

Panhandle Water News

OCTOBER 2013

Points of Interest

Special Board Meeting Held

Proposition 6 to be Voted on November 5th

Winterizing Your Xeriscape

TWDB Board Members

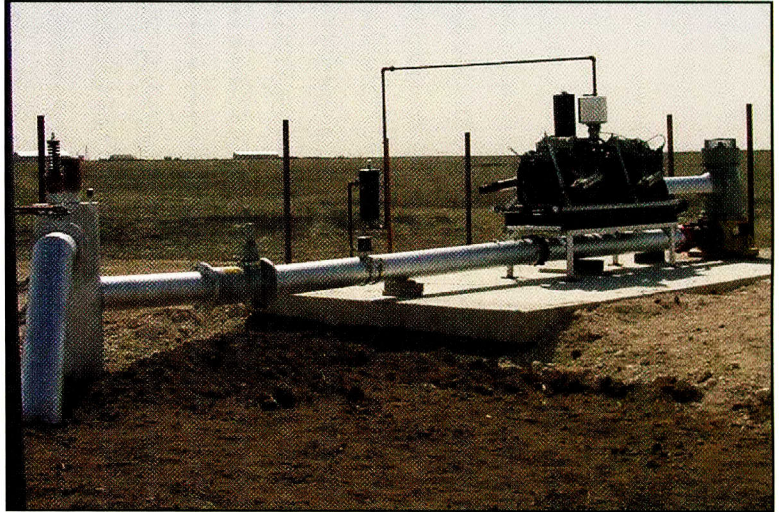
New Employee at PGCD

Gearing Up for a New School Year

Scholarship Available

Special Meeting to Address Illegally Drilled Wells

A special board meeting was held on Wednesday, October 2, 2013, regarding three illegally drilled wells within the District. The wells were drilled without going through the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) well permit process. This process includes filling out a well drilling application prior to drilling, getting the necessary easements from adjacent landowners if needed, having the wells spaced by a PGCD field technician and receiving approval from the PGCD's Board of Directors. Two wells were domestic wells drilled in Potter County and the third well was an irrigation well drilled in Gray County. None of the wells met proper spacing and would require an easement from nearby landowners in order



to receive a permit from PGCD.

At the meeting, the two Potter County landowners were fined \$400 each and will receive approval from the Board pending competition of the permit application, and easements from nearby landowners since the wells did

not meet spacing according to PGCD rules. The decision about the third irrigation well in Gray County was tabled until the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority's (CRMWA) board meeting on Wednesday, October 9,

Meeting Continued on Page 2

Proposition 6 on Texas Ballot November 5th

The Texas State Water Fund Amendment, Proposition 6, will be on the Texas voter ballot November 5, 2013. During the 83rd Texas Legislature two funds, the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) and the State Water Implementation Revenue Fund (SWIRFT), were created through House Bill 4.

House Bill 1025 authorizes a onetime investment of \$2 billion from the Rainy Day Fund to fund water projects through the

two funds created. If passed by Texas voters in November, the \$2 billion will be used only in the assisting of projects for the State Water Plan. The Texas Water Development Board would allot 10 percent of the funds for "rural political subdivisions and agricultural water conservation" and 20 percent would go to general water conservation and reuse. A few items that the money may be put toward include low-interest loans, credit enhancement agree-

ments, deferral of interest obligations, and funding for government entities that develop and manage water supplies.

Texas' population is increasing rapidly and it is getting harder to keep up with the growing demand of water across the state. If the proposition were to pass cities and towns across Texas would reap the benefits by having money to implement water conservation programs to keep up with the increasing pop-

Proposition 6 Continued on Page 2



Winterizing Your Xeriscape Garden

It's easy to forget about your garden when winter rolls around, but don't let the freezing temps ruin all the hard work you did during the spring and summer months. Start preparing your xeriscape garden for the winter. Winterizing your garden and its accessories will save time, money and heartache when spring approaches. Here are a few tips to follow to ensure your garden makes it through the winter!

- Many xeriscaping plants generally reach maturity in three years. During the fall, plants can be divided to fill the open spaces in your garden as the plants grow. This also prevents overcrowding when the plant begins to grow next year.
- Fall is the time of year to plant spring bulbs; they are great xeriscaping plants pulling moisture from the snow as the root systems develop.
- Some plants do better in the spring if they are cut back before the winter cold hits and the plants begin to harden to protect themselves. Be sure to check on your specific plant's needs, as they are all different.
- Filters need to be checked at least once a month, however in the winter months this is extremely important. Depending on your usage it may be ok to remove the filter completely.



- Although plastic pipes are typically preferred because they will not rust, when frozen, they are prone to breaking. Be sure to drain any water from pipes to ensure they do not freeze and burst where the water settles in the pipe.
- Be sure to remove or regularly maintenance any pumps or motors you may be using to move water. These too can

Meeting Continued from Page 1

2013. CRMWA owns the northeast quarter of that section's water rights where the irrigation well is drilled; therefore, an easement would be required from CRMWA to allow the well to be permitted for use by PGCD. At the CRMWA meeting, CRMWA chose to allow the landowner to keep the well by allowing him to purchase an easement from them for \$48,000. This tabled agenda item will be re-visited at the November PGCD board meeting.

