

Panhandle Water News

OCTOBER 2007

Points of Interest

Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts Meeting

Rebecca Rapstine 2007 Water Conservation Essay Winner & her Winning Essay

Ag Loan Money Still Available

Area Youth Attends State Water Camp

C. E. Williams selected for Water Conservation Advisory Board

2007-2008 Budget and Tax Rate Adopted

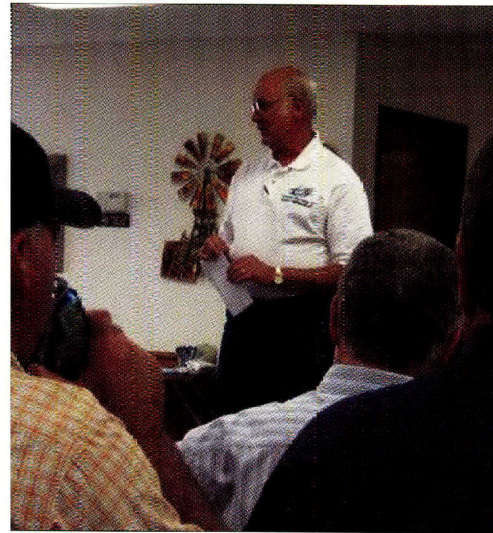
Board Designates Additional Water Depletion Study



P.G.C.D. HOSTS TEXAS ALLIANCE OF GROUNDWATER DISTRICTS QUARTERLY MEETING



Texas Representative Warren Chisum addresses the TAGD group at the District's office in White Deer.



PGCD General Manager C. E. Williams welcomed the group to the Panhandle of Texas and to the District office.

Members of the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD) met June 26-28, 2007, in Amarillo and White Deer. Panhandle Groundwater District was host for the quarterly meeting. Although the meeting headquarters was in Amarillo, the group was treated to a busy day of traveling the Texas Panhandle, on Wednesday.

Following the morning session of Texas Public Funds Investment Training, the group boarded the bus for a trip to the District's office in White Deer. There, the group was welcomed by Representative Warren Chisum, who gave them the House's perspective on the recently completed 80th Legislature.

Mr. Gale Henslee, of Xcel Energy, gave a very informative presentation on Xcel Energy's Waste Water Reuse Project. After that, the group took a short break for cookies and ice cream and a quick tour of the District's office.

General Manager C. E. Williams, and hydrologist Amy D. Crowell, gave a Power Point presentation outlining the District's programs, services, and

mapping capabilities.

Then it was back on the bus to return to Amarillo. On the way, they drove by the Mitsubishi Wind Power field, located just to the northwest of White Deer, for a quick peek at the 82 wind turbines turning in the Panhandle breeze. Back in Amarillo, they were greeted by Senator Kel Seliger, who gave the group a briefing on the Senate's perspective on the Legislative Session.

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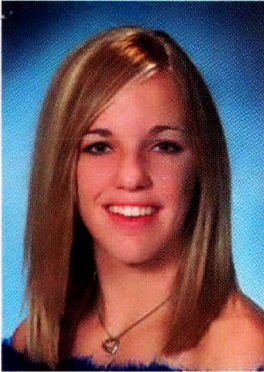
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN



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After a short happy hour, it was back on the bus to travel to Palo Duro Canyon. At the canyon, they enjoyed a "Big Texan Steak Dinner" and the outdoor drama, "TEXAS". It was a tired, but cheerful group that returned to the hotel, after midnight.

The session concluded with a business meeting, on Thursday morning.



Becca Rapstine

2007 Scholarship Winner

The 1st Place essay, in the Panhandle Groundwater District's 2007 Water Conservation Scholarship Contest was composed by Rebecca "Becca" Rapstine, daughter of Chris and Linda Kay Rapstine of White Deer. She has two younger brothers, Thomas and Jacob.

Becca has been a member of the National Honor Society for three years, and recently became the president of her local chapter. Her teachers and administrators awarded her the Citizenship Award, the past three years, and she served as an officer of her class all four years of high school.

