

EPA Region 6 UIC Section Changes and Updates

Ken Johnson, P.E.
R6 Groundwater/UIC Section Supervisor
May 2024

A Time of Transitions



- Several staff retirements and multiple new hires over 2018 to 2021
- New section supervisor and several role changes among section staff
- **Section Adjustments:**
 - Managing increased workload from Class VI projects along with other ongoing duties
 - Systemizing review processes and tracking review progress to improve review efficiency
 - Converting from paper to an all-digital environment
 - Submittals now all digital for petitions and Class VI
 - Training newer staff in multiple UIC technical areas

Current Section Staffing



- Section supervisor and 15 technical staff
- **Technically strong section** consists of 4 engineers, 11 geoscientists, and 1 environmental scientist
 - 12 staff hold masters' degrees in engineering, natural resources, or geoscience-related areas, 1 masters in progress
 - 1 PG and 1 PE
- Most newer staff now have experience with Class I, II, and VI projects
 - 5 remaining veteran staff with 8 or more years UIC experience
 - 1 staff member with 30+ years ground water modeling experience in Region 6 for other EPA programs prior to UIC

Section Areas of Focus – “5 Pillars”



- **No migration petitions for Class I Hazardous Waste Injectors**
 - 31 active, 2 new applications, 8 currently under review
- **Osage Mineral Reserve DI Permitting**
 - Class II and Class VI wells
- **Class VI Permitting**
 - 15 projects submitted in Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas
 - Process state Class VI primacy applications
 - LA DENR recently approved for Class VI primacy
- **State UIC agency oversight**
 - 9 agencies in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas
- **Region 6 Groundwater Center**
 - Groundwater project support for R6 RCRA and SF as well as states
 - Multiple projects under review

Section Activity Leads



- **Scott Ellinger** – Groundwater Center coordinator, Class VI contractor interaction COR
- **Arnold Bierschenk** – Overall state UIC program oversight coordinator
- **Chris Tingey** – Osage DI Permitting lead and UIC Data Management coordinator
- **Lisa Pham** – Primacy and state rules revision coordinator and aquifer exemption coordinator
- **Forrest Frederick** – Overall Class I well coordinator and No Migration Petition review team lead
- **Ian Ussery** – Class VI leadership team, No Migration Petition review team lead, and section FOIA lead
- **Brandon Maples** – Class VI leadership team, Class VI project tracker and meeting coordinator, and No Migration Petition review team lead
- **Brody Friesenhahn** – Class VI leadership team and section GIS lead
- **Lauren Ray** – No Migration Petition review team lead
- **Omar Martinez** – Sole Source Aquifer coordinator

Osage Mineral Reserve Class II and VI DI Permitting



- **Chris Tingey** - Osage permitting lead
- Approximately 2400 Class II wells on tribal mineral reserve in Osage County, Oklahoma and other tribal lands
- 4 section staff work with Chris part time
- Prepare permits, review plugging plans, administer well ownership transfers, and deal with well work and review of specialized MITs
- Interact with R6 water enforcement and Osage UIC inspectors witnessing field activities



EPA Region 6 Groundwater Center



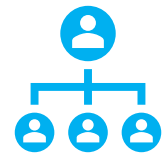
- **Scott Ellinger** - Coordinator
- Provides technical support to other Region 6 programs and to external organizations including Federal/State agencies and Municipal and Tribal governments.
- Flexible staff from geology, hydrogeology, and engineering staff from the Groundwater/UIC Section.
- Current projects (partial list)
 - Chromium plume assessment at Los Alamos National Laboratory.
 - Groundwater model review at Reese Technology Center, Lubbock.
 - Designing a groundwater monitoring system, San Mateo Creek Basin, New Mexico.
 - Data evaluation for ethylene dibromide plume, Albuquerque.
 - Evaluating groundwater conditions for a proposed landfill near Corpus Christi.
- We also provide groundwater related training, modeling support, and reviews of technical reports.

State Agency UIC Oversight Process



- 9 State UIC agencies – **TCEQ, Tx RRC, ADEQ, AOGC, La DENR, NMOCD, NMED, OCC, and ODEQ**
- Individual program oversight managers assigned in UIC section for each agency
- Oversight managers do periodic check in calls with state UIC staff on program activities throughout a fiscal year
 - May include “hot” topics such as purges and induced seismicity
- State 7520 data reporting to EPA reviewed by individual program oversight managers
- Oversight managers prepare an annual end of year report on each state UIC program in region

Region 6 GW/UIC Section Members



Ken Johnson, PE
GW/UIC Section Supvr.
214-665-8473

Scott Ellinger, PG
Geologist
214-665-8408

Ian Ussery
Geologist
214-665-6639

Matthew Liu
Engineer
214-665 -6626

Lauren Ray
Geologist
214-665-2756

Sona Chaudhary
Geologist
214-665-8327

Arnold
Bierschenk
Geologist
214-665-7435

Brody
Friesenhahn
Geologist
214-665-7259

Chris Tingey
Geologist
214-665-8364

Noel Bonilla
Geologist
214-665-8092

Forrest Frederick
Geologist
214-665-6656

Lisa Pham
Engineer
214-665-8326

Brandon Maples
Geologist
214-665-7252

Omar Martinez
Environmental
Scientist
214-665-8485

Heather Hullum
Geologist
214-665-7128

Wakisha Marshall
Engineer
214-665-6613

Useful EPA and R6 UIC Web Links

- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/underground-injection-control-epa-region-6-ar-la-nm-ok-and-tx#contacts>
- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/underground-injection-control-epa-region-6-ar-la-nm-ok-and-tx#permits>
- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/guidelines-completing-class-i-injection-well-no-migration-petitions>
- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/class-vi-wells-used-geologic-sequestration-carbon-dioxide>
- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/current-class-vi-projects-under-review-epa>
- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/final-class-vi-guidance-documents>
- <https://www.epa.gov/uic/underground-injection-control-epa-region-6-ar-la-nm-ok-and-tx#tribal>