

## PANHANDLE WATER PLANNING GROUP

### Minutes

August 7, 2009

A meeting of the Panhandle Water Planning Group (Region A) Modeling Committee) was held on Friday, August 7, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, 415 West Eighth Avenue, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas.

Mr. John Williams, Chairman, presided.

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ray Brady, Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District; Janet Guthrie, Hemphill County UWCD; Charles Cooke, TCW Supply, Inc.; Emmett Autrey, City of Amarillo; Gale Henslee, Xcel Energy; C.E. Williams, Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District; John Williams, Canadian River Municipal Water Authority – Ret; Grady Skaggs – County of Oldham; Ben Weinheimer – Texas Cattle Feeder Association

#### OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Stevens, Mesa Water; Bob Hardin, R.W. Hardin & Assoc.; Amy Crowell, Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District; Simone Kiel, Freese & Nichols; Van Kelly, Intera

#### STAFF PRESENT:

Scott Caldwell, Local Government Services Coordinator; Jonathan Ellis, Local Government Services Program Specialist; Kyle Ingham, Local Government Services Director

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

John Williams called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and took roll call, it was noted that a quorum was present.

#### 2. DISCUSS AND ACTION AS APPROPRIATE – METHODOLOGY TO ASSESS GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY FOR OGALLALA AQUIFER FOR 2011 REGIONAL WATER PLAN

John Williams made comment that he had been reviewing the process by which the data in the 2006 Regional Plan was developed, and comparing it to how the DFC and MAG may affect planning for the current round. There was consideration and discussion of the management policy adopted for the 2006 Regional Water Plan, which

required the setting of a goal of withdrawing annually not more than 1.25% of the current saturated thickness of the aquifer, with a recalculation of the remaining saturated thickness every five years. After some discussion on this point, John Williams asked where in the process the DFC from the GMA was. C.E. Williams spoke to the condition of the DFC as being tentatively established but pending a challenge. C.E. Williams made the comment that in regards to resolution of the challenge it might take approximately six months to be resolved. Simone Kiel said she had spoken with TWDB and there would be verification in two weeks how this might affect the PWPG, but it was stated that the DFC wouldn't be guaranteed to go into the MAG while under a challenge. There was discussion between members, it was determined that Mesa Water had issued the challenge to the validity of the DFC, contingent upon the different numbers within one regional planning area, over one aquifer. Steve Walthour spoke to the preparation of the Dockum DFC, he spoke to where in the process the GMA was in regards to the Dockum. Mr. Walthour said currently the GMA was waiting on the Dockum run from the TWDB, and that it should be completed later this year. Mr. Walthour also made the comment that the Rita Blanca was included in the Ogallala DFC. Gale Hensley returned to an issue brought up by John Williams regarding the 2006 Regional Plan methodology. Mr. Hensley spoke to the different considerations when one considered available groundwater and when one considered 1.25% decline. Mr. Hensley suggested that at the end of each 10 year period there is an evaluation of the model and in order to adjust the 1.25% amount. There being no other discussion at this time, Simone Kiel began her presentation.

Ms. Kiel first spoke to the past methods, as used in the 2006 GAM. She also spoke to challenges in the past methodology, among them: how to factor in dry cells, and problems and uncertainty associated with limited well locations. Ms. Kiel also spoke about TWDB methodology which took into consideration the limitations on past practices. Furthermore, Ms. Kiel gave a recommended approach which involved a re-run of the Ogallala availability using the current GAM, this would be done applying pumping at a cell level, and it would involve running 54 one-year simulations. As needed there would be an adjustment to pumping to meet desired conditions. With these practices the hope would be that the availability would equal the final pumping amounts. This would all be done in an effort to deal with issues brought up in discussion of the 2006 Regional Plan methodology. Finally, Ms. Kiel spoke about some decisions she would need from the modeling committee in order to continue moving forward regarding: the criteria for storage remaining, methodology, and implementation. Ms. Kiel also spoke to the schedule of tasks remaining and the timeline involved.

At this point, Bob Harden from R & W Harden and associates, asked to speak. Mr. Harden made the comment that the Region A is setting ground water availability for planning purposes not for managerial purposes. Furthermore he stated that regulatory control of groundwater is limited by groundwater availability and such control cannot conflict with the individual water districts. Mr. Harden urged the group to have the perception in terms of physical amount of water available, not in terms of demand utilized. John Williams asked a question regarding the consideration that Mesa, Amarillo, and CRMWA had all set down what they are needing i.e. demand. Mr. Harden replied that he doesn't want a system which would predict water usage for one group or another. Mr. Williams replied that the purpose of this group is to estimate demand for the future.