She excelled in sports, competing at the state level in cross-country and playing varsity basketball all four years of high school. She was active in FCCLA, Student Council, Yearbook, WDHS Band, Buck Pride and her church. She has also been employed by the "White Deer News" and White Deer ISD.

Becca has been attending Amarillo College and plans to further her education at West Texas A&M University majoring in sports and exercise science.

The District is happy to share her essay.

SOLUTIONS TO A LIMITED RESOURCE

Rebecca Rapstine, White Deer High School

It is well known that the demand for water is increasing to a dangerous point. Our area witnessed life-threatening fires that burned over 430,000 acres in a single grass fire, in Borger, Texas alone. Water rationing must be put into effect to prevent the careless wasting of water that could lead to the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer.

An unbelievable 455,000 acres burned within the few weeks between December and January of 2005. At least ten deaths were reported, along with large numbers of livestock in the region. Eight towns evacuated for safety, yet many refused to leave their homes behind, stubbornly remaining in harm's way. A mind-boggling two percent of Texas' land mass burned during these tragic weeks. Lack of rainfall sparked these grass fires, which causes concern about the amount of water we use each and every day. This tragedy focused the spotlight on the Ogallala Aquifer and Lake Meredith, our region's primary water sources, which have diminished consistently over the past decade. We must be efficient in the way that we conserve and use our water supply to prevent a nightmare scenario of an agricultural economy with no available water.

In order to address this situation efficiently, the price of water must rise by an amount large enough to

encourage conservation and reduce wastefulness. It is a measure that we are forced to take, in order to prolong our water supply. Water is an inexpensive commodity that is taken for granted within our society. People will continue to purchase water with the increase, yet use it more sparingly and prudently. When washing a car, many leave the water running on the sidewalk or on their lawn until it is flooded. This price increase will reduce this careless action in many households, for they will stop to think before wasting their water, no longer taking it for granted. What happened when gas prices increased? People chose to drive less, car-pooling or finding other ways of transportation on a daily routine. Would a price increase on water not have the same effect?

Another solution is to encourage the planting of natural habitat vegetation. This will lessen the amount of expensive lawns and shrubbery that require large amounts of water. Naturally grown vegetation will require little or no extra water, which will lead to a decrease of water taken from Lake Meredith or the Ogallala Aquifer. For example, buffalo grass needs one inch of water every three weeks to survive. Blue grass on the other hand, requires two inches per week and starts growing in early spring and late fall. Resulting in roughly ten times the amount of water per year! This doesn't even take into account fertilizers or maintenance costs. The small price increase on water could contribute to the planning of natural habitat vegetation throughout our area, in schools, city parks, and along state highways. Also, the increased revenue could pay to further encourage conservation education in schools and civic organizations. This efficient idea would save water, but using the profit from the price increase to aid in the promoting of natural vegetation.

Growing up on a family farm, my father and grandfather are forced to make financial decisions that are influenced by water availability and pumping costs. They recently switched to a sprinkler system to water their crops, as opposed to the pipe system that they have used for over thirty years. Whereas flood irrigation could water an eighty acre area, a sprinkler system could cover 125 acres of land without wasting as much water due to run-off and evaporation. This cost-effective conservation decision not only makes financial sense, but also environmental sense.

Water is a vital source that is essential to every human being. We must not neglect the need for water conservation, especially with the extreme lack of rainfall in the Texas Panhandle this past year. Using the price increase on water to promote natural vegetation and to encourage conservation with our water supply can lead to a prominent future for the generations to come.

AGRICULTURAL WATER CONSERVATION EQUIPMENT LOANS

The District still has money available for Agricultural Water Conservation Equipment Loans. Interest on this money is 5.9%.

Interested persons are encouraged to call the District office, 806-883-2501, for more information or to request a loan application packet.



Students gather for a group picture at the State Youth Water Camp in Monahans. In the above photo, Westin Williams is the first student on the second row.

WESTIN WILLIAMS ATTENDS STATE YOUTH WATER CAMP IN MONAHANS

The Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District was pleased to sponsor another deserving student to the State Youth Water Camp, July 8-12. This event is held each year, at the George and Opal Bently 4-H Center and is co-sponsored by the Texas Cooperative Extension Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The camp is designed to teach high school youth the importance of water stewardship, water conservation and preservation. The camp featured hands-on experiences, guest speakers and field trips. Over the course of the week, each group collected data and gave a final oral report on the following topics: Watershed Management, Saline Water Use, and Lawn and Home Water Use.

