

Panhandle Water News

OCTOBER 2019

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District Rules and Operating Permit Process Update

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's (PGCD) new depletion management rule went into effect last December, with the new rule came a new permitting system. The District believes it is about 60 percent finished District-wide with Operating Permits. Operating Permits are required on all wells pumping more than 17.5 gallons per minute. To begin the Operating Permit process, operators are encouraged to call Julie Bennett, PGCD Permitting Clerk to make an appointment, however, walk-ins are welcome as well.

Since the Rules went into effect, the Board of Directors have remained committed to revisiting aspects of the Rules where constituents have expressed concern. **The Board is hosting a District Rules Workshop on November 14th at the District Office.** The workshop is for anyone with concerns pertaining to the new rules. The Board hopes to have an open dialogue, address concerns and work toward solutions. The Board will have a Regular meeting starting at 9:00 a.m., and once adjourned they will move into the workshop.

Major Rules Changes Recap:

- Operating Permits are required on all wells pumping more than 17.5 GPM. Operating Permits must be applied for and granted by January 1, 2020. Operating Permits must be approved before any production takes place in 2020.
- As part of the Operating Permit process, operators are required to submit their Contiguous Acreage Tract (CAT) information. District staff will confirm and verify CAT(s) and the Maximum Allowable Volume will be calculated based off the number of acreage within each CAT.
 - ◊ **Maximum Allowable Volume** must not exceed one acre-foot per contiguous acre per year (which has been the rule since 2004).
- To drill a permitted well (2 inches or larger), operators must obtain an Operating Permit first, and then apply for a Drilling Permit, which can be accomplished simultaneously.
 - ◊ **Maximum Rate of Production** remains the same since 2004 at 2,880 GPM/section or 4.5 GPM/acre.
- In order to ensure compliance, flow meters are required on all wells pumping more than 35 GPM.
- Operators are required to comply with District Meter Standards, meaning they are responsible to ensure meters are operating to manufacturer's specifications, they must notify the District within three working days if their meter is inoperable and must submit initial meter readings at the beginning of each pumping season.
 - ◊ The initial meter reading is for PGCD staff to notate the meter as operational. Operators may text a picture of their operational meter(s) to **806-883-2124**.
- Registrations are still required for all 1-inch wells and exempt wells. Spacing rules in Rule 8.1 will still apply to all wells.



PGCD Co-Hosts Local Playa Lake Festival

PGCD along with Ogallala Commons hosted a Playa Lake Festival for 5th graders in Carson County earlier this month. Schools in attendance were Groom, Panhandle and Claude, totaling at about 90 students.

Throughout the day, students learned about water conservation from PGCD's Meteorologist, Jennifer Puryear. They also had the opportunity to come in close contact with reptiles and amphibians, thanks to Robert Martin with Ogallala Commons. Jim Steiert from Hereford taught the students about wetland buffers and the importance of waterfowl. His demonstration was complete with bird calls of all kinds. Justin Trammel from Canyon gave an interesting presentation on invertebrates and why playa lakes are so important to our area.

In the afternoon, the students visited a local playa lake. With the abundance of recent rainfall, the students were fortunate to visit a playa filled with water - the parents were not as fortunate, judging by the looks of their muddy shoes. Students also had the opportunity to use nets and see what they could dig up inside the playa lake.

PGCD stresses the importance of engaging with students and informing them about water conservation and why it is so important. If you have any upcoming events or meetings, where a presentation on water conservation would be relevant, please call the office at (806) 883-2501 or email Britney Britten at Britney@pgcd.us.



PGCD's Meteorologist, Jennifer Puryear talking about water conservation.



Carson County 5th Graders hearing from Robert Martin with Ogallala Commons.

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 3.03 percent and an eight-year payback term. Approximate funds remaining are \$1,000,000.

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

2019-2020 Tax Rate

During the September 17 Board Meeting, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's Board of Directors approved the 2019-2020 tax rate. As required, the District placed proper notices in newspapers and online. PGCD received no public comment regarding the proposed increase.

Directors voted to increase the tax rate from \$0.00905/\$100 up to 0.0096/\$100 of taxable value. The surplus funds will be used for general operations.

