

## GROUNDWATER RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

### TIME AND DATE:

9:00 AM, April 20, 2006

### LOCATION:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Campus, Building F, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Meeting Room  
2210, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Austin, Texas 78753.

### PURPOSE OF MEETING:

Regular business meeting

### AGENCIES/ENTITIES REPRESENTED:

Bureau of Economic Geology [BEG]  
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station [TAES]  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ]  
Texas Department of Agriculture [TDA]  
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board [TSSWCB]  
Texas Water Development Board [TWDB]  
United States Geological Survey [USGS]

### ATTENDEES:

Allan Jones	TAES, Co-chair of the GW Research Subcommittee of the TGPC
Mary Ambrose	TCEQ, Chairman of TGPC
Radu Boghici	TWDB
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ
Richard Egg	TSSWCB
Richard Eyster	TDA
Lynne Fahlquist	USGS
Joseph L. Peters	TCEQ
Andrew Tachovsky	BEG

**SPEAKER:** Laurie Curra

### AUDIENCE:

Steve Walden	Steve Walden Consulting
Peggy Hunka	TCEQ
Marylu Musgrove	USGS

## **MEETING SUMMARY:**

Dr. Jones called the meeting to order at about 9:07 AM. The meeting started with self introductions of everyone present.

Since our presenter, Laurie Curra, had notified us that she would be a little late, Dr. Jones proceeded to the next agenda item.

There was a request for a brief explanation of what 319 was. It is Federal funding for nonpoint source projects. Texas gets about 16 million dollars a year which is split evenly between TSSWCB and TCEQ. TSSWCB uses their portion to fund agricultural and forestry projects and TCEQ funds urban and other projects. Funding for projects are 60 percent through the 319 Federal source and 40 percent through an alternate non Federal source. Projects cannot be research centered but must primarily be aimed at implementation and education. Projects funded through 319 provide opportunity for universities and agencies to work together.

Ms. Ambrose mentioned another possible source of funding, private foundations. The TCEQ is not set up to take advantage of foundation money, but some of the other member agencies of the Groundwater Research Subcommittee may be.

Mr. Egg mentioned another source of funding through the Coastal Coordination Council, which distributes some funds from NOAA. Some funding is available for projects in the Texas Coastal Zone which is limited to coastal counties or parts of coastal counties. Projects must be aimed at the protection of coastal water resources which would include the protection of groundwater quality. Only a relatively small portion of any project can be research. Possible issues would be the over pumping of coastal aquifers and salt water intrusion.

Dr. Jones mentioned that the Congress also provides funding through ear-marked federal money for certain projects. Presently, a surface water project has been the beneficiary. The University of Texas, Texas State University, and the USGS are working on a project to set in place a model that would help determine where the surface water monitoring, modeling, flood warning, and draught warning system should be placed in the next decade. The idea is to get these universities, with the USGS, using Congressional money, working in the central part of the state to put together a model that would eventually extend to the rest of the country. Representatives and Senators favor these types of cooperative projects where universities are working together, which they prefer to support rather than individual requests by universities, especially when the cooperative project includes the appropriate federal agency. A similar project for groundwater would make sense for FY08. We need to start now if we are to pursue such a project. He also emphasized that to increase the chances for funding the project should address some problem with which the Representatives and Senators have a special concern.

Ms. Ambrose brought up the recent project with the BEG on groundwater/surface water interactions, which is only a beginning in this study area. Mr. Tachovsky mentioned that the Bureau of Reclamation was very interested in this project as it relates to reservoir capacity.

Ms. Ambrose also mentioned that the National Water Quality Monitoring Council was asked by some of its sponsoring organizations and especially by NOAA to develop a national monitoring network that would focus on coastal areas. The aim would be primarily to look at surface water, especially bays and estuaries, but it would have a groundwater component. The main problem to be addressed is that presently there is no way to quantify how much groundwater is directly discharging into bays and estuaries and to determine what components the groundwater may be bringing with it. The National Groundwater Association has also been pushing the concept of a national monitoring system for water quality in groundwater.

Dr. Jones added that we need to start by determining what will be of interest to Sen. Hutchison, Rep. Edwards, Rep. Carter, and possibly Rep. Granger and Rep. Culberson. Desalinization and the use of brackish groundwater and surface water might be of interest. We need to formulate an idea, put it into a one-page proposal, and bring it to the universities to run it through their approval processes. A&M probably has the earliest deadline for this process. It has to go through their process and be approved by October 1, 2006. Mr. Tachovsky volunteered that the BEG would be willing to put together the initial one-page proposal for the project.

Discussion was opened on the next agenda item, Initial White Papers. Two documents/white papers have been prepared thus far, both by the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI). They're titles are "Influences of Natural and Man-Made Sources of Contamination on Water Quality Trends in the Seymour Aquifer: A 2006 Status Report" and "Desalination Research at Texas Universities – A brief Overview." Mr. Tachovsky mentioned that he and some of his colleagues have been looking at the first paper and have some recommended revisions. Dr. Jones asked that the TWRI be provided with the revisions so that they could update the document before it is distributed to potential interested scientists. Dr. Jones added that the TWRI had another document under development that would be focusing on water use in the Oil and Gas industry.

Dr. Jones had to leave the meeting at this point and Mr. Tachovsky of the BEG took over as Chairman.

At this time, the guest speaker, Ms. Curra, was introduced. She announced that her presentation would primarily center on the FY07 distribution of 319 money from EPA. TCEQ's portion of that will be about 7.8 million dollars. This includes the required non federal match of 40 percent. Groundwater projects would need to be funded through base funds. A request for grant applications will be put out probably next May or June. The requirement for the FY07 will be to supply a pre-proposals that describes basic concept of the proposed project. The pre-proposals have to meet the minimum criteria as set out by TCEQ rules for grant applications. The applications this year should be about a five pages. As many projects as can be funded will be selected based on evaluation criteria. After selection projects will be assigned to project managers who will then work with the applicant. Groundwater projects are being sought. Nonpoint source moneys need to be spent on activities defined in the Nonpoint Source Management Program, which specifically addresses groundwater assessment and implementation activities. The Management Program document should be on the TCEQ website around the end of April. Only about twenty percent of funding should be spent on assessment. Most of the money needs to be spent on implementation. Education and outreach activities apply

as implementation. Ms. Curra's Section at TCEQ, the Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Section, will send out a notice in May or June indicating that they are accepting applications. Ms. Curra will specifically send a notice to Ms. Ambrose who will in turn send it to all the TGPC members and Groundwater Research Subcommittee Members. Ms. Curra pointed out that there are a number of other ways of meeting the match requirement other than providing cash.

Mr. Egg informed us that the TSSWCB, for FY07, had received twenty-one 319 project proposals which it was in the process of evaluating.

Mr. Tachovsky adjourned the meeting at 10:08 AM.

Minutes prepared by Joseph L. Peters, July 12, 2006

**Action Items:**

1. Initial one page proposal need to be drafted to seek Congressional ear-mark funding for a groundwater project.
2. Comments on the document, "Influences of Natural and Man-Made Sources of Contamination on Water Quality Trends in the Seymour Aquifer: A 2006 Status Report", need to be sent to Mr. Ric Jensen at the TWRI.

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