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# THE CROSS SECTION

VOLUME 59 --No. 3

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR WATER!

MARCH 2013

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

## Groundwater use reporting date extended to June 1

Following a Feb. 19 public hearing, the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District (HPWD) Board of Directors unanimously approved rule amendments allowing an extension of the reporting deadline for groundwater produced during calendar year 2012.

Problems with the district's meter reporting web site prompted the rule amendment which extends the production reporting deadline to **June 1, 2013**. The first annual production reports for calendar year 2012 were to be submitted to the district no later than March 1, 2013.

The amendment to District Rule 5.17 reads as follows: "Notwithstanding Subsection (d), the first annual production report required under this rule is for production during calendar year 2012 and must be submitted to the District no later than June 1, 2013. All annual production reports thereafter shall continue to be due March 1 as required under Sub-

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## Ronnie Hopper appointed new Precinct 5 Director

Ronnie Hopper of Petersburg was appointed March 5 to fill the vacant Precinct Five District Director position of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 (HPWD).

**HOPPER**

He serves until Nov. 2014.

Judge Ruben G. Reyes of the Lubbock County 72nd District Court administered the Oath of Office to Hopper following the special HPWD Board of Directors meeting.

A graduate of Petersburg High School, Hopper attended Texas Tech University where he earned his Bachelor of Science in Agronomy in 1969.

Hopper is a farmer in the Petersburg area.

He has served in numerous capacities on cotton-related organizations including former chairman of Texas Cotton Producers, former board member and ag committee chairman of the Cotton Board, as well as past president and former board chairman of Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.

He currently serves on the Panhandle-Plains Land Bank Board

of Directors, the Plains Cotton Growers Water Advisory Committee, and the High Plains Water District's Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

He was named outstanding conservation farmer in Hale County in 1992 and received the Gerald W. Thomas Award for Outstanding Agriculturist from the Texas Tech College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in 2001.

Citing health reasons, Bruce Rigler of Plainview resigned from the HPWD Board earlier this year after 18 years of service. He was re-

See **HPWD BOARD** Page Two

## Precinct Two Director Jim Copeland of Anton resigns

Jim Copeland of Anton resigned as Precinct Two District Director of the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 (HPWD) effective March 12.

**COPELAND**

Copeland served on the HPWD Board since Jan. 1998 and held the office of Vice-President from June 2006 to January 2011.

He was re-elected in Nov. 2010 to a four-year term (2010-2014) representing Cochran County, the portion of Hockley County in the district, and Lamb County.

Copeland is an active cattle rancher, who also raises cotton and grain sorghum. He is involved in various community activities, including the Hockley County Stock Show committee.

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. This is the same process the HPWD Board followed in appointing Ronnie Hopper of Petersburg as Precinct Five District Director on March 5.

Public meetings will be held **March 22** in each county in District Directors' Precinct Two to outline the appointment process and solicit input of local residents.

▪ The **Cochran County** public meeting is set for **9 a.m., March 22** at the Cochran County Activity Center, 200 W. Taylor, in Morton.

▪ The **Hockley County** public meeting is set for **1 p.m., March 22** at the Levelland City Council Room, 1709 Avenue H, in Levelland.

▪ The **Lamb County** public meeting is set for **4 p.m., March 22** at the Littlefield Junior High School Auditorium, 105 N. Lake Avenue, in Littlefield.

Application forms and qualifications to serve as a member of the HPWD Board of

Directors are available by contacting Kathryn CdeBaca at the district office in Lubbock at (806) 762-0181 or may be viewed/downloaded at <http://hpwd.com/about-hpwd/precinct-2-director-vacancy>.

It is important to remember that a candidate for appointment to this office must reside either in Cochran County, the portion of Hockley County in the water district, or Lamb County.

Completed application forms for all potential appointees must be received no later than **5 p.m., March 28, 2013** at the district office in Lubbock. They may be submitted by mail to Kathryn CdeBaca, High Plains Water District, 2930 Avenue Q, Lubbock TX 79411-2499; by fax at 806-762-1834; or by e-mail at [kathryn@hpwd.com](mailto:kathryn@hpwd.com).

Application forms received after the 5 p.m. March 28 deadline will not be considered.

Interviews with the candidates

See **CANDIDATE** Page TwoVISIT THE HIGH PLAINS WATER DISTRICT'S WEB SITE AT [WWW.HPWD.COM](http://WWW.HPWD.COM)



# HPWD Board outlined appointment process at series of public meetings

Continued From Page One

elected in Nov. 2010 to serve a four-year term as Precinct Five District Director representing residents in the portion of Floyd County within the district, all of Hale County, and all of Swisher County.

