GROUNDWATER RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:
9:00 AM, Wednesday, April 18, 2012

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

PURPOSE OF MEETING:
Third quarter regular business meeting

AGENCIES/ENTITIES REPRESENTED:

Bureau of Economic Geology [BEG]
Texas AgriLife Research
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ]
Texas Department of Agriculture [TDA]
Texas Groundwater Protection Committee [TGPC]
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board [TSSWCB]
Texas Water Development board [TWDB]
Texas Water Resources Institute [TWRI], a branch of Texas AgriLife Research

ATTENDEES:

Bridget Scanlon	BEG, Co-chair of the GW Research Subcommittee
Kevin Wagner	TWRI, Co-chair of the GW Research Subcommittee
Cary Betz	TCEQ, Chairman of TGPC
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ
Richard Egg	TSSWCB
Richard Eyster	TDA
Janie Hopkins	TWDB
Kelly Mills	TCEQ
Joseph L. Peters	TCEQ
L. Scott Underwood	TCEQ

MEETING SUMMARY:

Call to Order and Introductions

Dr. Scanlon called the meeting to order at about 9:02 AM. Dr. Wagner was present as the other co-chair of the meeting, representing the TWRI and its parent agency, Texas AgriLife Research. The meeting started with introductions.

Discussion of Sources of Funding and Current Calls for Proposals

Dr. Scanlon introduced discussion by bringing up the Texas Well Owner Network (TWON) Program, an educational training program offered by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in cooperation with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and other partner agencies and organizations. The program is funded with 319 funds through the TSSWCD. Dr. Scanlon asked if it was possible to fund groundwater education projects under this program. Dr. Wagner responded in the affirmative, and Mr. Egg elaborated that the program was designed more for the areas with water bodies on the 303d list and watersheds that have problems. The program is meant for addressing actual existing problems rather than for preventative projects, though preventive projects are not ruled out. Dr. Wagner explained that the 319 Program was set up to provide about 10% of its funding to groundwater projects, but that more recently the focus has been more on surface water. Directives from Congress and from EPA Headquarters stipulate that the funding should go toward getting water bodies off the 303d list. Bodies not on the 303d list automatically have a lower priority.

Dr. Scanlon asked Dr. Wagner if he had any problems with EPA in Dallas in funding projects because they were on groundwater. Dr. Wagner answered that he couldn't remember specifically if they ever had any specific comments along those lines. He then mentioned a project on which Dr Scanlon was working that involves groundwater nitrogen. Because of the specific area where it's located, in an area where you have Buck Creek, which has had some nitrogen concerns, it was obvious that there certainly was some concern with groundwater/surface water interaction. He thought he remembered that they had to make some loose ties to some surface water. He also mentioned another project below Lake Austin, where again they were looking at some groundwater/surface water interaction and bacteria issues.

Dr. Scanlon then asked if TWON was restricted to groundwater. Dr. Wagner responded that it was aimed at groundwater education, but he went on to say that they were delivering TWON sponsored education to a lot of watersheds that had surface water issues. He went on the explain that a lot of the things you can do to protect groundwater from non point source pollution will also help surface water, and bringing together both groundwater and surface water increases the number of stake holders involved, which is helpful towards getting a project approved. Dr. Scanlon asked if they could apply again this year and do some project on groundwater. Dr. Wager responded that, now that he's been thinking about it, in every case they had made at least some loose connection to an impaired surface water body. Mr. Egg added that if there is a watershed protection plan implemented in an area, there usually is a groundwater component that can be introduced.

Dr. Scanlon then brought up a report on nitrate by Dr. Thomas Harter, a Cooperative Extension Groundwater Hydrologist from the University of California at Davis. The report had introduced the idea of putting higher taxes on fertilizer to generate funds for dealing with fertilizer contamination. She asked if putting a tax on fertilizer was feasible in Texas. Mr. Eyster responded that it would never get through the Legislature. The discussion went on for a while on various ways that funds could be generated to cover

research and other projects aimed at fertilizer contamination of groundwater. Dr. Scanlon commented on the difficulty in funding projects, especially with the slump in the economy. She pointed out that one of the main problems with dealing with the recent draught was primarily a lack of funding. She further pointed out that any idea that we can handle a draught of the severity of the one in the fifties may be overly optimistic since we we're even able to handle last year's draught.

