

Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC)
Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee Annual Report
October 19, 2022

This Annual Report is provided as per the TGPC GWI Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) *Charge*¹.

Fiscal Year 2022 Results

- The Subcommittee met² four times during Fiscal Year 2022:
 - September 15, 2021;
 - December 15, 2021;
 - March 9, 2022; and,
 - June 8, 2022.
- At these meetings, the Subcommittee received reports from its Agricultural Chemicals Task Force, tracked the status of the TGPC’s publications, and discussed the following groundwater-related issues:
 - Oil and Gas Produced Water;
 - Emerging Contaminants;
 - Abandoned Water Wells;
 - Brackish Groundwater;
 - Evapotranspiration Networks; and,
 - Others:
 - § The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Water Resources / Source Water Protection Area (SWPA) Task Force was examining groundwater quality issues, specifically nitrate, as one of the criteria they were using to evaluate areas where they might consider doing further study;
 - § A New Mexico State University professor who was studying the effects of groundwater pumping on rivers;
 - § The Second International United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Conference on Transboundary Aquifers;
 - § A recently-published updated map of transboundary aquifers of the world that included those between the U.S. and Mexico;
 - § The discovery of a new freshwater transboundary aquifer in west Texas;

- § Proposed federal steps to protect groundwater from coal ash contamination;
 - § Overcrowded cemeteries due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing heavy metal pollution in soil and thus increasing the risk of groundwater contamination;
 - § A proposed federal program to address orphan oil and gas wells;
 - § Groundwater and drought; and,
 - § Some mining activity in Hondo, Texas that may have caused methane to seep into groundwater due to exposed seams as the water table lowered.
- As per its current *Activity Plan*³, the Subcommittee reviewed its *Charge* during its fourth quarter meeting and did not have any changes to recommend to the TGPC.
 - The Subcommittee approved the *ET Networks and the Protection of Groundwater Supplies and Quality* and *Opportunities and Challenges in Aquifer Storage and Recovery* white papers.

Fiscal Year 2023 Plans

- During Fiscal Year 2023, the Subcommittee will continue developing white papers on various topics, including:
 - *Abandoned Water Wells and the Challenges They Pose*;
 - *Prioritizing New Drinking Water Infrastructure Funding in Texas*;
 - The *Joint Report* and its connection with the TCEQ Groundwater Contamination Viewer and Groundwater Assessment for the *Texas Integrated Report*;
 - Private water well disinfection Best Management Practices (BMPs); and,
 - Private water wells supporting childcare facilities.

¹ https://tgpc.texas.gov/wp-content/themes/responsive/subcommittees/gwissues/GWI_SubComm_Charge10Jul2019.pdf

² The TGPC approves all Subcommittee products and designated TGPC members who attended these Subcommittee meetings participated as an employee or representative of their agency or organization, not as a designated TGPC member. Therefore, these Subcommittee meetings were not subject to the Open Meetings Act and they were held 100% virtually. The public was also able to attend these meetings via videoconference or teleconference at no cost.

³

https://tgpc.texas.gov/gwissues/activity_plans/TGPC_GWI_FY2022_2023_ActivityPlan_14Jul2021.pdf