

Joint Planning For Groundwater Management Area # 2

Monday, October 23, 2017

10:00 A.M.

Permian Basin Underground Water Conservation District

708 W. St. Peter Street

Stanton, TX 79782

CALL TO ORDER

Administrative Officer Jason Coleman called the Groundwater Management Area # 2 (GMA 2) meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. He thanked the Permian Basin Underground Water Conservation District for hosting today's meeting.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Coleman conducted a roll call of the Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) participating in the joint planning meeting.

A quorum was present with all GCDs in GMA 2 represented.

The GMA 2 voting representatives in attendance were:

- Ferrel Wheeler, Garza County UWCD.
- Ronnie Hopper, High Plains UWCD.
- Lori Barnes for Llano Estacado UWCD.
- Matt Farmer, Mesa UWCD.
- Donna Springer, Permian Basin UWCD.
- Amber Blount for Ross Hilburn, Sandy Land UWCD.
- Lindy Harris for Matt Hogue, South Plains UWCD.

Others signing in at today's meeting were: John Boren, Robert Bradley, Ray Brady, Amy Bush, Carmon McCain, and Victoria Whitehead.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Coleman asked if there were any comments from the public at today's meeting. There were none.

MINUTES

October 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Coleman presented the October 19, 2016 meeting minutes. An electronic copy of the minutes was provided to the member districts for review in advance of today's meeting.

Mr. Coleman gave attendees time for second review of the minutes and then asked if there were any additions or corrections.

A motion was made by Llano Estacado and seconded by Permian Basin to approve the minutes as presented.

Ayes: Garza County, High Plains, Llano Estacado, Mesa, Permian Basin, Sandy Land, and South Plains.

TEXAS WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD UPDATES

GMA 2 Liaison Robert Bradley, P.G., noted that there have been several staff changes in the TWDB Groundwater Technical Assistance Group since the last GMA 2 meeting.

Natalie Ballew moved from the Groundwater Technical Assistance Group to the Groundwater Availability Modeling (GAM) Department.

David Thorkildsen and Rima Petrossian retired at the end of August.

Dr. Robert Mace, Deputy Executive Administrator, is expected to retire Oct. 31. He will join the staff of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University at San Marcos.

Mr. Bradley and the remaining Groundwater Technical Assistance Group staff plan to focus on core groundwater issues until additional staff is hired. He will discuss how to submit GCD management plans for administrative completeness during the upcoming TAGD mobile leadership trainings in Beeville, Fort Stockton, Amarillo, and Salado. Mr. Bradley said TWDB staff is always willing to assist with pre-review of draft groundwater conservation district (GCD) management plans.

He also gave an update on the status of joint groundwater planning across the state. GMA 3, GMA 7, and GMA 10 have not submitted their explanatory reports as yet. However, new statutory deadlines will remedy this in the future.

GCD REPORTS ABOUT RULES AND/OR AQUIFER MONITORING.

Mr. Coleman invited the group to participate in a “round-robin” discussion of their district’s activities, aquifer monitoring, management plans, and rules.

GARZA COUNTY: Ferrel Wheeler – He told the group that there had been good rain in Garza County this year. Water wells in the district were pumped hard, but not as long as they usually are—thanks to the timely rainfall. Their rules are a little fuzzy with regard to oilfield activity and may need revision. All is going well at Garza County UWCD.

HIGH PLAINS: Ronnie Hopper – One of the biggest topics of discussion since the previous GMA 2 meeting is Xcel Energy’s innovative water supply project in Lamb County. The company drilled a horizontal well on its property in response to declining water levels and lower production from existing wells. This could significantly threaten the continued operation of the Plant X and Tolk Generating Stations. The well is about 2,300 feet long, with 500 feet of screened section. It is equipped with a pressure transducer that sends daily water level information to the HPWD office. There was also discussion about the HPWD irrigation assessment program which details growing season water use by crop. Participation in this program is entirely voluntary.

