

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), the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to study, identify, and define priority groundwater management areas (PGMAs), and start the creation of groundwater conservation districts (GCDs) 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 the steps for the designation of PGMAs and address issues related to the creation of GCDs in areas 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.
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 happened in five of the PGMAs that were designated before September 1, 2001. Successful district creation has not occurred in the designated parts of Briscoe, Dallas, Midland, and Upton counties. TCEQ started efforts to establish GCDs in some of these counties.

Resources and Useful Links

- TCEQ's PGMA webpage, <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/groundwater/groundwater-planning-assessment/pgma.html>.
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Priority Groundwater Management Areas: Overview and Frequently Asked Questions* (publication B-6191), at <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/>.

Other Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To find additional FAQs visit the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee's FAQ webpage at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/frequently-asked-questions-faqs>.