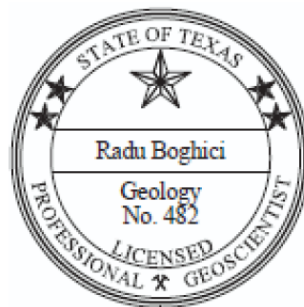# GAM Run 21-001: North Texas Groundwater Conservation District Groundwater Management Plan

Grayson Dowlearn and Radu Boghici, P.G.
Texas Water Development Board
Groundwater Division
Groundwater Availability Modeling Department
512-463-5808
January 13, 2022

1/11/2022

This page is intentionally blank.

GAM Run 21-001: North Texas Groundwater Conservation District Groundwater Management Plan

Grayson Dowlearn and Radu Boghici, P.G.
Texas Water Development Board
Groundwater Division
Groundwater Modeling Department
512-463-5808
January 13, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Texas State Water Code, Section 36.1071, Subsection (h) (Texas Water Code, 2015), 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 North Texas 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 North Texas Groundwater Conservation District should be adopted by the district on or before February 11, 2022 and submitted to the Executive Administrator of the TWDB on or before March 13, 2022. The current management plan for the North Texas Groundwater Conservation District expires on May 12, 2022.

We used the groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Trinity Aquifer and Woodbine Aquifers (Kelley and others, 2014) to estimate the management plan information for the Trinity and Woodbine aquifers within the North Texas Groundwater Conservation District.

This report replaces the results of GAM Run 16-004 (Boghici, 2016), as the approach used for analyzing model results has been since refined to more accurately delineate groundwater flows. Additionally, we routinely update the spatial grid file used to define county, groundwater conservation district, and aquifer boundaries, which can also impact the water budget. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the groundwater availability model data required by statute. Figures 1 and 3 show the area of the models from which the values in the tables were extracted. Figures 2 and 4 provide generalized diagrams of the groundwater flow components provided in Tables 1 and 2. If, after review of the figures, the North Texas Groundwater Conservation District determines that the district boundaries used in the assessment do not reflect current conditions, please notify the TWDB at your earliest convenience.

METHODS:

In accordance with the provisions of the Texas State Water Code, Section 36.1071, Subsection (h), the groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Trinity Aquifer and Woodbine Aquifers was used to estimate information for the North Texas Groundwater Conservation District management plan. Water budgets were extracted for the historical model period for the Trinity and Woodbine aquifers (1980-2012). We used ZONEBUDGET Version 3.01 (Harbaugh, 2009) to extract water budgets from the model results. The average annual water budget values for recharge, surface-water outflow, inflow to the district, outflow from the district, and the flow between 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 Aquifer and Woodbine Aquifer. See Kelley and others (2014) for assumptions and limitations of the model.

- The groundwater availability model for the northern portion of the Trinity Aquifer and Woodbine Aquifer 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 the 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.

- 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.

