

# Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Management Plan

<b>Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors Management Plan Adoption:</b>	<b>October 24, 2008</b>
<b>Texas Water Development Board Administrative Management Plan Approval:</b>	<b>December 22, 2008</b>
<b>Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors Management Plan Revision Adoption:</b>	<b>August 16, 2013</b>
<b>Texas Water Development Board Administrative Management Plan Revision Approval:</b>	<b>October 15, 2013</b>
<b>Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors Management Plan - Adoption with Revision:</b>	
<b>Texas Water Development Board Administrative Management Plan Revision Approval:</b>	

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## **DISTRICT MISSION**

The mission of the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District (**District**) is to develop sound water conservation and management strategies designed to conserve, preserve, protect, and prevent waste of groundwater resources within Victoria County for the benefit of Victoria County's landowners, citizens, economy, and environment.

The District will implement these strategies through the acquisition and dissemination of hydrogeological information, the development of programs and incentives to conserve and protect groundwater resources, and the adoption and enforcement of fair and appropriate District rules governing the production and use of the groundwater resources within the District.

## **PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Senate Bill 1, enacted by the 75th Texas Legislature in 1997, and Senate Bill 2, enacted by the 77th Texas Legislature in 2001, established a comprehensive statewide water resource planning process and the actions necessary for groundwater conservation districts to manage and conserve the groundwater resources of the state of Texas. These bills required all groundwater conservation districts to develop a management plan which defines the groundwater needs and groundwater supplies within each district and the goals each district has set to achieve its mission.

In addition, the 79th Texas Legislature enacted House Bill 1763 in 2005 that requires joint planning among districts that are in the same groundwater management area. These districts must jointly agree upon and establish the desired future conditions of the aquifers within their respective groundwater management areas. Through this process, the groundwater conservation districts will submit the desired future conditions to the Executive Administrator of the Texas Water Development Board who, in turn, will provide each district within the groundwater management area with the amount of modeled available groundwater within each district. The modeled available groundwater will be based on the desired future conditions jointly established for each aquifer within the groundwater management area.

Technical information, such as the desired future conditions within the jurisdiction of the District and the amount of modeled available groundwater from such aquifers is required by statute to be included in the Management Plan of the District and will guide the development of regulatory and management policies of the District. This management plan is intended to satisfy the requirements of Senate Bill 1, Senate Bill 2, House Bill 1763, the statutory requirements of Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code, and the rules and requirements of the Texas Water Development Board.

## **DISTRICT INFORMATION**

### **Creation**

The 79th Texas Legislature created the District in 2005 by the passage of House Bill 3423. The citizens of Victoria County confirmed the creation of the District by an election held on November 8, 2005. The District was formed to protect, conserve, and prevent waste of the groundwater resources beneath the area of Victoria County. To manage the groundwater resources under its jurisdiction, the District is charged with the rights and responsibilities specified in its enabling legislation; the provisions of Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code; this Management Plan, and the Rules of the District.

### **Directors**

The Board of Directors of the District consists of five members. These five directors are elected by the voters of Victoria County and serve a four-year term. The District observes the same four precincts as the Victoria County Commissioners' with one at-large position. Director terms are staggered on a two-year election interval in even-numbered years.

### **Authority**

The District has the rights and responsibilities provided in Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code and Chapter 356 of Title 31 of the Texas Administrative Code. The District has the authority to undertake hydrogeological studies, adopt a management plan, provide for the permitting of certain water wells, and implement programs to achieve statutory requirements. The District has rule-making authority to implement its policies and procedures to manage the groundwater resources of Victoria County.

### **Location and Extent**

The boundaries of the District are the same as Victoria County. This area encompasses approximately 888 square miles. The District is bounded by DeWitt County, Lavaca County, Jackson County, Calhoun County, Refugio County, and Goliad County.

## **GROUNDWATER RESOURCES OF VICTORIA COUNTY**

The Gulf Coast Aquifer System underlies Victoria County. Figure 1 and subsequent discussion of groundwater resources is derived Texas Water Development Report 365 - Aquifers of the Gulf Coast (TWDB Report 365) and Texas Water Development Report – Groundwater Availability Model of the Central Gulf Coast Aquifer System: Numerical Simulations through 1999 (TWDB CGC-GAM Report).