John Williams made the comment that if the methodology cannot be agreed up on, perhaps one of the other decisions might be. Emmett Autrey asked the record to express concern about how the DFC is set. Furthermore, Mr. Autrey clarified the issue as such: the DFC being unavailable, the board was unable to use it. Mr. Autrey said, though this be the case, the group must decide what will be used. He further made the point that the group must decide what it thinks the demand would be. Several more questions were asked for clarification. After discussion, Janet Guthrie made the comment that it appeared that three different runs were needed. There was further discussion between members. Amy Crowell began to draft what would be included in each. It was suggested to break for lunch while this happened. C.E. Williams made a motion to have a one hour recess for lunch; Emmett Autrey seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The group recessed at 12:15 p.m.

The group reconvened at 1:20 p.m. The three runs as preliminarily drafted by Amy Crowell are as follows:

- 1) Baseline Run (what would happen if pumping continued at current and projected levels):
  - i. Methodology: Current pumping locations and projected demand at those locations run for 54 years.
  - ii. Results: Gives you physical capability to meet demands regardless of regulation, shows areas of concern.
- 2) Groundwater Availability (like a "firm yield")
  - i. Methodology: Assigned pumping at each cell limited by the planning group goal.
  - ii. Results: Gives you maximum availability at each cell for plan, will be reported per county (and basin). Also receive total water storage in aquifer as volume.
- 3) Currently Available Supplies (Amount of water realistically available to each water user group)
  - i. Methodology: Current and projected pumping at geographic locations, adjusted as needed to meet planning group goal.
  - ii. Results: Available supplies to be used in the needs analysis and water management strategies.

There was discussion over the scopes and purposes of each of the runs. It was determined that through this methodology, the maximum amount can be available for water management strategies. The cost of the three runs was discussed. Charles Clark made a motion to adopt the methodology presented and conduct the three runs. C.E. Williams seconded. The floor opened up for discussion. Bob Harden spoke about liking the three runs idea. He made the comment that they are segregated and should be. Mr. Harden made the comment that the GMA DFC is not complete and the group should not rely on it for goals of the methodology. Mr. Harden made the comment that should the group rely on the GMA DFC, they should justify it outside of the fact that it is the GMA DFC, since currently it is not a stable concept due to the challenge. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The next issue before the group was the determination of goals for the methodology to follow. There were three primary goals discussed: 1) Follow the proposed DFC breakdown. 2) Follow the management plan of each water district. 3) Continue with the previously held 1.25% foot decline rule. Simone Kiel and Van Kelly expressed the importance of setting goals for their work. Steve Walthour spoke of the GMA DFC, he said that the four planning groups (water districts) had agreed upon a proposed DFC. Mr. Walthour asked to make the assumption that the GMA group knows what they are doing in their respective districts. Mr. Walthour proceeded to speak on the 80/50, 50/50, and 40/50 breakdown of the GMA DFC. Gale Henlsee expressed his desire to utilize the management goals that the individual districts have as they are set by the managing bodies and are very close to what is in the DFC. Emmett Autrey expressed the view that the districts were here first and they know what they are doing. That being said Mr. Autrey believed that their decision should be respected. John Williams expressed a desire to adopt goals as reasonably similar to the goals that the districts were using. Ben Weinheimer expressed a favorable view of utilizing the GMA DFC. There was further discussion between C.E. Williams and Steve Walthour on the appropriate way to measure remaining volume. After more discussion, in which the appropriateness of the districts judgment was in managing their own districts, discussion again turned to the adopting of the proposed GMA DFC. In response, C.E. Williams asked what if after the challenge is over those numbers are different. Kyle Ingham made the comment that by utilizing the existing district rules there would be something of a hybrid between what was done in the past and the new GMA DFC. Charles Cooke made a motion to utilize the same goal they had from the last plan which was a 1.25% decline per year, adjusting every five years. C.E. Williams seconded. Janet Guthrie said that would not work for Hemphill, she proceeded to say even a 1% would not fit the goals from the DFC, when the initial run was made it was determined that for the desires of the HCUWD, percentages would not be appropriate which is why the method of measurement was switched to volume remaining. After more discussion, a vote was called for. Ms. Guthrie asked for a roll call vote. In response to a query, Ms. Guthrie made the comment that under the conditions of the motion there would be zero surface water due to a tributary decrease to the region. Before the vote was taken, Steve Walthour made a comment about the appearance of the GMA DFC and the PWPG adopting different goals and the possibility that actions by the PWPG might negatively affect the GMA proceedings, even though the intent was not as such, the appearance might have such an effect. John Williams conducted a roll call vote for the motion on the table. The vote was as follows:

