

Item 3 | DFC Considerations for 4th Planning Round

GMA 12 planning group met February 21, 2025, to further discuss the Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) of the shared aquifers. Paul Kirby, representing Fayette County GCD, gave a presentation focused on the Yegua-Jackson Aquifer and determining the DFC for future adoption. It was decided that each district will perform evaluations for information and provide comments and corrections by the end of March to produce additional model runs to consider.

GMA 12 members discussed past and future pumping files and scenarios using the Sparta/Queen City/Carrizo-Wilcox Groundwater Availability Model (GAM) and results, including predicted water levels, water budgets and DFC planning for the current round of joint planning and model runs previously presented and discussed. Alan Day reminded the members that BVGCD had presented results of their “best estimate” run and would like for the members to consider these results in their decisions. Mr. Westbrook stated the Post Oak Savannah GCD board desired to maintain currently adopted DFCs. During discussion Mr. Van Dresar, Mr. Bailey and Mr. Totten agreed with desires to maintain current DFCs if possible. Mr. Westbrook noted the limited time remaining to adopt DFCs in this current round of planning and recommended moving forward with current DFCs and evaluating comments received during the process as a possible way to get an early start on the next round of joint planning.

Mr. Day reminded that Brazos Valley GCD had submitted updated pumping files previously and asked about each GCD updating their pumping files to be used in the current process. Different ways to incorporate additional pumping into the model runs while still targeting results of current DFCs were discussed. Jim Totten agreed that curtailment of permitted amounts in pumping files was acceptable. The group discussed the potential of documenting level of curtailment in pumping files in the explanatory report. Details of the curtailment process were not discussed. The group also directed consultants to include pumping estimates for counties without GCDs.

After discussion, GMA 12 members agreed to update their pumping file from the S-19 Run and provide their consultants with the updated files and instruction to work with consultant team to update the S-19 file with the intent that overall DFCs are still the goal, with the updated file and GAM Run being designated as PS4-1. All comments and well files for updating the current S-19 files are due by March 19, 2025.

- District staff and consultants have provided updated permit information for all permitted wells in all aquifers
- Pumping files for both GAMs used in this planning round have been properly reconciled and made available for planning purposes
- All districts have turned into updated files for the new PS4-1 GAM update
- Consultants will make GAM Run PS4-1 prior to the scheduled GMA 12 meeting on April 23, 2025
- PS4-1 will be evaluated and discussed by GMA 12 members at that meeting

- There will be an actionable agenda item on April 23, 2025 for GMA 12 members to consider the BVGCD “Best Estimate” pumping files as an alternative DFC pathway.

Other matters that continue to be decided upon for this planning round include:

- Determination of aquifer relevance for planning purposes (Gulf Coast Aquifer)
- Expression of DFCs for BVGCD in Planning Round #4
- Beginning date for model runs (2000 or 2010)
- Ending date for the DFC period (2080?)

Item 3 – Declaration of Non-Relevance of the Gulf Coast Aquifer for 2026 DFC Planning

Groundwater districts are required to establish a Desired Future Condition (DFC) for each of the aquifers within the bounds of the district at least every five years. The process allows a district to make a declaration of “non-relevant” when it is deemed the aquifer plays no significant role in the districts’ planning of future water supplies and their management.

The Catahoula Sandstone, the basal unit of the Gulf Coast Aquifer, occurs in the very south part of Brazos County under about 1.3 percent of the Brazos Valley Groundwater Conservation District area that encompasses Brazos and Robertson counties. The aquifer provides small amounts of water to a limited number of wells no greater than 250 feet deep. Its contribution to the overall groundwater supply within the Brazos Valley Groundwater Conservation District is de minimis. The Catahoula Sandstone is a groundwater supply of some significance in the counties to the south of Brazos County where the aquifer is deeper and can support wells with high pumping rates.

It is because of the above mentioned factors the Gulf Coast Aquifer was declared by the Brazos Valley Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors to be non-relevant during the 2017 DFC planning cycle. None of the underlying factors have changed to deem the Gulf Coast Aquifer relevant during the current 2021 DFC planning cycle.

It is the recommendation by the General Manager the Board declare the Gulf Coast Aquifer “non-relevant” for the 2026 DFC planning cycle as it relates to Brazos Valley Groundwater Conservation District.