



Panhandle Water News

U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT
DEPOSITORY LIBRARY NO. 610

March 2004

MAY 25 2004

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN
EDINBURG, TEXAS 78539-2999

SPEARMAN AND FLOWERS ELECTED TO PGCD BOARD

Election Draws Huge Voter Turnout

White Deer, TX – With a record total number of 804 voters casting a ballot in the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District Election, Precinct 3 incumbent John R. Spearman, Jr. and Precinct 7 challenger Kim Flowers proved to be victorious.

Spearman's precinct, comprised of the northern one-third of Gray County, southwest corner of Roberts County, and northwest one-eighth of Wheeler County, cast 508 votes for Spearman, while challenger Stephen Smith received 113.

In the Precinct 7 race, which includes all but the southwest corner of Roberts County, Kim Flowers garnered 120 votes, compared to incumbent Robert A. Clark's tally of 63.

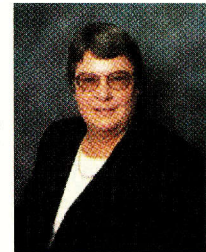
PGCD General Manager C. E. Williams said he was very pleased with the number of votes cast. "This only shows how important water issues are becoming to the general public," he said. In the last contested election, held in 1992, there were only 186 total votes cast from four different precincts.

Three other PGCD directors were up for election on February 7, but were unopposed. They are Phillip Smith, Precinct 1, which includes the western portion of Carson County and the eastern portion of Potter County; Jason C. Green, Precinct 5, covering the major portion of Donley County; John McKissack, Precinct 9, which includes the major portion of Potter County.

All five directors were elected for four year terms.

New Officers Elected to Board

After the newly elected Directors took the Oath of Office, at the Board of Directors meeting on February 16, new officers were elected to the Board. Charles Bowers was re-elected President, John R. Spearman, Jr. was elected vice-president and Jason C. Green was re-elected secretary. These officers will serve until the next Director's Elections in 2006.



Kim Flowers

TEXAS STATE DOCUMENT
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN
EDINBURG, TEXAS 78539-2999

REVISED DRAFT OF DISTRICT RULES TO BE CONSIDERED

The PGCD staff presented the final draft of the Revised District Rules to the Board of Directors, at their meeting on February 16, 2004. The final draft was open for public comment through March 16. A Board meeting will be held on March 24, to consider adopting the rules. The major changes from the current rules are in three areas, the Depletion Rule, the hearing process, and the permitting process. Specifically, the changes are: 1. Establishment of an acceptable decline rate that slows the depletion rate to 1.25% per year, with the benchmark recalculated every five years; 2. Dutton Study; 3. Groundwater discharge into a river won't be allowed without a permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ); 4. The District will require a permit for new domestic and livestock wells on ten acres or less; 5. Procedural changes for acquiring permits, expanded drilling permits and initial production permits; 6. Addition of smaller and larger pump sizes to the spacing rules; 7. Comprehensive revision of the notice and hearing process for production permits; 8. The addition of an alternative dispute resolution procedure for hearings; 9. The addition of a rule regarding a water transport fee.

A complete copy of the current District Rules and the proposed Rule changes are available at the District office, 201 W. Third St., P.O. Box 637, White Deer, TX 79097, 806/883-2501.

They are also available on our website www.panhandlegroundwater.org.

2002-2003 ANNUAL REPORT

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's Management Plan requires the general manager and staff to present an annual report to the Board of Directors, each calendar year. This annual report covers the District's performance, in regards to achieving management goals and objectives. It includes the number of instances each activity was engaged in during the year, referenced to the expenditure of staff time and budget, so that the effectiveness and efficiency of each activity may be evaluated.

The 2002-2003 Annual Report was presented to the Board in January. Copies have also been sent to Gov. Rick Perry and all Texas State Senators and Representatives. Persons desiring a copy may call or come by the District office. It is also available on our website www.panhandlegroundwater.org.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON WATER POLICY

In November, Texas Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst announced the formation of the Senate Select Committee on Water Policy. This committee is charged with studying issues regarding policy and management of Texas groundwater and surface water resources.

Members of the committee are Sen. Ken Armbrister, chairman; Senators Kip Averitt, Bob Deuell, Robert Duncan, Troy Fraser, Jon Lindsay, Eddie Lucio, Frank Madla, Eliot Shapleigh, Todd Staples, and Tommy Williams.

