

Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy



Created by the 71st Legislature in 1989, the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC)¹ strives to identify areas where new or existing Texas groundwater programs² could be enhanced, as well as improve coordination among the state agencies and statewide organizations involved in groundwater-related activities. The TGPC also provides a means for the public to interact with groundwater experts.

One of the TGPC's legislative mandates is to develop and update a comprehensive groundwater protection strategy for the state that provides guidelines for groundwater conservation and the prevention of groundwater contamination. Groundwater is water that occurs beneath the land surface in porous or fractured rock and sediments.

Prepared by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

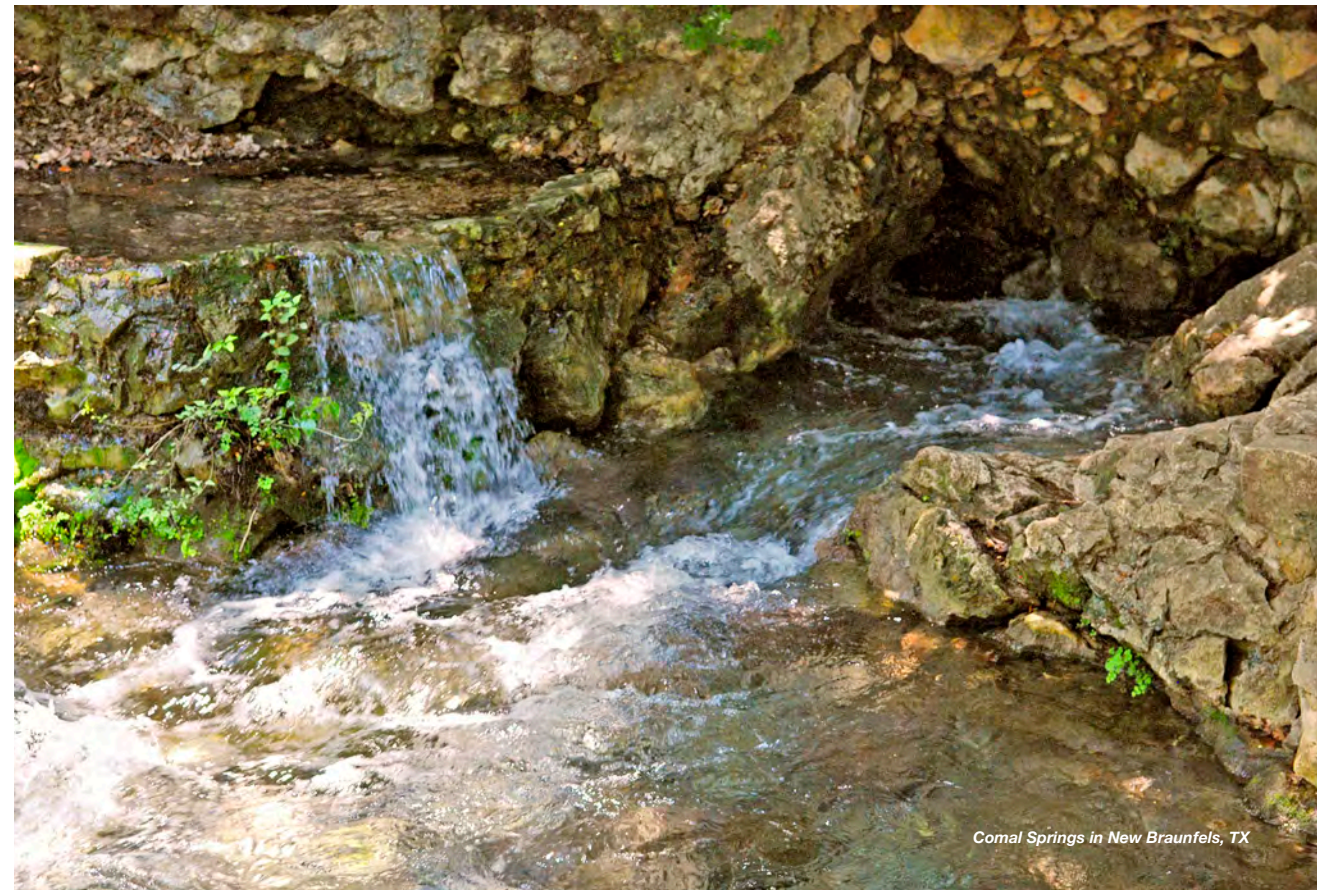
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Texas Alliance of
Groundwater Districts
Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Bureau of Economic Geology
of The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Department of
Licensing and Regulation

There have been two earlier editions of the *Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy* (“Strategy”)^{3,4}. With no official staff or funding, TGPC accomplishments achieved under the previous *Strategy* include:

- **Website**⁵ – Established in 2002, the TGPC website has evolved into a cost-effective clearinghouse of groundwater information that is fully accessible and has an internal search engine, website analytical capabilities, and responsive design for mobile devices.
- **Public outreach and education**⁶ – Through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the TGPC has supported public outreach and education related to groundwater since 2004, particularly private water well screening events across the state, as well as the publication of consumer-based fact sheets concerning hazardous constituents occurring in groundwater used for drinking water, abandoned water wells, and groundwater management and protection activities.
- **Exhibit booth**⁷ – The TGPC created its exhibit booth in 2006 in order to promote public outreach and education at local conferences. Posters, publications, fact sheets, brochures, maps, and rock samples teach visitors about the importance of Texas groundwater.
- **Subscription service**⁸ – In 2007, the TGPC replaced its postal mailing list with an email/text subscription service.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**⁹ – Beginning in 2008, over 40 FAQs have been generated on various topics related to groundwater quantity and quality, septic systems, water wells, administrative entities, and publications. These one- to two-page popular press articles are available to assist statewide newsletter editors and webmasters in disseminating groundwater-related information to the public.
- **Water Well Report Viewer**¹⁰ – The Water Well Report Viewer debuted in 2009. This online, map-based application allows users to geographically locate and view scanned copies of over a million historical reports for water wells drilled in the state.
- **Email address**¹¹ – A TGPC email address was set up in 2012 in order to facilitate communication with the public.
- **Groundwater Contamination Viewer**¹² – Developed in 2017, this interactive, online map allows users to query and obtain spatial relationship information about groundwater contamination cases as per the *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report* (“*Joint Report*”)¹³.

