

# TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

## RECORD OF MEETING

Third Quarter Meeting, FY 95

Meeting Date: May 11, 1995

Place: Building B, TNRCC, Park 35 Meeting No.: 22 Room: 201A

### Committee Members      Affiliation

Mary Ambrose, Chair	TNRCC
Phil Nordstrom	TWDB
Alan Dutton	BEG
Donnie Dippel, Alternate	TDA
Beade Northcut	TSSWCB
Charles Maddox	TDH

### Guest Speakers

Dennis Hoffman, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station

Rodger Sanders, Texas Rural Water Association

Agency Staff	Affiliation	Program
Ambrose Charles	TDA	
Cary Betz	TNRCC	WP&A Div/Ground Water Assmt.
Bob Blodgett	TNRCC	WU Div/Monitoring & Enf.
Chris Chandler	TNRCC	PST Div/RP Remediation
Doretta Conrad	TNRCC	ET Div/Occupational Cert.
Chris Drewy	TNRCC	WP&A Div/Ground-Water Assmt.
Margaret Hoffman	TNRCC	L&RS Div/Legal Services
Kelly Mills	TNRCC	WP&A Div/Ground-Water Assmt.
Steve Musick	TNRCC	WP&A Div/Ground Water Assmt.
Dianne Pavlicek	TNRCC	WP&A Div/Ground Water Assmt.
Joyce Sirota	TNRCC	WP&A Div/Ground Water Assmt.
David Terry	TNRCC	ARA Div/Community Support
Steve Wiley	TNRCC	ET Div/Occupational Cert.
June Wolfe	TAES	

### Interested Parties      Affiliation

Jim Garmon	Texas Water Well Drillers Advisory Council
Gary Grant	Texas Water Well Drillers Advisory Council
Tom Grimshaw	Bureau of Economic Geology

David Harris	Texas Rural Water Association
Barry Henderson	Texas Water Well Drillers Advisory Council
Keith & Dee Pate Edwards	Underground Water Conservation District
Denise Rhodes	Consultant
John Walker	Texas Water Well Drillers Advisory Council
Ray Whisenant	Texas Water Well Drillers Advisory Council

## **ITEM I. Call to Order and Introductions**

The Chairman called the FY 95, Third Quarter meeting of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee to order at 2:10 pm in Room 201A, Building B, Park 35 Austin Campus, TNRCC. The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts, and the Railroad Commission of Texas were not represented. Donnie Dippel represented the Texas Department of Agriculture.

The Chair moved directly to ITEM IV of the agenda and welcomed the members of the Texas Water Well Drillers Advisory Council (TWWDAC). The Chair called on Doretta Conrad, Manager of the TNRCC Occupational Certification Section to introduce the Chairman of the TWWDAC. Ms. Conrad introduced Gary Grant. Chairman Grant represents the Panhandle/High Plains area on the TWWDAC. Mr. Grant introduced the remaining members of the TWWDAC in attendance including: John Walker, representing the Gulf Coast area; Ray Whisenant, representing the Central Texas area; Barry Henderson, representing the East Texas area; and Jim Garmon, representing the Trans-Pecos area. Handout #1 was given to the Committee members listing the membership of the TWWDAC.

Chairman Grant addressed the importance of identifying and plugging abandoned water wells and identifying and repairing deteriorated water wells. He addressed several types of wells or bores which are unregulated in the state that are existing, or pose potential threats to ground-water quality. Among these were hydraulic elevator shafts, grounding wells, and shot-holes. He related a case of a hydraulic elevator shaft in Lubbock County, built in the 1950's, which has released several hundreds of gallons of hydraulic oil into the Ogallala aquifer; and reiterated that there are no regulations requiring casing for these shafts in the state. He also reiterated that there were no casing or sealing requirements for the emplacement of electrical grounding wells at power plants or large petrochemical facilities. He addressed petroleum exploration (seismic) shot-holes which are under jurisdiction of the Texas Railroad Commission. He said these were not an actively occurring problem, but that there were hundreds of undocumented abandoned shot-holes throughout the state which act as direct conduits to ground-water supplies. Chairman Grant said the TWWDAC was fully supportive of outreach efforts addressing the importance of plugging abandoned water wells.

The Chair reminded the Committee that she had made a presentation to the TWWDAC seeking their assistance on the Committee's outreach efforts promoting closure of abandoned water wells. The Chair moved to ITEM V of the agenda, and led a discussion of the Committee's outreach efforts to promote closure of abandoned water wells. Handout #2 related information citing the cooperative efforts of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Farm

Bureau. Handout #2 addressed water quality and the importance of plugging abandoned wells, and also addressed how, when, and where to seek advise for plugging abandoned wells in the Kansas program.