The Select Committee's specific charges include the role of federal, state, regional, and local governments in setting consistent water policies; the authority of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality over water contracts; the role of the Edwards Aquifer Authority; the role of groundwater conservation districts; the regional water planning process; the conjunctive use of both ground and surface water resources; the rule of capture; historic use standards; water infrastructure and financing; inter-basin transfers; junior water rights; conservation; water quality tan-

dards; drought preparedness; and water marketing. It is also charged with monitoring on-going desalination projects by the Texas Water Development Board, to determine how desalination can provide for a cost-effective water source for Texas cities.

The Committee is meeting monthly, or bi-monthly, at different areas around the state including El Paso, San Antonio, Victoria, The Woodlands, Lubbock, Waco, Brownsville, and Tyler. C. E. Williams, PGCD general manager, attended the meeting in El Paso, on February 3, and is making plans to attend the Lubbock meeting, on April 21. A wrap-up hearing will be held in Austin, in September.

WINTER LEVEL MEASUREMENTS RECENTLY COMPLETED

District personnel have recently concluded winter level (depth to water) measurements in approximately 900 wells located throughout the District.

Our goal is to be able to provide useful and accurate information to farmers, ranchers, or anyone who may have a question, or be concerned, about the water in their area. We will use data gathered to construct saturated thickness maps, winter level maps, and depletion maps. Some of the wells we measure each year have more than forty years of data, while wells in the more recently annexed counties will only have a few years of data.

DISTRICT APPLIES FOR NEW AG LOAN

PGCD has applied for another Agricultural Water Conservation Equipment Loan from the Texas Water Development Board. This money will be loaned to producers to finance more efficient low pressure sprinkler systems. For more information, call the office, 883-2501.

MANAGER AND BOARD MEMBERS ATTEND WATER CONFERENCES

Two water conferences have been held, in the last three months. **Groundwater Management Districts Association (GMDA)** held their 30th Annual Meeting in Florida, January 5-6. Managers and directors from groundwater conservation districts, conservancy districts and management districts, along with other water related organizations enjoyed two days packed

with information and ideas. PGCD general manager, C. E. Williams, presented a session entitled, "Water Wars --- Texas Style." PGCD directors Phillip Smith and Robert A. Clark also attended the meeting.

The Texas Water Conservation Association (TWCA) 60th Annual Convention was held at The Woodlands, Texas, on March 10-12. This proved to be another informative meeting. C. E. Williams gave a presentation on water management

methods using acreage. Rep. "Tuffy" Hamilton provided an update of interim House activities. PGCD director Jim Thompson also attended the convention.

ANNUAL DECLINE MAPS

Ms. Lorinda Busby, Internal Revenue Service Engineer, met recently with C. E. Williams and geologist Ray Brady to analyze the District's 2003 Decline Maps, for IRS purposes. The maps were approved and the annual letters, for landowners who qualify, and have requested decline information, have been sent.

DISTRICT'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT APPROVED

Chapter 36.153, of the Texas Water Code, requires groundwater conservation districts to have an annual audit made of the financial condition of the district.

The report for Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, as prepared by Grantham, Cory and Heare, P.C., was presented to the Board of Directors on February 16, 2004. It was considered and approved by the Board.

Copies of the audit have been mailed to the Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and each county clerk within the District.

PRECIPITATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM WILL BEGIN APRIL 1

Following a public hearing on March 3, and the subsequent comment period, the District's request for a permit renewal to conduct precipitation enhancement operations was approved. The permit became effective on March 14, 2004, and the District will begin operations for the 2004 season on April 1.



Pilot Chad Gerard and PGCD Plane

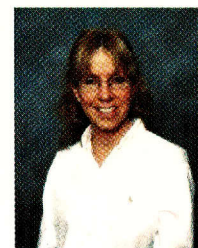
Mr. George Ferrie, Director, Office of Compliance, and Mr. George Bomar, Program Specialist, representing the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), conducted a public meeting on March 3, 2004, at the Grady Hazlewood Building in Panhandle, Texas, on the District's request for a precipitation enhancement permit renewal.

The public meeting was necessary because more than thirty letters were received by TDLR requesting a public hearing on the permit. As a result of the number of persons in Briscoe and Swisher counties protesting, Dr. Nunez and Mr. Williams requested that those two counties be removed from the permit request. Although these two counties are not in the District (target area), portions of those counties are in the operational area. TDLR agreed to remove them from the permit request.

Roughly fifty persons attended the meeting, with about eighteen persons giving public comment. TDLR officials gave careful consideration to all comments received, before making their decision to grant the permit.

