

Panhandle Water News

JANUARY 2011

Senate Staff Visits Local Groundwater Districts

On a beautiful winter day, several staff members from Texas Senator Troy Fraser and Texas Senator Kel Seliger's offices met together with three local Groundwater Districts within the Texas Panhandle to discuss joint groundwater issues. The trip was coordinated by Executive Director of Government and Public Affairs Jason Skaggs from Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) and State Legislative Director Billy Howe from Texas Farm Bureau (TFB), to investigate how Groundwater Districts are honoring private property rights in their management of groundwater. Also on the trip were Billy Bob Brown, TFB Director, and Joe Parker, incoming TSCRA President.

The tour began in Canadian, Texas, with a presentation from the Hemphill County



C. E. Williams, general manager, explains PGCD's management plan and 50/50 DFC decision at the 6666 Ranch Headquarters, North of Panhandle, TX.

Underground Water Conservation District (HUWCD) Board President Jim Haley and General Manager Janet Guthrie explaining all the actions HUWCD is taking to help preserve their water. The focus of their presentation was water use patterns and opportunities they

have for conservation of both surface and groundwater to preserve spring flow and ecotourism. Guthrie further discussed what driving factors were considered by their District Board in establishing the 80 percent of the current water

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Cambridge Resigns PGCD Board, Collard Joins



Board President John R. Spearman presents a plaque to resigning Board of Director Thomas Cambridge.

Thomas Cambridge resigned his seat at the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors. Cambridge first took seat at the District Board in August 2006 to represent Precinct 9, which is part of Potter County. He has been a loyal member, and has provided great insight into various industries. The December 15th board meeting was Cambridge's last meeting, but was also the start of a new board member's journey.

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Points of Interest

Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show

In Honor of Jim McCray

Depth to Water Measurements

New Ag Loan Money Available

Precipitation Enhancement 2010 Summary

IRS Approves District Decline Maps

2010 Annual Report Available

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left in 50 years Desired Future Condition (DFC) for Hemphill County. Guthrie provided a scenic drive to Lake Marvin and a Historic Ranch House to see some examples of what they are trying to preserve.

The group then traveled on to Dumas, Texas, where they were met by North Plains Groundwater Conservation District (NPGCD) Board President Danny Krienke, General Manager Steve Walthour, and Hydrologist Dale Hallmark. Krienke and Walthour continued to discuss local groundwater issues which included some of the programs ongoing in their area and details of their "200/12" program. The "200/12" program was a study conducted during the growing season in three areas of their District to investigate whether 200 bushels of corn can be economically grown in the NPGCD area. They also explained that the people in the four western counties of their District which include Dallam, Sherman, Hartley and Moore counties, felt that they could only accomplish a 40 percent left in 50 years DFC without adversely affecting the local economy.

After visiting the NPGCD area, the group continued out to the 6666 Ranch headquarters north of Panhandle, Texas, where Ranch Manager Joe Leathers gave a guided tour of the ranch to observe their ongoing conservation practices firsthand. Leathers explained to the group that water conservation has become an integral part of their everyday management on the ranch.

C. E. Williams, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) General Manager, also gave a presentation about PGCD's management plan and goals, and how PGCD arrived at the 50 percent left in 50 years DFC. He told the group the 50/50 Management Standard was born at the District in an effort to balance the needs to produce water today, and the desire to conserve the most water possible for future generations. He pointed out the need for sound data and how science drives our decisions.

The group was presented with an overall representation of the Texas Panhandle and the groundwater issues in our area. They were also shown a close-up view of how each Groundwater District operates and the importance of each District's views when it comes to considering state-wide problems. Howe explained that TFB supports the management of groundwater by local districts, and he also said, "One of the best ways for Austin legislative staff to get a first-hand view of the great job these districts do is to visit a district and see for themselves. Every time Texas Farm Bureau has helped to coordinate one of the tours, the staff comes away with an appreciation of how local groundwater management is working in Texas."

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that he had enjoyed working with all of the staff at PGCD and the other board members on the water issues at hand, and that he had learned so much about the issues that are and will continue to affect the Texas Panhandle.

