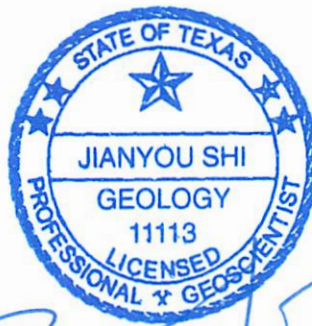

GAM RUN 19-018: UPPER TRINITY GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

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November 1, 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Texas State Water Code, Section 36.1071, Subsection (h) (Texas Water Code, 2011), 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 (TWDB) in conjunction with any available site-specific information provided by the district for review and comment to the Executive Administrator.

The TWDB provides data and information to the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District in two parts. Part 1 is the Estimated Historical Water Use/State Water Plan dataset report, which will be provided to you separately by the TWDB Groundwater Technical Assistance Department. Please direct questions about the water data report to Mr. Stephen Allen at 512-463-7317 or stephen.allen@twdb.texas.gov. Part 2 is the required groundwater availability modeling information and this information includes:

1. the annual amount of recharge from precipitation, if any, to the groundwater resources within the district;
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 groundwater management plan for the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District should be adopted by the district on or before June 17, 2019 and submitted to the Executive Administrator of the TWDB on or before July 17, 2020. The current management

plan for the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District expires on September 15, 2020.

Information for the Trinity Aquifer in the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District is from the groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Trinity and Woodbine aquifers (Kelley and others, 2014). This report replaces the results of GAM Run 14-008 (Shi and Wade, 2015), as the approach used for analyzing model results has been since refined. In this report, the groundwater evapotranspiration discharge to riparian areas was not included in the total discharge to surface water bodies.

METHODS:

In accordance with the provisions of the Texas State Water Code, Section 36.1071, Subsection (h), the groundwater availability model mentioned above was used to estimate information for the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District management plan. Water budgets were extracted for the historical model period (1980 through 2012) using ZONEBUDGET Version 3.01 (Harbaugh, 2009). The average annual water budget values for recharge, surface-water outflow, inflow to the district, and outflow from the district for the aquifers within the district are summarized in this report.

PARAMETERS AND ASSUMPTIONS:

Trinity and Woodbine Aquifers

- We used version 2.01 of the groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Trinity and Woodbine aquifers. See Kelley and others (2014) for assumptions and limitations of the model.
- The groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Trinity and Woodbine aquifers contains eight layers that generally represent the following: Layer 1 (the surficial outcrop area of the units in layers 2 through 8 and units younger than Woodbine Aquifer), Layer 2 (Woodbine Aquifer), Layer 3 (Washita and Fredericksburg Groups, and the Edwards (Balcones Fault Zone) Aquifer), and Layers 4 through 8 (Trinity Aquifer). Layers 2 through 7 also include pass-through cells. The Woodbine and Edwards (Balcones Fault Zone) aquifers are not located within the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District.
- Perennial rivers and reservoirs were simulated using the MODFLOW River package. Ephemeral streams, flowing wells, springs, and evapotranspiration in riparian zones along perennial rivers were simulated using the MODFLOW Drain package. Groundwater discharge to surface water bodies in the district was the

sum of groundwater discharge from the MODFLOW river and drain packages minus the riparian zone evapotranspiration discharge.

- The model was run using MODFLOW-NWT (Niswonger and others, 2011).

RESULTS:

A groundwater budget summarizes the amount of water entering and leaving the aquifers according to the groundwater availability model. Selected groundwater budget components listed below were extracted from the groundwater availability model results for the Trinity Aquifer located within the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District and averaged over the historical calibration periods, as shown in Table 1.

1. Precipitation recharge—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.
2. Surface-water outflow—the total water discharging from the aquifer (outflow) to surface-water features such as streams, reservoirs, and springs.
3. Flow into and out of district—the lateral flow within the aquifer between the district and adjacent counties.
4. Flow between aquifers—the net vertical flow between the aquifer and adjacent aquifers or confining units. This flow is controlled by the relative water levels in each aquifer and aquifer properties of each aquifer or confining unit that define the amount of leakage that occurs.

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 a district or county boundary, 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 FOR THE TRINITY AQUIFER FOR UPPER TRINITY GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN. ALL VALUES ARE REPORTED IN ACRE-FEET PER YEAR AND 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	Trinity Aquifer	129,019
Estimated annual volume of water that discharges from the aquifer to springs and any surface-water body including lakes, streams, and rivers	Trinity Aquifer	70,613
Estimated annual volume of flow into the district within each aquifer in the district	Trinity Aquifer	12,967
Estimated annual volume of flow out of the district within each aquifer in the district	Trinity Aquifer	35,502
*Estimated net annual volume of flow between each aquifer in the district	From the overlying Fredericksburg and Washita groups into the Trinity Aquifer	26,667

*The model assumes there is no interaction between the Trinity Aquifer and any underlying water-bearing hydrogeologic units.

