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CONSERVATION

# THE CROSS SECTION

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THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR WATER!

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## Legislation filed to provide funding for projects in State Water Plan

Just two days after the start of the 83rd Texas Legislature, Rep. Allan Ritter of Nederland filed two bills designed to provide funding needed to implement projects in the State Water Plan.

Ritter is chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

House Bills 4 & 11 would make a one-time allocation of \$2 billion from the state Economic Stabilization Fund (a.k.a. "Rainy Day Fund") to provide capital for a new, dedicated revolving fund for use in financing projects in the State Water Plan.

"Our projections show that \$2 billion would fully implement the State Water Plan as it exists today," Ritter said in a news release. "With that one-time capital investment, we could provide adequate, meaningful funding to the plan and achieve the state's goals of supporting local entities in implementation of projects."

He added that it is vital for the future of Texas that a dedicated source of revenue be established to fund the State Water Plan.

"Our economy depends on it, our communities depend on it, and ultimately, our daily lives depend on it," Ritter said.

House Speaker Joe Straus of San Antonio has identified water as one of the most important priorities of the 83rd Texas Legislature.

"Members of the Texas House understand the importance of water to agriculture, business, and all Texans. I am confident that the House will take bold, substantial action to address water needs this session--and the filing of these bills formally begins that process," Straus said.

In addition to traditional water supply projects, the bills would set aside at least 20 percent of the new revolving fund for water conservation and reuse efforts.

The legislation would also allow funds to be used across the various water-financing programs offered by the Texas Water Development Board.

This will ensure that the funding

support can adapt as state water demands and plans change.

The State Water Plan is the result of a regional, "bottom-up" planning process comprised of local stakeholders representing various water user groups, such as agriculture, industry, the environment, municipalities, water districts, and river authorities.

Every five years, the 16 regional water planning groups in Texas evaluate water needs for a 50-year planning period and recommend strategies and projects to meet that demand.

Once finalized, the groups submit their regional water plans to the state and they are combined to create the State Water Plan.



STATE CAPITOL AT AUSTIN

## Precinct Five District Director Bruce Rigler resigns

Bruce Rigler of Plainview has resigned as Precinct Five District Director of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 (HPWD) effective immediately.

Rigler served on the HPWD Board since Jan. 1994 and held the office of Secretary-Treasurer from Jan. 1996 to Jan. 2012.

He was re-elected in Nov. 2010 and served two years of a four-year term (2010-2012) representing residents in the portion of Floyd County above the Caprock Escarpment within the district, all of Hale County, and all of Swisher County.

The HPWD Board of Directors will appoint a successor to fill the remainder of the unexpired term as outlined in Chapter 36.051(c) of the Texas Water Code.

"It is the board's consensus that no action be taken on Rigler's replacement until newly-elected Precinct Three District Director



RIGLER

Mike Beauchamp of Friona and Precinct Four District Director Lynn Tate of Amarillo receive their Oaths of Office in January," said HPWD Manager Jim Conkwright.

Once the two new Directors take office, the HPWD Board will review the process to allow

interested persons in District Director's Precinct Five to be considered for appointment to fill Rigler's unexpired term.

"Additional information about this process will be made available to the public in the next couple of weeks," Conkwright said.

Rigler has been involved in numerous agricultural activities.

He and his brother operated Rigler Brothers Jersey Farms Dairy for 40 years and were active in several dairy-related organizations.

He has been a member of the Texas Farm Bureau for more than 45 years and has served as its Hale County President and Secretary.

Rigler retired in 2011 from the Region 17 Education Service Center (ESC) Board of Directors after 41 years of service. He was the longest-tenured ESC Board Member in Texas at the time of his retirement.

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VISIT THE HIGH PLAINS WATER DISTRICT'S WEB SITE AT [WWW.HPWD.COM](http://WWW.HPWD.COM)

## Lawmakers, staffers to learn more about ag water issues at Austin forum

Texas is talking water in a big way...and the topic is likely to heat up further during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature which convened January 8 for its regular biennial session.

The 2011 drought – the worst one-year drought in state history—coupled with sobering water demand projections contained in the 2012 Texas State Water Plan have focused attention on the critical question of how to ensure that Texas has adequate water supplies well into the future.