Figure 1: Stratigraphic Units of the Gulf Coast Aquifer and Central Gulf Coast

## Groundwater Availability Layers

Stratigraphic Units			Hydrostratigraphic Units	CGC-GAM Layer		
		Alluvium	Chicot Aquifer	Layer 1		
		Beaumont Clay				
Lissie Formation		Montgomery Formation				
		Bentley Formation				
Willis Sand						
		Goliad Sand	Evangeline Aquifer	Layer 2		
		Fleming Formation / Lagarto Clay				
			Burkeville Confining System	Layer 3		
		Oakville Sandstone				
			Jasper Aquifer	Layer 4		
Catahoula Tuff / Anahuac Formation / Frio Formation			Catahoula Confining System			

The Gulf Coast Aquifer System consists of five distinct hydrostratigraphic units: Chicot Aquifer, Evangeline Aquifer, Burkeville Confining System, Jasper Aquifer, and Catahoula Confining System. These units, except for the Catahoula Confining System, are included within the Central Gulf Coast Groundwater Availability Model developed by the Texas Water Development Board.

The Chicot and the Evangeline Aquifers consist of interbedded sand, silts, and clays. The Chicot Aquifer outcrops for most of the area within the boundary of the District except for a small portion along the western boundary of the Victoria County. The thickness of the Chicot Aquifer ranges from less than 50 feet in the western portion of Victoria County to nearly 1,000 feet in the eastern portion of Victoria County. The thickness of the Evangeline Aquifer varies from approximately 1,000 feet in the outcrop in the western portion of Victoria County to approximately 1,200 feet in the eastern portion of Victoria County. The majority of water wells drilled and operated in Victoria County have been completed and screened in the Chicot Aquifer or Evangeline Aquifer.

## **STATEMENT OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The District recognizes that the groundwater resources of Victoria County and the region are of vital importance to the many users who are dependent on these valuable resources. In addition, the District recognizes that the landowners have an ownership right in the groundwater resources associated with their properties and are the primary stewards of the groundwater resources associated with their properties. The District will work with interested parties, especially landowners, in Victoria County to conserve, preserve, protect, and prevent waste of this most valuable resource, for the benefit of the landowners, the public, the local economy, and the environment.

The Management Plan of the District is intended to serve as a tool to focus the thoughts and actions of those given the responsibility for the execution of the activities of the District as well as to provide information to the staff of the District, landowners, and others responsible for the execution of, or compliance with, the policies and regulations of the District. The District will carry out its programs and responsibilities in implementing this management plan in a prudent and cost-effective manner. The District, with public input, will adopt and enforce rules necessary to implement this management plan.

## **CRITERIA FOR PLAN APPROVAL**

### **Planning Horizon**

This plan will be reviewed within five years as required by §36.1072(e) of the Texas Water Code. The District will consider the necessity to amend the plan and re-adopt this management plan with or without amendments as required by §36.1072(e) of the Texas Water Code.

This management plan will remain in effect until replaced by a revised management plan approved by the Texas Water Development Board.

### **Notice and Hearing Related to Plan Adoption - TWC §36.1071(a)**

Public notices documenting that this plan was considered and adopted following

appropriate public hearings are included in Appendix D.

**Coordination with Regional Surface Water Management Entities - TWC**

**§36.1071(a)**

Letters transmitting this plan to the surface water management entities of the Victoria County region for coordination purposes are included in Appendix E.

**Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Director Resolution  
Adopting Management Plan**

A copy of the resolution adopting this plan is included in Appendix F.



## **ESTIMATES OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY §36.1071 OF THE TEXAS WATER CODE AND RULE 356.52 OF TITLE 31 OF THE TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

### **Estimate of Modeled Available Groundwater in the District based on Desired Future Conditions – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(A) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(A)**

Modeled available groundwater is defined in §36.001 of the Texas Water Code as "the amount of water that the executive administrator determines may be produced on an average annual basis to achieve a desired future condition established under Section 36.108." Desired future condition is defined in §36.001 of the Texas Water Code as "a quantitative description, adopted in accordance with §36.108 of the Texas Water Code, of the desired condition of the groundwater resources in a management area at one or more specified future times." The desired future condition of an aquifer may only be determined through joint planning with other groundwater conservation districts in the same groundwater management area as required by the 79th Legislature with the passage of House Bill 1763 into law.

