

developing the Atrazine Chemical Specific Monitoring Program Plan. Other pesticide-specific management plans for chemicals will be developed by the subcommittee as they are identified by EPA as a threat to groundwater. Upon EPA approval of these plans, the pesticide can be used within the state after national use is banned.

The Groundwater Classification Subcommittee developed a system to help all agencies design and implement groundwater protection programs and set cleanup standards for remediation.

The Data Management Subcommittee coordinates and provides guidance for the management of the various member agency groundwater databases. Currently, the Subcommittee is developing a database format that will facilitate access to all users of groundwater data.

Meetings

The Committee meets quarterly; meeting times and agenda are published in the Texas Register. The public is invited to attend all Committee meetings and to participate on the Subcommittees.

The TNRCC maintains audio tapes and written record of all Committee meetings. The Commission maintains a mailing list of Committee members, designated and alternate members, agency staff, and interested parties for meeting notification. The Committee also files, with the Governor and Legislature, a report of the Committee's activities and recommendations for legislation for groundwater protection.

Development of a Comprehensive State Groundwater Protection Program

Because groundwater protection programs are a patchwork of federal, state, and local efforts that focus on individual sources of contamination rather than protection of the resource as a whole, the Committee has begun to develop a Comprehensive State Groundwater Protection Program (CSGWPP). The CSGWPP consists of six strategic activities:

- ▼ establishing a common protection goal
- ▼ establishing priorities to achieve the most efficient and effective means of achieving the goal
- ▼ defining roles and responsibilities of all program areas
- ▼ implementing all necessary efforts to accomplish the goal
- ▼ coordinating information
- ▼ improving public education and participation

The Committee met the first milestone of the CSGWPP initiative by preparing a Core Program Assessment and submitting it for EPA endorsement. In the near future, the Committee will finalize a Texas-specific vision of a fully integrated CSGWPP. The Committee will develop the six strategic activities of the CSGWPP Program, including milestones for achieving a fully integrated groundwater protection program.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Committee publications can be purchased from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Publications (512) 239-0028.

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TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

*Texas Natural Resource
Conservation Commission*

Texas Water Development Board

Railroad Commission of Texas

Texas Department of Health

Texas Department of Agriculture

MEMBER AGENCIES

*Texas State Soil and Water
Conservation Board*

*Texas Alliance of
Groundwater Districts*

*The Texas Agricultural
Experiment Station*

*The University of Texas at Austin
Bureau of Economic Geology*

TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Created in 1989, the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee is bridging the gap between state groundwater programs. Composed of representatives from the state agencies listed on the cover, the Committee strives to identify areas where new or existing groundwater programs could be enhanced, as well as improve coordination among agencies involved in groundwater-related activities.

The Committee implements the state's groundwater protection policy, adopted by the Texas Legislature in 1989. This policy establishes non-degradation of the state's groundwater as the goal for all state programs. It recognizes the variability of the state's aquifers, the importance of maintaining water quality for existing and potential uses, the protection of the environment, and the maintenance and enhancement of the state's long-term economic health.

The policy states that pollutant discharges, waste disposal, and other regulated activities be conducted in a manner that will maintain present uses and not impair potential uses of groundwater or pose a public health hazard. The policy recognizes the use of the best professional judgement by the responsible state agencies in attaining these goals.

The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) holds the Committee chairmanship and receives funding through a United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Groundwater grant to further the state's groundwater protection efforts and improve the state's groundwater database.

Major Responsibilities

- ★ Improve coordination between state and federal agencies in the area of groundwater protection.
- ★ Study and recommend to the Legislature new protection programs and file with the Governor and the Legislature a report of the Committee's activities.
- ★ Publish an annual Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report describing the current status of groundwater monitoring programs of each member agency and groundwater contamination cases documented or under enforcement during the calendar year. The report is available through the TNRCC.
- ★ Advise the TNRCC on development of agricultural chemical plans to prevent groundwater pollution.
- ★ Develop, implement and update a comprehensive state groundwater protection strategy.

Groundwater Protection Strategy

The Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy (Z-80) was developed by the Committee and is intended to be a flexible guide for state agencies and others in developing and implementing groundwater protection efforts. It outlines goals, needs, and recommendations in six important areas: interagency coordination, hazardous and non-hazardous materials management, public water supply, rural water supply, research, and legislation.

Within these areas, the following strategy elements are discussed: status of existing programs, gaps or inadequacies in these programs, areas of currently unaddressed

groundwater issues, recommendations for changes or improvements in existing programs, and institution of new programs where needed. The final chapter of the strategy summarizes the important needs and goals for improvement of groundwater protection efforts.

Strategy Implementation and Update

The Committee is required to develop and update a comprehensive groundwater protection strategy for the state that provides guidelines for preventing contamination and conserving groundwater. This strategy also provides for coordination of the groundwater protection activities of the agencies represented on the Committee.

In 1991, the Committee developed a profile of the state's groundwater protection program at EPA's request. The profile defined current roles of each state agency in groundwater protection and identified new efforts and improvements in the program.

Subcommittees

Working through Subcommittees composed of agency personnel and the general public, the Committee has focused on the following special areas of concern:

The Nonpoint Source Pollution Subcommittee has been responsible for the development, revision, and implementation of a groundwater nonpoint source pollution management program.

The Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee developed the generic Texas State Management Plan for Agriculture Chemicals in Groundwater and is currently