Texas' population is expected to double over the next 50 years and the need for food and fiber will certainly not go away. But the availability of water for agricultural use in Texas is expected to decline as the demands for municipal and industrial use take an upward trajectory.

So how can Texas help its farmers do more with less water in the face of uncertain water supplies?

This tough question is the focus of the 2013 Texas Ag Water Forum set for Feb. 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol, 701 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, in Austin.

The Forum is intended as an informational event to raise awareness among Texas lawmakers about issues affecting water use in agriculture and trends for the future.

Complimentary admission is available for legislators, their staff members, and credentialed news media.

A detailed agenda for the Forum was not available at press

time; however, organizers expect presentations discussing the Texas Project for Ag Water Efficiency (*Harlingen Irrigation District*) and the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation (*High Plains Underground Water Conservation District and Texas Tech University*).

Both are long-term agricultural demonstration initiatives funded by the Texas Water Development Board.

In addition, the 200-12 Reduced Irrigation on Corn Project will also be highlighted.

This project, which seeks to produce 200 bushels of corn on 12 inches of irrigation water per acre, is conducted by the North Plains Groundwater Conservation District with funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Applications accepted for Blue Legacy Municipal award

Applications for the 2012 Blue Legacy Award for Municipal Water Suppliers will be accepted until Feb. 23, 2013, according to C. E. Williams, chairman of the Water Conservation Advisory Council.

Awards will be given in each of the following categories:

- Retail or Wholesale Water Supplier ~ Metropolis (>500,000)
- Retail or Wholesale Water Supplier ~ Medium (100,001 – 500,000)
- Retail or Wholesale Water Supplier ~ Small (50,000 – 100,000)
- Retail or Wholesale Water Supplier ~ Rural (<50,000)
- Rural Authority or Regional Water District.

Confirmed speakers at press time include:

**Carolyn Brittin**, Executive Deputy Administrator, Water Resources Planning and Information, Texas Water Development Board, on “**Ag Water in the 2012 Texas State Water Plan.**”

**Kevin Wagner**, PhD, Associate Director, Texas Water Resources Institute, Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, on “**Economics of Irrigated Agriculture in Texas.**”

The Texas Ag Water Forum is sponsored by a coalition of irrigation and groundwater conservation districts, regional water authorities with substantial agricultural irrigation in their service areas, and industry groups representing irrigated

agriculture in Texas.

Sponsors include El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1; Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; Harlingen Irrigation District; High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1; Lower Colorado River Authority; Lower Rio Grande Valley Water District Managers Association; North Plains Groundwater Conservation District; Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District; Rio Grande Regional Water Authority; Texas Irrigation Council; Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group; and WaterPR.

Additional information about the 2013 Texas Ag Water Forum, registration fees, and special hotel rates is available at [www.TexasAgWaterForum.org](http://www.TexasAgWaterForum.org).

“Municipal water users have been improving efficiency for any years by replacing old technologies/practices with those that accomplish the same desired goals while utilizing lower water deands.

“The Blue Legacy Award for Municipal Water Users is a means to showcase municipal water suppliers that have demonstrated outstanding and innovative commitment to the state’s mission of promoting responsible management and conservation of state water resources,” Williams said.

After the Feb. 22 nomination application deadline, selection committee members will meet March 6 to determine the winners.

They will be publicly announced and honored at the Texas Water 2013™ Conference set for April 9-12 at Galveston.

Additional details and nomination application packets are available by contacting the Texas Water Development Board at (512) 463-1667, e-mailing [wcac@twdb.state.tx.us](mailto:wcac@twdb.state.tx.us) or visiting [www.save-texaswater.org](http://www.save-texaswater.org).

### Did You Know?

The Ogallala Aquifer underlies portions of eight states: South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas.

## Rigler active in many organizations

Continued From Page One

He has received several honors, including induction into the Wayland Baptist University Athletic Hall of Honor in recognition of him being a long-time athletic booster; Texas House Resolution 1987 (80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature) commending him for his service to the Plainview community; and the Texas

Water Conservation Association’s Honorary Life Member Award.

“Bruce was a familiar face at gatherings where people discussed water, agriculture, and education issues for a period spanning many decades. His interest in conserving groundwater for future years was evident in the decisions he made during his 18 years of service on the Board of Directors. He will be greatly missed,” Conkwright said.

