



GMA 9 Meets – DFC Process Continues

In December I wrote an article with an overview of the process for establishing a Desired Future Condition (DFC) within a Designated Groundwater Management Area (GMA). Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (HTGCD) is a member of GMA 9. Headwaters GCD of Kerr County, another GMA 9 member, recently submitted for review, its DFC proposal. In late August, 2009, Groundwater Districts in GMA 9 and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) received appeals petitions from Region J, the Kerr County Commissioners' Court, and the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA).

On November 2, 2009, the TWDB held a Hearing in Kerrville, Texas in order to hear testimony and review evidence from the appeals petitioners and GMA 9 representatives on the reasonableness of the DFC set for the Headwaters GCD of the Edwards Group. This meeting resulted in TWDB recommendations for revisions to the existing proposal. They concluded that the DFC would result in a Managed Available Groundwater (MAG) that was "not reasonable" since it would not meet Regional and State projections for growth in *exempt* well demands in Kerr County.

As a result, on February 22, 2010, GMA 9 held a public hearing to present the revisions recommended by the TWDB and to solicit comments from stakeholders. Members could decide to simply revise the DFC as recommended by the TWDB or to make other changes that they feel would otherwise satisfy the Board and appealing petitioners. Nevertheless, the process of review and possibly appeals will begin again. Remember, rules adopting and enforcing MAGs and

supporting DFCs are mandatory upon *all* GCDs in a GMA. So consensus is required.

We will continue to report on this process and the decisions resulting from upcoming meetings and public hearings. The DFC process is scheduled to be completed later this year.

HTGCD Develops New Management Plan

When Groundwater Conservation Districts were created, one of the requirements was that they develop a Management Plan for the District and update it every five (5) years. There are certain stipulations which must be met and all plans are reviewed and approved by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (HTGCD) has begun this process and I will be reporting on the progress in these pages.

Our first workshop was held, after our board meeting January 28, 2010, between TWDB representative, Rima Petrossian, HTGCD Board, and General Managers. Rima offered several specific and valuable suggestions for us to incorporate. Work on a first draft of the Management Plan is underway and will be presented to the Board at the March 11, 2010 Board Meeting and Hearing. Changes submitted by the Board will be incorporated and the resulting Management Plan will be available for public review and hearings will be scheduled as the process continues.

New On-Line Reporting Completed

The on-line Quarterly Pumpage reporting system we told you about in December has

now gone into effect. Users were able to go live on the system in January and the feedback has been very positive. Even those people who were unable to attend our scheduled training sessions are thrilled with the system, calling it "straightforward and simple to use." All in all the switch went exceptionally well.

Gone are the days of entering water usage information on forms that have to be faxed or mailed to the District and then re-entered into a computer. For an old programmer like me this is simply inviting errors. The adage is that the more you "handle" the data, the more likely it is to be wrong when it gets stored. It's like playing "*Gossip*" with information.

Now, our Public Water Suppliers and other Non-Exempt entities are able to record their water usage and water level logs directly into our database, hopefully making at least this part of their job much simpler. Other changes are in the works also, such as electronic well registration. As before, training sessions will be scheduled for prospective users. I will continue to report new functionality as it becomes available.

ANDREW SANSOM FACILITATES STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Executive Director of River Systems Institute, Andrew Sansom has been asked to develop and manage a project for facilitating dialogue between key stakeholders of the District. As stated in a letter from Senator Jeff Wentworth and Representative Patrick Rose, "the District's long-term success requires an invested community that sees it as an indispensable partner in its prosperity."

Texas State University and River Systems Institute along with HTGCD Board Members are committed to working to overcome existing

divisions and encouraging open dialogue toward resolving differences. The selected stakeholders were agreed upon and Representative Rose with Andy Sansom announced the agreement in the December 10, 2009 HTGCD Board Meeting. The Senator and Representative Rose have stepped back and now Andy will be fully responsible for the process and guidance throughout the process. As he said, "I have cleared my plate of other commitments to devote my efforts to this."

A consensus position built through this project will carry the full support of both Senator Wentworth and Representative Rose into the 2011 legislative session. That support would suggest a long needed funding solution to the perpetually underfunded HTGCD.

AT 12/01/09 Stakeholders included:

Conservation Community

HTGCD Board Members
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association
Friends of Blue Hole
Texas Farm Bureau
Texas Groundwater Association

Community –At-Large

Belterra Community Association
Woodcreek Property Owner Association

Business Community

San Marcos Board of Realtors
Austin Board of Realtors
Wimberley Chamber
Dripping Springs Chamber
Hays County Builders Association
Real Estate Council of Austin

Water Suppliers

Aqua Corporation
Dripping Springs Water Supply
Wimberley Water Supply

Elected Officials

City of Dripping Springs
City of Wimberley
Village of Woodcreek
Hays County Judge
Hays County Commissioner Pct. 3
Hays County Commissioner Pct. 4