The District is located in Groundwater Management Area 15. The groundwater conservation districts of Groundwater Management Area 15 completed the second-round of the joint planning process to determine the desired future condition of the aquifers within the groundwater management area.

District representatives of Groundwater Management Area 15 adopted, by resolution, the desired future condition for Gulf Coast Aquifer within Groundwater Management Area 15 on April 29, 2016. The administrator of Groundwater Management Area 15 submitted the adopted desired future conditions and explanatory report for Groundwater Management Area 15 on June 23, 2016, to Texas Water Development Board. The Texas Water Development Board designated the Groundwater Management Area 15 Explanatory Report administratively complete on October 20, 2016. The Texas Water Development Board provided the Modeled Available Groundwater estimates for Groundwater Management Area 15 to district representatives on March 22, 2017.

The desired future condition for the entire area is stated as follows:

*"Drawdown of the Gulf Coast Aquifer System shall not exceed an average of 13 feet in December 2069 from estimated year 2000 conditions."*

The desired future condition for Victoria County is stated as follows:

*"Drawdown of the Gulf Coast Aquifer System shall not exceed an average of 5 feet in December 2069 from estimated year 2000 conditions."*

The Texas Water Development Board reported the modeled available groundwater for Groundwater Management Area 15 based on the desired future condition in GAM Run 16-025 MAG which is incorporated into this management plan as Appendix C. The modeled available groundwater, in acre-feet per year (AFY), of the Gulf Coast Aquifer

within the District per Table 1 of the GAM Run 16-025 MAG report is as follows:

Year					
2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2069
44,974 AFY	49,970 AFY	54,966 AFY	54,966 AFY	59,963 AFY	59,963 AFY

**Estimate of amount of groundwater being used within the district on an annual basis – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(B) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(B)**

Please refer to Appendix A.

**Estimate of annual amount of recharge from precipitation to the groundwater resources within the district – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(C) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(C)**

Please refer to Appendix B.

**Estimate for each aquifer, annual volume of water that discharges from the aquifer to springs and any surface water bodies, including lakes, streams, and rivers – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(D) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(D)**

Please refer to Appendix B.

**Estimate of annual volume of flow into and out of the district within each aquifer and between aquifers in the district – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(E) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(E)**

Please refer to Appendix B.

**Estimate of projected surface water supply in the district according to the most recently adopted state water plan – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(F) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(F)**

Please refer to Appendix A.

**Estimate of projected total demand for water in the district according to the most recently adopted state water plan – TWC §36.1071(e)(3)(G) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(5)(G)**

Please refer to Appendix A.

## **CONSIDER THE WATER SUPPLY NEEDS AND WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES INCLUDED IN THE ADOPTED STATE WATER PLAN – TWC §36.1071(e)(4)**

The 2017 State Water Plan identifies water supply needs, within Victoria County, for the irrigation, manufacturing, steam electric power, and City of Victoria water user groups. The sum of projected water supply needs is 21,846 acre-feet in year 2020 and increases to 105,471 acre-feet in year 2070.

The 2017 State Water Plan identifies water management strategies with source water from the Gulf Coast Aquifer within Victoria County. The volume of groundwater planned to be produced with these strategies equals 8,574 acre-feet in years 2020 and 2070.

The District has established regulations regarding historic use protection, groundwater production limitation, and well spacing to be used to evaluate permitting requests. The District will evaluate permitting requests associated with the implementation of the water management strategies with source water from the Gulf Coast Aquifer within Victoria County relative to the Rules of the District.

Please refer to Appendix A.

## **DETAILS ON THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT OF GROUNDWATER**

The Texas Legislature established that groundwater conservation districts are the preferred method of groundwater management in TWC §36.0015. The District will manage the use of groundwater within Victoria County in order to protect, preserve, conserve, and prevent waste of the resource while seeking to maintain the economic viability of all resource user groups, public and private. The District seeks to manage the groundwater resources of Victoria County as practicably as possible as established in the plan. In consideration of the economic and cultural activities occurring within Victoria County, the District will identify and engage in such activities and practices, that if implemented may result in the reasonable and effective protection, preservation, conservation, waste prevention of groundwater in Victoria County. The District will manage groundwater resources through rules developed and implemented in accordance with Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code and the provisions of the enabling legislation of the District.

