



The Cow Creek Quarterly

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FIRST EDITION

APRIL-JUNE, 2009

Welcome to the first edition of the Cow Creek Quarterly. This newsletter is brought to you by the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District (CCGCD) with news and information about water resource management, policies, and hydrology. CCGCD was created by the residents of Kendall County for the purpose of conserving, preserving, recharging, protecting, and preventing waste of groundwater from the aquifers within Kendall County.

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SECTION 1- PILOTING REAL-TIME

After months of planning, a real-time monitoring system has been implemented for the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District through a pilot project with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Six well sites have been equipped with monitors for water depth, conductivity and temperature. The sites, selected primarily because of their proximity to the pumping centers in the Cow Creek GCD service area, provide data that will allow Cow Creek GCD to determine what, if any, measures need to be taken to address the influence of surface water on groundwater quality and if non-point source pollution is occurring. This data set will help them make management decisions related to desired future conditions of the aquifer, drought management issues, and groundwater availability issues. For full press release:

www.gbra.org/News/2009041301 .

SECTION 2 – GBRA BASIN



BRIEFING

(L-R) JUDGE SCHROEDER, BILL WEST, TOMMY MATHEWS, CHUCK DVORSKEY, MICAH VOULGARIS

“Drought is a normal condition in Texas”, said Bill West, GBRA General Manager, in opening remarks to those gathered by Judge Gaylon Schroeder, Mayor Dan Heckler and CCGCD Chairman Tommy Mathews Thursday, April 30th for a report of current conditions in the Guadalupe River basin.

Current and historic droughts dominated the discussion. No surprise that current conditions indicate South Texas and the Hill Country are classified as “extreme to exceptional” drought conditions. Members of GBRA staff explained the various indices and methods employed in tracking climatic conditions. A sigh of cautious relief swept the room as a map from the Climate Prediction Center flashed on the screen forecasting improvement in drought conditions April 16, 2009 through July 2009.

State water planning established by Senate Bill 1 of the 75th Texas Legislature began a process to manage surface and groundwater resources for future water needs including contingency plans for drought management. GBRA's drought contingency plan is triggered when Canyon Lake levels reach 895 ft msl (mean sea level) for Stage 1 reductions of 5% based on six months average use of contracted water. The complete Drought Contingency Plan is available on-line at www.gbra.org .

Dr. Todd Votteler announced a new study of tree rings in Central Texas to build upon the data collected in a updated March, 2006 Extended Chronology of Drought in the San Antonio Area by Malcolm Cleaveland of the Tree Ring Laboratory of the University of Arkansas. Votteler explained how the wealth of information collected in the growth rings of Bald Cypress trees, some as old as 1,000 years, can give us more insight into drought cycles. (www.gbra.org/library/reports)

A long awaited preliminary gain/loss study of the Guadalupe River in Kendall County is in the planning stages. This study will help to refine spring flow data and better understanding of the interrelationship of ground and surface water in the Trinity Aquifers.

GBRA continues to plan for secure water resources in the district while protecting environmental flows to bays and estuaries. West outlined three water supply projects—two options include conjunctive use of ground and surface water. All three options and graphs may be found at www.gbra.org/library/basinbriefing2009 .

SECTION 3- MAGS, GAMS, AND GMA DFCS

No, the keyboard is not defective. The title of this section is legible to water people in the new world of Texas water management and policy. Beginning with Senate Bill 1 in 1997, Regional Water Planning Groups turned to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and science to quantify water resources. And, the jargon of water management was born with PGMAs (Priority Groundwater Management Area) and a new model called GAM (Groundwater Availability Model) which led to MAG (Managed Available Groundwater) and created DFC (Desired Future Conditions) in GMA-9 (Groundwater Management Area 9).

The DFC for GMA-9 is “Allow for no net increase in average drawdown (from current conditions in the Edwards Group of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer). More about the model runs and results in future newsletters. However, if you want a clear history of GAMS, WAMs (water availability model), and MAGs, click on the hyperlink to Dr. Robert Mace’s article “A Streetcar Named Desire”. http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/GAM/03-1_mace.pdf

SECTION 4 QUOTES TO REMEMBER

“I work with groundwater districts up and down the basin...and it is a pleasure to work with the Cow Creek GCD.they look to science to make their decisions....not what someone “thinks or feels”, but good science”---Bill West, General Manager, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

SECTION 5 GROUNDWATER RELATED CONFERENCES

May 20-22, 2009 in San Antonio, Texas--National Water Quality Conference 2009: Emerging Issues and Technology for Managing Water Quality and Supply in the 21st Century. Sponsored by Northwest Environmental Training Center. For more information: http://nwetc.org/hyd-550_05-09_san_antonio_save_the_date.htm

July 19-26, 2009 in Kerrville, Texas—Karst Horizons: 15th International Congress of Speleology. Sponsored by the International Union for Speleology and the National Speleological Society.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District meetings are held on the second (2nd) Monday of each month at 216 Market Ave. Ste. 105, Boerne, TX 78006. All meetings are posted and open to the general public.

For CCGCD agendas, minutes, and reports: www.ccgcd.org

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