

**TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
 RECORD OF MEETING
 Second Quarterly Meeting, Fiscal Year 2026**

Meeting Date: April 8, 2026
 Meeting No.: 153

Place: TCEQ Campus, Bldg F
 Room: 5108

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MEETING ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Eric Simon	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Natalie Ballew	Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
James Harcourt	Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC)
Omar Valdez	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
David Villarreal	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
T.J. Helton	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
Adam Foster	Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD)
Justin Thompson	Bureau of Economic Geology of The University of Texas at Austin (UTBEG)
Chris Hooyboer	Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)

Agency Staff

<u>Agency Staff</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Program</u>
Katie Brice	TCEQ	Water Availability Division (WAD)
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ	WAD
Stephanie Escobar	TCEQ	WAD
Chris Heiligenstein	RRC	
April Hoh	TCEQ	WAD
Cindy Hooper	TCEQ	WAD
Peggy Hunka	TCEQ	WAD
Eli Martinez	TCEQ	Public Interest Counsel Division
Kathy McCormack	TCEQ	WAD
Scott Underwood	TCEQ	WAD
Scout Vanderwal	DSHS	

Interested Parties

<u>Interested Parties</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Tabitha Aditi	Office of Senator Zaffirini
Erica Bealeu	Caddo Lake Institute
Scott Duhon	CenterPoint Energy
Cara Glasscock	Red River Authority of Texas
Shannon Glen	Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)
Joey Guerrero	Garney Construction
James Johnson	BGICO
Mike Lee	Politico and E&E News
Laura Martin	Gonzales County Underground Water Conservation District (UWCD)
Martha Pskowski	Inside Climate News
Victoria Rose	Save Our Springs Alliance
Dwayne Simpson	Chambers County Attorney Office
Virginia Smith	Southwestern Travis County Groundwater Conservation District
Allison Strube	Colorado River Municipal Water District
Stasi Vance	Brazos River Authority (BRA)

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. Agenda for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting on April 8, 2026
2. Record for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting on January 14, 2026
3. Summary of Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee Meeting, March 4, 2026
4. Summary of Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee Meeting, March 4, 2026
5. TGPC Rule Proposal Preamble
6. TCEQ Rules Update, 4/8/26
7. Water-related Conferences in Texas, April 2026

MEETING RECORD OF APRIL 8, 2026

1. PRE-MEETING REMINDERS

Before the meeting started, Eric Simon (TCEQ) provided the attendees with some tips that would facilitate a productive videoconference option for the meeting.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The member of the TGPC presiding over this meeting was physically present at the location listed on the first page and this meeting location was accessible to the public. Other designated TGPC members and the public were also able attend this meeting via videoconference or teleconference at no cost.

Eric Simon (TCEQ), Designated Chairman of the TGPC, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:31 PM CDT. Eric Simon (TCEQ) then called the roll of TGPC members. The designated representative or alternate from Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research) was not present at the meeting.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Groundwater Issues

Chris Heiligenstein (RRC) reported that the Subcommittee last met via videoconference on March 4, 2026, and 10 state and federal agencies and organizations were represented.

The Agricultural Chemicals Task Force Status Report was reviewed with the following highlights:

- The updated TCEQ Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD) and Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 pesticide monitoring results from the TCEQ Public Drinking Water program and TCEQ Source Water Protection program were uploaded into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Central Data Exchange – Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Grant Database website. An updated TCEQ IPD report was still being prepared to replace the previous 2008 report. Numerous potential errors were identified with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) data between 2019 and 2025, and this was being investigated and corrected as needed.
- On December 9 – 10, 2025, Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) attended and staffed a tabletop display at the annual Texas Plant Protection Association (TPPA) Conference in Bryan, Texas. The TGPC exhibit booth included FIFRA grant-related information. This conference focused on water resources and agriculture.
- The Pesticides of INterest Tracking System (POINTS) database was no longer in service. Should this change, updates would be provided annually in December.
- The 2026 U.S. EPA/States/Tribes FIFRA Spring grant meeting would be hosted by New Mexico, most likely in May 2026.

The TGPC Publications Status Report was reviewed with the following highlights:

- *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2025 (“Joint Report”, TCEQ publication SFR-56-25)*
 - Work on the 2025 *Joint Report* was in progress.
- *Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee: Report to the 90th Legislature (“Legislative Report”, SFR-47/26)*
 - The TGPC Legislative Report Subcommittee was reactivated during the January 2026 TGPC meeting and would prepare the draft report for delivery by December 31, 2026.
- *Groundwater Assessment (TCEQ publication AS-465/26) for the 2026 Texas Integrated Report of Surface Water Quality for Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d) (“Texas Integrated Report”)*
 - The 2026 *Groundwater Assessment* was being prepared and would be completed by April 2026.
 - The published report would be provided to TCEQ’s Water Quality Planning Division for inclusion in the 2026 *Texas Integrated Report*.
- *Priority Groundwater Management Areas and Groundwater Conservation Districts, Report to the 90th Texas Legislature (“PGMA/GCD Legislative Report”, SFR-53/26)*
 - Work on the *PGMA/GCD Legislative Report* would be initiated in the summer of 2026.

