Annual Report
to the
Board of Directors
on
Attainment of Management Plan Goals
and
Selected Activities
of the
South Plains Underground Water Conservation District

Fiscal Year 2021
September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021

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South Plains Underground Water Conservation District

Board of Directors

Name	Representing	Term Ends
Matt Hogue, President	Precinct 2	May 2022
Gabe Neill	Director-at-Large	May 2024
Tye Day, Member	Precinct 3	May 2024
David Swaringen, Secretary	Precinct 1	May 2024
Barrett Brown, Member	Precinct 4	May 2022

Report prepared by:

Layne Marlow, General Manager
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District Mission Statement

The South Plains Underground Water Conservation District will develop, promote, and implement management strategies to provide for the conservation, preservation, recharging, and prevention of waste of the groundwater resources, over which it has jurisdictional authority, for the benefit of the people that the District serves.

Introduction and Overview

SB 1, 75th Texas Legislature (1997), requires groundwater conservation districts governed by Chapter 36, Texas Water Code, to submit management plans for certification by the Texas Water Development Board. The management plans must specifically address the following management goals as applicable:

1. providing for the most efficient use of groundwater
2. control and prevention of the waste of groundwater
3. control and prevention of subsidence
4. conjunctive surface water management issues
5. natural resource issues
6. drought conditions
7. conservation
8. recharge enhancement
9. rainwater harvesting
10. precipitation enhancement
11. brush control
12. desired future condition of the aquifers

The management plans must also identify the performance standards and management objectives under which each district will operate to achieve their management goals.

The current District Management Plan is effective until November 2023. After notice and hearing, the Board of Directors officially adopted the plan on October 9, 2018. The plan was certified by the Texas Water Development Board on November 14, 2018

This annual report is a review of the District's activities for Fiscal Year 2021
and an evaluation of the District's performance in meeting its goals and objectives.

Report on Attainment of Goals

Goal 1.0 Providing the Most Efficient Use of Groundwater

Management Objective 1.01 — Water Level Monitoring
During the winter of 2020/2021, a total of 145 wells were measured: 137 Ogallala and 8 Edwards-Trinity (High Plains).

Performance Standards
1.01a -- 145 wells were measured in 2020/2021.

Management Objective 1.02 — Technical Field Services
29 requests for Technical Field Services were fulfilled in 2021. This is 14 less than the 43 requests in 2020.

Some tests were made for prospective land buyers.

Performance Standards
1.02a — 29 field service requests were fulfilled.

Management Objective 1.03 — Laboratory Services
The total number of lab tests performed for producers in 2021 was 64. This is less than the 102 tests run in 2020. These requests concern the suitability of irrigation water for certain crops.

Also, 3 bacteria tests were run in 2021, compared to 6 in 2020. One (1) of the tests indicated positive for either coliform or e-coli and disinfection and/or additional testing was recommended.

Performance Standards
1.03a — 67 lab service requests were fulfilled.
1.03b — 93 records entered in database. Data was obtained from water quality lab testing onsite.

Management Objective 1.04 — Irrigation Monitoring

2021 marks the 19th year for the District's Flow Meter Program. With the help of approximately 32 cooperators, the District reads flow meters during the growing season to determine water usage on various crops. Water usage for 2021 will be calculated at the end of the growing season. The following table contains a summary of irrigation water applied during previous years. The data received from the flow meter readings also helps the District calculate water efficiency in crop production.