**“We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one.”**

--Jacques Yves Cousteau (1910-1997)  
French explorer, filmmaker, & ecologist.

## THE CROSS SECTION

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Lynn Tate, Member, Precinct 4 ..... Amarillo  
Precinct 5 ..... Office vacant due to resignation

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## TWDB: Outdoor water use accounts for 31 percent of total single-family use

A recently released Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) study concludes that 31 percent of annual single-family residential water use in Texas is dedicated to outdoor purposes, such as lawn and garden maintenance, pools, and car washing, with the rest used indoors.

Based on an analysis of monthly water use data for 259 cities, the TWDB found that average outdoor water use ranged from 20 to 53 percent of total household water use, with dryer areas of the state tending to use more than wetter areas.

"No one has made these calculations for Texas before," says Sam

Marie Hermitte, a student at the LBJ School and lead author on the report.

Conventional wisdom based on national studies holds that 50 percent or more of residential water use is used outdoors.

"Texans are doing better than that," says Dr. Robert Mace, head of the Water Science & Conservation group at TWDB and co-author of the study.

The results of the study will be useful to water providers and utilities in identifying where to focus water conservation efforts.

"In order to prioritize where to save water, we first have to know where we're using water,"

explained Mace.

The report, *The Grass Is Always Greener...Outdoor Residential Water Use in Texas*, is available at <http://tinyurl.com/baapydd>

The TWDB is the state agency charged with collecting and disseminating water-related data, assisting with regional planning and preparing the State Water Plan for the development of the state's water resources.

The TWDB administers cost-effective financial programs for the construction of water supply, wastewater treatment, flood control, and agricultural water conservation projects.



## Panhandle area groups recognized with Blue Legacy in Agriculture award

Four entities with ties to the Texas Panhandle were recently recognized as 2012 winners of the Blue Legacy Award in Agriculture, sponsored annually by the Water Conservation Advisory Council.

The award ceremony took place during the Texas Commodity Symposium, held in conjunction with the annual Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

This year's award winners are:

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service-Panhandle District 1** was recognized for its work on the 2011 Efficient Profitable Irrigation in Corn (EPIC) demonstration project.

Project members include Nich Kenny, AgriLife Extension irrigation specialist in Amarillo and AgriLife County Extension Agents Michael Bragg, Dallam/Hartley Counties; Kristy Synatschk, Hutchison County; J. R. Sprague, Lipscomb County; Marcel Fischbacher, Moore County; Scott Strawn, Ochiltree County; and Brad Easterling, Sherman County.

**The Ogallala Aquifer Program** was recognized for its research and education efforts to promote water conservation while maintaining profitability of farming and prosperity of rural communities in the Texas High Plains.

Created in 2003, the program includes 80 state and federal scientists from the USDA-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), Kansas State University, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Tech University, and West Texas A&M University.

Dr. David Brauer with USDA-

ARS in Bushland accepted the award.

**Texas Alliance for Water Conservation** was recognized for its efforts to extend the life of the Ogallala Aquifer through on-farm demonstrations of cropping and livestock systems used by producers in Floyd and Hale Counties. The project compares production practices, technologies, and systems in order to maintain profitability while improving water use efficiencies.

The **Robert Meyer Farm** is a family-owned and operated farm in Deaf Smith County. Meyer has promoted water conservation practices on his own farm and also as president of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District Board of Directors.

"The Blue Legacy Award in Agriculture recognizes outstanding water conservation efforts and successes of the agriculture community. Our 2012 award winners were selected based on their demonstrated willingness and commitment to incorporate water conservation practices into their operations.

"They were also recognized for their leadership in furthering water conservation in their respective communities or within the industry," said C. E. Williams, chairman of the Water Conservation Advisory Council.

The winners were selected by a committee consisting of Water Conservation Advisory Council members, representing the Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Department of

Agriculture, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS).

The Water Conservation Advisory Council was created by Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 4 to:

- Monitor trends in water conservation implementation and new technologies for possible use as best management practices;
- Monitoring effectiveness of the statewide water conservation public awareness program;
- Monitoring the implementation of water conservation strategies by water users which are included in regional water plans;
- And monitoring target and goal guidelines for water conservation for consideration by the TCEQ and TWDB.



