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CONTACT THE EDITOR

Water Board seeks to set precedent

By Juliana Mathews/newseditor@gonzalescannon.com

The Gonzales County Underground Water Conservation District board voted unanimously to continue their opposition to Marathon Oil's proposed injection well in the Carrizo Formation during Tuesday night's regular meeting of the GCUWCD.

Greg Sengelmann, General Manager of the GCUWCD, said, "The proposed Marathon Oil injection well is located off of FM 443 near Dryer. The proposed injection interval is the Carrizo Formation. The injection zone is listed as 4,110 – 4,350 feet.

"Marathon filed a request with the Texas Railroad Commission (TRC) Hearing Examiner to dismiss the District's protest for a lack of standing. The TRC Hearing Examiner denied the request and Marathon has filed an appeal to that interim ruling.

"The TRC Hearing Examiner then submitted a memorandum to the TRC Commissioners requesting a ruling on Marathon's appeal. In the memorandum, the TRC Hearing Examiner addressed several reasons for denying Marathon's appeal. The deadline for the Commissioner's ruling on the appeal is June 6, 2014.

"This is an important ruling for all groundwater districts in the State of Texas as Marathon is arguing that groundwater districts are not local governments and are not entitled to standing as a protestant in a Statewide Rule 9 application."

Formor Energy's proposed injection interval at the Lower Cretaceous Formation was approved after Formor worked with the District to address their concerns, agreeing to add specific safety enhancements.

Sengelmann said, "In lieu of this cooperative agreement, the General Manager recommends the District drop its protest of the Formor Energy disposal well application to the Texas Railroad Commission."

During the Well Mitigation Manager's Report, Link Benson mentioned several wells in the Nixon-Smiley area dropped over 40 feet in about a week.

Secretary-Treasurer Barry Miller said, "I'm very concerned about the dropping water level."

Sengelmann said he was not concerned yet, that there could be a couple contributing factors. More information and investigation is needed.