- 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 and Woodbine aquifers located within the North Texas Groundwater Conservation District and averaged over the historical calibration period, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.
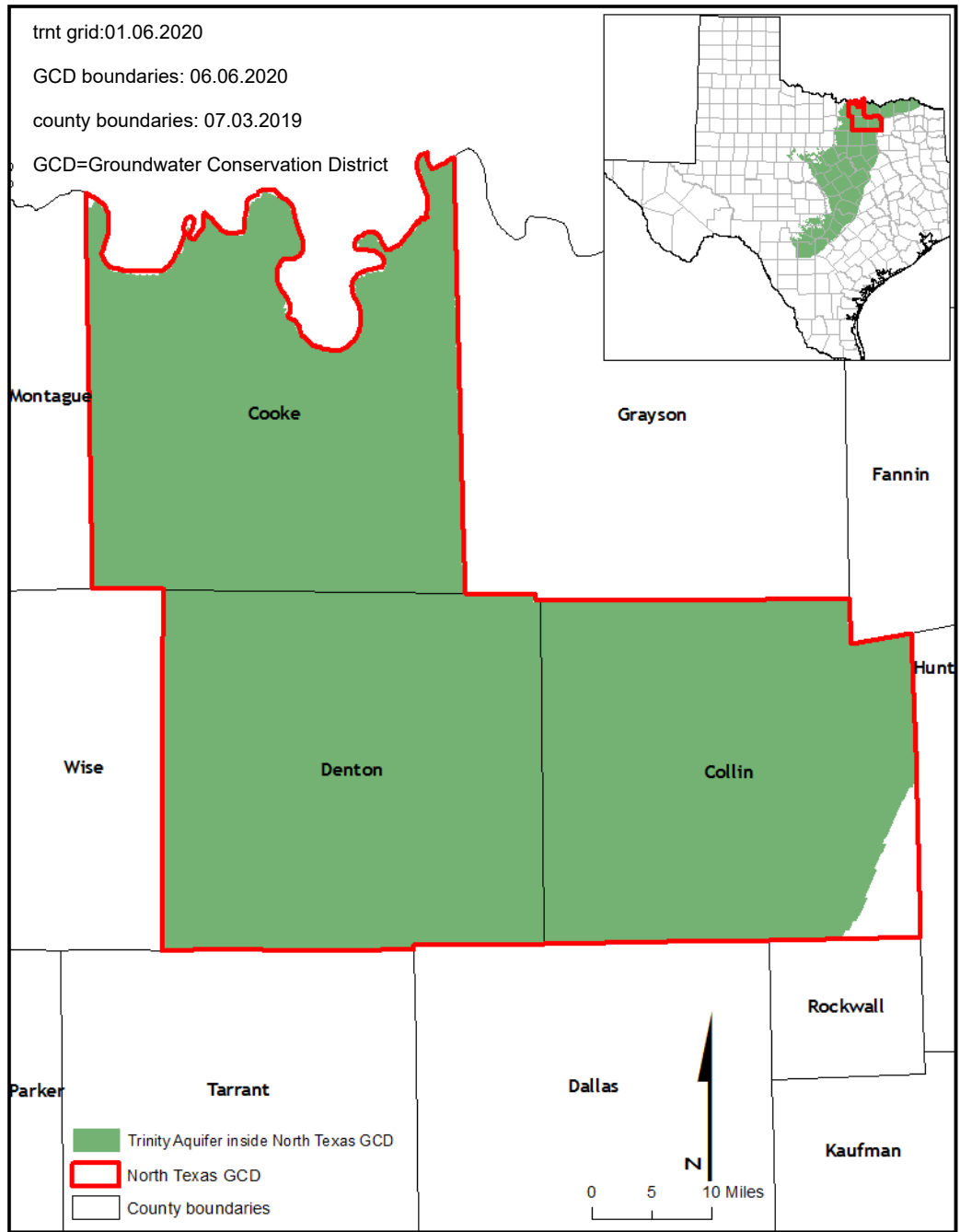
1. Precipitation recharge—the areally distributed recharge sourced from precipitation falling on the outcrop areas of the aquifers (where the aquifer is exposed at land surface) within the district.

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 Tables 1 and 2. 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.
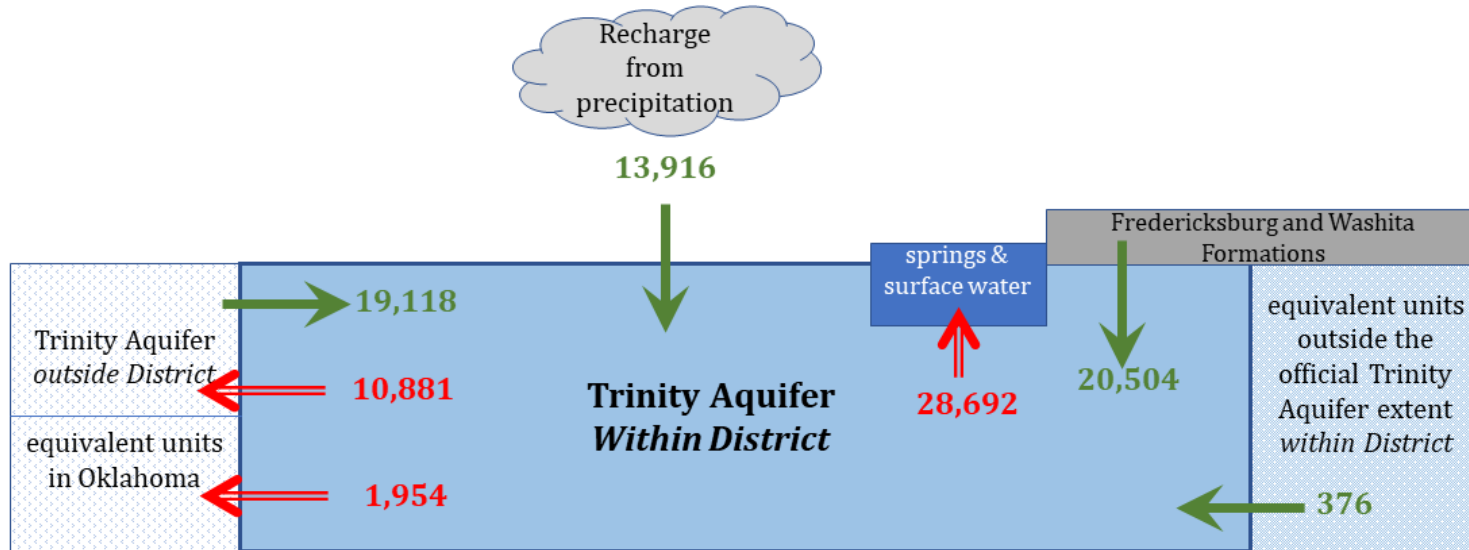
TABLE 1: SUMMARIZED INFORMATION FOR THE TRINITY AQUIFER FOR NORTH TEXAS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN. ALL VALUES ARE REPORTED IN ACRE-FEET PER YEAR AND ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 1 ACRE-FOOT.