The Chair asked the TWWDAC if they would review documentation compiled by the Committee for the well plugging program to insure that is would meet the needed standards.

Chairman Grant said the TWWDAC would be happy to work with the Committee on the well plugging program, and noted that well plugging reports are currently required.

The Chair announced her desire to form a well-plugging program working group to report back to the full Committee. The Chair said she would contact potential members of the working group, or she could be contacted by volunteers. She said the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board would be key members of the working group. She also said there may be the potential to partially support the effort with 319 grant funds. She asked Beade Northcut, TSSWCB, if the 503 program provided funding for well plugging efforts. Mr. Northcut said yes, but mostly on an operator-by-operator basis.

The Chair asked if there were any objections to the formation of the well-plugging working group. There were no objections and the proposal was accepted by the Committee. Steve Wiley of the TNRCC Water Well Drillers Team volunteered to serve on the working group, and to work with the Chair in the organization of the working group.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair returned to the agenda as scheduled.

## **ITEM II. Subcommittee Reports Agricultural Chemicals**

The Chairman called on Steve Musick, TNRCC, Chairman of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee to present the Subcommittee's Report. Mr. Musick reported that the Subcommittee met this morning, May 11, 1995, for its third quarter meeting. Mr. Musick reported the Committee heard presentations from the TDA and TAEX on licensing and certification programs requirements and training; and its applicability to the development of the State Management Plan (SMP), particularly to leachable pesticides.

The Site Selection Task Force reported during the Subcommittee meeting that it had received its preliminary analyses from the atrazine sampling event conducted at College Station. No detections of atrazine were recorded to date.

The SMP Task Force reported that it was slightly behind schedule in updating the Generic SMP, and should be back on schedule within a few weeks. The draft Generic SMP will be submitted for review to EPA and the Committee prior to the 4th quarter meeting of the Committee. The final draft of the Generic SMP will be submitted for review/approval at the Committee's 4th quarter meeting.

## **Data Management**

The Chairman called on Bob Blodgett, TNRCC, Chairman of the Data Management Subcommittee. Mr. Blodgett reported that the editing of the Committee's approved final draft of the Texas Ground-Water Data Dictionary had turned out to be a larger project than anticipated. The Data Dictionary is over 220 pages in length and has 188 tables. Staff of the TNRCC's Ground-Water Assessment Section is currently working on the presentation of the tables prior to publication. The TNRCC will print 500 copies of the Data Dictionary and it will be made available through the Texas Natural Resource Information System (TNRIS) and the TNRCC. Digitally, the Data Dictionary will be made available on the internet. The availability of the Data Dictionary will be made known through notices in 29 newsletters and ground-water publications, as well as through a prepared press release. Mr. Blodgett said he would make presentations discussing the Data Dictionary in the future.

### **Nonpoint Source**

The Chair called on Steve Musick to present the Subcommittee's report. Mr. Musick addressed the Committee for Margaret Hart, Chair of the Nonpoint Source Subcommittee. Ms. Hart provided Handout #3 to the Committee. Two nonpoint source items were addressed.

The annual cycle for the EPA 319(h) grant process for fiscal year (FY) 1996 has begun. A RFP should be out next week. If you are interested in getting a copy of the RFP, contact Ms. Hart at (512) 239-4512. The deadline for submission of proposals to EPA is August 1, 1995.

The annual effectiveness report deadlines and guidance have not been released for the year. The last effectiveness report was due on November 1, and a similar deadline is expected for this year. Ms. Hart will send a letter out next month to each Committee member describing the report requirements, and will discuss the report requirements at the next Committee meeting.

### **ITEM III. Presentations**

#### **Rural Water Association Wellhead Protection Program**

Rodger Sanders with the Texas Rural Water Association (TRWA) gave an overview of the TRWA and its Wellhead Protection Program. The TRWA works closely with the TNRCC Community Support Section which administers the state's WHP program. The TRWA is headquartered in Austin and has ten field staff. The field staff performs numerous advisory and educational services related to all aspects of the utility business, including wastewater, water, and wellhead protection (WHP). TRWA field personnel generally spend five days a week in rural areas, and their work has opened a lot of doors. They provide managerial and technical advice, and promote all programs for ground-water protection. They give presentations and assist in organizing and conducting WHP inventories and getting the programs initiated. In a little over a one year's time, 52 systems have been involved in WHP activities, and 15 to 20 systems have completed WHP programs. They provide one-on-one guidance for those they assist and can help the entities where the state may not be able to. They work with a lot of utilities, and have made three WHP presentations during the past year. To date it has been a successful program. TRWA is associated with the National Rural Water Association, and interfaces with them twice yearly on innovative techniques and procedures.