The following groundwater issues were discussed:

- Oil and Gas Produced Water;
- Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants;
- Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR);
- Groundwater Quality Monitoring;
- Brackish Groundwater;
- Evapotranspiration Networks; and,
- Others (TWDB grants for GCDs in the state and the Texas Produced Water Consortium).

The next TGPC GWI Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for June 3, 2026.

James Harcourt (RRC) joined the meeting at approximately 1:34 PM CDT and was present for the remainder of the meeting.

Public Outreach and Education

Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that the Subcommittee last met via videoconference on March 4, 2026, and eight state agencies and organizations were represented.

Joel Pigg (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; AgriLife Extension) reviewed the Texas Well Owner Network (TWON) training schedule. During the previous quarter, TWON staff held six one-hour events, and they collected 608 samples.

The Outreach Events Status Report was reviewed with the following highlights:

- AgriLife Extension Water Well Screening Events
 - Joel Pigg (AgriLife Extension) reported that five events had been held during the previous quarter.
- TGPC Exhibit Booth
 - Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that the 37th Annual TPPA Conference was held in December 2025 in Bryan, Texas.

The list of upcoming conferences was reviewed.

The POE *Educational Outreach Plan* was reviewed and discussed, and further edits would be made at the next meeting.

AgriLife Extension publications had been reprinted and they would be distributed as needed.

The next TGPC POE Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for June 3, 2026.

Legislative Report

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) deferred this report to the Business portion of the meeting during the discussion of the *Legislative Report*.

4. PRESENTATION

There was no presentation at the meeting.

Presentations at TGPC meetings are always available on the Meeting Records of the TGPC webpage (<https://tgpc.texas.gov/meetings/meeting-records-of-the-texas-groundwater-protection-committee/>).

5. BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Webcams

Eric Simon (TCEQ) reminded the members that the Texas Government Code and Open Meetings Act allow the TGPC to hold hybrid public meetings, and that they should keep their web cameras (i.e., “webcams”) on as much as possible if they are attending TGPC meetings virtually.

Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2025

Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that the draft *Joint Report* was almost complete, it would undergo technical and management review next, and it should meet the June 1st publication deadline. Katie Brice (TCEQ) thanked everyone for submitting their data and updated information.

Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee – Report to the 90th Legislature

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) reported that the Legislative Report Subcommittee was reactivated at the last TGPC meeting to prepare the *Legislative Report*. On March 4, 2026, the Subcommittee met to discuss the timeline and to work on recommendations for the *Legislative Report*.

The Subcommittee reviewed the recommendations in the previous *Legislative Report* (i.e., to the 89th Legislature) and made preliminary determinations regarding those that were still needed and those that might need to be updated. The Subcommittee also discussed how recommendations from TGPC white papers would be addressed.

The Subcommittee discussed the timeframe for finalizing its recommendations:

- A draft document, including the edits and comments discussed at that meeting, would be sent to Subcommittee members for review.
- Feedback would be requested before the next Subcommittee meeting where there would be further discussion and possible decisions made on the Recommendations section of the report.
- If possible, the draft *Legislative Report* would be finalized at the next Subcommittee meeting, and then it would be presented for preliminary approval at the next TGPC meeting in July 2026 – if not, the status of the draft *Legislative Report* would be provided.
- The Subcommittee planned to finalize the *Legislative Report* at its meeting in September 2026, and then it would be presented to the TGPC for approval at their meeting in October 2026.
- Finally, if anything needed to be discussed after the TGPC meeting in October 2026, the Subcommittee could meet in December 2026 to make final revisions before the *Legislative Report* was published and distributed to elected officials before the Legislature convened in January 2027.

The next TGPC Legislative Report Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for June 3, 2026.

David Villarreal (TDA) reported that the Water Conservation Advisory Council (WCAC) had recently drafted its *Legislative Report* recommendations, and that he would send them to Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) for review and possible inclusion in the TGPC *Legislative Report*.