Filling the Precinct 9 position is F.G. "Butch" Collard. Collard attended the December 15 Board meeting and, PGCD looks forward to working with him and building another valuable relationship.

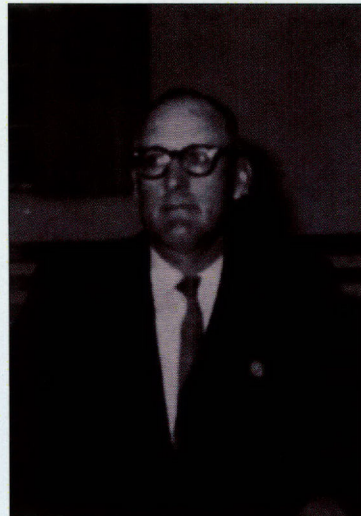
Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) staff attended the 26th annual Amarillo Farm and Ranch show in Amarillo, Texas, from November 30 through December 2, 2010. According to the Amarillo Farm and Ranch show recap for 2010, it was a huge success with over 30,000 people in attendance, and an upbeat mood that followed a good harvest with strong cotton and grain prices. PGCD always sets up a booth at the annual show to provide area farmers and ranches with information about our programs that could be of assistance to them. Overall the event was a huge success for everyone involved.



PGCD Assistant Manager Cole Camp speaks with individuals about water conservation in PGCD's booth at the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

In Honor of Jim McCray, PGCD Former Board President



PGCD retired Board President Jim McCray.

Jim McCray, former PGCD Board President, passed away January 9, 2011. McCray held a seat on the Board from 1969-1985 serving as Board President from 1974 to 1980. McCray was active in civic affairs in the area. He also served as president of the Panhandle Independent School District, as chairman of Carson County Appraisal District, as a member of the Groundwater Management District Association, and as chairman of the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission.

McCray was named an Honorary Life Member of the Groundwater Management District Association at a convention in El Paso, Texas, in 2008.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials be given to First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 549, Panhandle TX 79068; Carson County Square House Museum, P.O. Box 267,

Annual Winter Level Water Measurements Underway

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District Field technicians are currently out making depth to water measurements across the District. Approximately 950 various wells will be measured from December through February to provide accurate detailed information for our records. Types of wells measured include windmills, irrigation, domestic and abandoned wells.

The information gathered from these measurements is used in creating saturated thickness maps, depletion maps and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) decline maps. The data collected and maps are useful for local producers to determine the amount of water under their property and is key in the operation of our depletion management program.

The maps created from these measurements help to demonstrate how the water table has changed over the last year. They also help determine the depletion allowance for IRS purposes.

The main goal is to provide accurate information to constituents of the District.

If you have any questions or comments about this process then please call us at 800-320-3536 or 806-883-2501. The 2011 depletion maps will be published in the July newsletter.

TWDB Approves Loan to PGCD

At the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) December board meeting Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) was approved for financial assistance in the amount of \$1,000,000 to purchase approved agricultural water conservation equipment. The funds are made available through TWDB's Agricultural Water Conservation Loan Program.

This program allows TWDB to make loans to lender districts, such as PGCD. These lender districts can then make loans to individual local producers to purchase and install efficient irrigation equipment on private property.

The District will utilize these funds to make loans to individual borrowers for purchase of center pivot irrigation systems. The loans have an eight year term and the current interest rate is 1.67 percent.

"These loans provide a great opportunity for local producers to install efficient equipment," said PGCD General Manager C. E. Williams.

The District's Ag loan program has been extremely successful since it began in 1992. To date PGCD has made 126 loans totaling \$6,208,720.

For more information, or to receive a loan application, come by the office, 201 W. Third Street, White Deer, Texas, or call (806) 883-2501.

PGCD's Precipitation Enhancement 2010 Season Recap

The conclusion of the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's (PGCD) 2010 Precipitation Enhancement Program marked the eleventh year of cloud seeding in the Texas Panhandle. This season began with the first mission on April 11th and concluded on September 25th with the last mission. The mission on September 25th was the latest season flight since the inception of the program in 2000. Typically, the season runs from April 15th until September 30th; however, if suitable opportunities are present before the 15th then the season will commence.