The HPWD Board of Directors held public meetings in mid-February at Muncy, Tulia, and Plainview

to outline the procedure to appoint a new director to fill the unexpired term in accordance with Chapter 36.051(c) of the Texas Water Code.

Interested candidates were encouraged to file applications for appointment with the HPWD Board of Directors prior to the Feb. 21 deadline.

In addition to Hopper, other candidates included: Ray Brady

of Floydada, geologist; Hulon Carthel of Floydada, retired farmer/businessman; J. O. Dawdy of Floydada, farmer; and Glenn Schur of Plainview, farmer/landowner.

Brent Wilhelm of Happy submitted an application but was disqualified since he resides in Castro County, which is in District Director's Precinct Three.

HPWD Board President Lynn

Tate of Amarillo thanked the candidates for their interest in serving as Precinct Five District Director.

Tate also expressed appreciation to the residents in the three counties who attended the public meetings to learn about the appointment process and to suggest/support potential candidates for the Precinct Five District Director position.

## Candidate interviews set for April 2

Continued From Page One

will be held during a special April 2 Board of Directors meeting at the High Plains Water District office in Lubbock. It is hoped that the appointment can be made that day so that the new member will be in place for the April 16 regular monthly meeting.

## New starting times for HPWD meetings

The High Plains Underground Water Conservation District Board of Directors has set new starting times for their monthly work sessions and regular meetings.

Beginning March 19, work sessions start at 8 a.m. with the regular monthly Board of Directors meeting beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Work sessions are open to the public and are primarily for the benefit of the Board of Directors. No public comment will be heard during work sessions—but can be made at the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

No Board action is taken at work sessions. Any items ultimately warranting Board action will be revisited at a regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

## Natural Resource Committee named

Joe Straus III, speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, has appointed members to serve on 38 standing committees and three select committees during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature.

"High Plains Water District primarily deals with legislation referred to the House and Senate Committees on Natural Resources," said Manager Jim Conkwright.

The House Committee on Natural Resources includes: Chairman Allan Ritter of Nederland; Vice-Chairman Eric Johnson of Dallas; and members Trent Ashby of Lufkin; Dennis Bonnen of Angleton; William "Bill" Callegari of Katy; Jim Keffer of Eastland; Tracy King of Batesville; Lyle Larson of San Antonio; Eddie Lucio III of Brownsville; Trey Martinez Fischer of San Antonio; and Doug Miller of New Braunfels.

Reps. Ritter, King, Keffer, Larson, Lucio, Martinez Fischer, and Miller served on the committee during the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature.

Additional information about the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature is available online at the Texas Legislature Online web site ([www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us))

## Reporting deadline extended

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section (d). This subsection does not impact the temporary moratorium on fines established under Section VII of the District's Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Schedule. This subsection shall automatically expire and be of no further force and effect on January 1, 2014."

Two persons spoke in favor of the deadline extension at the public hearing, which was held immediately before the regular monthly Board of Directors meeting.

HPWD Board President Lynn Tate of Amarillo thanked everyone for their patience in working with the new system and asks anyone encountering problems with the reporting program to contact the district office at (806) 762-0181 or by e-mail at [jed.leibbrandt@hpwd.com](mailto:jed.leibbrandt@hpwd.com) or [gerald@hpwd.com](mailto:gerald@hpwd.com).

## Former staff member Obbie Goolsby dies

Former High Plains Water District staff member Burnie O. "Obbie" Goolsby died March 7. He was 86.

A World War II Navy veteran, Goolsby joined the HPWD staff in 1968. He was an Engineer Technician and worked on a wide range of District programs and activities until his retirement in Nov. 1991.

His most significant contribution was seeing that open, abandoned water wells within the HPWD service area were safely and properly closed.

Goolsby assisted in the closure of more than 1,200 open abandoned wells which could have contributed to pollution of the Ogallala Aquifer as well as loss of human and/or animal life.

"Obbie was a dedicated staff member who encouraged people

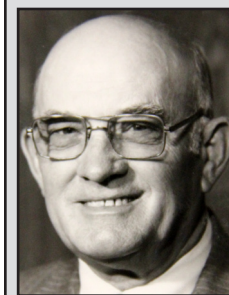
to be better stewards of their groundwater resources. This was particularly true with his efforts in the district's tailwater abatement program," said Manager Jim Conkwright.

He also investigated hundreds of irrigation tailwater cases and worked with area landowners to see that the groundwater waste was halted.