Dr. Wagner went on to speculate that with the current economic climate he didn't think that any additional taxation would be looked upon very favorably. He said that especially, unfortunately for things like water quality, the focus will be on water conservation and on water supplies, but as far as water quality, that's way down on the list. Mr. Eyster added that just getting water, right now, is a priority.

Dr. Scanlon responded that we should therefore focus on water availability. She mentioned the state water plan, which she thought was a fantastic report. She cited from the plan that we have 40% less storage per capita than we had in the 1980's, that our storage capacity is down 40% with the population growth and no new reservoirs. This indicates that we've not even kept pace, but fallen way behind. She concluded that this is why we're having a lot of problems, because we have no storage. She mentioned that San Antonio got by because of their Aquifer Recovery and Storage (ASR) capabilities. A lot of other cities keep waiting for reservoirs which won't happen in any near term time frame. She opined that we have to get more creative about storage, or desalinization, or other things. Se went on state that we should increase supply, but also reduce demand as much as we can, since we're still way behind in storage from where we were in the eighties.

Mr. Betz, at this point explained, that in his view the focus of the TGPC is quality. His opinion was that there was not a whole lot that anyone in the state could do about groundwater quantity issues. By law the TCEQ can't do very much. The groundwater conservation districts can do some, but the rest of these agencies, represented in the Groundwater Research Subcommittee, don't have any authority to promote much of anything concerning supply. We can promote conservation, but that's about the limit of what we can do as far as groundwater supply is concerned. Mr. Betz went on to confirm that desalinization has a very definite water quality component to it. There are some groundwaters that we can use for desalinization but others would be uneconomical to use for desalinization. He mentioned that the TWDB has undertaken a study on characterizing the saline aquifers or saline portions of aquifers.

Dr. Scanlon went on to suggest that we could educate more on ASR, since it has definite water quality implications. Mr. Betz agreed that it had very definite quality implications and that we do need to do a better job of educating, because people don't realize the problems that can arise when water from one aquifer is not chemically compatible with the water or formation of another. There is, he believes, an education component that is quality related, that we could undertake for ASR. Dr. Scanlon asked if we could pursue this education through the EPA non point source program. Dr. Wagner questioned the applicability of a non point source program to ASR which involves directly pumping

water into an aquifer. Dr. Scanlon pointed out that the TWON program had been used to provide education on mobilization of arsenic in groundwater. Similarly, remobilization of constituents in an aquifer in the ASR process should be applicable. She pointed out that this was what Mr. Betz was talking about, the potential for adversely changing the chemistry of the aquifer and mobilizing metals and other constituents.

Mr. Betz added that we need, in his opinion, something more comprehensive in regard to water and aquifer characterization for ASR. TCEQ agency rules now call for a characterization of the receiving aquifer for ASR, but it doesn't define how comprehensive that needs to be, and it probably needs to be much more comprehensive than the data that we have right now allows. So, the science of water and aquifer characterization for ASR needs to be more developed.

Dr. Scanlon mentioned, as a possible example, the Dallas-Fort Worth area where the Trinity Aquifer has been largely depleted leaving a lot of potential storage capacity. She opined that they could take surface water and put it into the Trinity. Mr. Betz commented that this would be possible if there would be surface water available. Dr. Scanlon then suggested that perhaps there was another groundwater source that could be used to recharge the Trinity. Mr. Betz then went on to expand the idea that this idea could be used in conjunction with desalinization. If desalinization is not practical, because you don't have any place to put the desalinated water, it could be used in ASR. This is another possible research topic to explore.

Mr. Egg pointed out again that 319 funding is not really geared towards research; if you're looking at a pure research project it wouldn't get funded. Dr. Scanlon suggested that maybe we could do some of this as part of an education project. We need to educate about the possibilities of ASR, and the potential of desalinization, and the costs involved.

