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CONSERVATION

THE CROSS SECTION

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THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR WATER!

JULY 2011

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE HIGH PLAINS UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NO. 1, LUBBOCK TX

Board adopts rule amendments to implement "50/50" management goal

At their July 19 regular meeting, the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District Board of Directors adopted rule amendments designed to implement the district's 50/50 management goal of having 50 percent of the saturated thickness of the Ogallala Aquifer in 2010 available for use in 2060.

In addition, the Board of Directors also approved the district's 10-year amended management plan, which includes the goal to achieve desired future conditions of the groundwater resources within its jurisdiction, including the Ogallala, Edwards-Trinity, and Dockum Aquifers.

State law requires groundwater conservation districts to adopt and enforce rules to implement and achieve their established management goals in order to maintain local control over groundwater management.

In order to achieve the 50/50 management goal, the newly-adopted rule amendments establish the first-ever production limit for groundwater pumpage from the Ogallala Aquifer within the 16-county High Plains Water District service area. This impacts all water users, including agriculture, municipalities, public water suppliers, and others.

"These rule amendments are a good start, but the High Plains Water District Board of Directors and staff are committed to making the rules a living document as we go forward. We know issues will arise that can be addressed through tweaks and adjustments," said Board President Robert Meyer of Canyon.

District Manager Jim Conkwright agreed.

Beginning in Jan. 2012 and through Dec. 2013, all persons owning or operating an existing, new, or pre-district well or well system that withdraws groundwater from the Ogallala Aquifer must limit the total amount of production from the well or well system to an allowable production rate of 1.75 acre-feet per contiguous acre per year (21 inches).

The production limit is lowered to 1.5 acre-feet per contiguous acre per year (18 inches) beginning in Jan. 2014 and through Dec. 2015.

The limit is lowered again to 1.25 acre-feet per contiguous acre per year (15 inches) in Jan. 2016 and beyond.



Rule Amendments Adopted

President Robert Meyer (left) announces the 3-0 vote by the High Plains Water District Board of Directors to adopt the rule revisions as amended. Precinct Two District Director Jim Copeland was absent due to a previously-scheduled vacation trip.

In addition, metering of groundwater production and submission of annual production reports to the district are required in the future.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2012, all new permitted water wells or well systems in the district are required to have a meter in place before pumping can occur. Existing water wells or well systems may measure groundwater production through an

alternative measuring method from 2012 to 2016. These systems must be equipped with meters no later than Jan. 1, 2016.

A list of approved meters and alternative measuring methods will be available on the High Plains Water District web site (www.hpwd.com) by Sept. 1, 2011. The list will also be published in a future issue of *The Cross Section*.

Water wells or well systems with fully functioning meters as of the date that the district's approved meter list is published are "grandfathered" and will remain so as long as the meter is fully functional. Any replacement meter must be one approved by the Water District.

Owners or operators of water wells required to be metered must submit annual production reports to the High Plains Water District. The first annual production report is for groundwater pumped during calendar year 2012 and must be submitted to the district no later than March 1, 2013.

The 3-0 vote to adopt the rule

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Public Hearing

Agricultural producers and other interested persons attended the July 19 public hearing on the proposed amendments to the 2011-2021 High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 management plan. The plan, adopted by the district's Board of Directors, contains a management goal to achieve the desired future conditions of the groundwater resources within the district's jurisdiction.

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VISIT THE HIGH PLAINS WATER DISTRICT'S WEB SITE AT WWW.HPWD.COM

Board appreciates public comments, participation in rulemaking process

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amendments was preceded by a public comment period during the board meeting in which several agricultural producers and other audience members spoke for and against adoption of the proposed rule amendments.

"I support your efforts...No one likes extra rules and regulations, but we've got to do a better job (of conserving water)," said Ray Joe Riley of Hart.

