

DATA MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:

10:00 a.m., August 18, 2006

LOCATION:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Campus, Bldg. F, Room 3202A, 12100
Park 35 Circle, Austin, TX 78753

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

Regular business meeting

AGENCIES/ENTITIES REPRESENTED:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ]
Texas Department of Agriculture [TDA]
Texas Water Development Board [TWDB]

ATTENDEES:

Janie Hopkins	TWDB, Co-Chair
Steve Musick	TCEQ
Mary Ambrose	TCEQ
Cary Betz	TCEQ
Tim Dobbs	TCEQ
Chris Chandler	TCEQ
Michael Hare	TDA
Jim Lester	GeoTechnology Research Institute (GTRI)
Stephanie Glenn	GeoTechnology Research Institute (GTRI)

MEETING SUMMARY:

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Janie Hopkins (TWDB), Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15 a.m. Members attending introduced themselves. Stephanie Glenn and Jim Lester of GeoTechnology Research Institute (GTRI) were introduced as the new contractors for the second phase of the statewide groundwater monitoring strategy.

Handouts were provided. Handout #1 - Meeting Agenda; Handout #2 – Draft workplan for monitoring strategy contract; Handout #3 – Ambient Groundwater Monitoring Strategy.

II. Business Discussion and Possible Action

The first item was discussion of statewide groundwater quality monitoring strategy. GTRI was introduced as the new contractor for the second phase of this project. GTRI has been working with TCEQ on the Galveston Bay and Estuary Program, and has

extensive experience in taking monitoring data and making it useful to regulators, policy makers and others.

Mr. Lester pointed out that in reviewing material prepared by the USGS in phase I, that there were a number of places where the notation “information not available” appeared. The members of the subcommittee discussed this terminology, and the exact meaning is variable, depending on the type of data being looked at.

The matrix approach was discussed. TCEQ’s Source Water Assessment and Protection program was identified as a possible model for the approach to monitoring, especially the incorporation of land use data and hydrologic and hydrogeologic data. Members also discussed the Groundwater Availability Models conducted by TWDB.

Mary Ambrose discussed the USGS report: *The chemical quality of self-supplied domestic well water in the United States*. Focazio, M.J.; Tipton, D.; Shapiro, S.D.; and Geiger, L.H., 2006. *Ground Water Monitoring and Remediation*, v. 26, no. 3, p. 92 – 104. Contaminants of concern include the inorganics arsenic, nitrate, uranium 238, radon 222, mercury (nationwide) and fluoride. Organics were also noted, and Atrazine was the most frequently detected pesticide. The issue of cost of sampling and analysis was raised, but this is not to be a concern in development of the proposed “scalable” program.

There was a discussion of the assessment of groundwater quality data in preparation of the Water Quality Inventory “305(b)” report. Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) and minimum detection level (MDL) are used as the basis for the assessment. Any values exceeding the MCL for a particular constituent are deemed to be problem areas; anything below the MDL is not a worry; and anything in-between may merit some caution, and further examination.

The question was raised as to whether aquatic life figured into the inventory, and the short answer was no, not the inventory. However, some programs are gathering data now for US Fish and Wildlife studies. This includes groundwater quality and biological data. This information is not currently part of the 305(b) report. Some of the species may be “indicators” however, “triggers” have not been identified.

TCEQ staff also expressed concerns with trying to identify raw water sample data from the Public Drinking Water database. Steps are being taken to make this data more usable for the 305(b) report. Progress regarding identification of spatial data for groundwater contamination sites was also discussed.

GTRI representatives asked if there were any regulated activities on the horizon that posed the risk of increasing groundwater contamination. Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (UST) are declining, dry cleaners are switching to different chemicals and practices, does anything appear to be heading in the other direction? TCEQ staff responded that nothing was apparent, however, MCL were going down, as in the case of arsenic, which causes an apparent rise in the number of groundwater contamination cases.

There was a discussion of general groundwater quality issues and other potential “emerging contaminants”.

Handout #2, draft workplan, was distributed. Stephanie Glenn walked the subcommittee through the workplan. The spreadsheet summary of the data needs assessment performed by USGS was discussed. The needs shown on the spreadsheet need to be reviewed by all of the original respondents to make certain that they are still current. GTRI will be using the spreadsheet as a source.

The terms Basic, Reference and Targeted sampling regimes were discussed in some detail. Variables in each of these regimes can include sampling density, chemical suites, and frequency of monitoring. Many sources of data can also be used to determine which regime to use, such as land use, existing contamination, and hydrogeology. Indicator parameters need to be incorporated as much as possible.

Other tasks in the workplan were reviewed and discussed. The plan includes a timeline. Members were reminded that the strategy is to be developed by the subcommittee, being “helped along” by GTRI. Members were asked to review the workplan for any major issues, and discuss them with Cary Betz of TCEQ, by August 21, 2006.

Members engaged in a brief discussion of the Groundwater Data Dictionary. The document is okay from a GIS standpoint, but there may be some other issues that need review. This will be taken up at a later date.

Next meeting will be held September 21, 2006 at the Texas Water Development Board offices, Stephen F. Austin State Office Building, 1700 North Congress, Austin Texas.

III. Adjourn

There being no other business or information exchange, Ms. Hopkins adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Cary Betz (TCEQ), December 1, 2006
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