Dr. Wagner pointed out the problem of funding ASR characterization research with non point source 319 funds. He said that he assumed that there was a permitting process for ASR projects, because of the injection wells, so there would need to be a characterization of the aquifer to a certain extent before they would permit that injection. If ASR is considered a point injection, this characterization couldn't be funded with non point source funds. Dr. Scanlon responded that she was considering more of a reconnaissance type of analysis that would answer the question of the potential for ASR in different areas. She said that we're not talking about site specific type of work. We're talking about something like the desalinization study that Guyton Associates did answering the question: what's the potential? She further indicated that she was not saying that 319 is the program under which this should be funded. She added that we have no research programs of this type pertaining to ASR at this time. She reminded us that, as far as being ready for a draught, last year was a warning call, and that we're nowhere near to being prepared. Dr. Scanlon suggested that we take advantage of the fact that draught preparedness is on the legislators' minds, to be ready to suggest appropriate research. She suggested that some sort of reconnaissance analysis of suitability of sites for ASR

would be a good project to have ready.

Dr. Wagner asked Ms. Hopkins of TWDB if they had anything developing along that line. She responded that she didn't think it was even coming up in the research topics that were to be presented to the Board next month. She emphasized that they were not talking about ASR right now. Dr. Wagner suggested, since it would not be possible this year, that perhaps it would be best to wait till next year, when research topics are requested again by the TWDB, to have an ASR research proposal ready.

Dr. Scanlon mentioned that the Legislature was talking about ASR a couple of weeks ago. She suggested that we need to be ready for the Legislature when they ask what we can do. And what we need to do is work on the problem of storage. We need storage to get through a drought. She reminded those present again that the Texas Water Plan analysis showed that we were 40% down in storage per capita relative to the 80's. So, we haven't been moving forward, we've been moving backwards.

Mr. Betz at this point had a suggestion. First he mentioned that, at the TGWPC meeting to be held that afternoon, they were going to reactivate the Legislative Report Subcommittee. One of the functions of this subcommittee is to include recommendations for legislation in the Legislative Report. He suggested that this subcommittee needs to put down on paper some of the things we've been talking about today, so that the Legislative Report Subcommittee can put it in the Legislative Report. Mr. Betz explained that in the past few cycles of this report, recommendations for a variety of programs had been included. There wouldn't be anything to stop the TGPC, if it thinks it's important, to say that some money for this type of research is needed. The money could be provided through the TWDB, or through the BEG, or through the TCEQ, or some other agency, like they've done in the past. Mr. Betz pointed out that this is what the Ledge report is to be used for. If we can identify a specific research project, that we can put in the Legislative Report, we can perhaps get the attention of the legislators.

Dr. Scanlon introduced the subject of conjunctive use, defined as the joint use of surface water and groundwater. She gave the example of rice farmers who pump groundwater when they don't get their surface water. She suggested that there may be a need for a better analysis of optimal conjunctive use and what the potentials are. A question to be answered would be that for lot of people that traditionally use surface water, what would their options be for groundwater? Summarizing possible research topics she mentioned conjunctive use, ASR, desalinization, relative costs, and relative potential for providing more water.

Mr. Betz suggested that we also have to consider that planning of this sort, for example conjunctive use, should be through the regional water planning groups which would include it in their water plan, which could then be included in the state water plan. Dr. Scanlon suggested that we can do an analysis to see what the potential is generally. Mr. Betz agreed, but reiterated that we have to bear in mind that the regional planning

groups would be doing the planning, so whatever we recommend would need to be targeted to that process. Dr. Scanlon agreed that this approach was a good idea.

Dr. Wagner reminded everyone that we need to stay focused on the water quality issues related to the things we've been talking about, or we need to recommend that the role of the TGPC be expanded beyond water quality. Mr. Betz agreed that this was a possibility. Dr. Scanlon pointed out that quantity and quality are always linked. However, Mr. Betz suggested that many people don't seem to think so or don't realize that they are related. Dr. Scanlon reiterated that they were, but the bottom line is that if you don't have any water it's not important whether the quality is there. She again emphasized that, if we couldn't respond to last year's draught with some ideas for research, we would be losing an opportunity. She again restated the potential research subjects to be: conjunctive use, ASR, desalinization, aquifer reconnaissance analysis, potential and costs, etc. Linking these with the state water plan would be very helpful. Then she asked what city it was, that pumped out of an alluvial aquifer that ran out of water. Ms. Hopkins responded that it was Spicewood. She added that they were contemplating drilling additional wells in a different area. She listed a couple of other cities that were having problems: Brownwood and Wichita. Brownwood was considering recycling of water even though Lake Brownwood was nearby. The city of Big Spring put reuse into place last year.

