



Panhandle Water News

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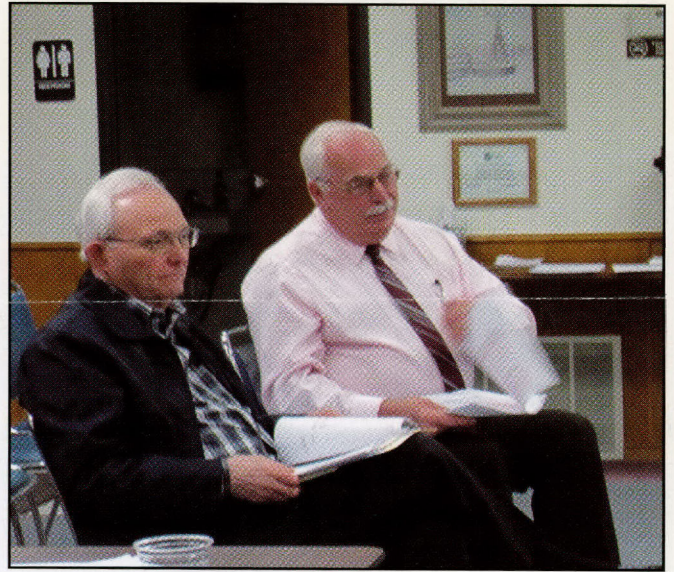
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPT CHANGES TO DISTRICT RULES

A public hearing was held March 24, 2010, at the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) office to address the most recent changes to the District Rules. The Board of Directors voted to adopt the proposed changes.

There was very little argument from the public about the proposed changes. Only four members of the public attended the hearing. Emmet Autrey, representing the city of Amarillo, made a few statements about the changes.



Steve Stevens, representing Mesa Water, Inc., and Emmett Autrey, representing City of Amarillo, gave comment at the public hearing on the proposed changes to the Rules

The Board voted to amend all of the changes to the rules and incorporate further explanation about achieving the desired future conditions of the District into the Preamble.

The following is a brief outline of the recently adopted changes:

- Rules 3 and 15 - The District amended to clarify the penalties that may be assessed by the District by adding a schedule of initial minimum penalties.
- Rules 4 and 8 - The District amended to rearrange and further explain the permitting process to make it clearer for constituents.
- Rule 4 - The District amended to rename the Drilling Permit to a Drilling and Production Permit and make conforming changes throughout the Rules.
- Rule 4 - The District amended to require a signed permit to be returned to the District staff within 60 days of the permit's issuance.
- Rule 4 - The District amended to require new wells to be constructed with sufficient space to allow for proper meter installation.
- Rule 15 - The District amended to change the production reporting requirements in a Conservation Area from quarterly to annually.

A complete copy of the current Rules of the District can be found online at www.pgcd.us or can be picked up at the District office, 201 W. 3rd St. White Deer, TX or call (806)883-2501.

Points of Interest

New District Rules Adopted

Director Elections Cancelled

PGCD Honors Yvonne Thomas

TWDB Rules in Favor of GMA 1

Regional Water Plan Draft Available and Hearing on April 28, 2010

FREE Lawn Watering Gauges!!!

Ag Loan Money Available

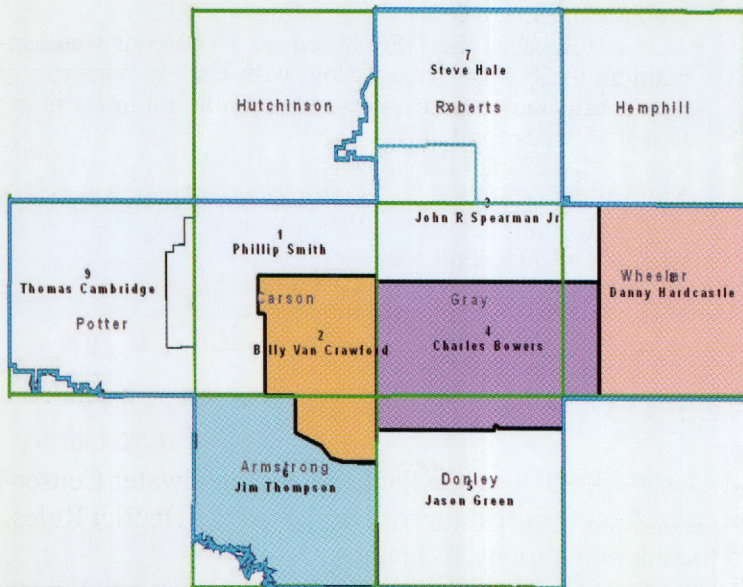
MAY 8TH ELECTIONS CANCELLED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PGCD Board of Directors cancelled the director elections that were to be held on May 8, 2010 because all candidates were running unopposed. This decision was made during the regular Board meeting on March 24, 2010.