	Cotton	Peanuts	Grain	Wheat	Grapes
2002	8.44	19.35	6.00	7.00	
2003	10.79	19.85	5.30	5.87	
2004	7.99	14.46	0.49	6.25	
2005	9.86	16.59	0.50	3.42	
2006	14.09	20.51	7.03	5.71	
2007	6.52	13.36	9.16	3.34	
2008	10.70	13.78	5.78	9.61	
2009	13.46	20.81	8.35	8.07	
2010	10.15	14.69	4.43	4.42	
2011	17.92	24.58		7.54	
2012	12.59	25.19	5.32	6.24	
2013	14.71	23.02	15.98	8.95	6.27
2014	11.29	14.23	7.14	5.94	4.78
2015	5.52	8.90	5.09	2.61	4.51
2016	8.34	10.90	2.00	3.33	4.92
2017	9.91	13.64	1.81	1.45	8.80
2018	11.74	17.08	3.54	3.82	11.86
2019	7.98	13.95	9.66	3.62	5.64
2020	10.92	15.94	5.02	4.21	12.33
	202.92	320.83	102.6	101.4	59.11
Average	**10.68**	**16.89**	**5.70**	**5.34**	**7.39**

Performance Standards

1.04a — In 2021, there were 43 irrigation systems in the cooperative program.

1.04b — Each year, the crops which are monitored vary according to what producers plant. In 2021, 8 different crops were monitored. These crops included cotton, peanuts, grain, wheat, watermelons, pumpkins, peas, and grapes.

1.04c — The table above shows the irrigation application for the major crops monitored.

Management Objective 1.05 — Irrigation System Inventory
The District conducted an Irrigation System Inventory in 2018.

Performance Standards
1.05a — No Irrigation System Inventory was required in 2021.
1.05b — 1,403 pivots and 129 sub-surface/above-ground drip-type irrigation systems are active and entered in District's database**.**

Goal 2.0 Controlling and Preventing Waste of Groundwater

Management Objective 2.01 — Well Permitting and Completion
Since March 1993, the District has issued 3,960 permits. The total number of permits issued during 2021 was 335 -- 280 irrigation well permits and 55 exempt/domestic/stock well permits.. This is higher than the 210 issued in 2020. March had the highest number of permits issued (78). Of the permits issued, 10 were either not used or a well was not completed or was plugged. Of the permits issued, approximately 10 were reported as deepening existing wells.

330 wells, which include irrigation and exempt, were inspected during 2021 to ensure proper completion and spacing. At the time of inspection, the GPS location of each well is obtained. This information is added to the database. The coordinates are also added to the District's ArcMap program so that all wells can be mapped. Currently 7,161 (83%) of the 8,610 wells within the District have GPS coordinates associated with them.

Performance Standards
2.01a — 280 permits issued.
201.b --- 55 exempt-well registrations issued.
2.01c — 330 well sites inspected.

Management Objective 2.02 — Open, Deteriorated or Uncovered Wells
Open or uncovered wells are discovered in one of two ways:
1. a person reports it to the District office; or
2. District staff discovers the well during a field visit.

One (1) deteriorated or uncovered well was reported to or discovered by District staff during 2021.

Performance Standards
2.02a — One **(**1) open, deteriorated or uncovered well discovered by the District.
2.02b — Initial inspection July 16, 2021; Resolved.

Management Objective 2.03 — Maximum Allowable Production
No instances of a maximum production violation were discovered this year.

Performance Standards
2.03a — Not Applicable

Management Objective 2.04 — Water Quality Monitoring
Water quality samples were taken from 30 domestic wells during the summer of 2021. The samples were tested in-office for conductivity, total dissolved solids, and chlorides. All samples were then submitted to Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Environmental Laboratory Services for additional testing and reporting.

Performance Standards
2.04a — 30 samples collected and tested in-office.
2.04b --- 30 domestic wells analyzed by LCRA.
2.04c --- 30 water quality test and analyzation results entered in database.

Goal 3.0 Controlling and Preventing Subsidence

(Not applicable.)

Goal 4.0 Conjunctive Surface Water Management Issues

(Not applicable.)

Goal 5.0 Natural Resource Issues

Performance Standards
The District received no complaints related to surface water, groundwater, or any natural resource within the District.