Amendments to 31 TAC Chapter 601, Groundwater Contamination Report – Discuss and Approve Proposal for Publication

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) presented the TGPC rule proposal to the members. In the 89th Legislature Regular Session (2025), Senate Bill (SB) 2124 (<https://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/89R/billtext/html/SB02124F.htm>) was passed which amended Section 26.406(c) of the Texas Water Code (TWC) regarding the publication deadline for the TGPC's annual *Joint Report* by moving it from April 1st to

June 1st. Because the word “April” appeared in the TGPC’s rules, the TGPC’s rules needed to be updated to implement SB 2124. While the rules were open, the TGPC also addressed provisions of SB 1663 (passed in the same session) regarding the form and content of groundwater contamination notices and proposed a few additional clarifying updates. A link to the *Texas Register* notice of the rule proposal would be available on the TGPC’s homepage, and this rulemaking would be scheduled for adoption at the next TGPC meeting. Adam Foster (TAGD) proposed, James Harcourt (RRC) seconded, and all remaining TGPC members approved the publication of the rule proposal in the *Texas Register* on April 24, 2026, allowing TCEQ staff to make any non-substantive changes required for that publication.

Set Future Meeting Date

The next TGPC quarterly meeting was scheduled for July 8, 2026, at 1:30 PM CDT as a hybrid meeting.

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

Groundwater Contamination Notice Coordination (Texas Water Code §26.408)

Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that, since the last TGPC meeting, the TCEQ IET had met two times and reviewed six groundwater contamination cases with almost 18,000 notices subsequently being sent to potentially affected private water well owners and users. All of the confirmed cases were part of the TCEQ leaking petroleum storage tank program and located in Odessa, Southlake (near Dallas), Houston, San Antonio, just north of Beaumont, and just north of Abilene.

Groundwater Management Areas

Adam Foster (TAGD) reported that GCDs were meeting frequently to finalize the Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) for each Groundwater Management Area (GMA) by May 1, 2026, after which they would be open for public comment.

Updates on Regional Water Planning, Groundwater Availability Modeling, Brackish Groundwater Studies, and Innovative Water

Natalie Ballew (TWDB) reported that:

- The Phase I draft *State Water Plan* would be considered by their Board on April 16, 2026, and it would include some of their legislative policy recommendations related to groundwater.
- They had analyzed the southern Trinity Aquifer for potential areas to designate as Brackish Groundwater Production Zones (BGPZs), a draft report was available, and a stakeholder meeting was scheduled for April 29, 2026, with the public comment period closing on May 8, 2026.

- Brackish groundwater was an interim legislative session charge in the House and Senate Natural Resources Subcommittees, and TWDB would be closely following this, as well as keeping an eye on discussions related to some other bills that were filed during the previous legislative session which would relax some of the regulations regarding the production of groundwater from BGPZs (e.g., monitoring, impacts on groundwater quality, and wastewater injection wells).
- They were wrapping up some work for the San Jacinto River Authority in Montgomery County regarding a geological assessment to identify the best location for an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project and more information was available on their website.

Nonpoint Source Pollution

T.J. Helton (TSSWCB) reported that:

- Their *Nonpoint Source Pollution Management in Texas: 2025 Annual Report* (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/water-quality/nonpoint/plans-reports/nps-2025-annual-report-sfr-066-25.pdf>) had been printed;
- They had received their FY 2026 allocation and there were no budget cuts; and,
- The annual TCEQ and TSSWCB Request for Proposal for Proposal (RFP) and Request for Grant Application (RFGA) information would be available in the summer and fall of 2026, respectively.

National Groundwater Information

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rules Update

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) reported on current TCEQ rulemaking and non-rule projects that were of interest to the TGPC:

- 2025-033-331-WS – SB 616 and SB 1061: Injection Through the Edwards Aquifer for Aquifer Storage and Recovery and Class III Production Area Authorization Amendment;
- 2026-001-293-OW – House Bill (HB) 2080: Update to 30 TAC Chapter 293 Relating to the Petition Requesting Commission Inquiry of a GCD; and,
- 2026-006-309-OW – Land Application of Produced Water.

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

Natalie Ballew (TWDB) announced that, on March 31, 2026, they had been approved to publish proposed rule amendments in the *Texas Register* regarding groundwater management (i.e., GCDs and how they were monitoring and tracking their DFCs). These

amendments were purely legislative implementation rulemaking for SB 1583 and HB 2078 from the 89th Legislature Regular Session (2025).

New Publications

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Upcoming Conferences

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

Eric Simon (TCEQ) noted that the TGPC would again have a presence at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair on May 19 – 20, 2026, in San Antonio, and he invited the members to stop by the TGPC counter within the main TCEQ booth.

Adam Foster (TAGD) noted that their 2026 Texas Groundwater Summit was scheduled for September 1 – 3, 2026, in San Antonio, and he added that the TGPC was again welcome to have an exhibit booth there at no charge.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

9. ADJOURN

James Harcourt (RRC) announced that they were planning a Texas Groundwater Coordination Meeting (TGCM) on May 26, 2026. This meeting was meant to be an information exchange between state agencies with shared authority over groundwater.

Eric Simon (TCEQ) adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:09 PM CDT.