

GROUNDWATER RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:

9:00 AM, Wednesday October 3, 2007

LOCATION:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Campus Building F, Room 2210, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Austin, TX 78753

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

First quarter 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]
States Geological Service [USGS]

ATTENDEES:

Allan Jones	TAES, Co-chair of the GW Research Subcommittee of the TGPC
Cary Betz	TCEQ
Radu Boghici	TWDB
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ
Richard Egg	TSSWCB
Richard Eyster	TDA
Lynne Fahlquist	USGS
Peggy Hunka	TCEQ
Marylynn Musgrove	USGS
Jean-Philippe Nicot	BEG
Joseph L. Peters	TCEQ
David Villarreal	TDA

MEETING SUMMARY:

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Dr. J. P. Nicot called the meeting to order at about 9:08 AM. The Co-Chair, Dr. Bridget Scanlon, could not be present, and initially the other Co-Chair, Dr. Allan Jones was also not present. The meeting started with self introductions of everyone present.

II. Discussion of Sources of Funding and Current Calls for Proposals

Dr. Nicot began the discussion by asking if anyone had any news on recent funding opportunities or heard of any recent groundwater research proposals. Mr. Egg responded by updating us on the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP). Texas gets about 43 million per year through this program. Projects under this program are restricted to counties bordering the Coast. Money for the program comes from income from mineral leases of federal land. Each county along the coast gets some money and the rest goes to the state. On the state level the General Land Office administers the program with the help of the Coastal Land Advisory Board which develops a plan for the state and selects projects after an RFP. The board is appointed by the governor.

At this point Dr. Jones arrived at the meeting. In continuing the discussion Ms. Fahlquist asked Dr. Jones if he had any new ideas or news on sources of funding or updates to groundwater research proposals. Dr. Jones responded by giving an update on the proposed United States-Mexico Transboundary Aquifer project. The goals of project, if it receives approval and funding from Congress, are to fully characterize the transboundary aquifers along the border with Mexico and to expand existing agreements between the USGS, the Border states, the Water Resources Research Institutes, and appropriate U.S. and Mexican scientific authorities. The bill authorizing and funding this project should receive congressional action sometime at the end of 2007.

Dr. Jones continued with a question regarding groundwater research activities in the area of the Barnett Shale. There has been a proposal to try to demonstrate the use of desalination technologies to clean up water produced from the Barnett shale. There has been interest in this type of project, but not yet any funding. Dr. Nicot and Mr. Eyster mentioned that there were projects sponsored by private companies to work with the Oil and Gas industry to set up on-site desalination cleanup to enable discharge of waste water to surface water or to use it for “frac” water.

Next, Dr. Jones mentioned that the irrigation water conservation project that Texas Tech, West Texas A&M, Kansas State, the agricultural Experiment Station and Agricultural Extension have been conducting for several years will be continuing. It was in danger of losing funding because of a recent change in how congress was handling appropriations by discontinuing the funding of earmarks. However, the good news in this instance was that a ruling was made that the funding for this project was not an earmark but was to be part of the USDA ARS base. The funding adds up to about \$4,000,000 yearly for all the parties involved.

Ms. Fahlquist asked Mr. Boghici if there were any new projects involving the TWDB. He responded that the Groundwater Assessment Models (GAMs) were the primary activity at this time. Runs are being made with existing GAMs on special request, but also some new GAMs are in the works. In response to a question by Dr. Nicot, Mr. Boghici informed us that the GAMs were updated as new data, such as water level data, become available.

III. Discussion of Progress on Initial White Papers

Dr. Nicot moved the discussion to the next agenda item by giving a short description of the three white papers that the Groundwater Research Subcommittee has either completed and on which it is presently working. One white paper, entitled *Influences of Natural and Man-Made Sources of Contamination on Water Quality Trends in the Seymour Aquifer: A 2007 Status Report*, has been completed and can be accessed on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) website at <http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/Seymour%20White%20Paper-4-18-07.pdf>. A second white paper,

entitled *Research into the Characterization of Brackish Water and Disposal of Desalination Reject Water in Saline Aquifers and Depleted Oil and Gas Reservoirs*, is essentially finished and will be available on the TGPC website shortly. A third, entitled *Desalination Research at Texas Universities — A Brief Overview*, is in draft form and will require a little more work to finalize.

Dr. Nicot asked if there were any ideas for new white papers. Dr. Jones responded by bringing up the fact that there were various study projects being carried out in studying the Edwards or aquifers in the surrounding region. There was a problem, he suggested, that the projects were so numerous and diverse that the general public did not have a complete picture of what was taking place. He suggested that perhaps some sort of review paper could be drafted that would report to the general public on all the activities taking place related to the Edwards. There was general agreement among those present that this would be a good idea. Dr. Jones indicated that Dr. Ric Jensen would probably be available to work on the project. Ms. Fahlquist agreed to start the project by getting some bullets together for Dr. Jensen to begin his work. Mr. Betz also volunteered to contribute to the project. Dr. Jones suggested that they have a conference call discussing the project within the next couple of days.

IV. Information Exchange

Mr. Boghici reported that the TWDB is celebrating their 50th Anniversary, and as a part of the celebration the TWDB was sponsoring Water Summit 2007, which will be held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, on December 2-4, 2007.

V. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 AM.

Minutes prepared by Joseph L. Peters, January 4, 2008

Action Items:

1. Finalize the white paper *Research into the Characterization of Brackish Water and Disposal of Desalination Reject Water in Saline Aquifers and Depleted Oil and Gas Reservoirs*, and post it on the TGPC website.
2. Continue work on the white paper *Desalination Research at Texas Universities — A Brief Overview*.
3. Initiate work on the planned review paper that would describe to the general public all the groundwater related research activities in and around the Edwards Aquifer.

Cary-Over Action Item:

- * Initiate work on a white paper describing a proposed project to study background heavy metal and radio nuclide presence in certain areas including the use of the resultant data to put together a fact sheet for local residents.

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