KENNY



BRAUER



MEYER

# Bayless Elementary students have fun while learning to save water

**EDITOR'S NOTE**—*Texas Tribune* reporter Kate Galbraith was in the classroom when students in Holly Guillmen's class recently received their WaterWise™ conservation education kits. The following story, reprinted here with permission, appeared in both the *Texas Tribune* and *New York Times*—CEM.

By Kate Galbraith

**LUBBOCK** — Christian Cardenas, a fifth grader at Bayless Elementary School, bubbled with excitement as he opened a box containing a low-flow shower head and other water-saving devices.

"These are really cool kits!" he exclaimed as he held up a packet of tablets used to detect toilet leaks. He planned to start making his home more water-efficient that evening — perhaps with his father's help.

The kits are part of an effort by the local groundwater district to encourage conservation in a region that has been dealing with a severe drought.

This school year, the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District, which



## Bayless Becomes Water Wise

**LEFT:** Science instructor Holly Guillmen reviews the WaterWise student kits with her class. The students are holding their workbooks as Ms. Guillmen explains its content. **RIGHT:** A student examines the lawn/rain gauge included in the kit. (Photos courtesy Jeff Blanton of Resource Action Programs.)

stretches across 16 counties in West Texas and the Panhandle, expects to spend up to \$75,000 to distribute kits and educational materials to more than 2,100 schoolchildren, including the fifth graders at Bayless.

Schools elsewhere in the state also incorporate water education, but officials often face budget constraints even as they praise the effectiveness of interactive learning.

"Funding is always an issue," said Carole Baker, the executive director of the nonprofit group Texas Water Foundation.

Though hands-on programs are fairly "few and far between," she said, they give children a water-saving ethic and can also reach parents, who may not prioritize conservation.

The High Plains district has made efforts in water-conservation education since the late 1950s, when it produced an educational comic book called "Chief Running Water's Story of High Plains Water," in which two children travel with the chief and his horse, Thunderhead, to learn about the Ogallala Aquifer.

In recent years, the district has distributed "WaterWise" kits, which include a rain gauge and new faucet attachments. They are assembled by Resource Action Programs, a company based in Nevada, and were distributed to about 75,000 students across Texas during the last school year.

The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District, a groundwater-regulation district in Southeast Texas, spends about \$2 million a year to participate in the WaterWise program, according to David Martinez, the district's education

program coordinator. Some of the cost is shouldered by people or groups that pump too much groundwater. They can avoid fines by sponsoring water education.

Other interactive learning tools exist, too.

In Frisco, a Dallas suburb, a robot called Professor WaterWise (*not related to the Nevada company*) speaks to fourth and fifth graders about conservation. Save Water Texas, an outreach group, helps bring mobile labs to Southeast Texas schoolchildren to show how storms replenish aquifers. The trailer's thunder and lightning displays are a highlight.

"Experiential things really stick with kids," said Ron Kaiser, a professor of water law and policy at Texas A&M University. Still, he said, despite anecdotal evidence about the programs' effectiveness, few studies exist to quantify their long-term impact.

According to Resource Action Programs, its efforts saved close to 11 million gallons of water last year in the High Plains water district.

That is nearly half the daily wintertime water usage in Lubbock. But that estimate is based largely on schoolchildren's reports of how much water their families saved by installing efficient equipment.

At Bayless Elementary, the WaterWise kits complement a water-education unit enthusiastically embraced by Holly Guillmen, a science teacher.

"What are some of the reasons to conserve water?" Guillmen asked the fifth graders. Hands shot up, and one student said, "Because we're going to need it in the future when

we're having kids."

Nelly Perez, whose daughter Angelica participated in the Bayless WaterWise program last year, said that her daughter had installed some of the faucet equipment by herself — a month before Perez even realized it.

My daughter was like, "Well, Mom's never going to get to it," Perez said, adding that her daughter's conservation focus has prompted the family to take shorter showers and also reduced their water bill.

The water tools are not universally embraced, however. Carmon McCain, a representative of the High Plains Water District, said he was approached a few years ago by a child who had been through the WaterWise program.

"Mr. McCain, my daddy doesn't like your shower head," the child told him.

In retelling that story, McCain smiled wryly. "You win some, you lose some," he said.



WATERWISE STUDENT KIT

PERIODICALS PERMIT

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