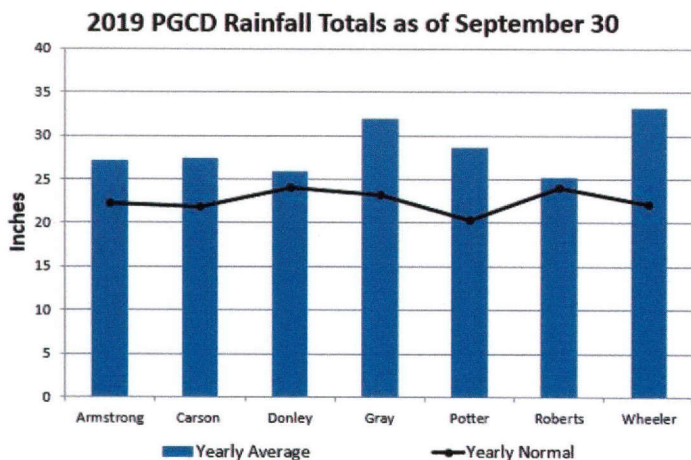
Upcoming Events

- **November 14:** PGCD Board of Directors is hosting a *Rules Workshop* after their regularly scheduled Board Meeting. The meeting begins at 9:00 a.m., the workshop will follow upon adjournment. The public is encouraged to attend and express their views.
- **December 3-5:** Stop by PGCD's booth at the Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show at the Amarillo Civic Center.
- **February 12:** Join us for the 5th Biennial Water Conservation Symposium, at the Amarillo Civic Center in the North Exhibit Hall. To register, please visit www.pgcd.us/2020-water-conservation-symposium and click the Registration Link.

District's Rain Gauge Program

PGCD has a vast rain gauge network that is used to measure rainfall totals in all areas of the District. We have a total of 140 gauges that are strategically placed through each county in the District. Rainfall varies greatly across the District from west to east and these rain gauges help to obtain a more accurate average per county, rather than an average for the entire District. It also allows for us to see differences in rainfall within the counties themselves. Rain gauges are read in January to get an ending total for the previous year. They are then read monthly in April, May, June, July, August, September and October. The rainfall data collected is used within the District in many of our programs, and this more accurate county rainfall data is also used by other entities in their programs throughout the District. The main program at PGCD we use this information for is our Precipitation Enhancement Program. Precipitation enhancement is designed to stimulate clouds to generate more rainfall than they would otherwise through the induction of seeding agents, such as silver iodide and calcium chloride. These seeding agents are used because it has a similar crystalline structure to ice, allowing it to induce freezing. Seeding normally takes place at the smooth, rain free base of the cloud where the updrafts for the storm are located. These updrafts carry the seeding agent to the super-cooled portion of the cloud. Precipitation enhancements is very similar to a farmer fertilizing their crops to produce more yield from the crops. On average, our precipitation enhancement program, which runs from April-September produces an additional 10-15% increase in rainfall.

This year, according to the Districts' rain gauges on average, all our counties are above normal rainfall since the end of September. The graph to the top right shows the county rainfall totals in blue with the black representing that county's normal rainfall for the year. The normal rainfall total comes from the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) and are based on data collected from 1981-2010.



Senator Seliger Hosts Town Hall

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District General Manager, CE Williams and PR/Education Director, Britney Britten attended a Town Hall Meeting in Panhandle hosted by Senator Kel Seliger.

The Senator spoke about several bills he voted for and against during the last legislative session which ended in May. Senator Seliger said the meeting in Panhandle was his 455th Town Hall. He said he enjoys hosting them because they give him insight about the real issues his constituents are facing.



Senator Seliger with Town Hall Meeting Attendees.

Education Program's 20th Year

This school year marks the twentieth year of PGCD's education program. The program was created in 1999 and has since reached out to thousands of students across the District. It is stated in PGCD's management plan for the District to visit at least 75 percent of the schools within the district boundaries to teach them about water conservation. However, our goal is to reach 100 percent to ensure we are making an impact on the importance of water conservation to our future generations.

New this year, PGCD is focusing on all grades, K-12, and discussing the importance of water conservation at each level. Presentations include information about the water cycle, the Ogallala Aquifer, where our water comes from playa lakes and water quality.

In addition to the school presentations, Britney also presents to local civic groups and other organizations. Topics include, General District Information, Xeriscape Gardens, Rainwater Harvesting Information and Ways to Conserve Water at Home. Our presentations are great for any Club, including: Lion's Club, Boy or Girl Scout Troops or evening gardening clubs.

If you would like to schedule an educational presentation or any other type of presentation given, please contact Britney Britten at the PGCD office at (806) 883-2501 or by email at pgcd_education@yahoo.com.

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
P.O. BOX 637
WHITE DEER, TEXAS 79097

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**SAVE
THE DATE**

**5th Biennial Water
Conservation Symposium**

The Future of Water:

Innovative, Efficient and Successful Strategies for Water Conservation

Wednesday, February 12, 2020 // Amarillo Civic Center // North Exhibit Hall

For more information call or email:

806-883-2501 // cew@pgcd.us or britney@pgcd.us

Featured Topics:

- Hemp 101 Panel: Perspectives on growing Hemp in Texas
- A Historical Look at the Ogallala Aquifer
- Xeriscaping in the Texas Panhandle
- Do or Dry Campaign with the Texas Water Foundation

To Register Visit: www.pgcd.us/2020-water-conservation-symposium