Goal 6.0 Drought Conditions

Management Objective 6.01 — Rain Gauges
The District maintains a network of 36 electronic rain gauges. These gauges allow staff to gather rainfall information at any time, not necessarily at the end of each month. The exact time and amount of rain collected is downloaded from the gauge to a computer. This information is published on the District's web site.

Performance Standards
6.01a — 36 rain gauges in District network.

Goal 7.0 Conservation

Management Objective 7.01 – Classroom Education
During 2020-2021, thirteen (13) total presentations were made to schools within the district. Annual Teacher Welcome Baskets were not distributed due to covid regulations. Baskets usually contain classroom items as well as information about curriculum/resources/presentations available to campus staff.

Sept 2020 – Annual Farm Tour for Kids 5th Grade – WU/Meadow (rescheduled to April 2021- Covid) ; Annual Farm Tour for Kids 5th Grade – OG (Cancelled – Covid)
Oct 2020 – Meadow/WU/OG "Kids, Kows & More" 4th grade program (cancelled – Covid)
March 2021 – Calendar Contest Presentations to all campuses (**6 total**):
Oak Grove 4th & 5th grade, Meadow 4th & 5th grade, Wellman-Union 4th & 5th grade
May 2021 – Presented to all three school districts (**6 total**):
OG 4th & 5th grade Calendar Contest Winners, Wellman-Union 4th & 5th grade Calendar Contest Winners, Meadow 4th & 5th grade Calendar Contest Winners
Presented to BHS, W-U, and Meadow High Schools – 1st & 2nd Place Scholarship Winners

Performance Standards
7.01a – 13 ongoing and long-term classroom education presentations and programs continued throughout 2020/2021.

Management Objective 7.02 — Newsletter
The District's newsletter, *South Plains Groundwater News*, was discontinued during the 2021 fiscal year. The District continues to maintain and update appropriate information on the website www.spuwcd.org.

Performance Standards
7.02a—Rainfall and groundwater information made available on website www.spuwcd.org.

Management Objective 7.03 -- News Releases
Brownfield News & Town Talk Radio FaceBook posts:
Dec. 2020 – Calendars ready for pick up & Cover/winners
Jan 2021 – SOCOP program info & 4H Water Ambassadors
Jan 2021 – Scholarship Contest Information & prompt
Feb 2021 – Ag Appreciation Dinner & Charles Orum Scholarship Event drawing
Feb 2021 – Town Talk Radio – Successful Ag Appreciation Dinner and Scholarship
March 2021 – National Groundwater Awareness Week & water conservation tips
March 2021 – Town Talk Radio: Upcoming RWH week
April 2021 – 4H Water Ambassadors applications open
May 2021 – Two-week promotion of RWH week on Town Talk Radio's FaceBook page and website

Performance Standard
7.03a — Six (6) articles were published in the local newspaper and/or local news media websites and social media.

Management Objective 7.04 -- Public Speaking Engagements
The District fulfilled 9 public speaking engagements during 2021. These included:

SPUWCD
Sept 2020 Rain Barrel drawing @ Farm Tour.
Sept 2020 Presentation to Rotary Club – District Services
July 2021 RWH Presentation made to Noon Lions club

SOCOP
Sept 2020 – Terry Co Farm Tour w/ Water Ambassadors
Feb 2021 – Ag Appreciation Dinner (helped serve w/ ambassadors)
April 2021 – Town Talk Radio
April 2021 – Terry Co Farm Tour for Kids
June 2021 – Tier I Water Ambassadors Leadership Academy
Aug 2021 – STEM academy for teachers @ ESC17 (Ag focused)

Performance Standard
7.4a -- Six (6) programs were presented in conjunction with and by Education Coordinator/SOCOP.
704b -- Three (3) public speaking engagements presented by General Manager Layne Marlow.

Management Objective 7.05 — Printed Material Resource Center
Thirty-six (36) different publications are displayed in the reception area of the office. These publications are obtained from various sources, including the TWDB, the USGS and AgriLife Extension Service. District staff developed twelve of the brochures.

