

**TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
RECORD OF MEETING**

First Quarterly Meeting, Fiscal Year 2026

Meeting Date: October 8, 2025
Meeting No.: 151

Place: TCEQ Campus, Bldg F
Room: 5108

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MEETING ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Kelly Mills	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Natalie Ballew	Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
James Harcourt	Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC)
Omar Valdez	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
David Villarreal	Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
T.J. Helton	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
Stephanie Keith	Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD)
Justin Thompson	Bureau of Economic Geology of The University of Texas at Austin (UTBEG)
Chris Hooyboer	Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)

Agency Staff

<u>Agency Staff</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Program</u>
Katie Brice	TCEQ	Water Availability Division (WAD)
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ	WAD
Stephanie Escobar	TCEQ	WAD
Chris Heiligenstein	RRC	
Cindy Hooper	TCEQ	WAD
Kathy McCormack	TCEQ	WAD
James-Eric Simon	TCEQ	WAD
Scott Underwood	TCEQ	WAD
Scout Vanderwal	DSHS	

Interested Parties

<u>Interested Parties</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Tabitha Aditi	Texas Senate
Ted Boriack	Water Protection Association (WPA)
Trey Daywood	Aqua Water Supply Corporation (WSC)
Kyle Frazier	Texas Desalination Association
Kristen Hogan	Allen Boone Humphries Robinson (ABHR), LLP
Laura Martin	Gonzales County Underground Water Conservation District (UWCD)
James Masucci	HillCo Partners
Diana Nichols	Kelly Hart & Hallman, LLP
Alysa Sule	Freese and Nichols

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. Agenda for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting on October 8, 2025
2. Record for Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting on July 9, 2025
3. Summary of Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Groundwater Issues (GWI) Subcommittee Meeting, October 8, 2025
4. Summary of Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Public Outreach and Education (POE) Subcommittee Meeting, October 8, 2025
5. TGPC GWI Subcommittee *Annual Report*
6. TGPC POE Subcommittee *Annual Report*
7. TCEQ Rules Update, 10/8/25
8. 2025 – 2026 Water-related Conferences in Texas, October 2025

MEETING RECORD OF OCTOBER 8, 2025

1. PRE-MEETING REMINDERS

Before the meeting started, Kelly Mills (TCEQ) provided the attendees with some tips that would facilitate a productive videoconference option for the meeting.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The member of the TGPC presiding over this meeting was physically present at the location listed on the first page and this meeting location was accessible to the public. Other designated TGPC members and the public were also able attend this meeting via videoconference or teleconference at no cost.

Kelly Mills (TCEQ), Designated Chairman of the TGPC, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:31 PM CDT. Kelly Mills (TCEQ) then called the roll of TGPC members. The designated representative or alternate from Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research) was not present at the meeting.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Groundwater Issues

Chris Heiligenstein (RRC) reported that the Subcommittee last met via videoconference on September 10, 2025, and 11 state agencies and organizations were represented.

The Agricultural Chemicals Task Force Status Report was reviewed with the following highlights:

- For Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, 102 wells and 30 QA/QC samples from Cooperative Monitoring were immunoassay screened for atrazine. There were two quantifiable detections with a maximum of 0.88 ppb (vs. the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for atrazine of 3.0 ppb). Due to sample vials being received approximately three months late, an unknown number of samples were not collected in FY 2025.
- FY 2025 Cooperative Monitoring results and 2021 – 2024 USGS data were entered into the TCEQ Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD), with the new totals at 7,134 wells and springs, 16,230 samples, and 407,508 pesticide analyses.
- On August 5 – 6, 2025, Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) attended TCEQ's annual Public Drinking Water Conference in Austin and staffed the TGPC exhibit booth from which Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) grant-related information were distributed.

The TGPC Publications Status Report was reviewed with no new updates.

The following current groundwater issues were discussed:

- Oil and Gas Produced Water;
- Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants;

- Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR);
- Groundwater Quality Monitoring;
- Brackish Groundwater;
- Evapotranspiration Networks; and,
- Others (a joint venture uranium mining project in Brooks County).