As required by statute, the TGPC publishes the *Joint Report* every year. The *Joint Report* explains the current status of groundwater protection and monitoring activities that are conducted or required by each member of the TGPC in order to assure regulatory compliance with groundwater protection, assess ambient groundwater quality, and conduct research activities.

The plan for preserving groundwater in the state starts with the existing regulatory and non-regulatory groundwater protection, remediation, and conservation programs listed in the *Joint Report*. In addition, this edition of the *Strategy* document introduces a summary of the dynamic and interactive processes by which information is exchanged and recommendations are made within and between the TGPC, its Subcommittees, and the public in order to further protect groundwater resources in the state. The comprehensive strategy for protecting groundwater in Texas includes both the TGPC member’s internal programs and the TGPC’s internal processes outlined below.



Comal Springs in New Braunfels, TX

This document was developed and produced by the TGPC in fulfillment of requirements given in §26.405(2) of the Texas Water Code. While the report represents the contribution of individual participating organizations, the report as a whole is the work of the TGPC and does not necessarily reflect all of the views and policies of each participating organization. The effort was partially funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Input Solicitation

- Independent data sources may submit information about a potential new groundwater issue to the TGPC:
 - ♦ Through U.S. mail, phone, or email; and,
 - ♦ By attending and addressing a TGPC, TGPC Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee, or TGPC Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee quarterly public meeting.
- TGPC, GWI Subcommittee, and POE Subcommittee members may report a potential new groundwater issue at one of their quarterly public meetings.
- The TGPC may direct the GWI Subcommittee to examine a potential new groundwater issue during their next quarterly public meeting.
- GWI Subcommittee members discuss potential new and already-identified groundwater issues during their quarterly public meetings.

Data Compilation

- TGPC members document the enforcement status of all groundwater contamination cases under their jurisdiction in the annual *Joint Report*.
- Every two years, GWI Subcommittee members review and approve new groundwater issues to be included in their *Activity Plan*¹⁴.
- With the assistance of Subject Matter Experts, GWI Subcommittee members develop white papers¹⁵ on the groundwater issues listed in their biannual *Activity Plan*.
 - ♦ White papers summarize the best available scientific data on a specific groundwater issue, identify areas where there is insufficient scientific data to thoroughly assess the issue, evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulatory programs to address the issue, and provide recommendations or policy options regarding the issue.

Subsequent Action

- The TGPC publishes a biannual *Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee* (“*Legislative Report*”)¹⁶ which describes the TGPC’s activities for the two preceding years and provides groundwater protection recommendations for legislative consideration.
- TGPC Legislative Report Subcommittee members may include a white paper recommendation in their *Legislative Report*.
- TGPC members may include a new groundwater issue in their *Legislative Report* before its white paper is completed in order to alert legislators to an emerging threat.
- TGPC members may issue a policy statement based on a white paper recommendation.
- The TGPC provides these recommendations and policy statements so that the Texas Legislature can act on the best available scientific information.

For more information, please visit the TGPC website at www.tgpc.texas.gov or contact us at:

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References

- ¹ Texas Water Code, Title 2, Subtitle D, Chapter 26, Subchapter J, Section 401, www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/WA/htm/WA.26.htm#J
- ² Texas groundwater programs, tgpc.texas.gov/member-agencies-and-representatives/
- ³ *Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy*, Texas Water Commission publication Z-80 (January 1988), not available online
- ⁴ *Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy*, TCEQ publication AS-188 (February 2003), www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/comm_exec/pubs/as/188.pdf
- ⁵ TGPC website, tgpc.texas.gov
- ⁶ Private water well screening event, Granbury, Texas, June 2009, tgpc.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/water-well-screening-Granbury.jpg
- ⁷ TGPC exhibit booth, tgpc.texas.gov/POE/TGPCboothTCEQ_PDWConf2015.pdf
- ⁸ TGPC email/text subscription service, tgpc.texas.gov/contact-us
- ⁹ TGPC FAQs, tgpc.texas.gov/frequently-asked-questions-faqs
- ¹⁰ Water Well Report Viewer, www.tceq.texas.gov/gis/waterwellview.html
- ¹¹ TGPC email address, tgpc@tceq.texas.gov
- ¹² Groundwater Contamination Viewer, www.tceq.texas.gov/gis/groundwater-contamination-viewer
- ¹³ *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report*, TCEQ publication SFR-056, www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/sfr/056
- ¹⁴ TGPC GWI Subcommittee *Activity Plans*, tgpc.texas.gov/tgpc-subcommittees/tgpc-groundwater-issues-subcommittee/#Resources
- ¹⁵ TGPC GWI Subcommittee White Papers, tgpc.texas.gov/tgpc-subcommittees/tgpc-groundwater-issues-subcommittee/#Resources
- ¹⁶ *Activities and Recommendations of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee*, TCEQ publication SFR-047, tgpc.texas.gov/tgpc-publications

www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/as/as-188.html

Responses to public comments about this document can be found at http://bit.ly/_____.

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