

**MONTAGUE COUNTY PROPERTY OWNERS
ASSOCIATION
UPPER CLEAR CREEK RANGE and WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

P O BOX 512
SAINT JO, TEXAS 76265-0512
Telephone 940-995-2349
Facsimile 940-995-7081

themcpoa@gmail.com

www.themcpoa.com

December 31, 2010

Dear Fellow Property Owner and Member:

As the year 2010 draws to a close, I want to take a few minutes of your time and bring you up to date on where we are on a number of items, which are important to all property owners.

One of the attractions of Montague County has always been the unique beauty of the quiet unspoiled scenery that seems to extend in all directions. Many people have compared this area of our state to the hill country of Central Texas. Over the last three years some of this beautiful countryside has started to look more like a Houston petrochemical industrial zone. The nights differ little from the days. The horizon is lit up with the bright lights of drilling rigs operating 24 hours a day, compressor stations that smell worse than a skunk and are louder than a jet airplane and tanker trucks running up and down state, farm to market and county roads 24/7. When you hear DPS Troopers complain about the condition of FM 455 you know it is serious. All of the state politicians refer to this as progress (there are a few exceptions) as long as it is not in their back yard. Unfortunately, in Texas that appears to be the rule of law. Our state legislature wouldn't have it any other way.

The technology of extracting oil and gas from the Barnett Shale via hydraulic fracturing has proven to be positive for the petroleum industry and mineral right holders, but negative for the many property owners without mineral interests to protect their property. One fact that is conveniently overlooked and played down by the petroleum industry and their political supporters is water. It takes an average of approximately 7,000,000 gallons of water to frac a newly drilled well in order to bring it into production. The operator may then go back as many as five more times and do this same process over the life of the well to keep it producing. None of this water is reused. When this water is pumped back up to the surface after fracturing, it is contaminated from various chemicals used in the completion process and is now called produced water. The tanker trucks you see running up and down the roads 24/7 haul this water to a disposal well site and pump it down into a well 5,000 to 8,000 feet deep and that, theoretically, supposedly ends the problem. We wish.

Year 2010 started with the ongoing opposition to the FENCO Contractors Group wanting to build a solid waste disposal facility three (3) miles west of Saint Jo over the Trinity

Aquifer and adjacent to the Farmers Creek Water Shed. The opposition was fierce and sometimes stormy. In the end, on October 6th FENCO withdrew their application from the Railroad Commission to the relief of many interested parties. Only time will tell if this is the end of the story, whether it is permanent or temporary.

In July the MCPOA received a very precious gift in the form of our *Save The Trinity Aquifer* logo that was designed and produced by Chris Poteet, owner of Rocket Science Screen Printing Company in Somerville, Massachusetts, who is a cousin of Janis Sneed. This came about from a conversation Joe Dial happened to have with Janis and mentioned to her that it would be nice if the group working on Operation Clean Water, which was working to defeat the FENCO application with the RRC, had a distinct logo that would communicate the message of water conservation. Janis suggested that Joe call Chris and relate the idea of the message he had in mind. The call was made and within several days the logo arrived via email. Donna Howell-Sickles suggested that a blue line be drawn to connect the Saint Jo water tower with the aquifer. The rest is history.

Chris Poteet owns a home in Saint Jo and often comes to Texas. He has a vested interest in our logo, *“because safe clean water is the right of every Texan.”* I could not be more proud of our logo. It is distinct, sends a clear message and is easy to understand. Thank you, Joe Dial, Janis Sneed, Donna Howell-Sickles and Chris Poteet. We are truly grateful for your generous efforts. For those of you who have not seen our new logo, please go to our website at www.themcpoa.com. We are in the process of registering this trade mark with the State of Texas.

As you will remember, 2010 was an election year for a number of county offices. The MCPOA hosted most of the candidates running for these offices to give our membership and interested public the opportunity to meet and greet the candidates. It turned out to be more informative than I imagined ahead of time. Some of the candidates delivered very distinct messages concerning what they would do in office if elected. I was disappointed that more people did not take more interest in listening to what these candidates had to say. After all, these are the elected officials who will decide your tax rates and spend your tax dollars.

In late 2010, our Board of Directors and interested members started to formulate our plans for the coming year. The following items will be discussed and voted on at our annual meeting in early March.

- 1) Election of officers and directors for the coming year.
- 2) The Upper Clear Creek Range and Wildlife Management name be discontinued and the combined organizations be operated under one name as the Montague County Property Owners Association.
- 3) Accepting the final draft of the completed bylaws.

One of the constant topics of conversation among members of the MCPOA is the subject of water. As short as four (4) years ago we all probably took our water resources for granted. Not anymore. The Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (UTGCD) has done a good job in educating those who want to take the time to listen, about the seriousness of protecting and conserving our precious natural resource of groundwater. One has to take water even more serious when we learn that Wise and Montague counties both have been placed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in a Priority Groundwater Management Area (PGMA). It is an area designated and delineated by TCEQ

that is experiencing, or is expected to experience, within 25 years, “**critical**” groundwater problems including shortages of surface water or groundwater, land subsidence resulting from groundwater withdrawal, and **contamination of groundwater supplies**. Van Kelly with Intera, Inc., hydrology quantitative consultants to the UTGCD, has stated that 25 years will in all probability be compressed down to 10 years. This not a very positive scenario. If Mr. Kelly is correct in his assumptions, we all need to work at the conservation of groundwater twice as hard.

We can do this by making a concerted effort to keep our membership well informed and by the MCPOA making an effort to inform the public at large. This can be done by working with elected officials, hosting informative and educational meetings, and displaying signs and banners.

Our next project on which we have already initiated work, is to provide a program available for those property owners who are interested in determining the quality of their well water. We already know that in most areas of heavy drilling, the groundwater level is already being partially depleted. Where there is drilling, there is also hydraulic fracturing using massive amounts of water that will eventually be pumped back down into a disposal well. If you are close to drilling, well completion and disposal wells, maybe you want think about where you currently stand with the quality of you groundwater. If contamination becomes an issue in your area, you will have the proof that at one time your water was good and you have certified proof that you have been affected by either drilling or disposal practices. As we found out this spring, there are already water contamination issues in Montague County near Bowie. As time progresses, there will be more.

MCPOA member, Penny Jordan has volunteered and taken on the immense job of contacting the 89 water testing labs scheduled and recommended by the TCEQ. She did a very involved spread sheet outlining which tests each lab has the ability to conduct and the prices charged per test. Her final analysis produced two testing labs that had the ability to conduct the tests we feel are needed to produce base line water testing that will hold up in court. This program will be discussed at our annual meeting.

In summation, I would like to thank everyone for their interest and support this past year. We hope to count on your support far into the future. With the problems we see coming, we are going to need it. If you have ideas for guest speakers, our web site or problems concerning property owners, please contact us. We want to hear from our members. We even want to hear constructive criticism. Now that's different!

Tell your friends and neighbors about the MCPOA. There is strength in numbers, and when appropriate, we want to voice our unified opinions about air and water quality, as well as property owners rights to state, county and city officials.

Thank you for your continued support of the MCPOA. I look forward to visiting with and seeing you in 2011.

Sincerely,

Robert E. McKee III
Interim President