In accordance with the Texas Election Code, political subdivisions can declare the results of an election without conducting it, if there are no contested positions and no propositions on the ballot. This saves both taxpayer money and time.

Precincts open for election were Precinct 2, 4, 6 and 8. See the map to the left to see what area the precincts cover and the current Director.

PGCD Directors serve four year terms. Their duties as a director typically include meeting the needs of the constituents in their respective precincts, setting District policies and guidelines, outlining long-range goals and monitoring the District finances.



PLEASE NOTE . . .

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District is moving towards an electronic newsletter. If you would prefer to get your newsletter electronically, please e-mail bgillespie@pgcd.us.

PGCD HONORS YVONNE THOMAS ON HER RETIREMENT

After 21 years of outstanding service Yvonne Thomas, Administrative Assistant of PGCD, will retire in April 2010.

She began her career with the District in 1989 when there were only two employees. Since then she has helped the District grow to cover all or parts of nine counties. Her outstanding administrative skills and professionalism have proven to support the District's needs and growth.

Other than the regular secretarial duties, Yvonne handled bookkeeping, payroll, the Ag Loan Program, coordination of the Board of Directors meetings, and publication of the quarterly newsletter. She also assisted with the annual audit, elections, and the Decline Program.

The Board recognized her at the last regular meeting on March 24, 2010. We extend our sincere appreciation for her dedicated service to Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District for over twenty years. We wish her congratulations on her well-earned retirement and best wishes for continued success, happiness and good health in the future.



Yvonne with her "Happy Retirement" cake at the Board meeting March 24, 2010.

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TWDB DETERMINES GMA 1 DFCS TO BE REASONABLE

Water is a common topic in the Panhandle. Recently a ruling was made on the latest water debate.

A hearing took place at the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) in Austin on February 17, 2010, and the Board determined the Desired Future Conditions (DFC) set in Groundwater Management Area 1 (GMA 1) are reasonable.

The DFCS were adopted on July 7, 2009, and set forth as the four northwest counties have set a DFC of 40 percent left in 50 years, Hemphill County is set to have 80 percent left after 50 years, and the remaining 13 counties have set 50 percent left in 50 years as their goal. The map to the right shows the DFCS, counties and the groundwater conservation districts contained in GMA 1.

These DFCS were petitioned by Mesa Water LP and G & J Ranch Inc on the basis that the DFCS were ineffective for aquifer management and unfairly distributed across the Panhandle. A hearing was held in November 2009 to allow both sides to express their concerns and provide information for TWDB to use in making their decision.

TWDB staff then took the information that had been presented and analyzed it to form a recommendation report for the Board to use in making a final ruling about the reasonableness of the DFCS for GMA 1.

The staff recommended that the Board rule in favor of GMA 1, stating that after evaluation, the DFCS were reasonable and the districts in GMA 1 have evaluated the potential outcomes of the selected DFCS.

“Staff is persuaded by the districts’ testimony and evidence that the districts have considered the potential impact of their decision on all users and uses of groundwater in GMA 1, and have achieved a balance ... for all sectors of the district, including the water marketers,” the report said.

The report developed by the staff details information addressing each of the petitioners concerns; whether the Districts engaged in joint planning, the impact on private property rights, uses and conditions of the aquifer, environmental impacts and spring flows, development of the State’s groundwater resources, whether the DFCS are physically possible, and the socio-economic impacts of the DFCS.

The report examined pumping history for each county in GMA 1 to further explain that if the four northwest counties were to have a DFC of 50 percent left in 50 years the economic impact might be a decrease of \$358 million.

This information was taken into deep consideration by the Board and used for their ruling that the DFCS set by Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, North Plains Groundwater Conservation District, Hemphill County Groundwater Conservation District, and High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 are reasonable.