Westin is the son of Becky Sheppard, of Panhandle, and he attends Panhandle High School.

If you know a deserving youth, who would like to attend this camp in 2008, please contact the District office, 806-883-2501.

2007-2008 BUDGET & TAX RATE SET

At their meeting on August 15, 2007, The Board of Directors decreased the District's budget by \$49,825, and cut the tax rate by 22%.

The 2007 Tax Rate was set at .0100/\$100 evaluation. The 2006 Tax Rate was .0124/\$100. This marks the 8th consecutive year that the District has lowered the tax rate.

P.G.C.D. STAFF

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Chad Gerard (<i>cgerard@pgcd.us</i>)	Pilot/Field Technician
Wesley Webb	Field Tech II

C. E. WILLIAMS ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF WATER CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

The 80th Texas Legislature directed the Texas Water Development Board to establish a Water Conservation Advisory Council to serve as an expert resource to state government, and the public, on water conservation in Texas. The duties of the Water Conservation Advisory Council will include monitoring trends in water conservation implementation and new technologies for possible inclusion as best management practices; monitoring the effectiveness of the statewide water conservation



public awareness program; developing and implementing a state water management resource library; developing and implementing a public recognition program for water conservation; monitoring the implementation of water conservation strategies by water users included in regional water plans; and monitoring target and goal guidelines for water conservation to be considered by the board and commission.

Mr. Williams has served as general manager of Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, since January 31, 1990.

Mr. Williams was notified of his appointment to the Water Conservation Advisory Council on August 27, 2007. At the Council's first meeting, held in Austin on September 26th, Mr. Williams was elected chairman.

Mr. Williams has been with Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District since 1990. In addition, he has also used his experience and leadership skills to benefit many organizations, including participation on the Texas Water Development Board Water Demand/Drought Management Technical Advisory Committee. He has served as a member and as President of the Groundwater Management Districts Association; as a member, Vice-President and President of the Texas Water Conservation Association; and as a member and as President of the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force.

Mr. Williams is currently serving as Chairman of the Panhandle Regional Water Planning Group – Region A, and is on the Board of Directors of both the Groundwater Management Districts Association and the Texas Water Conservation Association. He is also Co-Chair of Texas Water Conservation Association's Water Resources Development and Management Committee.

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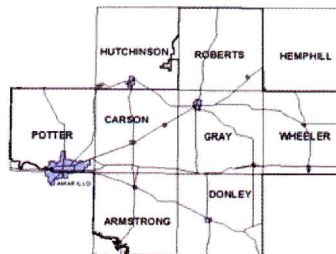
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ADDITIONAL STUDY AREAS DESIGNATED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS HELD IN McLEAN AND CLARENDON

Following a public hearing, on September 19, 2007, the Board of Directors designated four additional Study Areas within the District. These areas are in western Roberts County, in the Clarendon area of Donley County, in the McLean area of Gray County and in northwest Carson County. These are areas that show a 1.25 percent decline in the water table. The Board also discontinued a Study Area in Gray County, south of Pampa, and designated a new Conservation Area in northwestern Carson County. This area had been designated as a Study Area in 2005. The other three Study Areas, designated in 2005, will continue to be watched.

When an area is designated as a Study Area, water monitoring in that area is increased. The District field staff may collect information from the wells more than once a year and meters may be installed, by the District, on some wells. For other wells within the Study Area, meters will be provided at the request of the producer. These areas are studied for two years. If the decline continues, the area is moved to a Conservation Area.

The District held two informational meetings, to inform producers in the affected areas of the decline and to outline the actions the District will take to try to identify and remedy the problem. The first meeting was held on September 4th, in McLean. Approximately 25 interested persons attended this meeting. Around 40 persons attended a similar meeting, in Clarendon, on September 12th. Although there were many questions, and much discussion, at both meetings, everyone was in favor of identifying the problems and finding solutions to the declining water table in their area.

