



Panhandle Water News

October 2005

TEXAS STATE DOCUMENT
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U.S.F.W.S. ACCEPTS MANAGEMENT PLAN INSTEAD OF CRITICAL HABITAT DESIGNATION

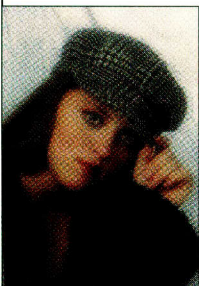
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service accepted a Voluntary Management Plan offered by the Arkansas River Shiner Coalition that will negate the need for designation of critical habitat for the shiner, between Ute Reservoir in New Mexico and Lake Meredith in the Texas Panhandle. The Arkansas River Shiner Coalition is comprised of individuals, several farm and ranch groups, water management entities, and landowners, along and near the Canadian River.

The management plan's cornerstone is the salt cedar spraying that the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority (CRMWA) is conducting in this area of the river. Also in the plan, is the cooperation of individual landowners to assist in this and other positive efforts along the banks of the River.

"This is great news," said C. E. Williams, General Manager of Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District and member of the Shiner Coalition, "we have been working with this situation for years, both legally and practically, looking for a positive conclusion to this issue that benefits both man and species. I believe that this is one of the shining examples of how to take a lemon and make lemonade out of it."

"John Williams, Special Consultant to CRMWA, took the lead and wrote the majority of the Management Plan for the Coalition. It took many months to write the plan, and John is to be commended for his efforts in scribing the plan," C. E. Williams said.

2005 ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Virginia M. (Jenny) Chadick, a senior at Shamrock High School, Shamrock, Texas, was the 1st place scholarship winner for the District's 2005 Essay Contest. Ms. Chadick was valedictorian of her graduating class and served as a student government leader throughout her high school years. She excelled academically, winning awards in pre-calculus, English, health, Spanish, algebra, and housing. She was active in FCCLA, NHS, TAFE, FCA, FFA, and One-Act Play. And, if that didn't keep her busy enough, she was a cheerleader, played basketball, and participated in track, tennis and golf. Ms. Chadick's essay follows.

WATER CONSERVATION

The Earth's surface is approximately two-thirds water, a natural resource that seems to replenish itself through the never ending water cycle. As young children, we are educated that through evaporation and condensation water will forever be replenished and at our fingertips for use. Throughout elementary, we are taught to believe that nature has its own purification system, and because we don't have to fight for our water supply as other countries do, we never concern ourselves with water conservation.

People tend to overlook the necessity for clean, usable water. Here in the Texas Panhandle, the Ogallala aquifer sustains our never ending need for drinkable water. This precious commodity is an invaluable resource that has sustained our agricultural needs, our livestock demands, and our use in both industry and recreation. However, water conservation is not a topic that is well-understood. Every day, children brush their teeth while the water runs, mothers leave the faucet on while they begin to prepare supper, and the young teen allows the yard hose to spout out water while washing his/her new ride. All the while, the excess water seeps through the ground taking its toxins to our underground lakes, and the sink water drains into the sewer or septic tanks. Water is polluted with grease and tiny organisms that, if swallowed, could be detrimental to our health.

My father, being a business owner and water distributor, he must do water samples each month to test for coliforms through the Railroad Commission. He owns a trailer park, and since he makes the tenants pay a flat fee, none of them seem to care about conservation. For fifteen dollars a month, tenants think they can use all the water they want without thinking about the effects it has on the rest of the park. This ignorance leads to the unreported leaks that spew water all over the ground.

Water conservation tends to be the last thought on the minds of many that continue to be wasteful and uncaring. Many people are apathetic to the conservation of water because, to the common person, water is in surplus. Many believe that rainfall seeps through the ground and continues to refill the Ogallala Aquifer. However, it is not well known that each year millions of gallons of water are pumped out to support the economy. For each acre of land, the mineral rights owner can pump out one acre foot of water a year; yet the aquifer's water level



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increases only one acre foot a year. The ration of use compared to that of replenishment is vastly different.

Highly developed areas such as Dallas-Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston are paying prices of over a thousand dollars to have one acre foot of water pumped to their populace areas. T. Boone Pickens, a self-made millionaire, has already bought up several thousand acres of mineral rights and continues to acquire more. The people of Texas vote according to their needs; the larger populace tends to overcome the minority voters that are being victimized by the devouring economy. The water is steadily being taken out from under the landowners.

If the people of New Mexico, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas continue to consume what is left in the aquifer (at the 50% rate), by 2050, the aquifer will be below three hundred feet, which is a level that exceeds our grasps. Several new policies have been made, but for these to work, the policies must be enforced.

