



Panhandle Water News

OCTOBER 2014

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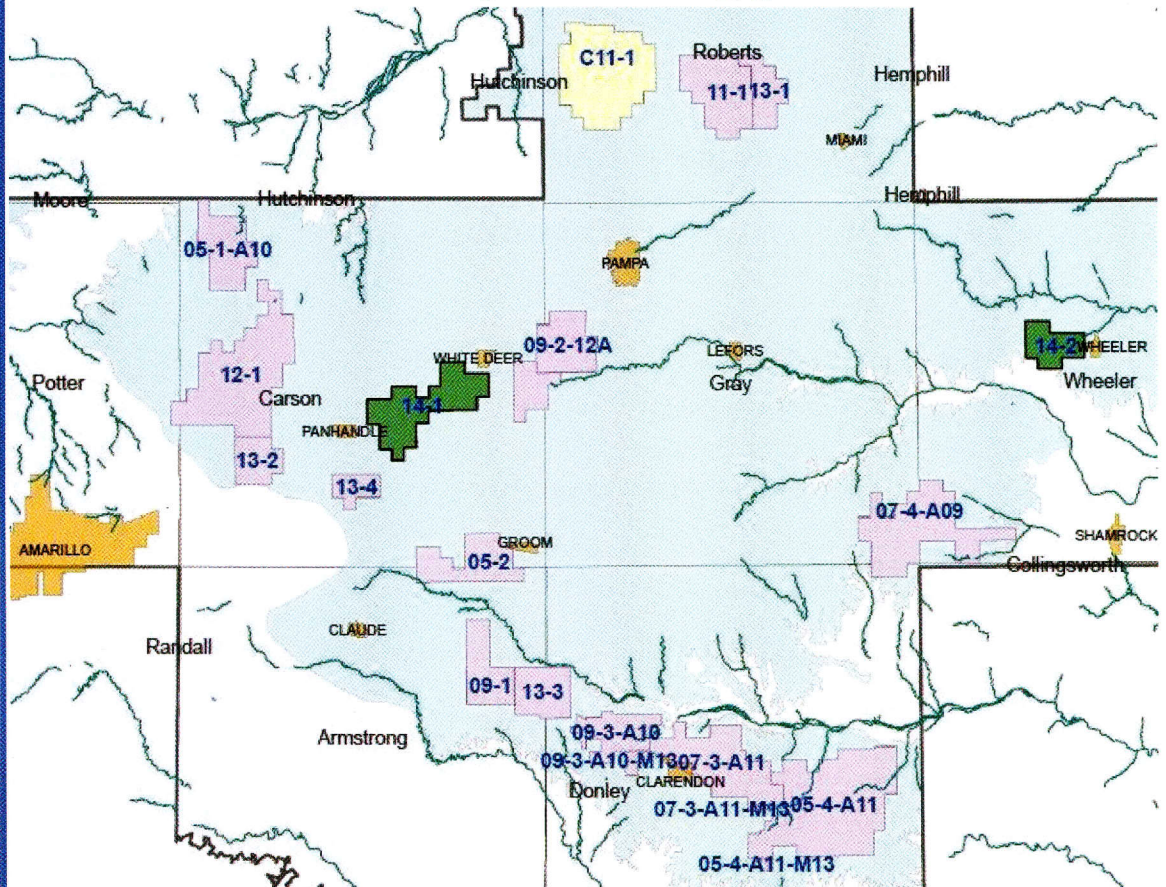
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New Study Areas Approved



All new proposed study areas within Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District were approved by the board during the hearing on August 20 in White Deer, Texas. The new study areas approved include 14-1 in Carson County and 14-2 in Wheeler County. All previous study and conservation areas will remain.

Meter Grant Program Available at PGCD

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's (PGCD) meter program was established in December 2004 and requires a meter to be installed on all new wells in the District with a discharge of 4" or greater.

On June 26 PGCD was approved for a grant from the Tex-

as Water Development Board. This grant will allow PGCD to 50/50 cost share meters for existing wells within the District.

For producers recently placed into a study areas designated by the District, the placement of a meter on their wells is required. With this grant, pro-

ducers in study areas will be eligible to receive a meter at no cost from PGCD if installed before March 1, 2015.

For more information about purchasing or installing a meter, please contact the PGCD office at (806) 883-2501.



2014-2015 Tax Rate

During the August 20 board meeting, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's Board of Directors approved the 2014-2015 tax rate. The tax rate will be 0.00802/\$100 valuation, down from 0.00848/\$100 in 2013-2014.