Aye: Charles Cooke, Gale Henslee, C.E. Williams

Nay: Ben Weinheimer, Janet Guthrie, Grady Skaggs, Steve Walthour, Ray Brady

Abstaining: Emmett Autrey

The final vote being three in favor and five in opposition, the motion fails. It was asked what the decline percentages were equivalent of the DFC conditions, they were as follows: 1.27% for 50/54, 1.68% for 40/54, and .41% for 80/54. Ms. Guthrie expressed hesitation at adopting these percentage decline equivalents, due to uncertainty on the will of her board. Steve Walthour made the comment that the legislature created an entity independent of the PWPG to create a regional DFC, not the PWPG. As such Mr. Walthour recommended adopting whatever that group (the GMA) is going to do. Due to the challenge to the proposed DFC and the time constraints that this organization is

subject to, Steve Walthour moved that the PWPG adopt as its goals the same goals of the GMA DFC as it was proposed and adopted by the GMA #1. This motion was seconded by Janet Guthrie. Some members asked for clarification on the DFC, which was given. Steve Walthour offered an amendment to the motion in which the Dockum is treated as it has been treated—as apart of the Ogallala—until the Dockum run is received. When asked what this might do to the process of doing runs, Ms. Kiel replied that the goals adopted today would be what all the subsequent work would be based off of. Ms. Kiel stated that if in that process, the DFC is modified their work would be unaffected, it could be adjusted at the end of the process. Furthermore, Ms. Kiel made the comment that the DFC parallels very closely the individual district plans. There was further discussion on concerns within water districts including measuring by discharge and by pumpage. John Williams called for a vote on the matter. It was unanimous, the motion passed.

### 3. **DISCUSS AND ACTION AS APPROPRIATE – NORTHERN OGALLALA GAM STUDY**

It was decided to take a five minute break while Van Kelly's presentation was being set up. Van Kelly from Intera, had prepared a presentation for the Committee. He sought to show the Committee where Intera was in the model revisions, what sort of challenges he faced, how the Committee could help, etc. Mr. Kelly said that the PWPG had identified the following items for potential revision in the revised GAM: Pumping Allocation within the GAM, the Base of the Ogallala, Hydraulic Properties, and Recharge based upon BEG studies in Roberts and Hemphill Counties – Return Flows. Additionally Mr. Kelly spoke about some of the challenges in addressing each issue. Regarding pumping, Mr. Kelly spoke to the issue of it requiring the integration of multiple data sources/types. Discrepancies and information gaps were addressed. Regarding Hydraulic Properties, Mr. Kelly said that information had been received from Panhandle GCD, Hemphill GCD, and Mesa Water; CRMWA was still pending. Mr. Kelly said that data received was consistent with the Dutton map, as such it was recommended to keep the Dutton distribution of hydraulic conductivity model wide and making changes only where warranted by new data. Regarding recharge, Mr. Kelly indicated there had been little progress since the last meeting, and he indicated that Dr. Scanlon is reviewing the recharge approach as compared to the BEG study. Mr. Kelly indicated the implications for changing recharge, among them: that recharge is only important to the steady-state model and would require changes to horizontal hydraulic conductivity to re-calibrate. Additionally that it was largely unimportant to transient model and future availability. Mr. Kelly indicated that the next step would be to meet with BEG and write a short white paper regarding Intera's recommendations and basis for them. Finally, Mr. Kelly went over the proposed schedule which included the following milestones:

- Complete pumping updates (in August)
- Perform post-audit (September)
- Update model base
  - Receive feedback on problem areas (August)
  - Redevelop new base (August)
- Update recharge and properties (August – September)

- New Scope
  - Dynamic pumping algorithm
  - New processes (groundwater ET)
- Recalibration – (late September – October)
- Prediction – (November)
- Reporting – (November – December)

When asked about when it would be appropriate to meet again, Mr. Kelly suggested mid September, as far as Intera was concerned.

4. **DISCUSS – SCHEDULE**

With Intera's milestones and timetable in mind, Simone Kiel spoke to some of the issues of Freese & Nichols and suggested the end of October as an appropriate meeting time for the Modeling Committee.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments

6. **ADJOURN**

Steve Walthour moved to adjourn, Janet seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The Modeling Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.