LLANO ESTACADO: Lori Barnes – Llano Estacado UWCD will look at possible rule revisions after crop harvesting is finished. Most changes will reflect changes in the legal process and procedures in posting meetings. Permit fees may also be considered. Jud Chevront stepped down as Board President and was replaced by Weldon Shook. Larry Day is the new Precinct Four District Director. Seminole continues to grow. LEUWCD issued 178 house/livestock well registrations and 350 irrigation well permits last year. She also noted that Hess Corporation (*Amerada Hess Corporation*) recently sold their oil recovery projects in the Permian Basin of West Texas and New Mexico to Occidental Petroleum (*Oxy*).

MESA: Matt Farmer – Mesa UWCD is considering a couple of upcoming rule changes, particularly one addressing transportation of water outside the county boundaries. Megan Mires has been hired as office administrative assistant after Harvey Everheart retired and Deanya Williams resigned. The Mesa UWCD Board is currently seeking applicants for General Manager. Mr. Farmer told the group that Mesa UWCD is on track to meet its Desired Future Conditions (DFC) based upon last year's annual water level measurements.

He also shared information about U.S. Silica Company's proposed sand mine near Cedar Lake (*Dawson/Gaines County line*). The company bought several sections of land to obtain groundwater rights. The amount of water the mine uses for rinsing operations will definitely be an issue for the future. There has been little to no publicity in the *Lamesa Press-Reporter* newspaper during the past three weeks or so.

PERMIAN BASIN: Donna Springer – The District's amended management plan was certified as being administratively complete on August 29, 2017. Most changes were the result of modifications to state statute. She said the TWDB staff were very helpful throughout this process. The District has had no amended rules since 1993. However, the latest revisions were made and took place October 1, 2017. Both revisions will give the Permian Basin District a good foundation to move forward. Oilfield drilling has not slowed down – especially horizontal drilling applications. While this is good for revenue, it can be a double-edged sword at times. There have been 80 wells drilled into the Dockum Aquifer within the Permian Basin UWCD service area. The average well depth is about 1,200 to 1,500 feet. Most of this water is being blended as 60 percent fresh water and 40 percent brackish water. A majority of these wells are spread out and their pumping capacity depends upon their individual location. Current projections show the District is on track for meeting its DFC.

SANDY LAND: Amber Blount – Sandy Land is reviewing rules for possible updates. Ms. Blount said that some of her district's rules are vague and full of assumptions. It is important to have better definition. Annual water level measurements will begin soon. Drilling of water wells has slowed in recent months.

SOUTH PLAINS: Lindy Harris – The district began initial review of rules for possible revision-but this was halted due to the legislative session and crop harvest. She gave an update about joint GCD educational efforts and the education trailer that is being outfitted. South Plains continues to host rainwater harvesting workshops. They are working with a local producer to install a rainwater harvesting tank at the barn where the Wellman Fire Department stores their equipment. Several new water wells have been drilled within the District to provide water to irrigate organic peanuts. The wine industry is doing well in this area.

Mr. Coleman thanked the representatives for their updates.

DISCUSS ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Coleman asked if there were any items for future GMA # 2 agendas.

Ms. Blount said it would be helpful to prepare a spreadsheet listing the differences / similarities between the respective GCD rules. Since “common rules among GCDs” was such a hot legislative topic this session, she said it would be good for GMA # 2 to discuss this and memorialize it in the minutes. The District representatives agreed.

It was the consensus of the GMA # 2 representatives to meet again in the spring—possibly at the end of March 2018. This will allow for annual water level measurements to be completed and preparation of the respective District Annual Reports. No date was set at this time. Mr. Coleman will propose a possible meeting date after the first of the year.

The representatives commended the HPWD staff for their work in redesigning and updating the GMA # 2 website. They said it looks very professional and is easy to navigate.

ADJOURN

There being no other business, Mesa UWCD made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:06 a.m. HPWD seconded the motion.

Ayes: Garza County, High Plains, Llano Estacado, Mesa, Permian Basin, Sandy Land, and South Plains.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Coleman, P. E.
Administrator, GMA # 2