Education Program Starting 15th Year

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) is starting up the fifteenth year of their education program. The program was created in 1999 and has since reached out to thousands of students across the District. It is stated in PGCD's management plan for the District to reach out to at least 80 percent of the schools within the district boundaries to teach them about water conservation. However, our goal is to reach 100 percent of the schools to ensure we are making an impact on the importance of water conservation to our future generations.

The program focuses on fifth grade students, teaching them about the importance of water conservation, the water cycle, the Ogallala Aquifer, where our water comes from, and playa lakes. Many of the topics discussed teach them objectives that they are tested on in the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness test, making it a great educational aid for teachers. We also have an underground flow model that shows the kids visually how wells work, what the aquifer looks like, and how water flows beneath the earth. At the end of the presentation we give the students a water saving kit that allows them to take conservation practices into their homes.

It is a great tool for educating our youth about water conservation and we are excited to be able to start another year in the classrooms. If you would like to schedule an education presentation or would like any other type of presentation given please contact Korri Packard at the PGCD office at (806) 883-2501 or by email at pgcd_education@yahoo.com.

Ag Loans Available

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's Ag Loan program provides low interest loans to producers within the District for center pivot sprinklers, drip irrigation systems, soil moisture probes and other water saving equipment. Approximate funds remaining are \$1,040,000.00 at an interest rate of 1.12 percent.

For more information about this program please contact Julie Bennett at the District's office at (806) 883-2501.

Forecast for Fall and Winter Cooler and Wetter

The fall and early winter is forecasted to be colder and wetter, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center. Even though the Texas Panhandle has received more rain this year and is close to normal rainfall received in some areas, the majority of the Panhandle remains in a severe drought with some areas in the Northwest Panhandle still in the extreme to exceptional categories. Figure 1 shows the U.S. Drought Monitor from September 16.

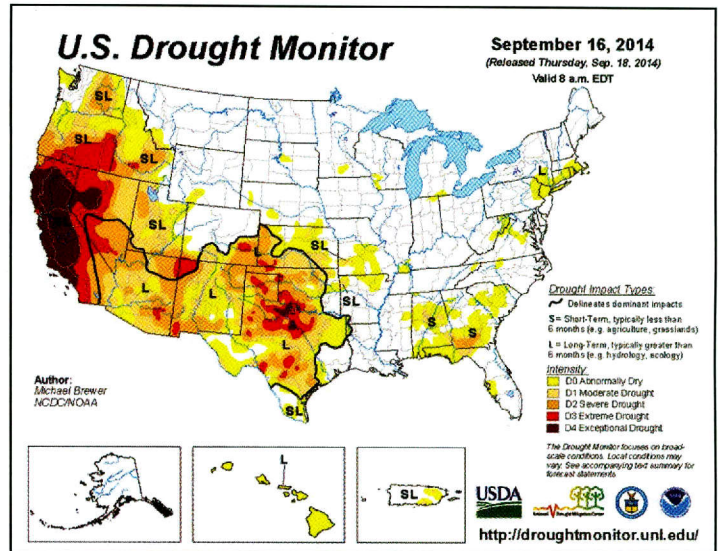


Figure 1: U.S. Drought Monitor September 16, 2014

NOAA has issued an El Niño watch and says there is a 60-65 percent chance of El Niño forming in the Northern Hemisphere this fall and winter in its September 4 ENSO (El Niño/Southern Oscillation) diagnostic discussion. El Niño is characterized by unusually warmer temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific which is known to bring increased rainfall across the southern U.S. Figure 2 shows the sea surface temperature anomalies across the Equatorial Pacific which is mostly characterized by

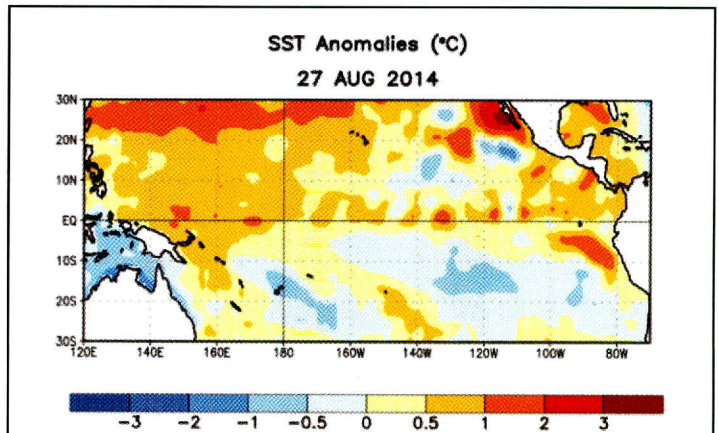


Figure 2: Average sea surface temperatures anomalies (°C) across Equatorial Pacific.



neutral to orange shades which signifies warmer temperatures. Figure 3 shows the NOAA precipitation three month outlook for October, November and December for the U.S. which signifies above average rainfall for all of Texas. The next ENSO (El Niño/Southern Oscillation) discussion will be available on October 9 at www.elnino.noaa.gov.