Mr. Egg brought the conversation back to sources of funding. He announced that the Coastal Management Program had their annual call for proposals out. It would be open through sometime around October. They cycle has just opened up, and in May they will be having some workshops along the coast, like they always do. They grant out roughly ten million dollars a year. Non point source is one of the categories to which they grant money for research. He went on to explain that, in general, research proposals would require coordination with some member agency that would support the same goals. He emphasized that a research project probably wouldn't get funded if it was proposed just because it sounded good. Any research proposed that would meet a need of one of the member agencies would have a much more likely chance to be funded. Dr. Scanlon asked what kinds of projects were funded in the past. Mr. Egg responded that there was quite a wide gamut, that a lot of smaller project dealing with beach access, beach erosion, etc. were supported. Dr. Scanlon asked Dr. Wagner if he ever had any funding from the Coastal Management Program. He responded that not for groundwater related work, but that he had some recollection of a pesticide education project.

Dr. Scanlon asked if we can use conservation a lot more than we have been, for drought. Everybody agreed that we could. Mr. Betz went on the give an example for the city of Pflugerville. In the part of town where he lives the water is supplied by Manville Water Supply Corporation. Manville Water supply Corporation built a well field out in Milam County and piped it to his part of town for two years. At that point in time, they found that it would be cheaper to buy the water from the City of Pflugerville. The City of Pflugerville buys its water from LCRA, as raw water, and stores it in Lake Pflugerville. They treat it and sell it to water supply corporations and distribute it to their city as well. Because this is a major revenue stream for the City of Pflugerville, the city manager

ordered that the water treatment plant be operated at full capacity throughout the peak of the drought, putting no conservation measures into place. There was no rationing inside the city until LCRA made an objection.

Mr. Betz asked for suggestions as to how this problem should be address when economics conflicts with conservation. He mentioned that the TCEQ Commissioner, Mr. Carlos Rubenstein, was a former city manager, and was very familiar with these types of conflicts. Mr. Betz confessed that he didn't know how we should approach this problem.

Mr. Egg introduced another pertinent strand to the conversation, stating that in state law any water provider that has over three thousand connections is required to have a water conservation plan. These plans are approved by TCEQ. These water providers are also required to have a drought contingency plan that has certain triggers. He informed those present that right now there are probably close to thousand water supply systems in the state that are in various stages of their drought contingency plan. He concluded that there was a lot of planning. He mentioned that Worth-Dallas, and a bunch of other cities in that area, were talking about trying to coordinate their water conservation plans. One of the things that they were looking at, for instance, was to make alternate days of watering a permanent thing, rather than just during a drought. Dr. Scanlon objected that if you ratchet back water use all the time, there is nothing to do when you really need to cut back. Mr. Egg countered that this would increase water in storage when you would go into a draught. Dr. Scanlon objected again, pointing out that the reservoirs are serving as both water supply and flood control structures. That means that they can't stay full. She pointed out that this happened in parts of Australia. Their reservoirs were water supply and flood control, and after thirteen years of drought, they wanted to keep more water in the reservoirs, and then they had a tremendous flood.

Dr. Scanlon mentioned that someone told her, at a NOAA meeting last week, that insurance companies required farmers to irrigate, even if the farmers knew that they weren't going to get any yield regardless of the irrigation. Mr. Betz pointed out that, for insurance, the farmer had to provide proof that he did everything he could to make his crop grow. Only when all efforts were exhausted could he declare that his crop failed and make a claim on his insurance.

Dr. Scanlon pointed out that there seems to be a sort of crossover between economic issues. For cities, funding is down just like for everybody else, and of course farmers want to get their insurance, but maybe we need to look at more incentives that would help with water conservation. Mr. Betz brought up the Carrizo-Wilcox Report. It surveyed the drought contingency plans of 21 groundwater conservation districts. The plans ranged from "We're going to watch the Palmer Brown Index." to very detailed plans with well defined multiple stages. They were all over the place. We have the situation where one city's draught stage 2 is another city's draught stage 5. Mr. Betz point out that this makes for a situation where, when a city declares itself to be in a draught stage 2, for instance, it is hard for someone not specifically familiar with their draught contingency plan to really know what that means. Stage 1 is typically voluntary

conservation, but once you get past stage 1, anything goes.

