

# GAM Run 08-46

by Mr. Wade Oliver

Texas Water Development Board  
Groundwater Availability Modeling Section  
(512) 463-3132  
August 1, 2008

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Texas State Water Code, Section 36.1071, Subsection (h), states that, in developing its groundwater management plan, a groundwater conservation district shall use groundwater availability modeling information provided by the Executive Administrator of the Texas Water Development Board in conjunction with any available site-specific information provided by the district for review and comment to the Executive Administrator. Information derived from groundwater availability models that shall be included in groundwater management plans include:

- (1) the annual amount of recharge from precipitation to the groundwater resources within the district, if any;
- (2) for each aquifer within the district, the annual volume of water that discharges from the aquifer to springs and any surface water bodies, including lakes, streams, and rivers; and
- (3) the annual volume of flow into and out of the district within each aquifer and between aquifers in the district.

The purpose of this model run is to provide information to the Mesa Underground Water Conservation District for its groundwater management plan. The groundwater management plan for the Mesa Underground Water Conservation District is due for approval by the executive administrator of the Texas Water Development Board before February 25, 2009.

This report discusses the methods, assumptions, and results from model runs using the groundwater availability model for the southern part of the Ogallala Aquifer. Table 1 summarizes the groundwater availability model data required by statute for Mesa Underground Water Conservation District's groundwater management plan.

Although the Edwards-Trinity (High Plains) Aquifer also underlies the Mesa Underground Water Conservation District, a groundwater availability model for this minor aquifer has not been completed at this time. If the district would like information for the Edwards-Trinity (High Plains) Aquifer, they may request it from the Groundwater Technical Assistance Section of the Texas Water Development Board.

## **METHODS:**

We ran the groundwater availability model for the southern part of the Ogallala Aquifer, and (1) extracted water budgets for each year of the 1980 through 1999 period and (2) averaged the water budget values for recharge, surface water outflow, inflow to the district, and outflow from the district for the portion of the Ogallala aquifer located within the district.

## **PARAMETERS AND ASSUMPTIONS:**

- We used version 1.01 of the groundwater availability model for the southern portion of the Ogallala Aquifer.
- In the analysis, the pumpage distribution for each transient calibrated model is the same as described in Blandford and others (2003) for the southern portion of the Ogallala Aquifer.
- Irrigation return flow was accounted for in the model by a reduction in agricultural pumping as described in Blandford and others (2003).
- See Blandford and others (2003) for assumptions and limitations of the model for the southern part of the Ogallala Aquifer. Root mean squared error for this model is 47 feet for 1990 water levels. This error will have more of an effect on model results where the aquifer is thin.
- The groundwater availability model for the southern part of the Ogallala Aquifer has only one layer representing the Ogallala hydrostratigraphic unit in the district.
- The transient portion of the model has monthly stress periods from 1982 to 1984 and 1992 to 1994.
- We used Processing Modflow for Windows (PMWIN) version 5.3 (Chiang and Kinzelbach, 2001) as the interface to process model output for the groundwater availability model for the southern part of the Ogallala Aquifer.

## **RESULTS:**

A groundwater budget summarizes the water entering and leaving the aquifer according to the groundwater availability model. Selected components were extracted from the groundwater budget and averaged over the duration of the calibrated portion of the model run (1980 through 1999) in the district, as shown in Table 1. The components of the modified budgets shown in Table 1 include:

- Precipitation recharge—This is the areally distributed recharge sourced from precipitation falling on the outcrop areas of the aquifers (where the aquifer is exposed at land surface) within the district.

- Surface water outflow—This is the total water exiting the aquifer (outflow) to surface water features such as streams, reservoirs, and drains (springs).
- Flow into and out of district—This component describes lateral flow within the aquifer between the district and adjacent counties.
- Flow between aquifers—This describes the vertical flow, or leakage, between aquifers or confining units. This flow is controlled by the relative water levels in each aquifer or confining unit and aquifer properties of each aquifer or confining unit that define the amount of leakage that occurs. “Inflow” to an aquifer from an overlying or underlying aquifer will always equal the “Outflow” from the other aquifer. Since this model is a single-layer, flow between aquifers was not included.

The information needed for the district’s management plan is summarized in Table 1. It is important to note that sub-regional water budgets are not exact. This is due to the size of the model cells and the approach used to extract data from the model. To avoid double accounting, a model cell that straddles a political boundary, such as district or county boundaries, is assigned to one side of the boundary based on the location of the centroid of the model cell. For example, if a cell contains two counties, the cell is assigned to the county where the centroid of the cell is located.

Table 1: Summarized information needed for the Mesa Underground Water Conservation District’s groundwater management plan. All values are reported in acre-feet per year. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 1 acre-foot.

Management Plan requirement	Aquifer or confining unit	Results
Estimated annual amount of recharge from precipitation to the district	Ogallala Aquifer	61,253 <sup>a</sup>
Estimated annual volume of water that discharges from the aquifer to springs and any surface water body including lakes, streams, and rivers	Ogallala Aquifer	3,502
Estimated annual volume of flow into the district within each aquifer in the district	Ogallala Aquifer	5,299
Estimated annual volume of flow out of the district within each aquifer in the district	Ogallala Aquifer	6,423
Estimated net annual volume of flow between each aquifer in the district	Flow in or out of the Ogallala Aquifer	0 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Recharge does not include irrigation return flow. Irrigation return flow was accounted for in the model as described in Blandford and others (2003).

<sup>b</sup> The model does not consider flow into or out of the Ogallala Aquifer from other formations.

## REFERENCES:

Blandford, T.N., Blazer, D.J., Calhoun, K.C., Dutton, A.R., Naing, T., Reedy, R.C., and Scanlon, B.R., 2003, Groundwater availability of the southern Ogallala aquifer in Texas and New Mexico—Numerical Simulations Through 2050: Final Report prepared for the Texas Water Development Board by Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc., 158 p.

Chiang, W., and Kinzelbach, W., 2001, Groundwater Modeling with PMWIN, 346 p.



Cynthia K. Ridgeway is Manager of the Groundwater Availability Modeling Section and is responsible for oversight of work performed by employees under her direct supervision. The seal appearing on this document was authorized by Cynthia K. Ridgeway, P.G., on August 1, 2008.