The 2010 seeding season contained 28 days with seeding events, which consisted of 37 seeding missions and 15 reconnaissance missions. According to Active Influence and Scientific Management, we seeded 45 clouds which consisted of five small clouds, 15 large clouds and 25 type B clouds during the seeding events. The seeding of these clouds helped to produce an additional 1,129,300 acre-feet of water which translates to an average of about 2.96 inches across the water District. Taking into account the raw rain gauge data, the 2.96 inches can be translated to a 15 percent increase per county in rainfall received. Table 1 gives a comparison of seeding variable from 2009 to 2010.

The economic value of this additional 15 percent of rainfall remained about the same as the 2009 season. The total cost of the seeding program in 2010 was \$188,526.12. Considering this figure plus what an additional 2.96 inch per acre is worth the District cost per acre is about five cents.

All of the counties within PGCD received more rainfall in 2010 than in 2009 from April to October (Table 2). A record event occurred on July 7, 2010, when a heavy rain event brought 10.5 inches of rain just east of the National Weather Service in Amarillo, which caused some

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Comparison of 2009 and 2010 Variables			
Variables	2009	2010	Difference
Days Flown	25	28	3
Missions	32	37	5
# of Flares Used	259	1065	806
Clouds Seeded	32	45	13
Ac/Ft of Additional Water	717,900	1,129,300	411,400
Additional Water (in inches) Received Per District Acre	1.65	2.96	1.31

Table 1: Gives a comparison of cloud seeding variable from 2009 to 2010, and their differences.

April - October Rainfall Averages in Inches 2009-2010			
	2009	2010	Difference
Armstrong	17.75	22.83	5.08
Carson	23.22	24.04	0.82
Donley	16.97	27.09	10.12
Gray	19.43	23.13	3.7
Potter	14.09	17.76	3.67
Roberts	16.99	18.42	1.43
Wheeler	19.08	25.54	6.49
District Normal 16.43 Inches			

Table 2: Above calculated rain gauge data is provided by rain gauge cooperators, and a collection of PGCD rain gauges read by District staff located across the water District.

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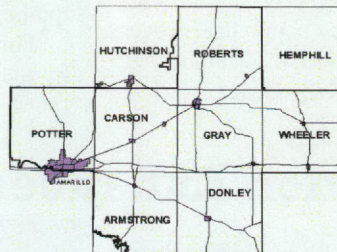
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IRS Approves 2010 Decline Maps

Each year PGCD Hydrologist Amy Crowell creates the District's Annual Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Decline maps. These maps are constructed using the water level measurements gathered annually from December to March.

Every December the IRS sends an engineer to study the District's maps. IRS Engineer Lorinda Busby met with Crowell to inspect the 2010 maps used for income tax deduction purposes. Busby also met with PGCD consultant, Gary Sutherland to consider the cost in water figures. The decline maps and cost in water figures were approved.

The 2010 Decline Letters have been mailed to qualified landowners participating in the program. If you have purchased irrigated farm land then you may qualify for a depletion deduction on groundwater. Contact your CPA for more information.

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flooding including the areas of Highland Park Independent School District and the Pantex Plant.

The 2010 seeding season was very successful with many opportunities for seeding throughout the season.

PGCD was also the host this year for the Texas Weather Modification Association workshop, which was held in October at the District office. This workshop is held every year during the fall so all the weather modification projects across the state of Texas can get together and discuss their seeding seasons, on-going weather medication studies, and new weather modification technologies.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pioneers in Agriculture Field Day

Wednesday, February 24, 2011
Muncy, Texas

Registration starts at 7:45 am at the Floyd County Unity Center. The program, hosted by the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation, will cover water topics, profitability management, livestock management, CRP, CSP and other information about production decisions.

For more information about the field day, visit <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/TAWC> or call (806)724-2774.

We encourage you to take advantage of this educational opportunity.

2010 PGCD Annual Report Available

The 2010 Annual Report, highlighting District activities from the past year, was presented to the Board of Directors at their meeting on December 15, 2010. This comprehensive report is being forwarded to Texas State Legislators, our local representatives, GMA 1 Board members and the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts.

It is accessible on the District's website, www.pgcd.us, or you may pick up a copy at the District office.