

What is a Priority Groundwater Management Area (PGMA)?

To enable effective management of the state's groundwater resources in areas where critical groundwater problems exist or may exist in the future, the Legislature has authorized the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ or Commission), the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to study, identify, and delineate priority groundwater management areas (PGMAs), and initiate the creation of groundwater conservation districts (GCDs or districts) within those areas, if necessary. "Critical groundwater problems" are defined as shortages of surface water or groundwater, land subsidence resulting from withdrawal of groundwater, or contamination of groundwater.

The PGMA process provided in Chapter 35 of the Texas Water Code is implemented by TCEQ rules that outline procedures for the designation of PGMAs and address issues related to the creation of GCDs in areas which have been designated as PGMAs. These TCEQ rules are contained in Chapters 293 and 294 of Title 30, Texas Administrative Code.

Eighteen PGMA studies and five PGMA update studies have been completed to date. Eight PGMAs have been designated – three by TCEQ rules under previous statutory provisions and five by Commission Order. The study areas that have been designated as PGMAs include: (1) parts of Reagan, Upton, and Midland counties; (2) all of Swisher and parts of Briscoe and Hale counties; (3) part of Dallam County; (4) part of El Paso County; (5) all of Bandera, Blanco, Gillespie, Kendall, and Kerr and parts of Bexar, Comal, Hays, and Travis counties (Hill Country area); (6) Northern Bexar County; (7) all of Bosque, Coryell, Hill, McLennan, and Somervell counties; and, (8) all of Collin, Cooke, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Hood, Johnson, Montague, Parker, Tarrant, and Wise counties.

Locally-initiated GCD creation, or addition of territory to an existing district, has occurred in five of the PGMAs designated before September 1, 2001. However, areas remain in some PGMAs that have not yet established a GCD. Successful district creation has not occurred in the designated parts of Dallas, Midland, and Upton counties. Local and legislative actions or TCEQ administrative actions to establish GCDs are still authorized in all or part of those three counties.

For reports, maps, and additional information related to the on-going PGMA process in the state, go to TCEQ's PGMA webpage at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/groundwater/groundwater-planning-assessment/pgma.html> and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Priority Groundwater Management Areas: Overview and Frequently Asked Questions* (publication B-6191) at <https://www.agrilifebookstore.org>.

For additional Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to groundwater quantity, groundwater quality, septic systems, water wells, administrative entities, and publications, visit the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee's FAQ webpage at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>.