I believe that to slow the drainage of our water supply, we should use gray water (the water from sinks, dishwashers, and washer machines) in our toilets and on our lawns. Some houses do have systems to filter out some of the pollutants and recycle it to our use on other things; however, these systems are very costly and not many people can afford to install them. If the government would give incentives, such as tax breaks, to the people, I believe we would see a dramatic decrease in the depletion of the aquifer. Also, I think that a cheaper option would be for the coastal cities to use sea water and purify it for their own use. Further down the line, someone will have to provide the Panhandle with clean drinking water if our supply is depleted.

This commodity is very valuable to our existence, and without its presence, the Panhandle will see harsh conditions and a less productive piece of land. God created a climate that is suitable for our existence; we should take care of what we have today, not tomorrow. If we do not take heed to this rising problem, our economy and livelihood will be affected indefinitely.



District personnel performed an efficiency test on August 29th, in Mark Urbanczyk's cotton field to test a new gas-powered Daewoo engine. A number of area farmers were invited to see first-hand what the results would be. If you would like an efficiency test on your irrigation engine, please contact the District office at 883-2501.

Come Visit Our Booth!

at the 21st Annual Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show

November 29–December 1

Amarillo Civic Center

POSSIBLE INTERIM STUDY ISSUES

Last month, speaking to the CLE Water Laws Conference, Senate Natural Resources Chairman, Ken Armbrister and House Natural Resources Chairman, Robert Puento suggested that several issues could be studied during the interim before the 80th Legislative Session starting in January of 2007. Some of the issues mentioned could affect groundwater districts, regional planning, water conservation, and groundwater management.

The District will be monitoring and giving testimony on the issues that relate to the use and management of water here in the Panhandle.

RAY BRADY HONORED WITH FAREWELL PARTY



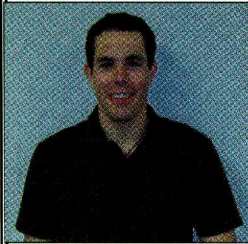
The Board of Directors and staff gathered at the home of C. E. and Kay Williams, on Friday, September 30, 2005, for a cook-out honoring Ray Brady. Ray has served the District as geologist/engineer since May, 1998, and as assistant manager since 1990. Ray is not retiring; he is branching out and will be doing contract work for several water conservation districts, including PGCD. The District will certainly miss Ray's presence, on a daily basis, but we are aware that his talent and knowledge must be shared.

Pictured above are Phillip Smith, Jim Thompson, Ray Brady, Jason Green, John McKissack, and Billy Crawford.

PGCD DECREASES TAX RATE AT SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

At their meeting on September 14th, the Board of Directors adopted a \$1,172,000 budget for 2005-2006, and set the tax rate at .0144 cents per \$100 valuation. "That's a six percent reduction from last year," said John McKissack, Board member from Potter County. Last year's tax rate was .0152 cents per \$100 valuation. This marks the second year in a row that the District has lowered its tax rate.

Introducing New PGCD Employee: Patrick



Patrick L. Warminski joined the District in October, 2005. Patrick will be a field technician. He will also assist with data entry and the Water Quality Program.

He is a graduate of White Deer High School and Texas Tech University, and is currently pursuing a Masters of Science degree in Agriculture and Applied Economics, at West Texas State University. He is planning to write his thesis on irrigation practices and water conservation. Patrick is employed on a part-time basis until his graduation from WTAMU in May 2006. After his graduation, he will be employed full-time with the District.

Patrick grew up on the family farm and has been employed as warehouse supervisor at Britten Feed & Seed, and manager assistant at 4-Ski's Farm. His parents are Stephen and Bonnye Warminski, of White Deer, and he has one sister, Kimberly.

Patrick is an "outdoors" person and enjoys all outside activities, especially hunting and fishing. Also, he likes to watch and play all types of sports, but his favorite is football.

REGION A WATER PLANNING

On August 9, 2005, the PWPG held a public hearing to present and discuss the Initially Prepared Plan to the public. Citizens from across the panhandle attended as Stephan Schuster, hydrologist of Freese and Nichols Inc. made the presentation. Board Chairman, C.E. Williams moderated the hearing and fielded many questions concerning the IPP.

The public comment period for the IPP expired on October 10th and the board will now move forward to complete the finishing details to the Plan. You may view the IPP on the Panhandle Water Planning Group web site located at www.panhandlewater.org.