Management Plan requirement	Aquifer or confining unit	Results
Estimated annual amount of recharge from precipitation to the district	Trinity Aquifer	13,916
Estimated annual volume of water that discharges from the aquifer to springs and any surface-water body including lakes, streams, and rivers	Trinity Aquifer	28,692
Estimated annual volume of flow into the district within each aquifer in the district	Trinity Aquifer	19,118
Estimated annual volume of flow out of the district within each aquifer in the district	Trinity Aquifer	10,881
Estimated net annual volume of flow between each aquifer in the district	To the Trinity Aquifer from the overlying Fredericksburg and Washita groups	20,504
	From the Trinity Aquifer to equivalent hydrogeologic units in Oklahoma	1,954
	To the Trinity Aquifer from equivalent units outside of the official Trinity Aquifer extent	376

trnt grid:01.06.2020

GCD boundaries: 06.06.2020

county boundaries: 07.03.2019

GCD=Groundwater Conservation District

FIGURE 1: AREA OF THE GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY MODEL FOR THE NORTHERN PORTION OF THE TRINITY AQUIFER AND WOODBINE AQUIFER FROM WHICH THE INFORMATION IN TABLE 1 WAS EXTRACTED (THE TRINITY AQUIFER EXTENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT BOUNDARY).
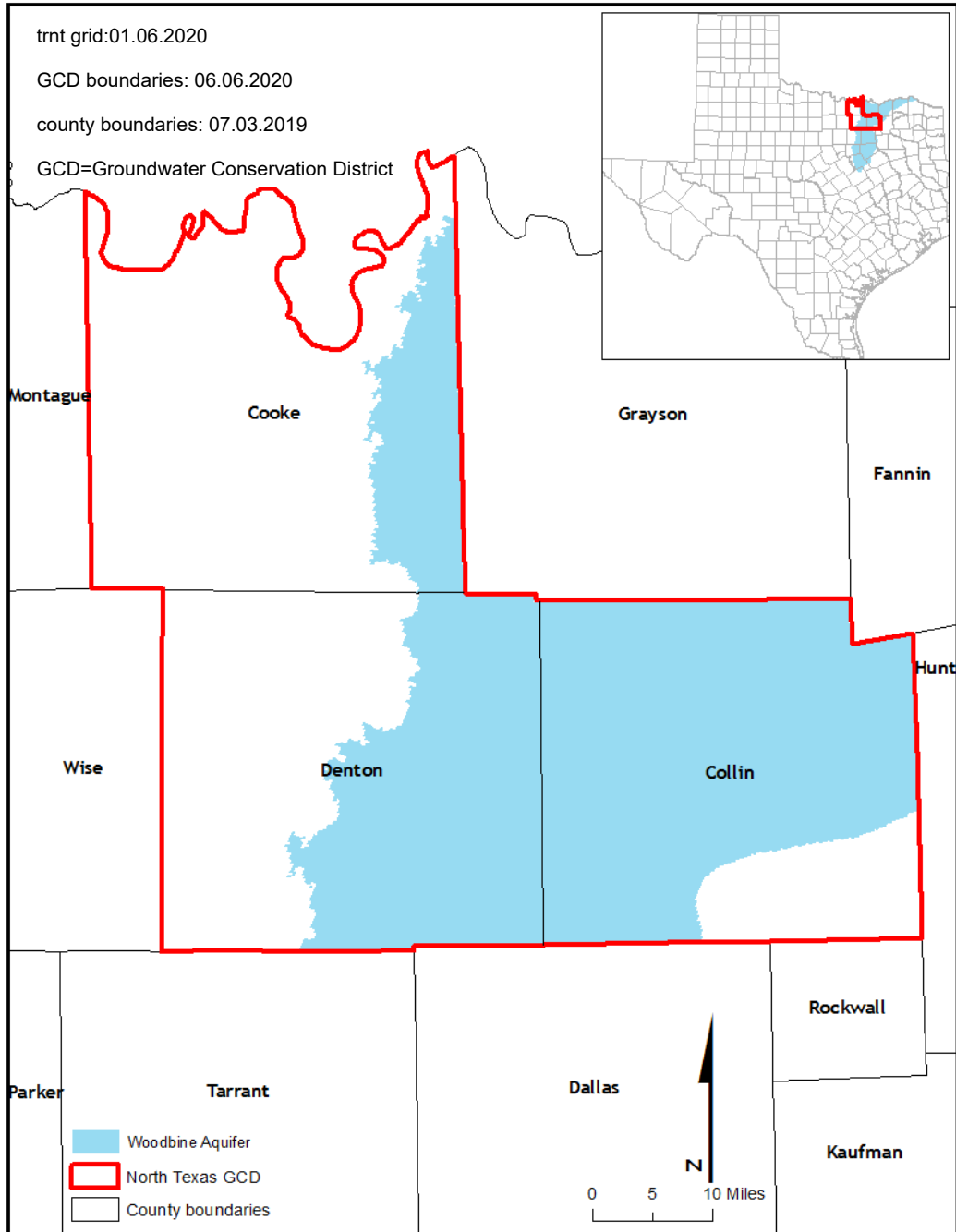
Note: This diagram only includes the water budget items provided in Table 1. If the District requires values for additional water budget items, please contact TWDB.
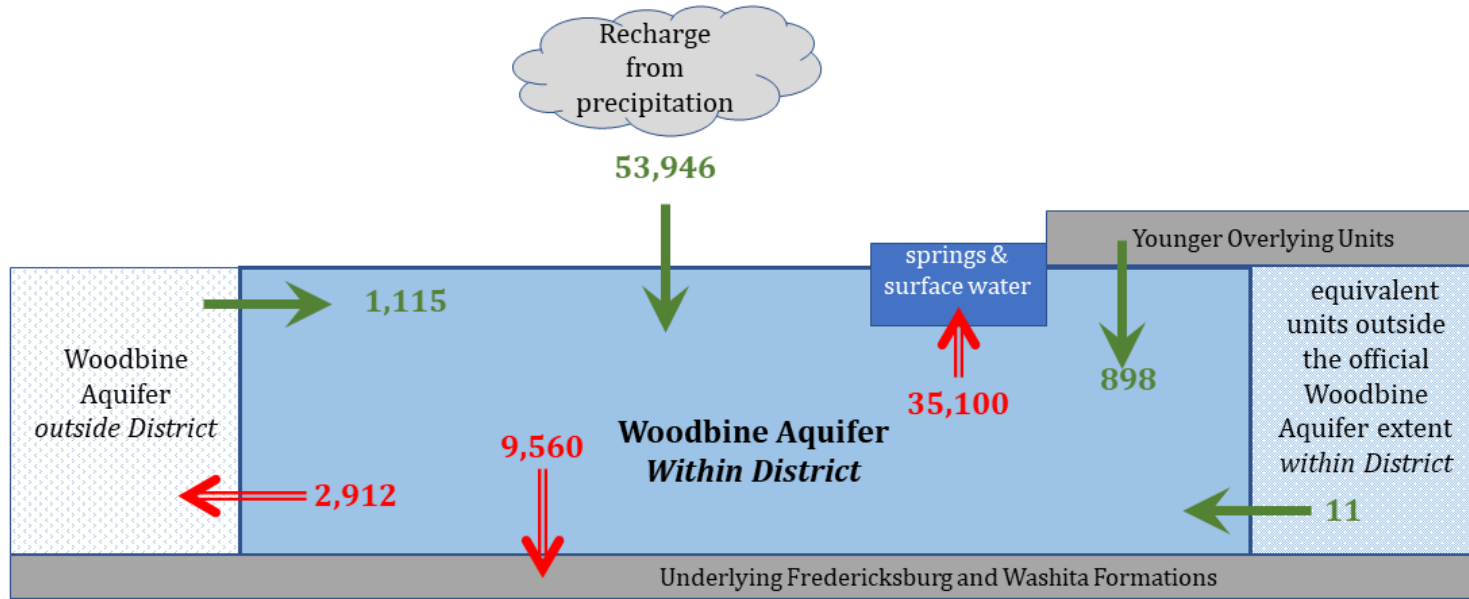
FIGURE 2: GENERALIZED DIAGRAM OF THE SUMMARIZED BUDGET INFORMATION FROM TABLE 1, REPRESENTING DIRECTIONS OF FLOW FOR THE TRINITY AQUIFER WITHIN NORTH TEXAS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT. FLOW VALUES EXPRESSED IN ACRE-FEET PER YEAR.