The rules regarding well permits and registrations within the District were adopted as protection for landowners and their water from encroachment by an adjacent landowner. The rules help to ensure that a landowner gets to use their water without infringing on their neighbor and vice versa. It also allows for an orderly production of groundwater, and keeps one area from being over produced at the detriment of another area. The Board requires all landowners within the District to abide by the rules and follow these requirements for well permits, registration and spacing. Well permits and/or registrations are required for any well drilled within the District **PRIOR TO** drilling. These requirements can be found on the District's webpage at www.pgcd.us or by calling the office at 80-883-2501. **PGCD rules also require the LANDOWNER to sign all water well application forms**, unless you have a legal power of attorney if you are not the landowner. A copy of the power of attorney should be attached to the applications.

Ag Loan Funds Available

The Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District's loan request of \$2 million was approved by the Texas Water Development Board September 20, 2012. This program loans funds to farmers for more efficient irrigation equipment. Funds have been loaned out to farmers within the District at a 1.16% interest rate. Funds remaining to loan out are approximately \$400,000. If interested in more information please contact Julie Bennett at the District's office at 806-883-2501.

2013-2014 Tax Rate

C. E. Williams reported that at the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors meeting on July 24, 2013, the 2013-2014 Tax Rate was set at .00848/\$100 valuation, down from .008870 in 2012-2013.

Proposition 6 Continued from Page 1

ulation. Texas farmers could more easily and affordably install water efficient irrigation methods and better track their water use and amount of water need for crops. In the passing of this proposition it would allow for tremendous help in water conservation and ensuring there will be water for future generations living here.



New TWDB Board Members

House Bill 4 of the 83rd Legislative Regular Session changed the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) from six, part-time members to three, full-time members. The TWDB's mission is "to provide leadership, planning, financial assistance, information, and education for the conservation and responsible development of water for Texas." The overall mission and vision relates to maintaining the viability of the state's natural resources, health and economic development.

On August 16, 2013, Carlos Rubinstein, Bech Bruun, and Mary Ann Williamson were named to fill the positions of the three full-time board members. They were sworn in by Governor Rick Perry on September 1, 2013.

Carlos Rubinstein was a commissioner of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and will serve as the chairman of the Board. His will term expires February 1, 2017.

Bech Brunn served as Director of Governmental Appointments for the Office of the Governor, and his term expires February 1, 2015.

Mary Ann Williamson is the owner of MKS Natural Gas Company and was a board member and current chair of the Texas Lottery Commission. Her term will expire February 1, 2019.



Carlos Rubinstein



Bech Bruun



Mary Ann Williamson

Gearing Up for a New School Year

Here at PGCD our conservation education program is underway for the new school year. The District started the program in 1999 in order to educate fifth grade students within the district on the importance of water conservation and how to become a water warrior to ensure water for future generations.

It is stated in our management plan to reach at least 80 percent of the schools within the district; however our goal is to

reach 100 percent. The presentation not only teaches the students about conservation, where water comes from, and how vital water is to our daily life, but also teaches them objectives that they are tested on in the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The flow model we use demonstrates to the students a profile view of how irrigation and domestic wells work. It also demonstrates what contamination will do to our aquifers. Our program is a great tool for educating our youth on 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 for fifth grade or would like any other type presentation given please contact Korri Britten at the PGCD office at 806-883-2501 or email at kbritten@pgcd.us.

Britten Joins PGCD Staff

Korri Britten joined the District June 4, 2013 as an intern and now has taken the Public Relations/Education position. She is currently still attending West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas and is majoring in Agriculture. Britten is expected to graduate in May 2014. She was raised in Groom, Texas, and currently resides there. Britten says she is very excited to be taking on the position and getting into the classrooms.



Korri Britten

Scholarship Opportunities

The PGCD established a scholarship in 2002 and has since given away \$99,000 to District students. First place is awarded a four year scholarship of \$4,000, second place receives \$3,000 and \$2,000 goes to third place. Graduating seniors from the District (Armstrong, Donley, Gray, Potter, Roberts and Wheeler counties) are eligible. 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 and attend college the fall semester immediately following selection.

The 2013/2014 essay topic is:

"House Bill 1025 authorizes a onetime investment of \$2 Billion from the Rainy Day Fund to fund water projects through two funds the 83rd Texas Legislature created with House Bill 4, State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) and State Water Implementation Revenue Fund for Texas (SWIRFT). If this constitutional amendment is approved by Texas voters in November what is the best use of these funds and why?"

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

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SAVE THE DATE!

**2nd Biennial Texas Panhandle-South Plains
Water Conservation Symposium:**



**The Dollars and \$ense
of Water Conservation**

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Amarillo Civic Center North Exhibit Hall