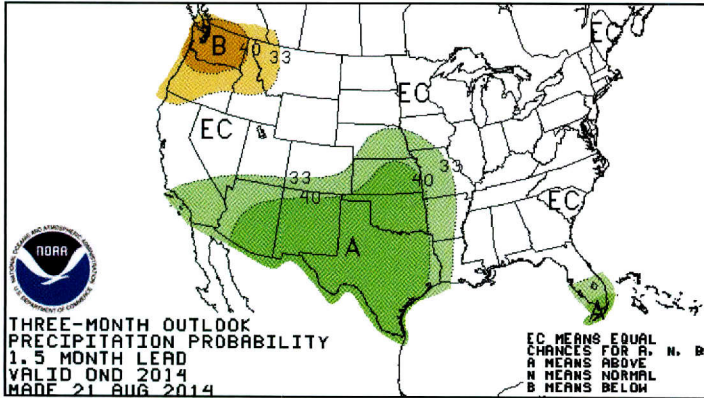


Figure 3: NOAA 3 month U.S. precipitation outlook.

August Rainwater Harvesting Workshop

It is important to always be water conscious and do our part to conserve water, especially at our homes. To give people an opportunity to learn about ways to save and reuse water at home, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) and Carson County AgriLife Extension hosted a rainwater harvesting and xeriscape workshop for District residents on Tuesday, August 5. The event brought in 27 people from around the District and was deemed a success.

Attendees learned about the importance and benefits of harvesting rainwater, basic components needed for a system, the average cost of installing a system, an average number of gallons of water that could be collected from their households, and different ways they can use their harvested rainwater. Xeriscape gardens were also a topic of discussion. Guests learned what xeriscape gardening is, the benefits of it, different types of plants to use in xeriscape gardens, the best types of grass to plant for water conservation, and how much is enough when it comes to watering your lawns. Attendees were also able to view PGCD's two rainwater harvesting systems and xeriscape garden.

If you were unable to make it to the event and are interested in installing a system or garden or would just like more information about rainwater harvesting and xeriscaping, please contact our office by phone at (806) 883-2501 or by email at kbritten@pgcd.us to receive more information and learn why it would be beneficial for you to implement your own rainwater harvesting system and xeriscape garden in your home or business.



PGCD's xeriscape garden renovated and redesigned in 2012.



PGCD's newest rainwater harvesting addition on the shop.



Attendees at the PGCD Rainwater Harvesting Workshop.

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2014/2015 PGCD Scholarship Question

The Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District established its scholarship program in 2002 and has since given away \$108,000 to graduating District students. First place is awarded a \$4,000 scholarship, second place receives \$3,000 and third place \$2,000. Each scholarship amount is broken up and paid out over four years.

Graduating seniors from the District (Armstrong, Carson, Donley, Gray, Potter, Roberts and Wheeler counties) are eligible to apply for the scholarship. Applicants must write a 500-1,000 word essay on the topic chosen by the District. Recipients are required to enroll as a full-time student, attend college the fall semester immediately following selection and maintain at least a 2.5 GPA at the college of their selection.

The 2014/2015 essay topic is:

Due to continuing drought conditions in many parts of the state and a growing population, Texas is considering alternative water sources such as Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) and use of Brackish Groundwater. In your opinion, what would the advantages and disadvantages be to the use of ASR and Brackish Groundwater?

Applications and additional information can be found online at the Amarillo Area Foundation's website: www.amarilloareafoundation.org.

Nominations Open for Annual Blue Legacy Awards

AUSTIN - (September 2, 2014) - The Water Conservation Advisory Council (Council) announced the opening of the nomination period for the Blue Legacy Awards in municipal, agricultural and manufacturing water conservation.

The Blue Legacy Award is an annual award program that recognizes the outstanding water conservation efforts and successes of entities and individuals. The Council is excited to recognize innovators across the state who champion preserving the state's most precious resource, water. Each award category provides several opportunities for nominees to showcase their efforts.

The nomination period for the 2015 Blue Legacy Awards will remain open until November 3, 2014. Awardees will be chosen by panels organized by the Council, notified by support staff, and invited to attend an award ceremony.

To learn more about the 2015 Blue Legacy Awards, visit www.savetexaswater.org or contact Katherine Thigpen, Council Support Staff, at Katherine.Thigpen@TWDB.Texas.Gov or (512) 463-1667.

(Article provided by the Water Conservation Advisory Council)