TABLE 2: SUMMARIZED INFORMATION FOR THE WOODBINE AQUIFER FOR NORTH TEXAS 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	Woodbine Aquifer	53,946
Estimated annual volume of water that discharges from the aquifer to springs and any surface-water body including lakes, streams, and rivers	Woodbine Aquifer	35,100
Estimated annual volume of flow into the district within each aquifer in the district	Woodbine Aquifer	1,115
Estimated annual volume of flow out of the district within each aquifer in the district	Woodbine Aquifer	2,912
Estimated net annual volume of flow between each aquifer in the district	To the Woodbine Aquifer from younger overlying units	898
	From the Woodbine Aquifer to underlying Fredericksburg and Washita groups	9,560
	To the Woodbine Aquifer from equivalent units outside the official Woodbine Aquifer extent	11

FIGURE 3: AREA OF THE GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY MODEL FOR THE NORTHERN PORTION OF THE TRINITY AQUIFER AND WOODBINE AQUIFER FROM WHICH THE INFORMATION IN TABLE 2 WAS EXTRACTED (THE WOODBINE AQUIFER EXTENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT BOUNDARY).

FIGURE 4: GENERALIZED DIAGRAM OF THE SUMMARIZED BUDGET INFORMATION FROM TABLE 2, REPRESENTING DIRECTIONS OF FLOW FOR THE WOODBINE AQUIFER WITHIN NORTH TEXAS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT. FLOW VALUES EXPRESSED IN ACRE-FEET PER YEAR.

LIMITATIONS:

The groundwater model 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.

REFERENCES:

Boghici, R., 2016, GAM Run 16-004, North Texas Groundwater Conservation District
Management Plan, 12 p.,
http://www.twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/docs/GAMruns/GR16-004.pdf.

Harbaugh, A. W., 2009, Zonebudget Version 3.01, A computer program for computing
subregional water budgets for MODFLOW ground-water flow models: U.S.
Geological Survey Groundwater Software.

Kelley, V.A., Ewing, J., Jones, T.L., Young, S.C., Deeds, N., and Hamlin, S., 2014, Updated
Groundwater Availability Model of the Northern Trinity and Woodbine Aquifers –
Final Model Report, 984 p.,
http://www.twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/models/gam/trnt_n/Final_NTGAM_Vol%
20I%20Aug%202014_Report.pdf.

National Research Council, 2007, Models in Environmental Regulatory Decision Making
Committee on Models in the Regulatory Decision Process, National Academies Press,
Washington D.C., 287 p., http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11972.

Niswonger, R.G., Panday, S., and Ibaraki, M., 2011, MODFLOW-NWT, a Newton formulation
for MODFLOW-2005: USGS, Techniques and Methods 6-A37, 44 p.

Texas Water Code, 2015, http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/docs/WA/pdf/WA.36.pdf.