Dr. Scanlon suggested that this also could be something that could be looked at. Mr. Betz agreed and pointed out that for groundwater systems the water supplier would have to have some sort of trigger for each of its various draught contingencies. He continued stating that it seems to be, that in a region, everyone should be uniform in their triggers. Mr. Egg suggested that the regions should be based on aquifer; everyone using the same aquifer would be in the same region. If you have three water providers using the same aquifer, they should have some sort of coordination at the very least, and probably, after this draught, when people have had to implement their draught contingency plans, a lot of them have had to review their plans and are now asking themselves if their plans are adequate.

Mr. Eyster informed those present that there has been some talk, too, among groundwater districts about better cooperation. The fracking down in South Texas has got a lot of them starting to see that fracking can affect more than one county. They want to start looking at how to help each other out. Dr. Scanlon brought up the subject of water for the cooling of electrical plants and the possibility of blackouts if they run out of cooling water. Then there is the question of open loop verses closed loop cooling. Mr. Betz responded that there were very few power stations in the state that use groundwater. This is mostly because groundwater use is cost prohibitive. The few that use groundwater are those in locations where there is an adequate groundwater supply. Mr. Betz concluded that, as far as this subcommittee is concerned, there was lot going on at TCEQ on the surface water side of the issue.

Dr. Scanlon asked what the power plants will do if they run out of water. Mr. Betz responded that they wouldn't run out. Because it's considered a health and safety issue, they can claim someone else's water rights to allow enough flow to go downstream to meet their needs.

Mr. Betz brought the conservation back to conservation and education on conservation, and pointed out that we've seen some really spectacular results with conservation. He asked us to consider San Antonio and how they're using less water today than they did twenty years ago, even though their population is much larger. He pointed out that San Antonio did a tremendous education effort. They looked at their infrastructure, they fixed pipe systems that were leaking, they sent out the water police, and they have a very well developed education program. We need to see, from a groundwater standpoint, if not from a surface water standpoint as well, that kind of education going out on the grassroots level. The San Antonio Water System (SAWS) was responsible for the educational effort. It was a very dramatic shift in water usage, prompted by conservation measures in the Edwards, but really accomplished by SAWS, that really did the leg work on the conservation plan. We need to see that in more places from a groundwater standpoint.

Mr. Egg mentioned that The Water Conservation Advisory Council had developed a kind of statewide education program, with logos and things like that, designed for other

entities to tap into and use as a framework. A lot of cities are developing programs. For instance Dallas has a program, North Texas Municipal Water District has an educational program, and they're working with their costumers to develop these conservation activities. There's a lot of activity going on in conservation, but of course there's a lot more that can still be done.

Dr. Scanlon turned the discussion back to the crop insurance problem, asking if there might be some way to address this irrigation problem. Mr. Eyster responded that it wouldn't be easy. Dr. Wagner also thought that it was pretty doubtful. He went on to explain that the reason that those requirements are there is to keep a farmer from planting a crop that he knew would fail, for the sole purpose of collecting insurance. Probably they could make a major overhaul of the whole system and try to put in some types of stipulations that would require that if a farmer is in a region that's in a horrendous draught that's well documented, then maybe some allowances could be made. He concluded, however, that he didn't know where you would start on getting changes like that made to a huge national crop insurance program.

Dr. Scanlon next mentioned that she was reading a report for the National Climate Assessment, for the Great Plains. They were saying that the input costs for agriculture had gone up from 30%, 20 to 30 years ago, to something like 60% now. She then asked what the costs of irrigating and fertilizing were, verses what they would get from the insurance. Mr. Eyster responded that the farmer about breaks even. Mr. Betz added that breaking even includes the farmer's living, that it includes labor and a few other things.

Dr. Wagner related a conversation he had with some farmers in the North Plains, considering input costs. They said that for a half-mile pivot, which irrigates about 640 acres, they would have an approximately investment of half-a-million dollars. From this operation they would make an average $50,000 profit for the year. Some years they would lose twice that, $100,000. Some years they would make twice that. He summed up that farming is a very risky venture.

