

Meeting of the
Groundwater Management Area 8
On November 15, 2005 in Belton, TX

Minutes

The Groundwater Management Area 8 consisting of the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District (GCD), Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District (UWCD), Fox Crossing Water District, Middle Trinity GCD, Post Oak Savannah GCD, and Saratoga UWCD held a meeting on Tuesday, November 15, 2005 in Belton, TX at the Clearwater District's Conference Room, Building A of the Bell County Courthouse Annex, located at 550 E. 2nd Avenue.

Groundwater Districts:

Central Texas GCD: Pat Quinlan, John Simmons

Fox Crossing Water District: Sam Beaumont

Post Oak Savannah GCD: Gary Westbrook

Middle Trinity GCD: Joe B. Cooper

Saratoga GCD: (Absent)

Clearwater UWCD: Horace Grace, Wallace Biskup,
Judy Parker, Leland Gersbach, Ricky Preston,
Cheryl Maxwell, and Chris Ramser

Others Present:

Rima Petrossian, Texas Water Development
Board (TWDB)

Robert Bradley, TWDB

Larry French, URS Corporation

Randy Williams, Turner Collie & Braden,
Inc.(TCB)

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. Horace Grace, Board President of Clearwater UWCD, asked if any of the other Districts represented would like to preside over the meeting. Since no District requested to act as presiding officer for this meeting, Mr. Grace was selected to serve for this meeting.

1. Welcome and introductions- District representatives will have an opportunity to provide a brief statement of the current status of their districts.

Mr. Grace called for introductions from all in attendance and asked a representative for each District to give a brief summary of the status of their District.

Clearwater UWCD- Bell County

Cheryl Maxwell, District Manager, explained that Clearwater was created in 1989, but it was not confirmed until 1999. The District opened for business and began registering wells in February 2002. Currently the District is conducting revisions of its Management Plan. Scientific studies and Groundwater Availability figures have been conducted on the Trinity and Edwards (BFZ) aquifers by Turner Collie & Braden, Inc. These studies resulted in more available groundwater than the previous state numbers. The availability figures were adopted by the District and are included in the proposed revisions to the Management Plan.

Middle Trinity GCD- Comanche and Erath Counties

Joe Cooper, District Manager, stated that Middle Trinity was created in 2001 and confirmed in May 2002. It is situated over the outcrop of the Trinity aquifer. The District became operational in May 2004. Recently the District completed a one year registration process of existing wells in May 2005. Mr. Cooper explained that 16,000 wells have been registered into two databases. Middle Trinity currently uses the availability figures provided by TWDB and hopes to have a field technician hired

soon. The District has been concerned with the effects of hydrocarbon production in the surrounding area.

Fox Crossing Water District- Mills County

Sam Beaumont, Board Member, explained that the Fox Crossing Water District elected a new Board in May 2005. The District's original Management Plan was adopted several years ago but the new Board is now working on revising it. Mr. Beaumont has been working with the TWDB to get some GAM (groundwater availability model) runs conducted.

Central Texas GCD- Burnet County

John Simmons, Board Member, explained that the Central Texas GCD was created in 2005 during the 79th legislative session and was approved by the voters in September. The Central Texas GCD held its first Board Meeting this past month and has not started working on its Management Plan. The District hopes to benefit from the cooperation with the other Districts in the GMA.

Post Oaks Savannah GCD- Milam and Burleson Counties

Gary Westbrook, District Manager, encouraged the newer Districts to not only talk to other Groundwater Districts but to also work with Rima Petrossian and the other folks at the Texas Water Development Board on the Management Plans and GAM runs. The Post Oak Savannah District was created in 2001 and confirmed by the voters in 2002. The District adopted its first set of rules in March 2004 and its first Management Plan was certified in May 2004. Mr. Westbrook explained that the District has some very prolific aquifers such as the Carrizo-Wilcox and some minor aquifers and has refined its management strategies for these resources by revising the Management Plan, which was approved in September 2005. The District is a fee based entity.

2. *Presentation from Texas Water Development Board regarding the GMA joint planning process.*

Rima Petrossian and Robert Bradley handed out a flow chart showing the GMA planning process. Mr. Bradley explained some of the statutory requirements for joint groundwater planning that were enacted with the passage of H.B. 1763. He explained that the state was divided into 16 groundwater managements areas based largely on aquifer boundaries. Each of these GMAs will be required to determine the "desired future conditions" (DFC) of the aquifers within the area by 2010. The GMA group will consist of representatives from each groundwater district (GCD) in the area. Mr. Bradley stated that a quorum of 2/3s of all Districts in the area must be present to conduct business and a 2/3s majority vote of the Districts present are required to set the desired future conditions of the aquifers. Once the statement of desired future conditions is submitted to TWDB, the state will calculate or verify to determine the "managed available groundwater" (MAG). If the GMA wishes for a consulting firm to calculate the MAG, then TWDB would just verify the results. TWDB will officially give each District the MAG numbers and will also send them to the Regional Water Planning Groups. These figures must be included in Regional Water Plans and Groundwater Management Plans. During the process, an interested party can file a petition with TWDB to challenge the statement of DFC. If the DFC is challenged, TWDB will set a hearing to determine if the statement was reasonable and if it needs to be revised.

