

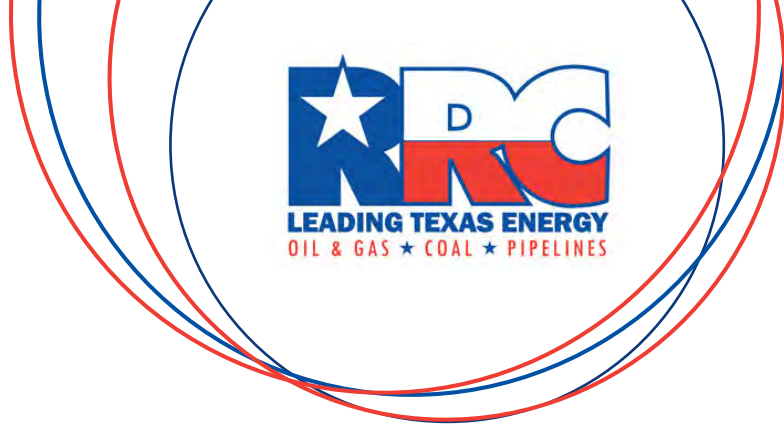


JULY 2023

# Energy News



**From the Field Photo**  
Eastland County P&A rainbow  
Photo from Jarod "Rowdy" Riffe



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## Upcoming Events

RRC Open Meeting.....  
22, 2023

Tuesday, August

[VIEW OPEN MEETING WEBCASTS ▶](#)

# RRC Accepts Comments During a Virtual Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments for Class VI Injection Well Rules

The Railroad Commission held a virtual hearing in July to hear public comments on proposed amendments to 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 5 which are the agency's Injection Well rules for Carbon Dioxide sequestration. The RRC submitted an application for Class VI primacy to the EPA in December, and the proposed amendments are to make sure that Texas' regulations on Class VI injection wells meet federal requirements for enforcement.

RRC staff will address comments after the comment period closes and take the proposed rules to an upcoming Commissioner open meeting for a vote.

Primacy allows the EPA to delegate its authority to states, provided they meet the federal government's minimum standards. If ultimately approved by the EPA, primacy would mean that operators would only need to apply with the RRC for Class VI injection well permits rather than both agencies. This could streamline the process for operators to be able to trap Carbon Dioxide released into the atmosphere from different sources into appropriate geologic formations.





# Surface Mining & Reclamation Division 2023 Texas Reclamation Award

The Texas Municipal Power Agency (TMPA) is the latest recipient of the RRC's Texas Reclamation Award. The award recognizes the successful reclamation of the Pond SP-50 Islands Project at TMPA's Gibbons Creek Lignite Mine, vastly improving the land from its former natural state.

Since its reclamation, the site has become a popular location for the Christmas Bird Count and aquatic wildlife.

Pond SP-50 Islands Project was originally built in 1994 for sediment control of a new area and mining began in 1995. Later that year, TMPA closed Gibbons Creek Lignite Mine and decided to import coal from another location and no mining occurred in the watershed of Pond SP-50.



*Pond SP-50 Islands*

In 2016, a decision was made to convert the waste piles left on the area into islands with wetland wildlife enhancement features. Channels were excavated to separate the waste piles from the banks of the pond, leaving them as islands. The soils of the waste piles were improved to create suitable plant growth material by liming, fertilizing, and deep aeration.

In 2018, TMPA planted grass and woody vegetation and used sprinklers to help the vegetation become established.

The project meets and exceeds the intended Post-Mining Land Use as it enhances the Developed Water Resources designation of the pond and provides an additional 12 acres of added environmental value in the form of wetlands and wildlife enhancement areas distributed over four islands.

# The RRC Steps in to Remove Boating Hazards at Big Thicket

The Railroad Commission recently completed an important project to help the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS) ensure boater safety recently at the Big Thicket National Preserve in East Texas.

The project involved removing surface casings on four wells that had been properly plugged in the Neches River by operators in the 1970's and early 80's. The tall surface casings were starting to get exposed over the decades as river depths changed, posing a risk in recent years to boaters passing through the national preserve.