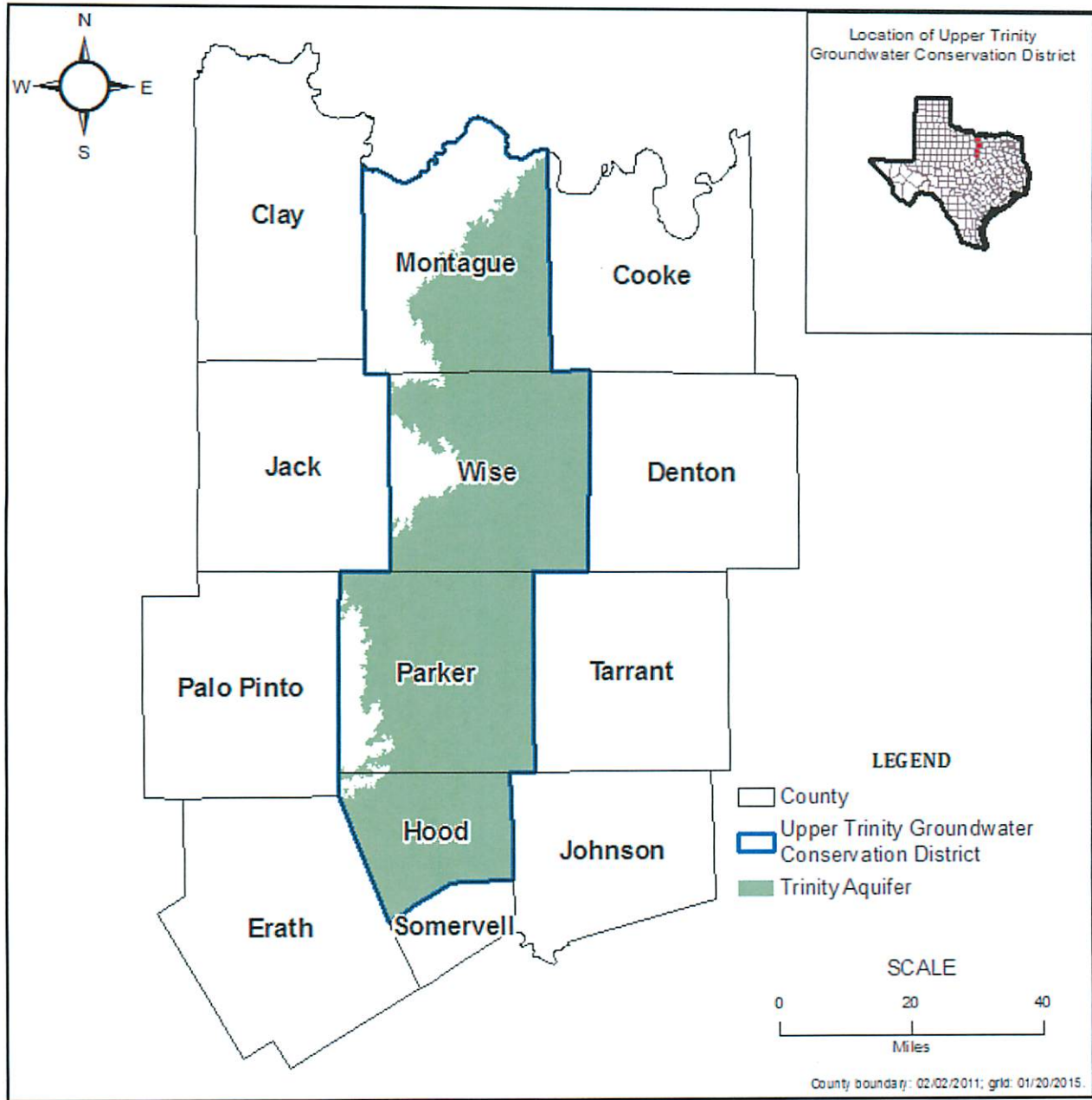


FIGURE 1 AREA OF THE GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY MODEL FOR THE NORTHERN PORTION OF THE TRINITY AND WOODBINE AQUIFERS FROM WHICH THE INFORMATION IN TABLE 1 WAS EXTRACTED (THE TRINITY AQUIFER EXTENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT BOUNDARY).

LIMITATIONS:

The groundwater models used in completing this analysis are the best available scientific tools that can be used to meet the stated objectives. To the extent that this analysis will be used for planning purposes and/or regulatory purposes related to pumping in the past and into the future, it is important to recognize the assumptions and limitations associated with the use of the results. In reviewing the use of models in environmental regulatory decision making, the National Research Council (2007) noted:

“Models will always be constrained by computational limitations, assumptions, and knowledge gaps. They can best be viewed as tools to help inform decisions rather than as machines to generate truth or make decisions. Scientific advances will never make it possible to build a perfect model that accounts for every aspect of reality or to prove that a given model is correct in all respects for a particular regulatory application. These characteristics make evaluation of a regulatory model more complex than solely a comparison of measurement data with model results.”

A key aspect of using the groundwater model to evaluate historical groundwater flow conditions includes the assumptions about the location in the aquifer where historical pumping was placed. Understanding the amount and location of historical pumping is as important as evaluating the volume of groundwater flow into and out of the district, between aquifers within the district (as applicable), interactions with surface water (as applicable), recharge to the aquifer system (as applicable), and other metrics that describe the impacts of that pumping. In addition, assumptions regarding precipitation, recharge, and interaction with streams are specific to particular historical time periods.

Because the application of the groundwater models was designed to address regional-scale questions, the results are most effective on a regional scale. The TWDB makes no warranties or representations related to the actual conditions of any aquifer at a particular location or at a particular time.

It is important for groundwater conservation districts to monitor groundwater pumping and overall conditions of the aquifer. Because of the limitations of the groundwater model and the assumptions in this analysis, it is important that the groundwater conservation districts work with the TWDB to refine this analysis in the future given the reality of how the aquifer responds to the actual amount and location of pumping now and in the future. Historical precipitation patterns also need to be placed in context as future climatic conditions, such as dry and wet year precipitation patterns, may differ and affect groundwater flow conditions.

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