

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
RECORD OF MEETING
Fourth Quarterly Meeting, Fiscal Year 2004

Meeting Date: August 12, 2004
Meeting No.: 01

Place: TCEQ Campus, Building F
Room: 3202A

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEETING ATTENDANCE	2
MEETING HANDOUTS	2
MEETING RECORD OF AUGUST 12, 2004	
1. Call to Order and Introductions	2
2. Review of Minutes from the April 29, 2004 Meeting	3
3. Discussion of Items from the April 29, 2004 Meeting	3
a. Abandoned Well Closure - Update	3
b. Coordination Opportunities - Information/Education	3
4. Update of Proposed Funding	4
5. Report to the Legislature	5
6. Development of Action Plan - Discussion and Assignments	5
7. Public Comment	7
8. Announcements and Adjournment	7

MEETING ATTENDANCE

<u>PO&E of TGPC Members</u>		<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Program</u>
Bruce Lesikar	(Chair)	TCE	
Linda Haynie	(Co Chair)	TCEQ	Policy & Standards
Michael Hare		TDA	
Lee Parham		TDLR	
 <u>Agency Staff</u>			
Mary Ambrose		TCEQ	
Frank Fuller		TCEQ	
John Lich		TCEQ	Technical Analysis Div
 <u>Interested Parties</u>			
Lynne Fahlquist		USGS	
Dawn Heitman		TSSWCB	

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. Minutes from the April 29, 2004 meeting of the Subcommittee

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Bruce Lesikar started the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m. He began with a brief status report on the abandoned well closure project, which included development of a well-owner's guide and outreach plan for groundwater districts, and development of an individual landowner guidance document and outreach plan (John Lich).
- Bruce Lesikar volunteered to provide assistance regarding formatting of the individual landowner guidance document, which was presenting some problems for TCEQ staff.
- A question was also raised regarding the formula for determining well volume which is included in the guidance document, and Bruce Lesikar and Lee Parham agreed to take a look at the formula to check its accuracy.
- Michael Hare asked about the definition of contamination, and staff cited the definition in the rules which is included in the TGPC Report to the Legislature.
- He pointed out that we need to be sure that readers will have a clear

understanding of that term, which may be best accomplished with some examples that can help fully explain “contamination.”

REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 29, 2004 MEETING

- No Comments Received

DISCUSSION OF ITEMS FROM THE APRIL 29, 2004 MEETING

Abandoned Well Closure - Update

- Bruce Lesikar spoke about the outreach plan for the Groundwater Conservation District (GWCDs), noting that five well closure demonstrations are scheduled for FY 05, and will be conducted by Cheryl Maxwell.
- Lee Parham agreed to contact local GWCDs before the owners' guide is distributed. He said that training needs to be for both field people and GWCDs, adding that there is some training available via continuing education for drillers and pump installers and internal staff at TDLR.
- TCEQ staff mentioned the additional possibility of factoring such training and outreach into the work of that agency's Small Business and Environmental Assistance (SBEA) team.
- Mary Ambrose suggested that something should be written up for landowners to help identify what an abandoned well is, that this information should be added to the TGPC web site, and that it should be the subject of a flyer, similar to one from Kansas. The type of topics that should be included are “when is a well considered ‘deteriorated’ or ‘abandoned?’” and “if a well is abandoned or deteriorated, when what should a landowner do?” This was identified as the type of information that both GWCDs and Tex-A-Syst could use.

Coordination Opportunities - Information/Education

- In regard to coordination opportunities for the Subcommittee, TCEQ staff suggested having a SBEA representative come to the next meeting, and to participate in the committee. Because SBEA does work which frequently involves some level of program marketing, they might be able to provide some valuable guidance and/or assistance regarding how best to conduct outreach for many of the products the Subcommittee will be developing.
- Linda Haynie suggested that the Subcommittee consider the opportunity to do outreach at the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair in the Spring in Austin.
- Linda Haynie will advise Bruce Lesikar and the committee members

regarding the dates and details for the Trade Fair, to assist in planning for this event.

UPDATE ON PROPOSED FUNDING

- Bruce Lesikar provided an update on the proposed funding contract for the development of various educational and informational materials, events, demonstrations, etc., for which a contract is currently under development.
- Mary Ambrose mentioned that it would be important for the private well owner/landowner training to include information regarding the topics of arsenic, radionuclides, and perchlorate, any of which may be found on private property.
- Lynn Fahlquist suggested that such guidance focus not only on individual constituents but also on combinations of these constituents, as is being experienced in the High Plains area of the state where fluorides, nitrates and other constituents are being found.
- Bruce Lesikar noted that the contract was focused on development and delivery of informational/educational materials, which would include targeted areas.
- Mary Ambrose added that while we know specific areas where arsenic and radionuclides are being found, we need to consider where other situations could be causing them to be present, such as septic tank locations. In 'urban counties', this is particularly worth considering.
- Lynn Fahlquist also suggested that a guidance document is needed on how to handle multiple constituents which occur together, and how to put together a comprehensive treatment process.
- Lee Parham asked if a map was available that showed the presence of particular types of problems - like radionuclides and arsenic, and Mary Ambrose said that the Public Drinking Water Supply section of TCEQ would have that information.
- Linda Haynie and Mary Ambrose volunteered to talk with SBEA regional office when they come in for their next Austin meeting, to get some idea of region-specific issues. One area that garnered specific interest was the Gulf Coast, particularly in regard to well-plugging and management.
- Frank Fuller mentioned that some funding might be available to support a pilot project in that area.
- Bruce Lesikar spoke about on-site sewage facilities and the need to educate people regarding what's considered proper maintenance, well-plugging, and proper closure. What is a maintenance contract?
- John Lich asked if there are public entities that could assist with abandoned well plugging.
- Bruce Lesikar noted that fire stations, schools, and similar institutions and organizations could do that.
- The education effort needs to explain what a landowner can do, when a