In addition, he attended to day-to-day maintenance needs of the HPWD office. He supervised construction of the HPWD warehouse and made significant contributions to the successful completion of the playa basin recharge site at Shallowater and the secondary recovery sites at Idalou, Slaton, and Wolfforth.

He was a loyal member of the Masonic Lodge, achieving 32<sup>nd</sup> degree status and serving in many roles, including Worshipful Master.

Survivors include his wife, Geneva, a son, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. His daughter, Teresa Gail Perry, preceded him in death in 2010.



GOOLSBY

## THE CROSS SECTION

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Precinct 2 ..... Position vacant due to resignation  
Mike Beauchamp, Secretary-Treasurer.....Frona  
Lynn Tate, President .....Amarillo  
Ronnie Hopper, Member .....Petersburg

### DISTRICT STAFF

Jim Conkwright ..... Manager  
Patty Bryant..... Permit Group Supervisor  
Gerald Crenwelge.....Field Data Coordinator

Billy Barron ..... Field Technician  
Terry Bridges ..... Field Technician  
C. J. Campbell .....Field Technician  
Liz Casias ..... Receptionist/Administrative Assistant  
Kathryn CdeBaca ..... Executive Secretary  
Irma Clark .....Administrative Assistant (Amarillo)  
Lee Cranmer ..... Field Technician  
Jim Crowmover ..... GPS Specialist  
Ray Eads ..... Field Technician (Amarillo)  
Lance Epperson ..... Field Technician  
Mark Hamilton ..... Field Technician  
Greg Holder ..... Field Technician  
Pat Kunkel..... Bookkeeper  
Jed Leibbrandt ..... GIS Specialist  
Juan Peña .....Field Technician  
Gray Sanders .....Field Technician  
Sherry Stephens..... Executive Assistant  
Keith Whitworth.....Draftsman



# Drought, declining water supplies, and lack of financing for conservation among top subjects discussed at Feb. 25 Texas Ag Water Forum in Austin

By Carmon McCain

Lingering drought, declining surface and groundwater supplies, and lack of financing for producers to implement new water conservation technologies were among items discussed during the Feb. 23 Texas Ag Water Forum in Austin.

State legislators, legislative staff members, representatives of irrigation districts, groundwater conservation districts, agriculture commodity groups, and farmers gathered at the Sheraton at the Capitol to raise awareness about issues affecting water use in agriculture and to look at trends for the future.

"Five years ago, no one was talking about water. Today, everyone is talking about it—and they're all experts. While many are involved in statewide water issues—it is up to us to continue to educate the general public about water...and especially its importance in irrigated agriculture," said Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority General Manager Bill West as he welcomed attendees to the forum.

He added that Texas has transitioned from a rural state to an urban state throughout time.

"Approximately 76 percent of the state population lived in a rural setting and 24 percent lived in a town or city in 1910. Now, 15 percent live in a rural setting and 85 percent live in towns. So, there is concern as to whether or not agriculture will have adequate water supplies for the future," West said.

Most speakers and participants focused on proposed 2013 legislation designed to help fund water infrastructure needs in the state. While this is an important issue, many at the forum felt it was equally important to provide funding to help farmers implement new conservation tools and techniques to achieve water savings.

According to conference organizer WaterPR, the 2012 State Water Plan does not specifically discuss specific agricultural water conservation strategies needed to achieve the 1.5 million acre-feet per year water savings projected for this sector.

"Whatever water management strategies exist for irrigation, they account for only two percent of the total capital costs of recommended strategies in the 2012 plan. (\$1.2 billion of a total \$53.1 billion)... All eyes may be on agriculture to conserve water—but few have been



WAGNER

looking at how to make that conservation possible," the conference program states.

Dr. Kevin Wagner, associate director of the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) at College Station, shared information from the recent report, "Status and Trends of Irrigated Agriculture in Texas."

"In some areas of the state, irrigated agriculture has gotten bad press for being 'water hogs.' It was for this reason that TWRI and others, including Texas Farm Bureau, Texas AgriLife Research and Extension, and USDA-NRCS, decided to look at statewide agricultural water use trends.

According to the report, Wagner said annual estimated water use in Texas totaled 16.2 million acre-feet in 2009, with 57 percent used for agricultural production. The total annual irrigation water use has remained steady—averaging about 9.5 million acre-feet since the late 1970s. An acre-foot of water equals 325,851 gallons of water.

He added that on a per acre basis, the rate of irrigation application in Texas has averaged less than 18 inches annually since the 1950s. While the rates can vary by region and crop, agricultural irrigation rates on a statewide basis are comparable to or even less than the rate of application by homeowners.