3. *Discuss how GMA 8 will address statutory requirements including process to define a desired future condition for aquifers in the GMA and the preferred schedule to meet statutory obligations.*

Representatives from the Groundwater Districts asked several questions about the planning process. Sam Beaumont asked for an example of an unreasonable “DFC” statement. Rima Petrossian stated that the clearest example would be if one district had a goal to manage to sustainability, while another wanted to draw down the aquifer levels by 50%. Judy Parker, Clearwater District Board Member, asked for a clarification on the language pertaining to desired future conditions. Robert Bradley stated the group ‘will establish different desired future conditions for each aquifer, subdivision of an aquifer, or geologic strata located in whole or part within the boundaries of the management area.’ The group briefly discussed what impact the DFCs will have on a county without a groundwater district. Mr. Bradley explained that the counties without GCDs will receive a managed available groundwater figure for the regional water planning process. Ms. Petrossian stated that several GMA groups have established a science subcommittee to determine some of these decisions. She stated that GMA 13 and 16 will have individual districts set aside some funds for that committee. The GMA 8 group discussed strategies for dealing with these issues since the Districts all are in different stages of development and have different sized budgets and science developed.

Representatives from the Districts also discussed policies for managing the different aquifers. Randy Williams, a hydrogeologist with TCB, spoke about Clearwater’s management philosophy that was used in the GAM runs that the District recently conducted. He explained that pumping from the Edwards (BFZ) depended heavily on climatic conditions, so during good times 7,500 ac-ft could be pumped while still maintaining 200 ac-ft of preferred spring flow. However during periods of climatic stress, a reduction in pumping by 20% would be needed to maintain spring flow. The Clearwater District’s policy statement for the Trinity aquifer was to maintain 95% of the saturated thickness of the unconfined portions of the aquifer (upper level) and to keep 2000 water levels at least at 50% of available drawdown for confined portions (middle and lower) after 50 years, benchmarked to the area with the least amount of drawdown (western part of the county).

The group discussed how the GMA would involve other entities, such as counties without Districts. Gary Westbrook spoke a little about the GMA-lite concept that gave GCDs responsibility of conducting the GMA planning process. He also stated that it would be a good time to encourage other counties to create a groundwater district to get representation in the GMA. Robert Bradley explained that two GMAs have started working on interlocal agreements for insuring the GMA sets the desired future conditions. Horace Grace asked Randy Williams how much it would cost to ask a consultant to develop future condition statements. Mr. Williams stated it could be very involved or could be streamlined, but the first step is to develop a vision or policy which would guide the process. The Board discussed the feasible timeline for getting the desired future conditions set. Sam Beaumont stated that he will be getting some GAM runs done soon, once the District’s Board decides on the parameters. John Simmons stated that any financial commitment from his District could not be given until Central Texas GCD has obtained funds and approved a budget in June/July. Joe Cooper suggested having each District get all of its availability numbers together, whether it’s the original availability figures or new GAM runs. Leland Gersbach, Clearwater District Secretary, suggested having another meeting set in a quarter years time to bring together science and to organize the group.

4. Discuss how GMA 8 will address the administration and organization of the group.

GMA 8 members discussed the administration and organization of the group and decided that an election of officers will be needed at the next meeting. The election of officers and organization of the group will be done at the next quarterly meeting. The Board talked about the location of the next meeting. Rima Petrossian offered to send copies of the administrative bylaws that GMA 16 and 13 created and also suggested having one of the Districts serve as an administrative agent to keep records.

5. *Public Comments*

No comments were made.

6. *Discuss agenda items for next meeting*

The GMA group began discussing the agenda items for the next meeting. Gary Westbrook suggested getting examples of bylaws and reviewing them at the next meeting. Sam Beaumont wanted to see the interlocal agreements from the other GMAs. Other groundwater districts have used Board Resolutions to appoint or elect a representative and an alternate to the GMA. These resolutions (if adopted in time) could be brought to the next meeting. Mr. Westbrook suggested having Clearwater serve as the administrative agent; this should be formally approved at the next meeting. The GMA will also consider electing officers. Other agenda items need to be sent by February 1, 2006 to Cheryl Maxwell.

7. *Set date, time, and place of next meeting*

The group discussed the time of the next meeting. It was determined that quarterly meetings would be a good timeframe. Districts agreed that the next meeting should be in Belton, TX (hosted by Clearwater) primarily because of its central location. The date was set for February 21, 2005 at 10 a.m. Joe Cooper volunteered to host the following meeting and the Central Texas GCD would like to host a meeting once they have established an office. Post Oaks Savannah would also be willing to host a meeting, if Districts do not mind driving all the way to Milano, TX.

8. *Closing Comments*

No closing comments were made.

9. *Adjourn*

Horace Grace adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Upon motion duly made by _____ to approve the minutes, and seconded by _____, and upon discussion, the GMA 8 Board voted _____ in favor and _____ opposed, _____ abstained, and _____ absent, and the motion thereby PASSED on this 21st day of February, 2006.

(Audio tapes of this meeting are available upon request.)