230 & HB 2771: MOU with RRC;
- 2019-116-297-OW – HB 720 and HB 1964: Procedure for Action on Certain Water Right Amendment Applications and Surface Water Appropriations for Aquifer Recharge and Aquifer Storage and Recovery; and,
- 2019-117-331-WS – SB 483 and SB 520: Permits and the Storage and Recovery of Water in a Portion of the Edwards Aquifer.

Additional information on a specific TCEQ rule can be found at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/whatsnew.html>.

James Harcourt (RRC) noted that there were interim charges in both the Texas House and Senate related to produced water. Larry French (TWDB) added that the Texas Senate Committee on Water and Rural Affairs would be meeting jointly with the Texas Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development to consider the interim charges related to future water supply and groundwater regulatory framework on January 22, 2020.

New Publications

There were no new publications announced at the meeting.

Upcoming Conferences

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) referred TGPC members to the conferences listed in the “2020 Water-related Conferences in Texas” handout – the current version of this handout is always available on the TGPC’s POE Subcommittee webpage at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/tgpc-subcommittees/tgpc-public-outreach-and-education-subcommittee/> under the “Additional Resources” heading.

John Tracy (AgriLife Research) announced 2020 Ogallala Aquifer Summit in Amarillo on March 31 – April 1, 2020.

Larry French (TWDB) noted that there would be a National Ground Water Association (NGWA) Water, Energy, and Policy in a Changing Climate Conference in Albuquerque, NM on February 24 – 25, 2020.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

8. ADJOURN

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:34 PM CST.