"A three-year study in College Station found average households supplemented rainfall by applying 22 inches of water annually to their lawns and landscapes," he said.

He emphasized that agricultural irrigation has come a long way from the days of flood and furrow irrigation. For example, center pivot irrigation has been adopted for use on nearly 80 percent of Texas' irrigated acres. Approximately 87 percent of those acres now use low-pressure spray applications.

Subsurface drip irrigation has also grown in popularity in recent years. It now comprises about



COMMISSIONER STAPLES

three percent of the irrigated acres in Texas.

These improvements in irrigation technology have helped boost irrigation application efficiencies from 60 percent to about 88-95 percent in much of Texas today.

"Agriculture responds to change, and it has adapted to changes in water supplies, costs, and regulations," Wagner said. "Some of our future challenges include declining groundwater levels in aquifers and increasing urbanization. Most of our irrigated land is located west of the Interstate 35 corridor while most population growth is along and east of I-35. Even with these challenges, irrigated agriculture has several opportunities for greater efficiencies, including improved irrigation scheduling techniques, irrigation management using potential evapotranspiration (PET), drought-tolerant crops, improved water conveyance systems, and continued water conservation practices," he said.

In his noon keynote address, Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Todd Staples told the group that water is one of the biggest issues facing the state. He thanked attendees for their leadership in addressing water issues and for sharing the success stories in both the agricultural and urban sectors.

"We have about 1,500 people relocating to Texas each day. We can't ration or restrict our way to growth. There will be dire consequences if we can't move all Texans forward. We can't have a mentality of 'us versus them' or 'agriculture versus urban' if we are to succeed," he said.

Staples said the 2011-2012 droughts have impacted the state. Headlines tell the story of irrigation districts in the Rio Grande Valley notifying farmers that they will run out of water in May or June; rice farmers bracing for another year of water curtailment from the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA); closure of the Cargill Meat



HALBERT

Packers and loss of 2,000 jobs in Plainview since drought has caused cattle herds to drop to their lowest level since the 1950s; and the need to place environmental needs over human needs.

Yet, there are some positive aspects as a result of the drought. Private interests are stepping forward to help improve water use efficiencies. Village Farms in the Trans-Pecos region grows hydroponic tomatoes on 87 percent less water than is used in normal production. Companies are investing time and money to develop more water-efficient turf varieties while others are developing irrigation systems operated by soil moisture conditions—and not a timer.

"There's no single solution to our water situation. We can't sit back and wait for the State of Texas to act on this. The state has a major role to play—but local water availability at the local level is important. We must all remember that the larger the role that state and federal government plays in water management—the larger the price. The state should empower each and every one of you at the local level," Staples said.

Panel discussions during the morning and afternoon focused on challenges in meeting regional water conservation goals, proving science through water conservation demonstration projects, a crop and water perspective from the farm, and the economics of investing in agriculture water conservation efficiency.

Panelists from the Panhandle-South Plains region included Jim Conkwright, High Plains Underground Water Conservation District; Phil Haaland, North Plains Groundwater Conservation District; Craig Heinrich, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.; Mark Howard, Texas Corn Producers; Daniel Krienke, Texas Grain Sorghum Association; Steve Walthour, North Plains Ground-



# Forum speakers: All must work together to solve state water problems

Continued From Page Three

water Conservation District; Dr. Chuck West, Texas Tech University; and C. E. Williams, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District.

In closing remarks, Harlingen Irrigation District Manager Wayne Halbert said it is important for everyone to be part of the solution to the state's water problems.

"Each of us must seek ways to improve water use efficiencies—otherwise, we won't flourish. Agricultural producers need access to technology and management strategies that will optimize irrigation application efficiencies. We ask the Texas Legislature to provide support and to be forward-thinking in order to solve the state's water problems. It will take all of us working together," he said.

Several PowerPoint presentations from the conference are now available for on-line viewing at [www.texasagwaterforum.org/](http://www.texasagwaterforum.org/)

The 2013 Texas Ag Water Forum was sponsored by the El Paso County Water Improvement District # 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.

Other participation was received from Plains Cotton Growers Inc.; Texas Alliance for

Water Conservation; Texas Citrus Mutual; Texas Corn Producers; Texas Grain Sorghum Association; Texas Project for Ag Water Efficiency; Texas Vegetable Association; Texas Water Development Board; and Texas Water Resources Institute.

## Don't throw in the trowel and divorce your landscape!

During the past two years, most home gardeners faced adverse conditions as they worked to grow flowers, fruits and vegetables. It's been too hot, too dry, and too windy—but it's not time to throw in the trowel and divorce your lawn/garden, said Barbara Robertson, Certified Master Gardener and Water Conservation Specialist.