As required by the GWI Subcommittee's current *Charge* (https://tgpc.texas.gov/wp-content/themes/responsive/subcommittees/gwissues/GWI_SubComm_Charge12Jul2023.pdf), a draft of the GWI Subcommittee's *Annual Report* was reviewed and approved with one minor change, and it would be presented to the TGPC for final approval at their next meeting.

GWI Subcommittee members had a lengthy discussion of possible future white paper topics related to groundwater quality and associated Subject Matter Expert(s).

The next TGPC GWI Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for December 3, 2025.

David Villarreal (TDA) joined the meeting at approximately 1:39 PM CDT and was present for the remainder of the meeting. Chris Heiligenstein (RRC) left the meeting at approximately 1:42 PM CDT and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Public Outreach and Education

Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that the Subcommittee last met via videoconference on September 10, 2025, and six state agencies and organizations were represented.

Joel Pigg (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; AgriLife Extension) reviewed the Texas Well Owner Network (TWON) training schedule. During the previous quarter, TWON staff held 14 one-hour events and three four-hour events, and they collected 874 samples. There had been over 1,506 samples or attendees at TWON events since September 2024.

The Outreach Events Status Report was reviewed with the following highlights:

- AgriLife Extension Water Well Screening Events
 - Joel Pigg (AgriLife Extension) reported that 14 events had been held during the previous quarter.
- TGPC Exhibit Booth
 - Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that two events had been held during the previous quarter at the TCEQ Public Drinking Water Conference in Austin and the TAGD 2025 Groundwater Summit in San Antonio.

The list of upcoming conferences and the drought monitor report were reviewed. Changes to the POE Subcommittee's *Annual Report* for FY 2025 were finalized, and it would be presented to the TGPC for final approval at their next meeting.

The POE Subcommittee discussed displaying TGPC handouts at upcoming conferences and whether other agencies would be willing to include TGPC handouts at conferences that they attended.

The next TGPC POE Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for December 3, 2025.

4. PRESENTATION

Due to the federal government shutdown, there was no presentation regarding the USGS Decadal Change in Groundwater Quality Viewer at the meeting.

Presentations at TGPC meetings are always available on the Meeting Records of the TGPC webpage (<https://tgpc.texas.gov/meetings/meeting-records-of-the-texas-groundwater-protection-committee/>).

5. BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report – 2025

Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that they were planning to make the 2025 *Joint Report* more streamlined and clearer with changes being mostly formatting-related and removal of sections that were repetitive. They would begin working on the report in January 2026 to meet the publication deadline of June 1, 2026.

TGPC GWI Subcommittee Annual Report

Kathy McCormack (TCEQ) presented the TGPC GWI Subcommittee FY 2025 *Annual Report* highlighting FY 2025 results and FY 2026 plans. James Harcourt (RRC) proposed, David Villarreal (TDA) seconded, and all remaining TGPC members approved the TGPC GWI Subcommittee Fiscal Year 2025 *Annual Report*. The report would be posted on the TGPC website.

TGPC POE Subcommittee Annual Report

Katie Brice (TCEQ) presented the TGPC POE Subcommittee FY 2025 *Annual Report* highlighting FY 2025 results and FY 2026 plans. James Harcourt (RRC) proposed, Natalie Ballew (TWDB) seconded, and all remaining TGPC members approved the TGPC POE Subcommittee Fiscal Year 2025 *Annual Report*. The report would be posted on the TGPC website.

Set Future Meeting Date

The next TGPC quarterly meeting was scheduled for January 14, 2026, at 1:30 PM CST as a hybrid meeting.

6. INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR GROUNDWATER-RELATED ACTIVITIES – STATUS UPDATE

Groundwater Contamination Notice Coordination (Texas Water Code §26.408)

Katie Brice (TCEQ) reported that, since the last TGPC meeting, the TCEQ Impact Evaluation Team (IET) had met four times and reviewed eight groundwater contamination cases with 97 notices subsequently being sent to potentially affected private water well owners and users. Benzene was the most commonly reported contaminant in these cases. The IET had also been updating their protocol due to the passage of Texas 89(R) Legislative Session Senate Bill (SB) 1663 which amended Texas Water Code (TWC) Section 26.408(b) regarding the notice of groundwater contamination, and they anticipated launching a new webpage with additional information.

Groundwater Management Areas

Stephanie Keith (TAGD) reported that Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs) across the state continued to hold regular meetings and work through model updates and the Desired Future Condition (DFC) process. Specifically:

- GMA 12 had been taking comments throughout this round of joint planning, and they had discussed the nine factors and considered several Groundwater Availability Modeling (GAM) runs for DFCs, including runs with considerations far beyond the 50-year time frame. The members had committed to meeting monthly with a goal of having proposed DFCs in place by the end of 2025; and,
- GMA 13 would hold its next meeting on October 10, 2025. Bill Hutchison would be submitting the recalibrated GAM performed by their consultant for the southern portion of the Carrizo-Wilcox/Queen City/Sparta Aquifers for review and ultimate release for use. They would then focus on the nine factors for the development of the fourth round of DFCs which were due for adoption by May 1, 2026.

Updates on Regional Water Planning, Groundwater Availability Modeling, Brackish Groundwater Studies, and Innovative Water

Natalie Ballew (TWDB) provided the following updates:

- Regional Water Planning
 - o The final 2026 Regional Water Plans were due to TWDB on October 20, 2025; and,
 - o They anticipated TWDB Board approval of the 2026 Regional Water Plans in January 2026.
- GAM and Brackish Resources Aquifer Characterization System (BRACS)
 - o They received \$7.5 million during the previous regular legislative session to administer grants to Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) for science, research, and data collection, and they were working on application guidelines and processes with the goal of opening the first round of applications in the fall of 2025;

- o They were finalizing projects for this biennium for contracted research and projects to support modeling and brackish groundwater production zone designation;
- o They were wrapping up proposed brackish groundwater production zones for the southern portion of the Trinity Aquifer and would hold a stakeholder meeting to review the proposed zones prior to zone designation; and,
- o They were finalizing the Woodbine Aquifer brackish groundwater study.
- Innovative Water Technologies (IWT)
 - o Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)
 - § September 22 – 25, 2025: IWT staff attended and presented at the National Groundwater Association Managed Aquifer Recharge Conference in Denver, Colorado
 - Presentation: Reclaimed Water ASR or AR in Texas (Andrea Croskrey)
 - Poster: ASR Aquifer Characterization for the San Jacinto River Authority, Texas (William Chastain)
 - Poster: Developing Managed Aquifer Recharge Projects in Texas: Transforming Ideas into Reality (Azzah AlKurdi)
 - § October 19 – 22, 2025: IWT staff would be chairing a session at the 2025 Annual Geological Society of America Meeting in San Antonio, Texas
 - Session: Exploring Groundwater Recharge and Management: Managed Aquifer Recharge and Other Innovative Tools for Water Supply Development and Operations (James Golab and Andrea Croskrey)
 - o Desalination and Reuse
 - § IWT staff recently participated in a panel at the 2025 Pearland Water Symposium in Pearland, Texas
 - Panel: The Future of Water – Innovation, Collaboration, and What’s at Stake (William Delgado)
 - § Staff recently presented at the Texas Desalination Association Annual Conference in Bee Cave, Texas
 - Presentation: Texas Desalination Plant Concentrate Management Strategies (William Delgado)

Nonpoint Source Pollution

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) reported that:

- The FY 2025 Nonpoint Source (NPS) *Annual Report* would be submitted to agency publishing later in October 2025, finalized by agency publishing by the end of December 2025, and go to the agency executive offices for review and signature in January 2026. It was due to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by January 31, 2026.
- The next quarterly TCEQ/TSSWCB NPS meeting was scheduled for November 14, 2025.