"The Protect Water Rights Coalition is concerned that limiting groundwater production and requiring installation of water meters is a government taking of private property rights without compensation," said attorney Timothy Pridmore of Lubbock, who represents the group.

Following the vote, Precinct One District Director James Powell of Lubbock thanked those in attendance for their participation in

the rulemaking process.

"We may not all be right and we may not all be wrong. But one thing is for sure...when the water is gone; none of us will be here. We encourage you to stay engaged as the High Plains Water District continues the process to meet its 50/50 management goal. I assure you there will be adjustments, as needed, along the way," Powell said.

PDF files of the amended District Management Plan and the

rule revisions are now available for viewing/downloading on the High Plains Water District's web site (www.hpwd.com).

The links are on the front page of the web site in a blue shaded box titled "Rule Amendments."

"We ask Water District residents to read the amended rules and encourage them to contact our office at (806) 762-0181, if they have any questions," said Manager Jim Conkwright.

NOAA: United States was warmer and drier than normal during June 2011

June 2011 brought temperature and precipitation extremes across the United States.

An oppressive heat wave, accompanied by intensifying drought conditions, shattered temperature records in the South and Southwest.

Overall, the nation had its 19th driest and 26th warmest June on record, according to scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina.

The average U. S. temperature in June was 70.7 degrees F, which is 1.4 degrees F above the long-term (1901-2000) average.

Precipitation, averaged across the nation, was 2.38 inches, or 0.41 of an inch below the long-term average.

Several locations broke all-time high temperature records.

On June 26, Amarillo, TX set an all-time high temperature of 111 degrees F, breaking the record of 109 degrees set just two days prior.

The expansive heat across Texas

resulted in an average temperature of 85.2 degrees F, which was 5.6 degrees above normal--surpassing 1953 as the warmest June in 117 years of records.

This was the fourth consecutive June in Texas with temperatures at least two degrees F above the long-term average.

Along with the heat, parts of the Southwest through much of the Southern Plains and Gulf Coast experienced a continuation of intense drought.

Amarillo received 0.49 of

an inch of precipitation in June, while Lubbock only received trace precipitation.

New Mexico had its driest June on record while Arizona and Oklahoma had their fourth driest.

June was the fifth driest month in Texas and ninth driest in Florida.

In the South, the percentage of area in exceptional drought (*the worst category of drought*) rose from 28 percent to 47 percent during June 2011.

The current weather pattern is expected to continue through July.

Field Technician Dan Seale retires after 42 years of service to District

After 42 years of service, Field Technician Dan Seale retired July 5 from the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1.

Past and present colleagues honored Seale during a June 30 retirement dinner.

Former district employees in attendance included Dwight Adams, Glenn Blackmon, Obbie Goolsby, Arnold Husky, and Tony Schertz.

Dan joined the High Plains Water District staff on Sept. 9, 1968.

One of his first assignments was work to upgrade and expand the district's observation well network.

Throughout his career, Dan worked on a wide variety of programs and activities—including groundwater quality and quantity, soil moisture monitoring, and other field work.

"Dan gained extensive knowledge of the High Plains Water District during his 42 years

of service. He knew water well locations, their numbers, and their characteristics by heart. He also knew many landowners and operators which proved to be very beneficial as the district implemented water conservation programs throughout the years," said Manager Jim Conkwright.

During January, February, and March of each year, Dan and other staff members made annual depth-to-water level measurements in privately-owned water wells in the district's observation well network.

For many years, Dan collected water samples from domestic wells and conducted a bacteriological analysis of the water to detect the presence of fecal coliform bacteria resulting from cesspool, rodent, or animal contamination.

If contamination was found, he worked with well owners to locate the source of the contamination, eliminate it, and treat the well so that the water was safe for human consumption.

In recent years, Dan's work efforts focused on tailwater abatement and the proper closure of open water wells within the district's 16-county service area.