Eighty-three (83) items were distributed from the resources center.

Performance Standards
7.05a — There were 50 items on conservation, 5 on rules/management plan, and 19 on water quality procured by the public from the resource center. Also, rule books were given to permit applicants as a part of the permitting process.

Management Objective 7.06 — Saturated Thickness Maps
A new saturated thickness map was created in 2016.

Performance Standards
7.06a — Sixteen **(**16) saturated thickness maps are available in the District office. The map is also available on the District's web site. Real estate agents and prospective land buyers frequently request this document. Nine (9) maps were obtained from the resource center, as well as one (1) map/graph depicting the base level of the aquifers.

Management Objective 7.07 — Conservation Literature
Fourteen (14) publications displayed in the reception area of the office are devoted to water conservation for the home and the farm.

Performance Standards
7.07a — 14 publications are dedicated to water conservation.
7.07b — 22 items were obtained by the public.

Goal 8.0 **Recharge Enhancement**
(Not applicable.)

Goal 9.0 Rainwater Harvesting

Management Objective 9.01 — Public Awareness Program
Following cancellation of the Rainwater Harvesting Project due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, Rainwater Harvesting Week resumed the first week of May 2021, May 03 thru May 07, 2021. The educational trailer was parked at Bicentennial Park and visible from the Tahoka Highway between the hours of 11:00 AM and 1:30 PM on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Local residents were invited to visit and view the trailer and register to win a rain barrel and rain chain. Winners were: Monday, May 03, 2021 – Tom Hesse; Tuesday, May 04, 2021 – Caryn Caballero; Wednesday, May 05, 2021 – Jerry Weaver.

Approximately 30 people attended the Rainwater Workshop on Thursday, May 06, 2021, Lindy Harris Day. Lindy Harris, founder of Rainwater Harvesting Week, presented a talk regarding importance of harvesting rainwater. Layne Marlow presented a PowerPoint presentation and information regarding Xeriscape, Softscape and Hardscape in homeowner landscaping. The first 20 pre-registered attendees received rain barrels and rain chains.

Performance Standards
9.01a — District published two articles in Brownfield News about rainwater harvesting and ran ads and promotions for two weeks on Town Talk Radio's website and Facebook page.

Goal 10.0 Precipitation Enhancement
(Not applicable.)

Goal 11.0 Brush Control
(Not applicable.)

Goal 12.0 Desired Future Condition of the Aquifers

The members of GMA 2 met on March 25, 2021 via virtual meeting. Each GMA 2 district was represented at the meeting. Representatives of Groundwater Management Area 2 adopted the proposed desired future conditions.

- A GMA 2-wide average drawdown of 28 feet between 2013 and 2080 for the Ogallala and Edwards-Trinity (High Plains) Aquifers.
- A GMA 2-wide average drawdown of 31 feet between 2013 and 2080 for the Dockum Aquifer.

GMA 2 member Districts had a 90-day public comment period (March 25-June 23, 2021). Each district conducted a public hearing to receive comments about the proposed DFCs during this time.

August 17, 2021: Dr. Hutchison presented Resolution 21-01 which adopts the Desired

Future Conditions (DFCs) for the Ogallala, Edwards-Trinity (High Plains), and Dockum Aquifers in GMA 2. The GMA 2 members also discussed, considered, and approved the final draft explanatory report for the adopted desired future conditions. The Explanatory report, along with Resolutions, was submitted to the TWDB October 18, 2021.

Management Objective 12.01—Calculate Annual Drawdown

Performance Standards

12.01a -- The average drawdown results (-1.70') were presented to the District Board at their March Board meeting.

12.01b --The average drawdown results were published on the District website, www.spuwcd.org.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

IRS COST-IN-WATER DEPLETION PROGRAM

After 20 years of participating in the IRS Cost in Water Depletion Program, the District declined to participate in the 2021 Fiscal Year.