The Chair asked Mr. Sanders, from his WHP inventorying experience, what feeling he had on the number of abandoned water wells out there. Mr. Sanders replied he had encountered a lot of abandoned wells. He felt old hand-dug wells were one of the biggest concerns, and reported finding up to 100 abandoned hand-dug wells in a single WHP area. This problem was especially severe in East Texas. He also commented on the large number of abandoned irrigation wells he has encountered.

Steve Musick, TNRCC, asked Mr. Sanders what size communities and how many public water supply (PWS) wells did they usually give assistance to. Mr. Sanders said generally they serve population of less than 10,000, most averaged 3,000 to 4,000, but some were as small as 100 to 200. The average number of PWS wells per system averaged somewhere between one to five.

Charles Maddox, TDH, asked Mr. Sanders what he had observed in the field related to septic systems. Mr. Sanders replied he had observed failing septic systems to be a major concern, especially in East and Southeast Texas. Texas

### **Agricultural Experiment Station TEX-A-SYST Program**

Dr. Dennis Hoffman presented an overview of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station's (TAES) TEX-A-SYST Program. Dr. Hoffman commented on, and agreed with the previous discussions that the number of abandoned wells within the state was staggering. The TEX-A-SYST Program was adopted from TAES's FARM-A-SYST Program as a cost-effective, voluntary partnership with rural residents. It was developed in cooperative effort between the TNRCC, TSSWCB, TDA, TWDB, NRCS, and other agencies with the overall objective of assisting rural residents in protecting the quality of drinking water supplies. Anyone with a water well or a septic system can participate in the program. The original version of the program was developed by the Wisconsin and Minnesota extension services in cooperation with the EPA.

Nine fact-sheets address water quality issues affecting drinking water were first released in 1993. Some of the topics include agricultural chemical storage, fertilizer management, pesticide use, household waste, hazardous waste management around the house, petroleum storage and disposal practices, and livestock manure and waste. The fact-sheets are very specific, and when paired with accompanying work-sheets, provide the users with a basis for assessing risk.

In the near future, the TEX-A-SYST Program will have a full-time staff position working on ground-water protection. In the near future, the program hopes to update and reprint 10,000 to 12,000 copies of the fact-sheets with 319 funds for distribution primarily in areas with recognized nonpoint source problems.

The Chair asked Mr. Hoffman if the fact-sheets were available to other state agencies. Mr. Hoffman said they would be, and they will invite any agency assistance in providing outreach. Beade Northcut (TSSWCB) asked if they served as a technical assistance tool, and received a similar response.

Steve Musick asked if TAES had targeted any particular project areas for this year. Mr. Hoffman said they were looking at the Lake Fork Creek area, Stevenville, the Leon River area, and, in an

818 project, the LCRA project near Bastrop. Mr. Musick said the Ground-Water Assessment Section would want to work cooperatively with TEX-A-SYST in two 319 projects; the nitrate areas project and the Brazos River Basin project.

#### **ITEM IV. Information Exchange for Ground-Water Related Activities**

##### **Comprehensive State Ground-Water Protection Program (CSGWPP)**

The Chair asked Mr. Musick (TNRCC) to report on CSGWPP development status. Mr. Musick announced that TNRCC had received comments on the Committee's CSGWPP Core Program Assessment. He provided a copy of the comments to Committee Members by mail prior to the meeting.

In summary, EPA had substantial comments on both adequacy of the Assessment and clarification of program references. A meeting will be arranged for the Chair and TNRCC staff to discuss comments with EPA staff. TNRCC staff will begin addressing the comments regarding program references. The issues of flexibility and the endorsement process with CSGWPP were not addressed in EPA comments.

##### **1994 Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report**

The Chair called on Kelly Mills, TNRCC, to discuss the Committee's 1994 Joint Report. Mr. Mills provided, for each Committee member, a chronology of 3rd quarter events leading the publication of the report (Handout #4) and a copy of the published report (Handout #5). The last program description was submitted on March 13. The final report was forwarded to the TNRCC Graphics Section on April 7, and to the TNRCC Printshop on April 13. The published report was returned to the Ground-Water Assessment Section on May 5. The report is in the TNRCC's state and federal report series, and is numbered SFR-20. Mr. Mills reported that the report would be forwarded to the legislative library next week. The report will be forwarded to the Committee's mailing list and to the ground-water conservation districts within the next couple of weeks.