"Dan's knowledge of farms and their owners throughout the years made him a natural to work in these program areas. This, along with his personality, was important in resolving water waste issues in the district during the past 10 years," Conkwright said.

The Board of Directors and staff of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 express their sincere appreciation to Dan for his 42 years of dedicated service to District residents.

We wish him all the best on his retirement!

THE CROSS SECTION

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SEALE

Water conservation comments flood local media as drought continues

As the 2011 drought continues, hardly a day goes by without a news story or letter to the editor discussing the need to conserve water.

Here's what some area residents are saying:

"I know many residents are very water-conscious and do all they can to conserve water; however, the actions of the irresponsible ones can lead to water shortages as the aquifers and reservoirs are depleted. This lack of responsibility could ultimately force governments to enact laws to force people to exercise common sense. Otherwise, we could end up someday having to make a choice between a green lawn and water to drink." (*Amarillo Globe-News*)

"I came home one day last week after work about 5 p.m. and it was 103 outside, and windy, and my neighbor had every sprinkler running in his yard and water was running down the sidewalk into the road. As hot as it was, he probably had to run those sprinklers three times what he would have at 2 a.m. to get the same amount of water on his yard. That's a waste! People who water like that should have a picture of their yard with the sprinklers running posted on the 10 o'clock news." (*Amarillo Globe-News*)

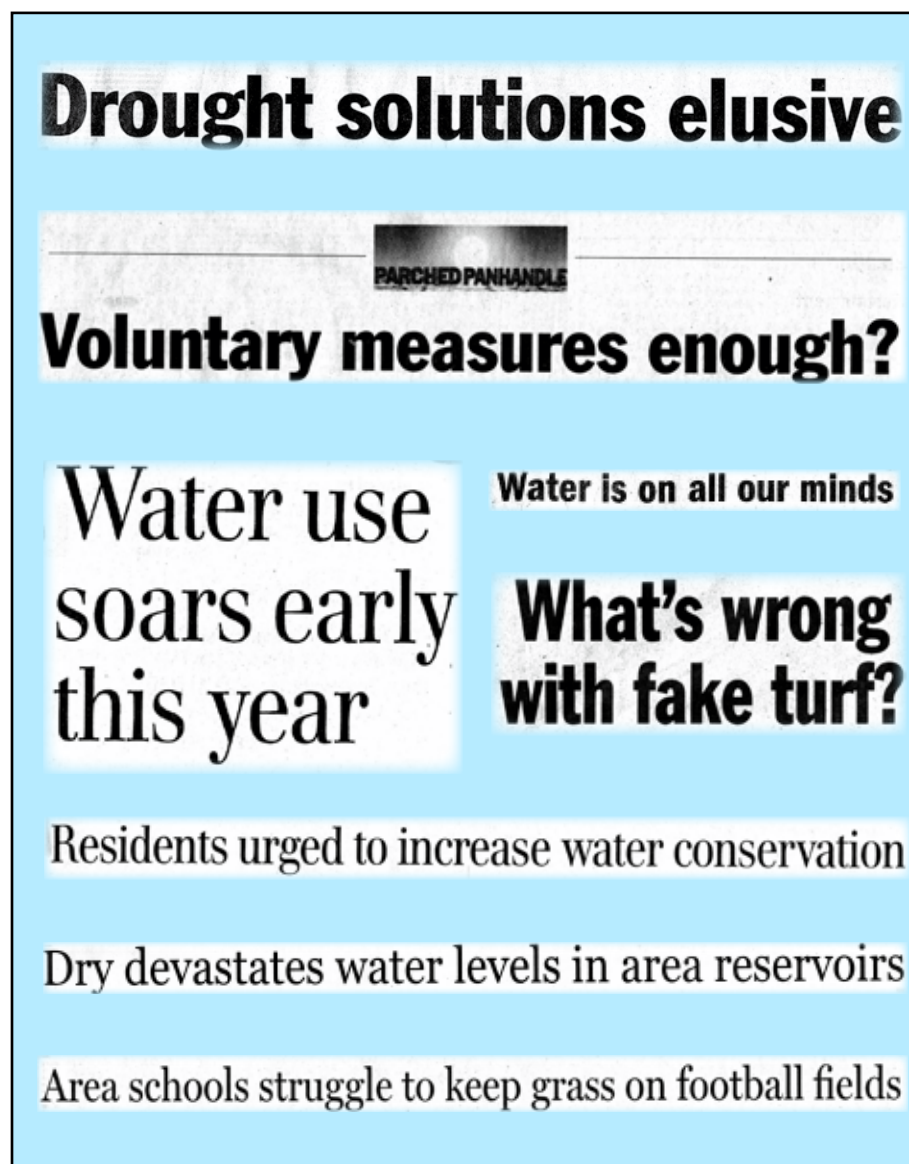
"I have a fairly wealthy acquaintance. Not long ago, we had a short conversation about wasting water. Now his standard answer to anything is: "We pay for it," meaning if a tidal wave of water rolls down the street and it's his fault—it's OK—because we pay for it. Not one time have I driven through (a specific) intersection that there was not standing water. Even in the winter, you have to be careful and watch for ice. But that's OK, because we pay for it. I walk (at a city park) in the mornings. The ground is always wet. There's always water along the curb and mud across the sidewalk at two other places. It's nice to have pretty, green parks, but they don't need to be watered every day and the broken sprinkler heads need to be fixed now! On second thought... why bother? We pay for it—and pay and pay and pay." (*Amarillo Globe-News*)

