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BEG plans to create water consortium

By Mella McEwen, MRT.com/Midland Reporter-Telegram **Updated 11:44 am CST, Monday, February 24, 2020**

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Dr. Bridget Scanlon, Senior Research Scientist, Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, Jackson School of Geo Sciences, University of Texas, speaks during the third annual Permian Basin Water In Energy Conference February 19, 2020, at Horseshoe Arena in Midland.

Scenes from the Permian Basin Water in Energy Conference>>>

Already overseeing oil and gas and seismicity issues, the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin is stepping into the water mix

A meeting in late February is scheduled to organize the Subsurface Water and Energy Lab, a planned water consortium at BEG, according to Bridget Scanlon, senior research scientist at the BEG.

She told attendees at the Permian Basin Water in Energy Conference that the longer laterals drilled in the Permian Basin's unconventional oil and gas plays equal four times the Earth's circumference. Those longer laterals are also reflected in the region's high demand for water used in drilling and completion projects

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She discussed a study by the BEG designed answer three basic questions.

As to how much water is used for hydraulic fracturing, from 2002 to 2017 the Midland and Delaware basins combinec used 110 billion barrels of water.

As to how much water is being produced, the study found the Delaware Basin used 2.85 billion gallons of water for fracturing and produced 10.4 billion barrels of water. The Midland Basin used 1.96 billion gallons and produced 2.62 billic gallons.

In how to manage that water, Scanlon said efforts are needed to increase its use outside the oil patch, whether for irrigation, industrial use, municipal use, surface water discharge or groundwater recharge

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She said demand for water for irrigation use exceeds produced water volumes by five times

“Irrigation demand could accommodate produced water but produced water won't solve the issue of water scarcity," sh said. “Then there's also the water quality issue to solve.'