For the purposes of this management plan, the following definitions are used:

- Protection of groundwater is the activity and practice of seeking to prevent harm or injury to a groundwater resource.
- Preservation of groundwater is the activity and practice of seeking to extend the useful longevity or life of a groundwater resource.
- Conservation of groundwater is the activity and practice of seeking to use a groundwater resource in a manner that appropriately balances the impacts associated with consuming the resource and preserving the resource for the future.

- Waste prevention of groundwater is the activity and practices seeking to prevent the use of groundwater in any manner defined as waste in Section 36.001 of the Texas Water Code.

An observation well network has been established and will be maintained by the District in order to monitor changing water levels and water quality of groundwater supplies within Victoria County. When a monitoring well network has been established, the District will make a regular assessment of water supply and groundwater storage conditions, water quality conditions and will report those conditions to the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation Board of Directors and to the public. The District may undertake, as necessary, investigations of the groundwater resources within Victoria County and will make the results of investigations available to the public. The District will co-operate with investigations of the groundwater resources of Victoria County undertaken by other local political subdivisions or agencies of the State of Texas.

In order to better manage groundwater resources, the District may establish management zones for; and adopt different rules for:

1. Each aquifer, subdivision of an aquifer, or geologic strata located in whole or in part within Victoria County; or
2. Each geographic area overlying an aquifer or subdivision of an aquifer located in whole or in part within Victoria County.

For the purpose of managing the use of groundwater within Victoria County, the District may define sustainable use as the use of an amount of groundwater in Victoria County as a whole or any management zone established by the District that does not exceed any of the following conditions:

1. The long-term average historical groundwater production from aquifers in Victoria County established by the District prior to the establishment of the desired future condition of aquifers in a groundwater management area in which the District is located; or
2. The desired future conditions of aquifers in Victoria County established by a groundwater management area in which the District is located; or
3. The amount of modeled available groundwater resulting from the establishment of a desired future aquifer condition by the District or a groundwater management area in which the District is located; or
4. The estimated long-term average historical amount of annual recharge of the aquifer or aquifer subdivision in which the use occurs as recognized by the District; or
5. Any other criteria established by the District as being a threshold of use beyond which further use of the aquifer or aquifer subdivision may result in a specified undesirable or injurious condition.

The District adopted rules that protect historic use of groundwater in Victoria County to the maximum extent practical and consistent with this plan and the goals and objectives set forth herein. The District may impose more restrictive conditions on non-historic-use

permits and non-historic-use permit amendments to increase use by historic users if the limitations:

1. Apply to all non-historic-use permits and non-historic-use permit amendments to increase use by historic users, regardless of the type or location of use;
2. Bear a reasonable relationship to the Management Plan of the District; and
3. Are reasonably necessary to protect historic use.

The District adopted rules to regulate groundwater withdrawals by means of spacing and/or production limits. The relevant factors to be considered in making a determination to grant or deny a permit or limit groundwater withdrawals shall include those set forth in the District enabling Legislation, Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code, and the Rules of the District. The District may employ technical resources at its disposal, as needed, to evaluate the groundwater resources available within Victoria County and to determine the effectiveness of regulatory or conservation measures. In consideration of particular individual, localized or District-wide conditions, including without limitation climatic conditions, the District may, by rule, allow an increase or impose a decrease in the total production in a management zone above or below the sustainable amount for a period of time considered necessary by the District in order to accomplish the purposes set forth in Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code, or the enabling legislation of the District. The exercise of said discretion by the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors shall not be construed as limiting the power of the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors.

## **ACTIONS, PROCEDURES, PERFORMANCE AND AVOIDANCE FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – TWC §36.1071(e)(2)**

The District will implement the provisions of this plan and will utilize the provisions of this plan as a guidepost for determining the direction or priority for all District activities. All operations of the District, all agreements entered into by the District, and any additional planning efforts in which the District may participate will be consistent with the provisions of this plan.

Rules adopted by the District for the permitting of wells and the use of groundwater shall comply with Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code, including §36.113 of the Texas Water Code, and the provisions of this management plan. All rules will be adhered to and enforced. The promulgation and enforcement of the rules will be based on the best technical evidence available to the District.