Robertson was one of the presenters at the recent West Texas Homebuilders Association Home and Garden Show in Lubbock.

"Yes, it has been frustrating with the drought the past two years—but local Master Gardener programs, sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension, can provide science-based information to homeowners which can help them with simple, colorful, and water smart landscaping," Robertson said.

Outdoor water use can account for 50 to 80 percent of home water use during summer months, according to the Texas Water Development Board in Austin. As much as 50 percent of that amount is wasted due to inefficient landscape watering practices.

"This is potable water that we pay to have transported, treated and delivered to homes and businesses. Most of that water is wasted by letting it run down the street, by having leaks in the irrigation systems, overwatering, and trying to grow plant varieties not suited for the High Plains region," she said.

Robertson said as much as 30 percent of the water applied can be saved through selection of plant materials adapted to our area and proper landscape irrigation techniques.

"Many homeowners have automatic landscape irrigation systems. All too often, we set it and forget it. When was the last time you checked the operation of your sprinkler system for the correct run time, proper alignment of spray heads, and whether or not the system was leaking? Persons also should be aware of changing weather conditions and adjust their sprinklers accordingly. Sprinklers should not be operated in high wind. Also, sensors can be added to systems to halt their operation during rain and freezing weather," she said.



### Catch Can Conservation

Master Gardener Barbara Robertson explains how tuna cans may be used to determine sprinkler water application rates.

While some may be ready to take out their lawns due to drought and watering restrictions, Robertson said turf grass does have its place. She added that much of our landscape is covered with impermeable hardscapes. Turf helps enhance areas, allows transpiration for cooling, and provides recreational benefits.

However, she said it is important to be "water smart" when irrigating turf areas.

"Fescue is a cool season grass that grows well in shade and Bermuda is a warm season grass that likes sun and heat. Unfortunately, we didn't have a 'hot season' grass that would have performed well in 2011 when temperatures exceeded 100 degrees for 20 days. Above-normal heat causes fescue to become dormant. Bermuda grass turned brown, went dormant, and no amount of water in the world would have greened it up. We just need to relax a bit and realize that dormant turf does not equal dead turf," Robertson said.

Under normal circumstances, Bermuda grass generally needs one inch of water per week while fescue takes one and a half inches of water per week. Buffalo grass should be watered every two weeks.

"Frequent shallow watering fosters shallow roots and makes turf more susceptible to drought. Roots are basically lazy—they need to be taught to go deep into the soil for water. This will make for a healthier, more water-efficient lawn. Persons may use a lawn gauge or a series of tuna "catch-cans" near sprinkler heads to determine when one inch of water has been applied

to the landscape," she said.

She recommended using a "cycle-soak system," where a small amount of water is applied and allowed to soak in. A second amount is applied and allowed to soak in—thus minimizing runoff of water and nutrients applied to the turf.

Water should be applied slowly so that it reaches a depth of six inches in the soil. This can be verified by pushing a screwdriver or rod into the soil until it encounters resistance.

Proper fertilization helps turf use water more efficiently. It is a good idea to collect a soil sample for nutrient testing every 3 to 4 years.

It is important to make sure trees receive deep water at the drip line during drought periods.

"Persons should apply water for 24 hours with soaker hoses positioned at the drip line of the tree. This will allow water to reach the tree roots at the 18-inch level. Again, persons can use a screwdriver or other probe to check the soil moisture.

Whether it is an annual or perennial, Robertson said there are plant materials that can bring an abundance of color to a water smart landscape.

"It doesn't have to be concrete and cactus. Persons may want to avoid the 'annual trap' by planting colorful perennial plant materials which return each year. Some of these include Artemisia, Black-Foot Daisy, Daylily, Lambs Ear, Mexican Bush Sage, Mexican Petunia, Purple Heart, Red Yucca, Turks Cap, and Yarrow," she added.

Spring and summer blooming bulbs, earthkind or knockout roses, and ornamental grasses, such as Little Blue Stem, Mondo Grass, and Muhlenbergia ("*Muhley grass*") can also provide color and visual interest to water smart landscapes.

"Our landscapes have a drinking problem—but we can reduce the amount of water used outdoors by applying water more efficiently, using mulch to hold moisture in place, using native and/or drought-tolerant plant varieties, and rainwater harvesting," Robertson said.

Additional information about WaterWise plant varieties is available at [www.lubbockgardeners.org](http://www.lubbockgardeners.org)

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