The Chair noted that the mandated April 1 deadline again was not met. She asked the Committee if it felt the deadlines should be moved up. There was general opposition to moving the deadlines up. Phil Nordstrom (TWDB) said he still had data coming in for the previous year's analyses at the deadline date. Mr. Musick (TNRCC) offered that he did not feel it would be possible to move the deadlines up any further. Mr. Mills noted from viewing the chronology, that the time-lag between the program description submission deadline and the final actual program description submission (about six weeks) was about equal in length to the amount of time taken over the mandated April 1 deadline (five weeks). Mr. Mills noted that it was not a problem with the deadline's date, but a problem with the majority of the 41 plus contributors not meeting the deadline.

Mr. Musick added that the report will be supplied to county judges and local health official heads for notification requirement of Texas Water Code .5.236.

Mr. Mills reported that 800 copies of the report were published, and said if the Committee

members required additional copies to contact him at (512) 239-4512. All others seeking additional copies of the report will need to contact TNRCC Publications at (512) 239-0028.

### **Draft Texas Ground-Water Program Directory**

A copy of the draft Texas Ground-Water Program Directory's table of contents (Handout #6) was provided to the Committee members. A copy of the draft directory was passed around to the members. The Chair noted the directory was intended to assist the public by directing them to the proper agency/division/section/program/etc. for the proper answers to their question. The Chair said she would forward a copy of the TNRCC's yellow pages as an example, and asked for each agency to supply a copy of their yellow pages for use in the directory.

Steve Musick discussed the major sections of the draft directory which include; the introduction, a section on ground-water hydrology and terminology (to be taken from TWC Report 89-01), the ground-water subject oriented yellow pages, the program descriptions (from the Joint Report), and the supporting appendices. Program descriptions will be solicited from the USGS and EPA for inclusion in the directory.

### **ITEM V. Business Discussion and Possible Action**

#### **Proposal to add the Texas Structural Pest Control Board to the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee**

The Chair addressed the proposal to add the Texas Structural Pest Control Board to the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee, and provided Handout #7, a letter addressed to her from Steven Baker, representing the Texas Structural Pest Control Board, supporting the proposal.

Alan Dutton (BEG) addressed the issue for the procedures (or lack thereof) of adding members to the Committee, and asked if this was the same case for adding members to subcommittees. The Chair replied that the addition of members to subcommittees was at the Committee's discretion.

The Chair asked for any motions on the issue. Phil Nordstrom (TWDB) moved to add the Structural Pest Control Board to the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee. Charles Maddox (TDH) seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried. Mr. Nordstrom noted that the Structural Pest Control Board used to attend all of the Committee's meeting and have been involved in the past.

The Structural Pest Control Board joins the following agencies represented on the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee: Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission; Texas Department of Agriculture; North Plains Underground Water Conservation District (Texas Alliance of Ground Water Districts); Texas Agricultural Experiment Station; Texas Agricultural Extension Service; Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board; Texas Water Development Board; Texas Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Economic Geology; and, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board.

## **ITEM VI. Announcements**

The Chair provided Handouts #8, #9, & #10 for the Committee members general information. Handout #8, Water-Quality Assessment of the Trinity River Basin, Texas - Data Collection, 1992-1995, discusses the assessment and the aquifers within the basin. Handout #9, National Water-Quality Assessment Program - Pesticides in the Trinity River Basin Study Unit, Texas, 1968-1991, shows a number of detections of pesticides in surface water in the study area, but no detections of pesticides in ground water (from a limited number of samples). Handout #10, Occurrence of the Gasoline Additive MTBE in Shallow Ground Water in Urban and Agricultural Areas, discusses the occurrence of MTBE in shallow ground water. MTBE chiefly detected in urban areas (Denver-most prominently), and the rate of occurrence cannot be correlated solely to spills. MTBE does not have a MCL but is being proposed for one. These handouts are from the U.S. Geological Survey.

The Chair announced a workshop from May 23-25 on Computer Applications in Waste Management in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Contact Mary Ambrose for information/brochures.

The Chair will be attending the SFRIG Water Quality and Pesticide Disposal Working Committee on June 5 & 6. Discussions will include the State Management Plan for Pesticides in Ground Water. Ms. Ambrose will take comments from the Committee for input until June 1.

The Chair announced the TNRCC Environment Trade Fair was presently being conducted at the Austin Convention Center until tomorrow afternoon.