MEET ALLISON

PGCD's newest staff member is Allison Purviance. Allison, who recently moved from Virginia, served eight years in the United States Air Force. She was honorably discharged as an F-16 Aircraft Maintenance Tech. Allison joined the District on December 1, 2003, as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist. She is also assisting with the Water Quality Program and field technician tasks.



Allison Purviance

SOUTHERN PLAINS CONFERENCE DEEMED A SUCCESS

Ogallala Commons, a resource network for the High Plains-Ogallala Aquifer region, hosted its 15th Annual Southern Plains Conference on February 7, in the small town of Nazareth, Texas. The huge turnout of conference attendees from Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, nearly doubled the town's size, during the one day conference.

Not only did the conference entertain its guests with singers, songwriters, and artists, all honoring the common wealth of water, but agencies in and around the state, such as the Texas Parks and Wildlife, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, environmental companies, Canadian River Municipal Water Authority, Texas Tech University, rural community and development projects, and groundwater conservation districts gave a variety of workshops for attendees to choose from.

Bart Wyatt, Director of Education and Information with the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, teamed up with John Drake, of Vista Environmental Services Company, and Cliff Fedler, Texas Tech University, on ways to steward existing water resources, water reuse, and the importance of well capping. Bart started the workshop session by demonstrating how little fresh water is left in the world. After capturing everyone's attention, Bart showed, with the help of his underground flow model, how water moves or flows beneath the ground and how contamination can occur. He explained the importance of capping wells to avoid possible contamination. Bart's presentation "flowed" smoothly into John's detailed presentation of well capping and plugging. With the final twenty minutes, Cliff's presentation showed the many ways to reuse water, both for conservation purposes and for possible profits.

There were six workshops to choose from and each session was repeated, allowing everyone to attend two sessions of their choice.

The conference was well run and well attended, and the District hopes to participate in it in future years.

DISTRICT OFFICE
201 W. Third St, PO Box 637
White Deer, TX 79097
Phone: 806/883-2501
FAX: 806/883-2162
E-Mail: cwilliams8@aol.com

Web Page:
www.panhandlegroundwater.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Charles Bowers, President
John R. Spearman, Jr., V-President
Jason C. Green, Secretary
Phillip Smith, Director
Jim Thompson, Director
Danny Hardcastle, Director
John McKissack, Director
Billy Van Crawford, Director
Kim Flowers, Director
C. E. Williams, General Manager

Panhandle Water News is published quarterly by the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District. Subscriptions are free upon request.

PANHANDLE GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 637
WHITE DEER, TEXAS 79097

RETURN SERVICE RE-
QUESTED

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
WHITE DEER, TX

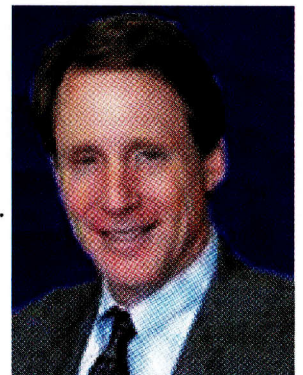
PERMIT NO.2



SEN. ROBERT DUNCAN HOSTS PRODUCERS' FORUM IN LUBBOCK

In an effort by the State of Texas to encourage on-farm agricultural water conservation, Sen. Robert Duncan, R-Lubbock, hosted a producers' forum on February 10, 2004. PGCD general manager, C. E. Williams, was invited and attended. The purpose of the forum was to discuss the Agricultural Water Conservation Demonstration Initiative set forth by the Texas Water Development Board.

"The ultimate goal of this initiative is to have a state wide, producer-directed program that will save water and help producers increase their bottom line," Duncan said. "We have discussed the background of this initiative with representatives of numerous state and federal groups," he continued, "but before we move forward, we want and need to hear from producers. They are a critical part of this state's economy and should be an equally critical player in this initiative." During the meeting, Duncan gathered ideas and heard insight from agriculture producers.



Sen. Robert Duncan

DUNCAN PAYS VISIT TO PGCD OFFICE

Senator Robert Duncan, and members of his staff, conducted town hall meetings in Wheeler, Pampa, Panhandle and Claude, on Tuesday, March 2. While in the area, they stopped by the District office for a brief visit. They were given a tour of the office, visited with staff members on the duties and functions of the District, and were briefed on the District's Precipitation Enhancement Program and the proposed changes to the District's Rules.