"Since the City of Amarillo announced voluntary watering restrictions, I have complied in the spirit of water conservation. That is until today when I learned from a front-page story in the Globe-News that Amarillo public schools are watering athletic fields at least twice daily, seven days a week. The care and watering of my lawns and gardens are just as important to me as those athletic fields are to the schools. (*The water I use is a mere "drop in the bucket" compared to the water used on athletic fields!*) So today, I have resumed my regular summer watering schedule, sometimes at a more frequent interval depending upon the temperature. I will comply with mandatory restrictions as long as schools comply. Meanwhile, I will water my property as I deem necessary." (*Amarillo Globe-News*)

"I support the recommended water conservation process as issued. These recommendations certainly present no sacrifice on anyone, but I estimate fewer than one percent of the residents in my subdivision are observing the water conservation methods... Unless our water conservation process becomes mandatory and is enforced with large fines, few at best will try to conserve water. I support mandatory conservation rules because I don't believe a volunteer approach will work. Too many people just don't care." (*Amarillo Globe-News*)

"...What is it going to take for people to understand how precious water is? So your lawn isn't as green as you might like. Do you have food to eat and water to drink? Will your children have these necessities in the future?" (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*)

"I thought to myself that perhaps what we should do is go back to the outhouse. No worry there about using too much water to flush. Then there is the laundry. Instead of our modern clothes dryers and washing machines that use new water for each rinse and each load of clothing, we could go back to the wringer washer. The warm soapy water in this machine would be reused over and over, first to wash the least soiled clothing then to wash progressively dirtier laundry. The removal of soap was done by dipping



the clothes in two different tubs of cold water and then twisting them by hand to remove the excess water before hanging them on an outdoor clothesline, where the air and sunshine dried them. All the used water was poured either on the yard or in the garden. Of course, electricity may have been used to iron the clothes. Then there is the bathing and shampooing problem. Back in the "good ol' days," a large galvanized tub was put in the middle of the kitchen and filled with warm water. The family lined up for their once-a-week bath and when everyone was finished, the water was again poured on the gardens where the vegetables were grown. This is what is called real conservation." (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*)

