

Should We Support Continued Use of Wilco Monitoring Wells for the Texas Water Development Board

Earlier today I was contacted by Natalie Ballew, Groundwater Division Manager at the TWDB, about a recorder well just northeast of the regional park off Whitestone. She would like to connect with someone at the County level to discuss maintenance and rehab options for the well, and determine whether the County could assist. These recorder wells are few and far between, and important to understanding local groundwater conditions.

Just for a bit of background on the issue, this well needs some borehole maintenance in the next few months to remain operational as a recorder well. Since the well is unused for production and is just an observation well, the only impetus to rehab it is for the continued data collection in a data sparse area. Technically it would be the responsibility of the well owner to maintain a well in use, but since this is now just an observation well equipped with TWDB monitoring equipment, we certainly have an interest in continued data collection from the well, but do not have the funding available. In situations like this, groundwater conservation districts typically have an interest in funding, but since Wilco doesn't have a district I thought it'd be worth reaching out to you with the county.

Our rough estimate on the cost to rehab it is ~\$10k, but we'd be happy to get a quote (in the event y'all have funds and would be interested!). This is a much lower estimate than what it would cost to drill a new well for continued monitoring. I included my colleague Rebecca Storms here, who oversees our Groundwater Monitoring Program. We may be able to scrape together some pennies for a cost sharing agreement, but that can get complicated and burdensome with state bureaucratic processes!

I really appreciate your quick response here, and your dedication to groundwater science in Williamson County. Let me know what you hear from your people!

Cheers, and have a great week,

Natalie Ballew
Groundwater Division Director
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