“The agency has had more than 40 years of extensive experience working with plugged wells and any issues that may crop up. We're glad to be able to lend our technical expertise for projects like this to help federal and state agencies when they reach out to us,” Clay Woodul, RRC Assistant Director of the Oil and Gas Division for Field Operations.



*Diver working on surface casing*



*Work and removal of surface casings*



*Work and removal of surface casings*

The NPS contacted the RRC to oversee the project which took about two and a half months to complete. Contractors, including divers, worked in the water removing river debris and cutting the casings at the riverbed to get them removed.

The NPS has contacted the RRC twice to step in and help ensure safety over the last couple of years. The Commission also worked on a project at Padre Island National Seashore in 2021.





# National Utility Leaders Gather in Texas to Pass Key Resolutions and Announce Special Task Force

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), met with state and federal regulators for its Summer Policy Summit in Austin in July. RRC Commissioner Jim Wright and Executive Director Wei Wang attended the Summit, where strategies to prepare for and anticipate future development in public utilities were discussed. RRC Assistant Executive Director Kari French also attended the Summit and served as the Chairperson for the Staff Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety for NARUC.

“The Summit was a great opportunity for staff from Texas and other states to come together, and exchange ideas with experts and experienced leaders as part of critical safety and regulatory work,” said French.

The formation of the new Evolving Gas Infrastructure Planning Presidential Task Force was announced at the Summit, which will help provide information on utility decarbonization and further develop state commissions in improving infrastructure planning.

Discussions also included the EPA’s regulations targeting per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, the effect of thermal generation retirements on reliability, and how clean energy goals could affect consumers with associated price increases.

The Board of Directors of NARUC approved substantive and honorary resolutions for water policies and telecommunications which included the following:

- Resolution Supporting the Integration of Hydropower as a Part of Water/Wastewater/Stormwater Facilities Development, Expansion and Maintenance
- Resolution Supporting Permanent Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program
- Resolution Proclaiming Digital Connectivity and Lifeline Awareness Week
- Resolution Regarding the Use of Communications Equipment Produced by Firms Posing a National Security Risk





# Chairman Craddick

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



In July, Chairman Christi Craddick spent time preparing for upcoming rule changes and legislative implementation after the final adjournment of the legislature. Agency staff has worked diligently to ensure that all necessary changes to rules and regulations are completely timely and in compliance with the legislation passed during the 88th Legislative Session, as well as subsequent special sessions. While many of these bills do not go into effect until September 1, Chairman Craddick is appreciative of the efforts undertaken by staff to make sure the agency is prepared. These changes include the agency's participation in a Hydrogen Council, Human Resources changes for state employees, and collaboration with a variety of state agencies to manage jurisdiction and partnership adjustments



# Commissioner Christian

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



Commissioner Christian published an opinion editorial featured in the Midland Reporter-Telegram regarding abandoned oil and natural gas wells and the real story with responsible production in Texas. The article sets the record straight regarding many of the misleading reports on orphan well in Texas and what the Railroad Commission is actively doing to ensure a safe environment. You can read it here.

[READ THE COMMISSIONER'S OPINION](#)





# Commissioner Wright

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER

In July, Commissioner Wright participated in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Summer Policy Summit. The annual meeting, which was conveniently hosted in Austin, brings together utility regulators from around the United States to discuss policy issues and emerging trends with respect to regulated energy, telecommunications, power, water, and transportation utilities.

At the policy summit, Commissioner Wright provided an update on recent policy changes made during the legislative session and detailed how the Railroad Commission is in the process of hiring additional pipeline safety inspectors to comply new Federal Pipeline Safety Regulations which increased the jurisdiction of RRC oversight to include some 45,000 miles of natural gas gathering lines.



# Oil & Gas Production Statistics

View monthly production totals of crude oil, condensate and total oil; and of gas well gas, casinghead gas, and total natural gas.

[VIEW CURRENT PRODUCTION STATISTICS ▶](#)

# Enforcement Actions

The Commission has primary oversight and enforcement of the state's oil and gas industry and intrastate pipeline safety. View RRC's Latest Enforcement Actions here.

[VIEW LATEST ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS ▶](#)

# Public GIS Viewer

The Public GIS Viewer allows users to view oil, gas and pipeline data in a map view.

[LAUNCH THE PUBLIC GIS VIEWER ▶](#)