SPUWCD.ORG

In 2019, the District web site was given an upgrade to a more modern look. The site provides education and information for District constituents, as well as people state-wide. The web site can be accessed from the Texas Alliance of Groundwater District's web site and is linked from various water district web sites. General information, hydrologic maps, a 2018 Terry County vineyard map, rainfall information, newsletters, rules, management plan and water level data are available on the site. In 2015, a weather station was installed at the District office. The real-time information is accessible on the Home Page. Interactive maps were also added to enhance water levels and water quality information. Although information is updated on a consistent as-needed basis, no major modifications were made to the website in 2021.

HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2020-2021 was the seventh year that scholarships were made available to all three high schools within the District. The essay topic for 2021 was "Value of Water" which correlated with World Water Day 2021 theme of #Water2Me on what water means to people. 1st and 2nd place scholarships were awarded to graduating seniors from each high school for a total of $4,500. To date, the District has awarded $29,855 in scholarships.

SOUTHERN OGALLALA CONSERVATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

In 2007, the District joined Llano Estacado UWCD and Sandy Land UWCD to form The Southern Ogallala Conservation and Outreach Program (SOCOP) which serves the education needs of the three districts. Through the Education Coordinator hired by SOCOP, more emphasis has been placed on education to students in the three school districts in the SPUWCD.

This year marks the 16th annual "Water Conservation Artwork Contest" for 4th and 5th graders in the District. Students submit water conservation artwork after hearing a presentation concerning water usage and conservation. The winning artwork is featured in a 2022 calendar to be published and distributed by the district. Several hundred entries were received in 2021. Approximately one hundred (100) 2021 SPUWCD Water Conservation Calendars were distributed throughout the District and community.

The education website, www.savingH_2O.org continues to be a part of the District's public education outreach. This outlet contains water conservation tips and information regarding the District's education program along with curriculum ideas for teachers.

SOCOP participated in and held numerous education programs for the three school districts. Other education outreaches are held within the District through SOCOP.

- Two Presentations at Kendrick Memorial Library
- Numerous invitations by TownTalk Radio to talk about education programs
- Calendar art contest presentations at all 3 elementary schools.
- Texas 4H Water Ambassadors—SOCOP has been involved in the program since its inception in 2016 through sponsorship donations. Students represented Tier I level ambassadors & SOCOP (Michelle Cooper) served on the state 4H Water Ambassador Advisory Board. The Ambassador Program allows these students to learn about water in all areas of the State.
- Education Trailer at the FHV Tractor Treat; Kids, Kows & More; Farm Tour for Kids .
- SOCOP Education Trailer—the educational trailer is filled with many lessons about water and water conservation. It continues to travel throughout the District to both student and adult events.
- SOCOP and 4H Water Ambassador (Macy Downs) participated in the Ogallala Virtual Summit held online in February 2021 as participants and guest closing speaker.
- SOCOP participates in the statewide Groundwater Education Collaborative – a network of groundwater educators from across the state.
- Terry County Texas Agri-Life Extension received two models from the 4H Water Ambassador program sponsors & trained with SOCOP at the Terry Co Agri-Life Extension Office. Models will be used by ambassadors and local 4H clubs to learn about groundwater and surface water resources.

Participation in Community/School Activities:

- Oct 2020 – Whitehouse Parker "Tractor Treat" (All ages; Cancelled – Covid)
- Sept 2020-May 2021 – Kendrick Memorial Library Story Hour (*EC-JH*; Cancelled – Covid)
- April-May 2021 – Ag Career Expo (HS; Cancelled – Covid)
- May 2021 – Western Day @ Colonial Heights (K-1st; Cancelled – Covid)
- May 2021 – Education Trailer presentations to adults attending SPUWCD Annual RWH Workshop
- June 2021 – Kendrick Memorial Library Summer Reaching Program (EC-JH age group & adults)
- June 2021 – Texas 4H Water Ambassadors Tier I Leadership Academy (9-12th; Education trailer & RWH demo garden presentation)
- Aug. 2021 – STEM academy for teachers @ ESC17 (Ag focused) – education trailer, 4H Water Ambassadors & programming information