T.J. Helton (TSSWCB) added that their FY 2026 Request for Proposal (RFP) opened in mid-August 2025, closed September 19, 2025, and they had received approximately 30 proposals that were under review for funding.

National Groundwater Information

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Omar Valdez (DSHS) followed up on the SB 1663 requirements regarding the notice of groundwater contamination and the one-mile boundary in the revised IET protocol that had been reported earlier in the meeting. Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) indicated that, if the area of the underground plume was known, the distance was measured from the plume's edge; otherwise, the distance was measured from the point of detection. However, the contamination needed to be verified as being in exceedance of a regulated comparison value which would impact a private water well to trigger a notification.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rules Update

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) reported on current TCEQ rulemaking and non-rule projects that were of interest to the TGPC:

- 2024-003-039-LS – Updates to Public Participation Rules to Implement Sunset Legislation;
- 2024-009-285-CE – Proposed Changes to 30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 285, On-site Sewage Facilities (OSSFs);
- 2025-033-331-WS – SB 616 and SB 1061: Injection Through the Edwards Aquifer for Aquifer Storage and Recovery and Class III Production Area Authorization Amendment; and,
- 2026-001-293-OW – House Bill (HB) 2080: Update to 30 TAC Chapter 293 Relating to the Petition Requesting Commission Inquiry of a GCD.

Cindy Hooper (TCEQ) added the following two updates:

- 2023-139-321-OW – Land Application of Dairy Waste and Disposal of Dairy Waste in Control Facility – The rules were recently promulgated and the webpage was updated (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/disposal-of-dairy-waste-during-emergency-conditions>); and,
- Edwards Aquifer Protection Program, 30 TAC 213 – Public hearings were scheduled in San Antonio on October 21, 2025, and in Austin on October 23, 2025.

Additional information on a specific TCEQ rule could be found at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/rules/whatsnew.html>.

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) announced that the TGPC would be conducting two sets of rulemaking in FY 2026. The first would implement SB 2124 from the Texas 89(R) Legislative Session regarding the *Joint Report* publication date, as well as SB 1663 regarding the form and content of the TWC 26.408 groundwater contamination notice. This rulemaking would take place during the January and April 2026 meetings. The TGPC would also conduct its regularly scheduled Quadrennial Rules Review (QRR) at the April and July 2026 meetings.

Natalie Ballew (TWDB) reported that their rulemaking would be coming soon to incorporate new requirements related to GCD Groundwater Management Plans and the joint planning process in establishing DFCs from HB 2078 and SB 1583.

New Publications

There was no discussion of this topic at the meeting.

Upcoming Conferences

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) referred TGPC members to the conferences listed in the “2025 – 2026 Water-related Conferences in Texas” handout – the current version of this handout is always available on the POE Subcommittee webpage at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/tgpc-subcommittees/tgpc-public-outreach-and-education-subcommittee/> under the “Additional Resources” heading.

James Harcourt (RRC) announced the establishment of their new Subsurface Investigations Team (SSI) as well as an update to their Drilling Insight and Casing Estimator (DICE, <https://www.beg.utexas.edu/dice>) application.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ted Boriack (WPA) provided public comment regarding the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer in Gonzales County (i.e., exporting groundwater, the Gonzales County UWCD, ASR projects, the waste of groundwater, excessive groundwater pumping causing groundwater quality declines, and lack of aquifer and land subsidence modeling).

9. ADJOURN

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) announced that he would be stepping down as the TGPC Designated Chair, and that James-Eric (Eric) Simon would serve as the point of contact for TGPC business until the TCEQ Executive Director designated a new representative. Eric Simon (TCEQ) presented Kelly Mills (TCEQ) with an appreciation plaque for his decades of service supporting the TGPC.

Kelly Mills (TCEQ) adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:26 PM CDT.