Phil Nordstrom reported on Consensus Water Planning. The TWDB will supply a speaker for the next Committee meeting on the subject. Phase I has been completed, basically for legislative comment. Four recommendations concerned 1) abandoned and deteriorated water wells, 2) a plugging fund, 3) continuing education for water well drillers and pump installers, and 4) reevaluation of and funding for the Critical Area Process. These recommendations generally followed those of the Clean Water Council. The Consensus Planning is being conducted by the TWDB, TNRCC, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Phase II will look at some of the data.

Mr. Nordstrom also reported on two TWDB publications which will be coming out in the near future. Water Quality Monitoring of the Edwards/Trinity Plateau Aquifer will be issued in the Hydrologic Atlas format. It was prepared by Janie Hopkins. Aquifers of Texas expands upon LP-212 (Delineation Criteria for the Major and Minor Aquifer Maps of Texas) and is a detailed report on each aquifer. This report was prepared by John Ashworth and Janie Hopkins.

In addition, Mr. Nordstrom discussed the activities of the Ground Water Monitoring Unit of the TWDB. He reported sampling had been completed in the Trinity Group aquifer, with analysis for trace metal, major anions and cations, radioactivity, and nutrients. The Unit is currently sampling in West Texas, including the Marathon, Pecos Cenozoic Alluvium, Rustler, and some other little aquifers. Next month, the Unit will be sampling the Dockum and the Triassic along the High Plains, and will concentrate analysis on radioactivity, Radium 236 and 238, and all other parameters. The Unit has completed its six-year cycle, and will begin over next year in the



Ogallala aquifer of the High Plains. The TWDB will work in conjunction with Don McReynolds and Wayne Wyatt (High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1).

Donnie Dippel, TDA, reported that they had a pesticide law bill in the House last night which was stopped due to a point of order. The Bill should come back up in the Senate in the next few days. The Bill is seeking authority to charge registrants a fee to pay for the ground-water monitoring associated with the State Management Plan. A \$200 fee was proposed, but was removed by amendment to no set amount. TDA has pushed hard for the passage of the Bill, and has made the legislature aware of the fact that if we do not have the required money, there is a possibility of restrictions (no use) on five pesticides within the state. The Chair asked if funds would be available to other agencies. Mr. Dippel said TDA would collect the fees, and the fees would be available to other agencies as appropriate.

Charles Maddox, TDH, reported that they had been working on acquiring funding assistance to improve their laboratory facilities and capabilities.

## **ITEM VII. Public Comment**

The Chair called on Chairman Grant, TWWDAC, and related a letter of complaint from Dwight Rhea regarding the set-back distance for shot-holes. Chairman Grant said they had received numerous complaints of the nature in the past, but not many recently. He said there was a 72 hour waiver if the shot-point was within 500 feet. These chiefly cause problems in open-completion wells.

Dianne Pavlicek, TNRCC announced the initiation of a new project in the Ground-Water Assessment Section. The 319 grant project concerns nonpoint source ground-water pollution prevention in the Brazos River Basin, and is in cooperation with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. The purpose of the project is to target four areas within the Brazos River Basin with documented nonpoint source pollution problems and to abate the problems utilizing best management practices. A meeting will be held on June 27 at the Brazos River Authority in Waco to discuss the project. If interested, please contact Dianne at (512) 239-5857.

Bob Blodgett, TNRCC Water Utilities Division announced proposed changes related to the public water supply system rules and regulations. They should appear in the Texas Register in the next two to three weeks, and affect 30 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 290. The Chair asked what subjects were addressed. Mr. Blodgett reported a variety of subjects were affected and mentioned portions dealing an expansion of features related to set-back distances to PWS wells, as specifically mentioned set-back restriction on petrochemical pipelines. Chairman Grant, TWWDAC, asked the Committee of the status of the unfilled water well reports. Steve Musick, TNRCC, said to date the status was unchanged, but there is a proposal for grant monies to be applied to address the situation. Currently are waiting on response from EPA Region VI grant people. Should hear something in the next week or two. Chairman Grant noted they had received numerous complaints from drillers on the lack of filing of the reports. Mr. Musick asked the TWWDAC for assistance in prioritizing area for filing, and to coordinate with Steve Wiley. The Chair asked Steve Wiley, TNRCC Water Well Drillers Team how the current system of filing well report was working. Mr. Wiley said there were a few problems, mostly dealing with the use

of the base maps for drillers who require numerous counties, but overall the new system was working OK. An August 31 mailback deadline has been established for new logs which do not contain a grid number.

**ITEM VIII. Adjourn**

There being no other business or discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

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Compiled by Steve Musick/Kelly Mills, Ground-Water Assessment Section, TNRCC