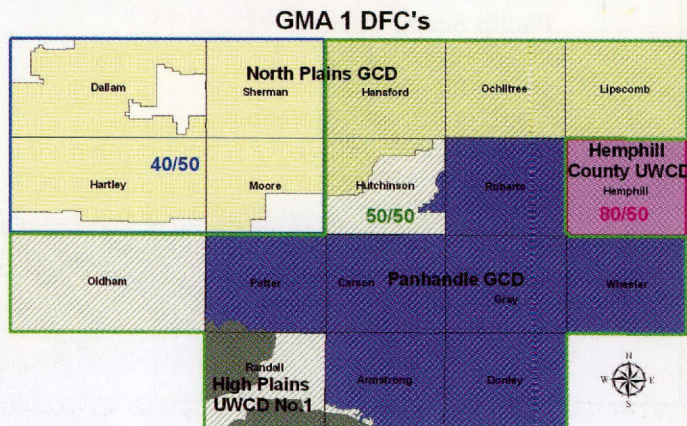
PGCD started working towards their 50/50 Management Standard over 10 years ago. This ruling helps to affirm that the District has always been heading the right direction.

TWDB staff report also explains that the 50/50 standard set for the 13 counties will not produce an economic impact.

“Because the DFC based on 50 percent water remaining in 50 years is consistent with historic pumping in the 13 affected counties, no socio-economic impact is anticipated,” the report stated.

“Balancing the interest of all the involved parties while allowing for today and affording for the future is a tricky situation, but we are working towards it,” C. E. Williams, PGCD General Manager, said.

For further information the staff report can be found at <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/BoardMembers/2010/February/Special/spc02-GMA.pdf>.



UPDATED DRAFT OF REGIONAL WATER PLAN NOW AVAILABLE

The 1997 Legislature authorized the local level to begin the process contributing to creating a state water plan. Panhandle Water Planning Group is currently in its third round of regional water planning.

The draft version of the 2011 water plan is available online at www.panhandlewater.org. The draft report is the latest update of the original water plan and includes supply, demand and management strategies.

It breaks down water supply and demands over the next 50 years and identifies areas that are predicted to experience shortages. The planning group has commissioned several studies since the last plan and the results are incorporated in the draft. Some of the studies include the inability of the Ogallala Aquifer to recharge and the factors contributing to Lake Meredith’s falling water level have been studied.

According to Kyle Ingham, local government services director for the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, printed copies are also available at county courthouses and libraries.

A public hearing has been set to present to the public the results of the Initially Prepared 2011 Regional Water Plan. This hearing has been set for April 28, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the Texas AgriLife Research & Extension Center. Written and oral comment will be taken.

“This meeting gives the general public an opportunity for input to the planning process,” C. E. Williams, chairman of Panhandle Water Planning Group, said.

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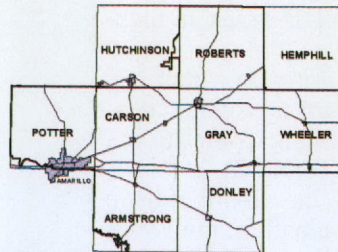
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FREE LAWN WATERING GAUGES !!!

In an effort to assist municipal water conservation, PGCD has delivered lawn watering gauges to local garden centers and lumber yards and some general purpose stores throughout the District. These gauges and the accompanying guide are free to the public on a first come, first served basis. When the guide is used in conjunction with the gauge, it will calculate how many inches per hour your sprinkler applies to your lawn.

Growing populations and rising costs for water and wastewater facilities are straining the ability of some communities and utilities to meet demand, especially during the summer.

During the winter, 90 percent or more of household water use occurs inside the home; however, in the summer lawn watering and other outdoor uses can account for 50 to 80 percent of home water use. Yet, studies have shown that as much as half of this outdoor use is wasted through poor watering practices.

Typically, wells producing water from the Ogallala Aquifer supply the water needs of communities in the District. Recharge amounts are usually lower than the withdrawals, resulting in water table declines. As water levels decline, communities must consider the means of ensuring dependable supplies. Conservation is a key component of groundwater management.

Summer is almost here, so pick your gauge up today!

**AGRICULTURAL WATER
CONSERVATION EQUIPMENT LOANS**

The District still has funds available for low energy, water conserving sprinkler systems. These funds come from the Texas Water Development Board. Interest on loans made with this money will be 1.67%. Loans can be made for up to \$125,000, for 7 years.

For more information or to receive an information/application packet, call the office at 806-883-2501.

According to the Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency, groundwater in Texas provides an estimated:

- 59% of all freshwater withdrawals,
- 79% of agriculture water use (mostly for irrigation),
- 36% of the public water supply withdrawals,
- 99% of drinking water for the rural population