land needs a driller (to pull casing), etc. Sometimes groundwater districts provide plugging materials. Potential funding sources would include Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), to use for plugging abandoned wells.

- In the past, the Committee asked TCEQ to add plugging abandoned wells to the list of possible SEPs. Funding would have to be dedicated to the same county and in the same media, and most funding (which is limited) goes to air fines.
- Mary Ambrose suggested having a SEP presentation at the next meeting.
- Frank Fuller asked about the possibility of groundwater district in a coastal area getting funds for abandoned well plugging, particularly in areas where nitrates have been identified as a problem.
- Bruce Lesikar asked Frank Fuller to send a copy of a map that shows those areas.

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

- Mary Ambrose spoke about the TGPC Report to the Legislature, which is due every 2 years, and provides information regarding activities and recommendations to protect groundwater (see TGPC Web site).
- Does the subcommittee need to develop recommendations regarding areas in need of funding? Extension Service did this for the last report.
- A decision was made that the subcommittee needs to revisit this topic and rewrite recommendations. (The full committee is working on the recommendation for a well plugging fund.)
- Bruce Lesikar will develop the necessary information and provide it to Mary Ambrose in the next week, or will get a representative on the Council some talking points.
- Mary Ambrose will ask for full-blown recommendations.
- Subcommittee chairs are invited to participate in the discussion at the meeting.
- One topic that was suggested for Bruce Lesikar to cover was the need for funding to cover development of education materials and implementation of training on drinking water wells, on-site wastewater treatment plant systems, and their potential impact on water quality.
- Also noted was the fact that there is already a strategy mentioning the need for getting drinking water well sampling done through Tex*A*Syst.
- Monty's workshop does sampling and they meet with landowners regarding the results, potential causes of water quality problems, and what needs to be done.
- Mary Ambrose noted that funding is needed particularly for work in the suburban fringes of rapidly growing counties, particularly for landowners with small acreages.
- A decision was made to take a look at developing targeted workshops for

that purpose.

DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN - DISCUSSION AND ASSIGNMENTS

- It was noted that the information on the new radionuclide constituents needs to be sent to the subcommittee members, and that Bruce Lesikar will send Michael Hare an email on what's needed - probable exposure routes, scenarios, etc.
- Bruce Lesikar will also work with Bob Brach on updating permitting materials, use of greywater in suburban areas, and operation and maintenance materials. Landowners should be more involved in maintenance instead of repair.
- Bob had brochures on free clinics for septic systems, etc., and the On-Site Research Council does have some ability to fund educational materials.
- Another topic for the Action Plan is outreach activities, particularly regarding abandoned wells.
- Potential options for outreach included groundwater districts, TCEQ regional offices, extension agents, health departments, etc.
- Public Water Supply staff at TCEQ are doing source water protection (wellhead protection), and they try to encourage system owners regarding prevention.
- There is a need to reach out to communities who are supposed to implement source water protection outreach.
- Linda Haynie will check with Diane Stallings to about the Research Council Conference, which will be March 7-9 in Waco, and similar conferences, etc., to see about having a presence at such events to get the word out, provide printed information, etc.
- There was also discussion about private drinking water well quality, especially with workshops on radionuclide rules by Texas Cooperative Extension.
- There was mention of the need to identify which areas of the state have specific problems with uranium (Gulf Coast), radionuclides (S. Texas), arsenic (Andrews County), etc.
- Lynn Fahlquist mentioned a map that TWDB has which shows radionuclides 'hits' which would be useful in that regard, and discussion again touched on the need for outreach which can look at these issues comprehensively, where more several water quality problems (arsenic + nitrates, etc.) may co-exist, as opposed to just looking at them individually.
- This is something that the Bureau of Economic Geology might be able to help with, by identifying areas where geologic arsenic problems exist.
- The Texas Community Futures Forum, which is currently ongoing, may also be able to help in providing information to support targeting of outreach efforts, although that may not be available until 2006.
- Bruce Lesikar will get with Monty about where they are on updating the abandoned well brochure, and consider how the subcommittee might be

- able to assist in getting the information out.
- Dawn Heitman mentioned the need to consider nutrient issues from the perspective of the TSSWCB.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No Comments Received.

ANNOUNCEMENT AND ADJOURNMENT

- The next meeting of the Subcommittee should take place in November, but we need to find out when other subcommittees and the Council will be meeting, in order to determine an appropriate date.