Mr. Betz turned to the subject of the Edwards Aquifer Alliance (EAA) and how they were implementing their voluntary irrigation suspension program. They basically will pay agricultural producers not to irrigate. It's based on a set of triggers activated many months in advance of the irrigation season. He pointed out that the program is not without controversy, because the agricultural producers pay $2.00 an acre-foot for water, and they are being paid back, by the cities and industrial users, much more than that when they participate in the program. The cities and industrial users pay $137.00 per acre-foot to EAA, and part of that money is being used to pay the agricultural producers to not irrigate. Mr. Eyster pointed out that this was not a conservation measure, but rather that it was just insuring a more firm supply for San Antonio. This wasn't considered conservation. Dr. Scanlon added that in Australia they are paying three to four billion dollars, but that it was for a permanent buy-back from the irrigators. She also added that with irrigators being the main users of water, a lot of the decisions on water will involve irrigators. Temporary or permanent buy-backs may

become more popular.

Mr. Betz went on to explain the reason he brought up the voluntary irrigation suspension program. He said that it might be used as an example as to how it could be used on a larger scale to encourage real conservation. An example he gave was that when we would be coming into a draught, maybe we would need to look at a statewide program based on suspending irrigation and compensating the agricultural producers for not irrigating. Dr. Scanlon affirmed that this was what she was saying, putting in place some incentives. Dr. Wagner brought up that we should also consider the use of water for lawns and other outdoor applications within the city. It amounts to about 40% to 60% of municipal water use. He asked whether we should be reducing our crop production, something of value to the citizens of the U.S., just to keep our lawns and golf courses green. Mr. Eyster added that when you start talking about restricting farmers their pumpage, either mandatory or voluntary, they're going to respond to the cities, pointing out how the 18-hole gulf courses continue to pump. They would be asking why they should not be able to make a living off their property, growing food, when the golfers continue to have green grass.

Mr. Betz agreed that Dr. Wagner was right about the municipal use of water for lawns and other activities. He suggested that here again we have another educational opportunity. Mr. Eyster commented that maybe we can pay homeowners not to grow grass. Mr. Betz volunteered that he had maybe $10,000 invested in his landscape. He said that he couldn't afford to let it go to waste. He said that the loss of his yard would devalue his property. He speculated that maybe, instead of his having $10,000 invested in his landscape, his irrigation system, and everything else, maybe he needed to invest $3,000 in the expansion of the cactus garden he had out back. Mr. Egg half humorously suggested that growing vegetables would be a good option, as well. Ms. Hopkins recounted how she had recently called the city of Austin to inquire about a program where they give you money for turning your yard into mulch, for getting rid of your grass.

Dr. Wagner mentioned that native grasses were available. He said that there certainly were a lot of grasses that use less water than St. Augustine. However, he recounted, that the home owners association in the area where he lives requires that all new houses that go in must have St. Augustine and an irrigation system. And he has observed that people with those irrigation systems water a lot more than they used to, more than when they had to drag around a hose and put a portable sprinkler head up. Many times with the irrigation system, the installer sets it up, and then it never gets readjusted, so rain or shine it's watering. Mr. Betz added that this was yet another educational opportunity. He related that he tweaks his irrigation system depending on what his water supplier tells him is the stage of draught at the time. He has his trickle system set so that when the first little bit of runoff reaches the street, it shuts off. But, he relayed, that his neighbor across the street much of the time waters fives days a week, in the middle of the day, etc. He said that he had spoke to his neighborhood association, suggesting the need to have somebody come in from Master Gardeners, or somebody from the water supply corporation, or TDA, Texas AgriLife Extension, or whatever, and instruct the

neighborhood on how they should be watering for water conservation. Then, maybe they would have an increased attendance at the homeowners association meetings, too. But, these groups need to be targeted and educated as a part of an outreach program. It can be achieved under the guise of groundwater conservation, and it could also be done under the guise of surface and groundwater quality. He related that the same neighbor that waters five days a week also dumps fertilizer on his yard. The neighbor's yard doesn't look any better than his own even though Mr. Betz doesn't fertilize. Mr. Betz indicated that he had suggested to his neighbor that he needed to cut back on irrigation and fertilization, but that his words fell on deaf ears. Mr. Betz speculated that maybe if his neighbor heard it from an authority or through the homeowners' association he would be more responsive. Furthermore, Mr. Betz felt that it was an absurd rule that a homeowner had to put in St. Augustine grass. This type of requirement has no business being in a deed restriction, or bylaw, or anything like that, in a homeowners' association.