AGRICULTURAL CAREER EXPO (ACE)

In 2012, a group of ag and education professionals held the first Ag Career Expo. The goal of the Ag Career Expo is to inform high school sophomores about the many different education and job opportunities which are available in the agricultural fields. Local colleges, equipment companies and other types of companies which deal in any form of agriculture are represented at the ACE event. The District has participated in each ACE day since its inception.

Spring 2020 & Spring 2021 cancelled due to Covid.

RAINWATER HARVESTING PROJECT

Several Producers and landowners indicated interest in applying for the District's assistance with rainwater harvesting projects. Plans and location designs pending further direction.

WOMEN IN AG

The third annual Women in Ag Conference scheduled for April 2020 & April 2021 were cancelled due to Covid-19.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SB 152/HB 668

The omnibus SB 152/HB 668 (Perry/Harris) was the main focus of groundwater-related discussions leading up to and during the legislative session. The bill included four distinct parts. First, it would have changed the mandatory award of attorney's fees to groundwater conservation districts when a district prevails under Section 36.066(g) to be discretionary. Second, it would have clarified which DFC should be used in a GCD's management plan if the adopted DFC is petitioned to be unreasonable under the provisions of Chapter 36. This provision came out of the consensus process conducted by TWCA's groundwater committee in which TAGD and many TAGD members participated. Third, the bill would have added a new section to Chapter 36 allowing a person with groundwater ownership to petition their GCD to adopt or modify a district rule. This provision also achieved consensus at the TWCA groundwater committee. Lastly, SB 152 would have added a new section to Chapter 36 to require an applicant for a well permit application or amendment to provide notice to each person with a real property interest in groundwater beneath the land within the space prescribed by the district's spacing rules for the proposed or existing well, with certain exceptions.

TAGD voted to support three of the four components of SB 152—all except the proposed change to the attorney's fees provision contained in Section 36.066(g). Bills to modify the attorney's fees provisions of Chapter 36 have been filed for at least the past three legislative sessions and have consistently reflected a point of disagreement, with TAGD opposed to such a change. After SB 152 passed the Senate with the provision to change attorney's fees intact, a committee substitute was offered in the House Natural Resources Committee that removed that change. That committee substitute garnered support from TAGD, was voted favorably from committee, and subsequently passed the full House. Ultimately, however, the Senate did not vote to concur or appoint a conference committee on the version of the bill returned to the Senate. As a result, the entire bill died. While it is still too early to make predictions, it does appear likely that the provisions of this bill will again be part of interim discussions and portions of the bill may be refiled in the 88th legislative session.

• **HB 2851 (Lucio)** would have required TWDB to calculate the managed sustained groundwater pumping of the state's aquifers as a way to provide greater context to the total estimated recoverable storage number. This bill was a refile from earlier legislative sessions, and the concept originated in the TWCA consensus process. TAGD supported this bill. This bill was approved by the House but did not receive a hearing in the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee.

• **HB 3619/SB 946 (Bowers/Eckhardt)** would have added registered exempt wells to those to be considered in permitting decisions. Similar versions of this bill have been filed in prior legislative sessions and first emerged through the TWCA consensus process. TAGD supported this bill. Like HB 2851, this bill was approved by the House but did not receive a hearing in the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee.

• **HB 966 (Burns)** sought to eliminate the mandatory award of attorney's fees under Section 36.066(g) and 36.102(d). TAGD opposed this bill. This bill did not receive a hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee.