The Rules of the District are available at the following website address: [www.vcgcd.org](http://www.vcgcd.org)

## **METHODOLOGY FOR TRACKING DISTRICT PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING MANAGEMENT GOALS – 31TAC 356.52(a)(4)**

The staff of the District will prepare and present an annual report to the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation Board of Directors regarding the performance of the District in achieving management goals and objectives for the fiscal year of the District. The report will be presented within 120 days following the completion of the fiscal year. The District will maintain the report on file for public inspection at the office of the District upon adoption at a meeting of the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation Board of Directors.

## **GOALS, MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES and PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

### **Providing the most efficient use of groundwater – TWC §36.1071(a)(1) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(A)**

**Objective:** Develop and maintain a water well registration program for tracking well information for wells within Victoria County.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the changes related to water well registration including the number of non-grandfathered and grandfathered wells registered.

**Objective:** Develop and maintain a water well permitting program for processing and tracking all permits authorizing groundwater production.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the changes related to water well permitting including the number of new applications and the disposition of the applications.

### **Controlling and preventing waste of groundwater – TWC §36.1071(a)(2) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(B)**

**Objective:** Develop and maintain a water well inspection program for non-exempt wells.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the findings of the inspection activities including information regarding the number of wells that require improvement to control or prevent waste of groundwater.

### **Controlling and preventing subsidence – TWC §36.1071(a)(3) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(C)**

This category of management goal is not applicable to the District at this time because no significant subsidence has occurred in Victoria County. The District will monitor geological conditions for evidence of subsidence, particularly in high groundwater production areas near the coast and take appropriate action should subsidence develop.

### **Addressing conjunctive surface water management issues – TWC §36.1071(a)(4) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(D)**

**Objective:** Participate in the regional water planning process by attending at least



one South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group (Region L) meeting per year.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the representatives of the District, dates, and the number of meetings of the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group attended.

**Addressing natural resource issues which impact the use and availability of groundwater, and which are impacted by the use of groundwater – TWC §36.1071(a)(5) and 31 TAC §356.52(a)(1)(E)**

**Objective:** Develop and maintain a water quality monitoring program.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the monitoring activities including the number of wells monitored and the year-to-year change of water quality.

**Addressing drought conditions – TWC §36.1071(a)(6) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(F)**

**Objective:** Collect and review drought condition information related to Victoria County and the surrounding region of Texas.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the drought condition information collected and reviewed.

**Addressing conservation, recharge enhancement, rainwater harvesting, precipitation enhancement, or brush control, where appropriate and cost-effective – TWC §36.1071(a)(7) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(G)**

**Objective:** Promote conservation, rainwater harvesting and brush control within Victoria County.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the activities directly related to conservation, rainwater harvesting and brush control including educational materials developed and delivered to local schools, cooperative educational contributions and grants, public speaking events and presentations, community event participation, and educational publications.

Recharge enhancement and precipitation enhancement are deemed to be not appropriate or cost-effective programs for the District at this time because there are no existing recharge enhancement or precipitation

enhancement programs operating in nearby counties in which the District could participate and share costs. The costs of operating a single-county recharge enhancement or precipitation enhancement program are prohibitive and would require the District to increase taxes. Therefore, these goals are not applicable to the District at this time.

**Addressing the desired future conditions adopted by the district under Section 36.108 – TWC §36.1071(a)(8) and 31 TAC 356.52(a)(1)(H)**

**Objective:** Develop and maintain a water level monitoring program.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the water level monitoring activities including the number of wells monitored and the year-to-year change of water level.

**Objective:** Analyze water level monitoring information to evaluate water level trends and determine the degree to which the District is complying with the desired future conditions of Gulf Coast Aquifer in Victoria County.

**Performance Standard:** Each year, the District will summarize within the annual report the water level trends and the conclusions regarding the compliance of the District with the desired future condition of the Gulf Coast Aquifer in Victoria County.

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**Appendix A.** Estimated Historical Water Use and 2017 State Water Plan  
Datasets provided by Texas Water Development Board

**Appendix B.** Groundwater Availability Model Run 12-022 provided by Texas Water Development Board

**Appendix C.** Groundwater Availability Model Run 16-025 MAG

**Appendix D.** Public Notices Regarding Hearings Related to Plan Adoption

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**Appendix F.** Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of  
Director Resolution Adopting Management Plan

**Appendix G.** Minutes of Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Director Meeting related to the public hearings for and adoption of the Management Plan

**Appendix H.** Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District Contact Information