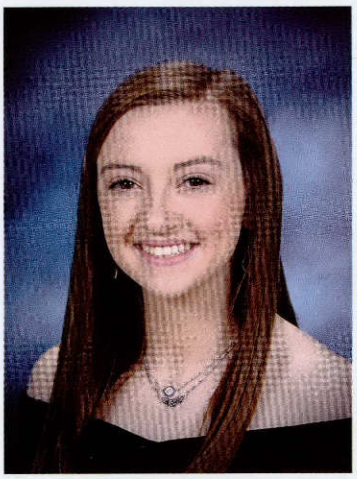
Panhandle Water News

APRIL 2018

PGCD Announces Scholarship Winners

Rylee Albracht
1st Place Winner
Panhandle High School



Callie Thornton
2nd Place Winner
Claude High School

Lily Nguyen
3rd Place Winner
Highland Park High School

In 2002, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) established a scholarship program for graduating seniors throughout the District. The applicants are required to write a 500-1,000 word essay on a topic chosen by PGCD and to enroll as a full-time student at the college of their choice the fall semester immediately following selection. Also, they must maintain at least a 2.5 college GPA. A committee of three board members and a staff member select the winners.

The student awarded first place receives a $4,000 scholarship, second place receives $3,000, and third place receives $2,000. The scholarship total is paid out over four years.

PGCD's topic this year was: **"In your opinion, why are people complacent about conserving water for future generations? Can conservation be taught, and/or what can be done to change the current mindset?"**

PGCD had twenty-four applicants this year and is proud to announce Rylee Albracht, Callie Thornton and Lily Nguyen as the top three winners of PGCD's scholarship.

Rylee Albracht, daughter of Joseph and Kathi Albracht of Panhandle, is our First Place winner. Albracht is set to graduate from Panhandle High School with a 4.0 GPA. Her future plans include attending Texas Tech University to study Biology.

Callie Thornton, daughter of Les and Shelley Thornton from Claude, received second place. Thornton will graduate from Claude High School with a 4.0 GPA. She plans to attend Texas Tech University to study Business.

Lily Nguyen, daughter of That and Ngoc-Anh Le of Amarillo, received third place. Lily will graduate from Highland Park High School with a 4.0 GPA. She plans to attend the University of Texas at Arlington to study Biology.

PGCD wants to thank all of the applicants and congratulate the winners. We thoroughly enjoyed each essay and perspective on the topic. We wish you all the best of luck on your future endeavors.

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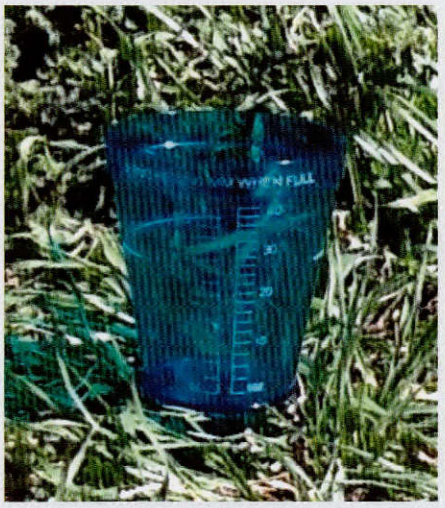
Lawn Sprinkler Gauges Available

To help you know how much water your lawn is getting, we recommend that you accurately measure using a lawn gauge provided by Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, which can be picked up at numerous locations around the district (see right).

Using the Lawn Sprinkler Gauge

- Randomly place sprinkler gauge on your lawn and run the sprinkler for 15 minutes. Record the amount of water collected in the gauge.
- Repeat and take measurements at three or four different locations around the lawn.
- Calculate the average of all measurements and multiply average by four.

This will tell how many inches per hour your sprinkler applies to your lawn; e.g., if your sprinkler waters 1/8 inch in 15 minutes, the hourly rate is 1/2 inch, which is the ideal rate for proper soil absorption.



How Much to Water

Apply enough water to wet soil to a depth of 4-6 inches. After watering your lawn, determine the depth the water reaches by using a soil probe or screwdriver. Even during the hottest months, one inch of water per week is usually adequate.

When to Water

Stress for your lawn is natural, especially during the summer. When your lawn is ready for water, it will have a grayish cast and footprints will remain in the turf. Wait for these signs of stress to appear before watering. Avoid watering on a windy day, and only water in early morning or late evening to reduce evaporation.