January 5, 2006 is the deadline for the completed plan. The PWPG will begin the process of addressing the requirements to begin the next phase of planning. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact C.E. Williams at 883-2501 or Chris Coffman at 372-3381.

Public and private entities have provided voluntary financial contributions that have enabled the Panhandle Water Planning Group to continue the Regional Water Planning process. On behalf of all the PWPG board members, thank you. Your contributions have been essential to this planning and we cannot continue without them.

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District

Celebrating 50 Years

1956—2006

Stay tuned for our celebration dates!

2005 WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

FINISHES WITH A FLURRY

In just a little over two months, the Panhandle Groundwater District gathered and analyzed some 241 samples collected throughout the District. Samples were obtained from different aquifers including the Ogallala, Dockum, Whitehorse, Blaine, and Seymour.

Some samples taken were found to be above the secondary state standard in drinking water. Of the 241 samples taken, 13 were high in chloride; 36 were high in sulfate; six were high in fluoride; and 32 were high in iron. Of the 32 that tested high in iron, 20 of these samples were taken from rusting windmill pipes, a source and reason for the high iron content. There were no annual samples collected this year that were above the standard for nitrate levels. Many of the high chloride and sulfate levels can be directly contributed to the lower water qualities of the different aquifers.

The District would like to thank all the cooperators who have their wells in the program. If you would like your water analyzed for mineral content, please call the District office. We would be glad to assist you!

DISTRICT PROVIDES INFORMATION AT TRI-STATE FAIR

For the sixth year in a row, the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District participated at the Amarillo Tri-State Fair. Over a nine day period, fair-goers had the opportunity to stop and browse through the District booth, which was filled with various District and water saving brochures, aquifer information, water wheels, and coloring and fun books for the kids. District employees answered many questions on the District's functions and services, depletion implementation, educational programs, and weather modification. Employees manning the booth throughout the week included: Geologist Ray Brady, Hydrologist Amy Crowell, GIS Technician Susan Laughlin, Chief Pilot Herb Speckman, Field Technician Devin Sinclair, and Director of Education Bart Wyatt.

The District staff enjoyed visiting with everyone who took the time to stop by or ask a question. We believe many people left with more knowledge and a better understanding of the District's goals and accomplishments.

A contest was also held at the PGCD booth. A five-gallon bottle of water with an undisclosed amount of water was placed on the table. The object of the contest was to guess the weight of the water in the bottle. Thirty-nine people gave their best educated guess. The correct answer was 11.29 lbs. The top ten guesses, nearest to the exact weight, will receive a PGCD cap.

The District staff would like to thank everyone who stopped by the booth with his or her gratitude, thoughts, questions, ideas, or concerns. We all know education is the key, and we are never too old to learn. We hope to see you next year!

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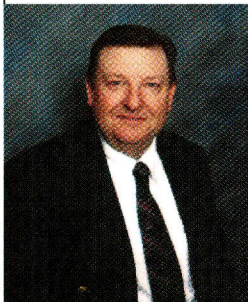
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MEET YOUR DIRECTOR



Charles Bowers serves as the District's Director in Precinct 4. Charles was elected to the Board in 1990. He was elected secretary of the Board in 1992, and vice-president in 1994. He has served as the president of the Board, since 2004.

Charles is a graduate of Pampa High School and attended Texas Tech University, studying Agriculture Education. Charles is a farmer/rancher in Gray, Carson and Hansford counties. In addition to serving on the District's Board, he serves on the board for the Carson County Gin, the administrative council board for the First United Methodist Church, and the advisory board for the Gray County Extension Service.

Charles' wife, Janyth, is employed with the Pampa Independent School District, at the Pampa Learning Center. She is also assistant varsity basketball coach and the freshmen volleyball coach.

Charles and Janyth are parents of three boys, Chandler and twins Chance and Collin. Chandler attended college and has a cow/calf operation. He also helps run the family farm. Chance and Collin are attending West Texas State University. Chance is pursuing Ag-Ed and Collin is studying Ag-Economics.

Precinct 4 encompasses the southern two-thirds of Gray County and the northern most portion of Donley County. If you live in that part of the District, Mr. Bowers is your representative on the Board.

MORE AG LOAN MONEY

AVAILABLE SOON



The District has applied to the Texas Water Development Board for another Agricultural Water Conservation Equipment loan. The application will be considered at their October board meeting, and if it is approved, the money should be available in November. Interest on the money should be around 5%, but will not be determined until the loan is finalized.

The Board also authorized changes to the requirements, to allow producers to obtain loans on drip irrigation systems.

Persons interested in the Ag Loan Program should call the office for an information packet.