• **HB 3972 (T. King)** sought to add a bonding requirement for petitioners other than the applicant in a contested case hearing to cover both the district's and applicant's costs (SB 1314 [Lucio] included a similar but not identical concept). TAGD was neutral on this bill. This bill was voted favorably from the House Natural Resources Committee but did not receive a vote in the House.

• **HB 3801/SB 2157 (Metcalf/Creighton)** contained the same provision regarding unreasonable

DFCs as was included in SB 152. TAGD supported this bill. This bill was approved by the House but did not receive a hearing in the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee.

• **HB 2103 (Bowers)** would have clarified that meetings of GCDs within groundwater management areas are subject to provisions regarding video and telephonic meetings contained in the Texas Government Code Section 551.125 and 127. This bill was approved by the House but was not referred to a committee in the Senate.

Groundwater-Adjacent Bills

While not directly affecting Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code, another bill that was filed this legislative session and received attention was HB 2095 (Wilson). This bill would have directed the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct studies of surface water and groundwater to improve on data gaps, integrate models to characterize water resources, and make determinations on water availability. In a lengthy Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee hearing, questions were raised regarding potential confusion and overlap with other legislatively funded models relied on for the regional and state water planning process, and the bill was left pending in committee. However, the dialogue on this topic suggests that how to best fill and fund data and modeling gaps, including interactions between groundwater and surface water, could be a subject for interim study.

Finally, a bill with potential future implications for groundwater management that did pass this legislative session was SB 601 (Perry/Burrows). This bill creates the Texas Produced Water Consortium at Texas Tech University, which will study the economic, environmental, and public health aspects of beneficially using water produced during oil and gas operations and will recommend a pilot project. The potential to reuse produced water could provide a viable alternative to disposal through underground injection and may offer future opportunities for beneficial use outside the industry to meet water demands, if the produced water is treated to meet all water quality and groundwater protection standards.

Government Bills

After over a year of countless meetings and hearings held virtually, pursuant to Governor Abbott's temporary suspension of certain provisions of TOMA, it was anticipated that the 87th legislative session would bring changes to TOMA that would provide additional opportunities for governmental entities to utilize virtual meetings. Several bills were filed that would have granted governmental entities this increased flexibility, and there was early movement of those bills at the committee level. However, as the legislative session progressed, these efforts met resistance in the Senate. As a result—and pursuant to Governor Abbott's recent declaration—the suspension of certain provisions of TOMA will expire on September 1 and governmental entities will be required to fully comply with the unchanged TOMA. There were, however, several bills affecting government operations and transparency that did become law and were of interest to TAGD members:

• **HB 1118 (Capriglione/Paxton)** expands the cybersecurity training requirement to include appointed officials while limiting the requirement only to those employees and officials that have access to the government's computer system and who use a computer to perform at least 25% of their required duties.

• **HB 1154 (Jetton/Kolkhorst)** requires certain special purpose districts to post specified information on a website. It also amends requirements regarding public meeting locations for districts in rural areas.

• **HB 1082 (P. King/Zaffirini)** exempts certain personal information of elected public officials from public disclosure.

• **SB 1225 (Huffman/Paddie)** provides that a governmental entity may only suspend responses to open records requests once for each declared catastrophe. It also requires that a governmental entity make a good faith effort to continue to respond to open records requests even when it closes its administrative offices but requires remote work.

• **HB 2723 (Meyer/Bettencourt)** requires DIR to develop and maintain a property tax database on the internet and requires that tax notices from taxing entities reference how to access that local property tax database.

"Legislative" section excerpted from "TAGD's 87th Legislative Wrap-Up" at https://texasgroundwater.org/policy/the-legislature/legislative-summaries/

SUMMARY

The original legislative intent of groundwater district performance evaluations through management plan certification and auditing was to answer two main questions:

1. Is the district operational, and
2. Is the district actively engaged in achieving stated goals, objectives, and performance standards?

Without a doubt, the South Plains Underground Water Conservation District is operational and is achieving its stated goals, objectives, and standards.