Type of Grass

When choosing what type of grass to plant, it is best to choose a type that is best suited for our area.

- **Best Choice:** Buffalo grass: normally remains green on as little as 1.5 inches of water per month, even during the summer. Due to deep root systems, 2 or 3 soakings a summer may be sufficient.
- **Good Choice:** Bermuda grass: requires about one watering a month during the winter and may require 1 to 2 inches per week during the summer.
- **Not Recommended:** Fescue: this type of grass may require as much as 3 inches a week during the summer and 1 inch per week during the winter.

Choosing low-water or native grasses will save water as well as many hours behind the lawn mower. You can find these grasses and other low-water hybrid grasses at your local lawn and garden center.

Lawn Gauge Distributors		
Amarillo	Coulter Gardens	Gebo's
	Home Depot-Soncy	Lowes-Tascosa Rd
	Home Depot-Georgia	Pete's Greenhouse
	Potter Co. AgriLife	Pride Home Center
	Sutherland's	Walmart-Grand
	Walmart-Tascosa Rd	
Clarendon	J&W Lumber	Lowes/Ace Hardware
Claude	Keith's Service Center	
Groom	Groom Hardware	
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Pampa	B&G Rental-Hobart	Bartlett's Hardware
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	Gebo's	Gray Co. AgriLife
	Walmart	
Panhandle	Panhandle Hardware	
Shamrock	Bartlett's Hardware	
Wheeler	Hefley's Hardware	
White Deer	Freeman's Grocery	PGCD Office
	White Deer Supply	

Ag Loans Available

Panhandle Groundwater District is accepting loan applications from District producers for center pivot sprinklers, drip irrigation systems, soil moisture probes, and other water saving equipment.

The loan is available to producers at an interest rate of 1.86 percent and an eight year payback term. Approximate funds remaining are $342,200.

For more information about our ag loan program contact Julie Bennett or C.E. Williams at the District office at (806) 883-2501.

Precipitation Enhancement Program

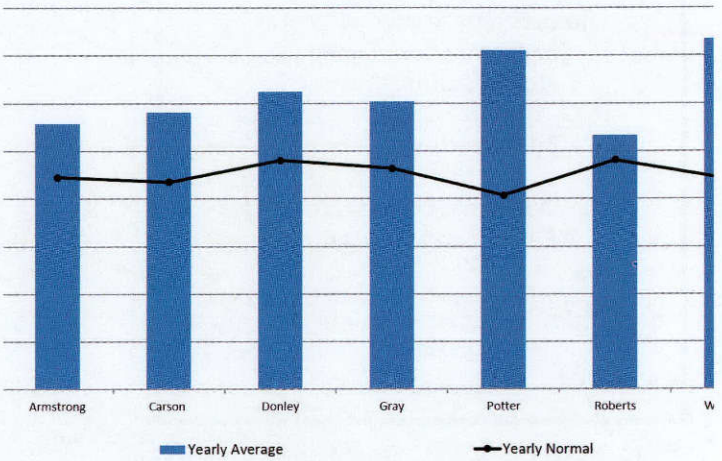
Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) kicked off its eighteenth year of the Precipitation Enhancement Program on April 1. This year has been a slow start with all the Texas Panhandle in extreme to exceptional drought conditions according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The current La Nina that has been in place since last fall has begun to weaken, and most models show us moving towards neutral conditions during April and May. Neutral conditions will allow for the blocking high in the Pacific Northwest to break down which will allow for storm systems to move further south again. This should help bring some much needed rain back to the Panhandle.

The 2017 season concluded with 20 total seeding days which is about average for our program. The first flight occurred on April 16, 2017 and our last flight occurred on September 16, 2017. April and May were both slow months for the program. During April, the month remained cool with average temperatures about 58□F, and the majority of the storm systems that brought precipitation to the Panhandle also brought cooler temperatures and overcast skies so there were not a lot of seeding opportunities. During May, the Panhandle saw a lot of boundary passages throughout the month, but several of those presented severe weather. The rest of May was characterized by high pressure with clear and sunny skies. During June, the season picked up some but remained slower than normal. June did see a lot of boundaries move through, but we also had a lot of upper level highs in place. Therefore, on some days weather that initiated via surface boundary did not have enough upper level support to allow for growth. In July things picked back up with several troughs and fronts moving through the area. There were nine flights in July which was our busiest month during the season. During August and September, we saw another slow down in operations. August was characterized by mostly high pressure, and in September frontal boundaries brought cooler temperatures and overcast skies sooner than normal. The season ended with 20 total seeding flights, 16 reconnaissance flights, 273 glaciogenic flares burned and 21 hygroscopic flares.