Mr. Betz brought the discussion back to sources of funding. He suggested that we need to look at the avenues of funding that are available right now, that we can exploit, to get conservation in place, get education in place, and get sensible rules in place. He suggested, however, that we shouldn't be looking to get funding though any additional taxes.

Dr. Scanlon suggested that we need to stay with research that produces results that are readily applied to current needs. Basically it's the type of research we usually do. She admitted that maybe it seemed like we were a little off topic during the meeting, but she she said that we need to be ready when the Legislature starts talking about water issues; we need to have some ideas ready to present. We can use the Research Subcommittee and the full Texas Groundwater Protection Committee to develop some ideas and get them to the attention of the Legislature.

Mr. Betz again reminded the subcommittee of the short time frame for getting things into the Legislative Report. The Legislative Report Subcommittee will be having meetings in May and June. He said that a draft of the Legislative Report needs to be ready in July. This is before the next meeting of this subcommittee. He urged the subcommittee to take the opportunity of the Legislative Report, to prepare some of these ideas we discussed today for the Report.

Dr. Scanlon asked if there was anybody else that had anything to say. Mr. Mills responded with some comments. He reiterated that certainly the Legislature, at least certain members of it, was looking at ASR and desalinization as a panacea. He thought that in would be good if this subcommittee could put together something to educate the members of the Legislature on what the real groundwater quality challenges and factors are. He felt that that would be very useful for them, and that it would be something that they would appreciate – at least those particular members interested in water supply. It would be well to have proposed preliminary research projects in the ready to support the State Water Plan and the Regional Water Plans where they have identified areas where ASR and desalinization have potential. He went on to say that if the TGPC wanted, they could recommend a specific research project that would provide an opportunity for a

preliminary look at the groundwater quality problems for strategies identified in the state and regional water plans. That study could also address policy challenges and any suggested rule changes. He pointed out that the subcommittee today had a discussion on conservation and conservation plans, and that the Legislature, too, with its interim committees, were looking at conservation plans and draught contingency plans. He felt that it was a good chance that a number of these things would be addressed by the Legislature in their next session. He also informed the subcommittee that there had also been past legislative efforts to fund a statewide information campaign, basically through the TWDB, on water conservation.

Mr. Egg responded that this was something that the Water Conservation Advisor Council had been pushing, to try to get additional funding for that statewide information campaign, a campaign that would be perhaps similar to "Don't Mess with Texas." It would be kind of like an umbrella under which local entities then could customize local education programs. Mr. Mills added that if this subcommittee wanted, it could suggest to the full committee to try to dovetail in on that information campaign effort and give it support.

Mr. Mills continued with his remarks reminding the subcommittee that at the last legislative session there were some efforts to develop a funding source for implementation of the state water plan, and the Legislative interim committees are looking at this again. There has been a lot of planning, but this last draught has probably driven home the need to actually start implementing some programs. Dr. Scanlon thanked Mr. Mills for the excellent suggestions and confirmed that the subcommittee had every intention to act on them and develop something for the Legislative Report.

Information Exchange

Dr. Wagner and Dr. Scanlon announced an upcoming water conference in May that BEG is planning. It's called The Texas Water Summit and will take place on May 21st. A lot of the topics to be covered are like what we were talking about today: brackish water, desalinization, reuse, maybe even ASR. All the things that we were just talking about today will be primary topics, and one of the big focus groups will be made up of legislative staffers, agency heads, and people like that.

Mr. Egg announced that he heard from Mr. David Van Dresser that the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts would be putting on a conference sometime toward the end of August. He wasn't sure of the exact dates or the details, but it would be another conference dealing with groundwater.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 AM.

Minutes prepared by Joseph L. Peters, October 8, 2012

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