

Office of Conservation Ground Water Resources Program (GWRP): A Review for Commission Members

La. Water Resources Commission

December 6, 2017

Role of the Commissioner of Conservation in Groundwater Resource Management

State law is very clear: The Commissioner of Conservation is “empowered and responsible for the administration of all matters related to the management of the state’s groundwater resources”

Moreover, the Commissioner has the “authority to make any reasonable rules, regulations, and orders that are necessary from time to time in the proper administration and enforcement” of such matters, including to:

- ❑ Do all things necessary to prevent the waste of water resources
- ❑ Prevent or alleviate damaging or potentially damaging salt water movement or water level decline and loss of sustainability in the state's aquifers
- ❑ Prevent subsidence of the land surface caused by the withdrawal of groundwater
- ❑ Require registration of all new water wells

- ❑ Determine areas of groundwater concern and designate critical areas of groundwater concern
- ❑ Collect data with respect to water wells and water resources; continue development of a statewide groundwater resource management program
- ❑ Issue compliance orders and civil penalties

Office of Conservation

Ground Water Resources Program

- ❑ Oversees water well registrations, notifications, and evaluations; issues compliance orders, civil penalties
- ❑ Manages responsibilities for areas of concern, critical areas of concern
- ❑ Provides staffing for Water Resources Commission, Water Management Advisory Task Force, and Advisory Committee for the Regulation and Control of Water Well Drillers (including water well driller licensure)
- ❑ Handles research, policy, and education

Some Examples of Groundwater Actions

Sparta Areas of Concern (2005 –): Monroe-West Monroe (Ouachita); Ruston (Lincoln); Jonesboro-Hodge (Jackson, Bienville); mandatory reporting; work with Sparta GW Conservation Commn.

Haynesville Shale and Tuscaloosa Marine Shale (TMS) Memos & Advisories (2008, 2011): “frac water supply wells” to be classified as industrial wells and must be evaluated for impact; surface water use encouraged over groundwater use where feasible; WH-1 reporting on source water

South Caddo Groundwater Emergency (2011 –): Issued on heels of 2010-2011 drought; monitoring by USGS, LSU-Shreveport Red River Watershed Management Institute; regular updates provided

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