While drought is currently a topic of concern, through 2017 the majority of the Panhandle remained drought free through much of the year. A few areas of abnormally dry and moderate drought popped up in the eastern Panhandle during July and August but cleared out in September. More areas of drought appeared in December with all the Panhandle in a drought category ranging from abnormally dry to severe drought by January 1, 2018.

Yearly rainfall totals for 2017 were above normal in all the PGCD counties. The rainfall chart *(see right)* shows total 2017 rainfall compared to their normal rainfall received. The 2017 year end assessment done by Dr. Arquimedes Ruiz, Texas Tech University Professor and from Active Influence and Scientific Management, showed that on average the program produced an additional 1.34 inches of rainfall per acre. The cost of the 2017 program was $165,356.63. Factoring in the cost of the crops, plus the additional amount of rainfall produced the cost of the program was $0.041 per acre.

2017 Yearly Rainfall Totals



Scholarship Winning Essay

Water is Life, by Rylee Albracht, 1st Place Winner of PGCD's 2018 Scholarship Competition.

According to statistics, 97% of all the water on the Earth is salt water, which is not suitable for drinking. Only 3% of all the water is freshwater, and only 1% is available for drinking because 2% of the available freshwater sources are locked in ice caps and glaciers. It is obvious that freshwater is one of our most precious resources. Without freshwater, a human will die within just a few days. Straight forward, no sugar coating, water literally equals life. Water conservation is not a job that is reserved strictly for technicians, soil scientists, hydrologists, foresters, wildlife managers, plant scientists, city planners, park managers, farmers, ranchers, or mine owners– instead ,it is up to each and every one of us to save water.

With the statistics listed above, it is hard to believe that many of us have no problem taking extra-long showers, leaving the water running while we wash our dishes and brush our teeth, letting our sprinklers run in our yard for multiple hours, flushing every time the toilet is used, and simple using water carelessly and selfishly. I think that the reason people are complacent to

Continued on Back Page

DISTRICT OFFICE
201 W. Third St, PO Box 637
White Deer, TX 79097
Phone: 806/883-2501
FAX: 806/883-2162
Web Page: www.pgcd.us

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PANHANDLE GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Winning Essay Continued

conserving water for future generations is simple. It is the same reason why people believe their vote doesn't matter or why they think it is impossible to eat healthier and lose weight: they decide that nothing they, as an individual, could do would make enough of a difference to put forth the effort and make the sacrifices. If they don't feel like they have very much power over the problem, then they just aren't going to engage.

We all know as social creature, humans do not like looking lazy or selfish. So, to change the current mindset, water agencies could make individual water saving efforts more public. Some agencies have already done this by showing neighbors how their water usage stacks up to those around them, and it has helped those neighbors save water. Framing the drought as a local issue that affects people on a scale of their own town or neighborhood rather than a state or region could change the current mindset as well. When people feel that their participation and sacrifices would make a difference, they will engage in the attempt to fix the problem.

In my experiences, water conservation is taught in schools at a young age. When I was young, we were taught how important freshwater is and many ways to conserve it, such as shorter showers and saving the extra water in our water cups instead of throwing it down the sink.

All of the things we learned concerning the importance of conserving water were great things, but as young kids in elementary school, we were not able to fully comprehend how crucial it is to save water and how limited our water resources really are.

While introducing water conservation to kids at a young age is important, I think that reiterating the significance of conserving water to kids when they are older is more important and more productive because they are more mature and are able to look at their future and realize how saving water not is critical for their future kids' lives and for many more generations to come.

A quote by Wendy Pabich nailed it on the head. "The things which have the greatest value in use frequently have little or no value in exchange; on the contrary, those which have the greatest value in exchange frequently have little or no value in use." Although water is more useful than diamonds– in fact, it is essential to life– diamonds command a significantly higher price in the market. We, as humans that depend on water to live, need to realize the significant need for water conservation and instill in ourselves the drive to save as much water as possible. If we don't engage in the opportunity now, it will be too late by the time someone else decides to.