

Minutes of GMA #2 Joint Planning Meeting December 14, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 am at the Commissioners meeting room in the Gaines County Courthouse in Seminole, Texas. Those attending the meeting were Jim Conkwright, James Mitchell, Jim Copeland, Bruce Rigler, Sherry Stephens, Ferrell Wheeler, Ken Carver, Jason Coleman, Shelby Elam, Mike McGregor, Harvey Everheart, Gary Walker, and Robert Bradley. All GMA #2 member districts were present.

The initial discussion concerned the current conditions within the GMA. Each manager gave a brief update of the conditions in each district. Ken Carver mentioned that his district is upgrading the density of water level measurement locations, and researching the aquifers being monitored at the respective well sites. Mike McGregor said that his district is identifying areas of particular concern which are affected by water level declines which are higher than average. Ferrell stated that many parts of his district have received over fifteen inches of rainfall since August. Additionally, he informed the group that water levels often rebound whenever they receive a lot of precipitation. High Plains UWCD has completed an analysis of land values and discovered a continuing rise in irrigated land values, which they believe is influenced some by the dairy industry. Jim also said that there are currently 43 proposed or operating dairies and 8 proposed ethanol plants within his district.

The group moved on to the question of identifying subdivisions of the aquifer(s) within the GMA. Robert Bradley of the TWDB presented some items for consideration when addressing this matter. It is important, he stated, to remember that multiple subdivisions may complicate the planning process, since each separate DFC may require unique management in order to meet the stated goals. He also informed the group that TWDB counsel had clarified the meaning of a geographical area. Further, he provided the members some examples of subdivision boundaries for other GMAs, specifically GMA #7. Lastly, Robert explained that different subdivisions and corresponding DFCs must be defined so that the scenarios are not mutually exclusive. For example, using all the water in storage for one subdivision may preclude the attainment of a managed depletion scheme for another subdivision.

There was a short discussion of the minor aquifer GAMs and their role in this process. A question was posed for Robert Bradley concerning how the MAG would be determined for a minor aquifer that does not yet have a completed GAM. He stated that the TWDB staff would make those calculations by hand in the absence of a completed GAM. Several GMA #2 members explained to Mr. Bradley how the completion of minor aquifer GAMs was expected to improve Ogallala GAM performance, as stated by the GAM contractors. Lastly, Mr. Bradley distributed a document illustrating the newly-delineated boundaries of the Ogallala and Pecos Valley aquifers in Andrews County.

Several ideas were discussed concerning proposed strategies for defining DFCs. Jim Conkwright explained some of the proposed methods from GMA #1, and the potential areas of conflict across GMA #1 which would arise from a 1.25% managed depletion scheme. Mike McGregor and Jason Coleman presented the idea of using historical average water level declines as part of the process. Ken Carver stated that his district is awaiting the results of a pending

GAM request from TWDB, and that those results may help the understanding of an appropriate strategy where several major aquifers are used. High Plains UWCD discussed the TWDB funding for changed conditions in six counties, due to dairy and ethanol production. The results of this proposed study may greatly increase the understanding of future use, and supplement the knowledge of how changing uses may affect water levels. Also, there was some discussion concerning the choice of a particular time period when addressing the DFCs. Robert Bradley stated that some GMAs were working within the same 50 year period as is currently used for RWPGs. Some hesitation was expressed from GMA #2 members for working with a 50 year period when current data available for historical reference is most prominent for only the past 20 years. There was some agreement that a period of 20 years into the future might be a better fit for GMA #2. No official action was taken regarding this matter.

Each county judge from GMA #2 counties without a gcd were provided an invitation for today's meeting, but there was no response. Some conversation ensued regarding the likelihood that this matter will be addressed legislatively during the 2007 session.

No public comment was offered, as no other interested parties attended the meeting.

The group agreed that future agenda items should include many of the same things discussed at this meeting. No exact date was set for the next meeting, although there was agreement that July 2007 would be an acceptable time for the next assembly of GMA #2. Additionally, there was support voiced for meeting at each gcd at least once. Consequently, the next meeting is likely to be held in Lamesa.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.