"I support the need for conservation but I don't think having the 'water police' patrolling neighborhoods is a good idea. First of all, the city needs to direct its money (our tax dollars) toward other more needful areas. Education of the citizenry would be my choice along with watering restrictions that are already in place. Local television and radio stations could do this for a minimum of cost with short spots reminding people of the need. Although it doesn't make it right, there are always going to be those who think they are special and don't need to pay attention to the rules." (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*)

"I see people who seemingly have much more invested in the future of this area who simply do not seem to even think about the issue of water—much less try to conserve the resource for future generations..." (*Response to High Plains Water District web poll*)

"I believe that all resources should be conserved. Why do some people feel the need to use more than what is required? Why is it that when we are in an extreme drought and suffering with excessive heat that local businesses have the audacity to saturate their precious patch of sod in the middle of the day in 100+ degrees???" (*Response to High Plains Water District web poll*)

Randall County residents discuss water well concerns with District

Approximately 150 residents of neighborhoods between Amarillo and Canyon met July 12 with representatives of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District to discuss a lack of water in domestic wells within the area.

“Many of the residents in attendance said they were having problems with domestic water wells supplying enough water for basic residential use,” said Manager Jim Conkwright.

He said the extreme drought in 2011 is just one of several factors contributing to the problem.

“The majority of Texas is under extreme drought conditions and our region is certainly no exception. We have seen much heavier groundwater pumpage so far this year to compensate for the lack of rainfall,” Conkwright said.

He added that many of the rural domestic water wells in question may be too shallow or completed to the same depth—which could cause interference.

“The problem in the area may be that all the wells are having an effect on each other. Most of the domestic wells are shallower in depth than industrial, commercial or agricultural water wells,” Conkwright said.

He added that it appears some of the water wells were completed to the proper depth several years ago but now, water levels have declined



Conservation Comment

Manager Jim Conkwright (at right) listens to a comment from the audience during the July 12 meeting at Mescalero Baptist Church in Amarillo.

and the wells are not producing as they once did.

Conkwright told attendees that the area in question is not within a groundwater conservation district and as a result, is not subject to water well spacing requirements.

Wells drilled too close to one another can cause localized depletion of an aquifer.

He suggested attendees form a working committee to investigate options, including purchase of water from either Amarillo or Canyon, or formation of a municipal water supply district for the area.

“The High Plains Water District is working with residents of that area on possible solutions to their domestic water supply problems,” Conkwright said.

Conservation Conversation

News briefs and other conservation-related information

DEATHS: **Louis A. Beecherl Jr.**, 85, former chairman of the Texas Water Development Board at Austin, died July 5 at Dallas. Beecherl was appointed to the Texas Water Development Board by Gov. Bill Clements and served as its chairman from 1980-1986. Survivors include his wife, eight children, 35 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



BEECHERL

Delbert L. Devin, 90, died July 31 in Tulia. Devin was a lifelong farmer in Swisher County and served as president of STAND (*Serious Texans Against Nuclear Dumping*) for several years. STAND, along with the High Plains Water District, opposed the U.S. Department of Energy's efforts of characterizing a site northwest of Hereford in Deaf Smith County as a possible depository for high-level nuclear waste in the 1980s. Survivors include his wife, two sons, and six grandchildren.

ELECTED: High Plains Water District staff member **Jim Crownover** of Lubbock was recently elected to serve a two-year term as Director-At-Large for the Texas Rainwater Catchment Association.

RETIREMENT: **Richard Bowers**, general manager of the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District at Burnet, will retire Aug. 31. Bowers previously served as general manager of the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District at White Deer from 1979-1987 and as manager of the North Plains Groundwater Conservation District at Dumas from 1987-2007. He later joined the Central Texas GCD following its creation in 2007. Bowers is a past president of the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD).



BOWERS

TRANSITION: **Mary Jane Buerkle** is the new Director of Communications and Public Affairs for Plains Cotton Growers. She previously served as Vice-President of Business Development for the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce and two years as the agriculture reporter for the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*.



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HIGH PLAINS UNDERGROUND WATER

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