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CONSERVATION

THE CROSS SECTION

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THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR WATER!

DECEMBER 2013

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE HIGH PLAINS UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NO. 1, LUBBOCK TX

Electronic forms to replace well permit paper applications in 2014

Starting January 1, 2014, the High Plains Water District will use electronic forms for water well permit applications, rather than the standard blue paper forms.

This change offers many advantages for permit applicants, water well drillers, pump installers, and district staff.

No other changes in the process are likely, and those requesting a permit will still meet with a staff person on site to measure the proposed well site and make sure it complies with district rules.

However, the applicant will then execute an electronic signature on a notebook computer, rather than the current paper form. Afterward, the applicant, water well driller, and pump installer may all request a hard copy of the completed form, should any of them desire it.

A summary of the advantages to this process are listed below:

1. The applicant, water well driller and pump installer will be emailed the completed form, thus providing easy access to it. The chances of losing a paper form are a bit greater than the electronic form, which may be accessed via mobile devices and other computers. If you use email on a mobile device, the information from the permit application is readily available and easy to retrieve.

2. The current multiple carbon



copy forms are sometimes difficult to read, as the carbon copies may be illegible. This process should improve the ability to read the completed forms.

3. Paper reduction in this process may save the district substantial

space and improve our efficiency in locating documents. Currently, we have about 56 file drawers full of paper permits and well logs. These file cabinets occupy a good amount of space within our office, and almost all are completely full.

4. Water well drillers and pump installers that want to fill out their respective forms may do so by email, which saves postage and time in the process.

5. This process lessens some of the redundant methods that are currently used with paper forms.

6. After the well application and supporting documents are submitted, the subsequent data entry is minimized, offering some savings in employee time and increasing our productivity.

7. With paper forms, we must scan them so they are stored electronically. Using a standard electronic form means that district

staff will no longer have as much time devoted to scanning paper documents.

A similar process is expected with the district's *Registration and Log of Well* form. Water District staff members are currently working on an electronic version of that form.

"Paper documents will still be accepted as the district's Permit Group makes the transition to electronic forms," said Manager Jason Coleman.

During the coming weeks, district staff members will conduct several educational meetings with some water well drillers and pump installers.

We need feedback from those users so we can make this process as successful as possible.

If you have any questions about this process or need additional information, please contact the HPWD office.

Scanning simplifies access to well logs and permits

Looking for a Water Well Log or Water Well Permit?

Over the past several years, the High Plains Water District has been scanning all completed permits and well logs from our vast inventory of paper documents.

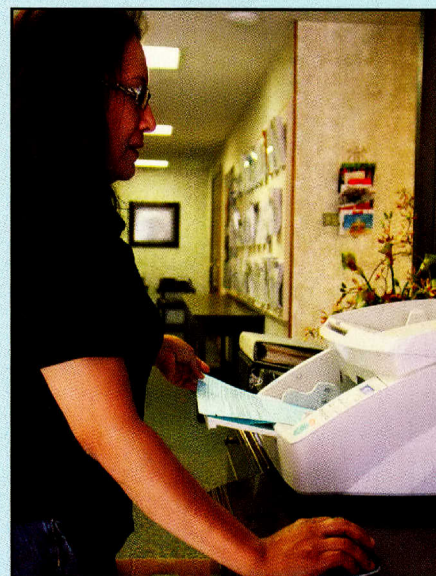
This makes the handling of information much easier, as the documents do not have to be retrieved from a file cabinet.

We often have requests from landowners, producers and others for well logs, and copying them requires time and some expense.

In fact, people sometimes make special trips to our office in order to get this information.

Having the documents scanned

means that we can e-mail them to the requestor and eliminate the



LIZ CASIAS SCANNING PERMITS

need for their travel to our office.

If we know the legal description of the property, we may retrieve the well logs (if they exist) and then e-mail them.

We are still conducting a quality check of the scanned documents, and expect that there will be some that need to be rescanned, but the vast majority of them are available electronically.

So, the next time you need this information, please let us know if you would like it delivered by e-mail.

We hope this improves the service the district provides.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please let us know by contacting the HPWD office.

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VISIT THE HIGH PLAINS WATER DISTRICT'S WEB SITE AT WWW.HPWD.COM

TCEQ report recommends annexation of western Briscoe County into HPWD

Should the western portion of Briscoe County within the Briscoe, Hale, and Swisher County Priority Groundwater Management Area (PGMA) create its own groundwater conservation district or should it be added to the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District?

That's the question being asked right now after a Dec. 2 preliminary hearing in Silverton.

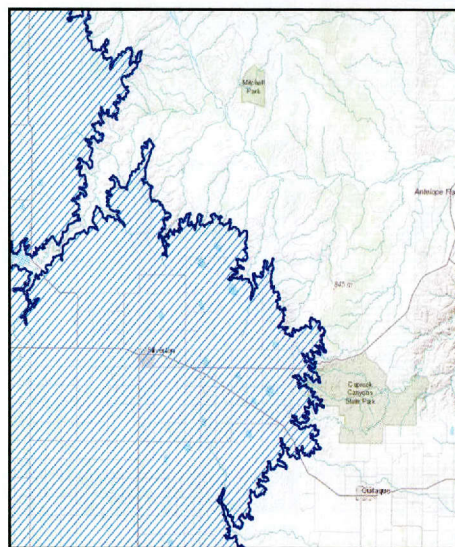
HPWD Precinct Three District Director Mike Beauchamp, Precinct Five District Director Ronnie Hopper, and General Manager Jason Coleman attended the preliminary hearing conducted by the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).

An evidentiary hearing is scheduled for April 2014.

According to the TCEQ report, portions of Briscoe, Hale, and Swisher County were studied, delineated and designated as a priority groundwater management area by the Texas Water Commission in 1990.

The study concluded that "the primary hydrologic problems facing the Briscoe, Hale, and Swisher County area were continuing declines in groundwater levels, the potential for groundwater shortages and waste of water over the next 20 years; and an absence of surface water supplies."

The 1990 report and designation came at a time when the TCEQ was not required to make a formal recommendation for the establishment of a groundwater conservation district (GCD).



PROPOSED ANNEXATION AREA

However, this has changed in recent years. The TCEQ Executive Director is now authorized to petition the TCEQ to establish groundwater management in PGMA's where there is none.

All of the Hale County and Swisher County portions of the PGMA are now a part of the High Plains Water District. The remaining portion of Hale County was annexed into the HPWD in 1993 while Swisher County was annexed in 2010. The only part of the PGMA without groundwater management is the western portion of Briscoe County.

According to the TCEQ report, two groundwater management options are available.

1) A new single-county groundwater conservation district could be created in Briscoe County.

"This option would have the greatest economic impact on landowners and the GCD would only manage a limited, politically

delineated portion of the Ogallala Aquifer," the report states.

2) The area could be added to the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District.

"This option would have the least economic impact on landowners and would allow for a uniform groundwater management program for this region of the Ogallala Aquifer," the report states.

After the hearing process, the TCEQ may adopt a proposal for decision and issue an order recommending the territory in the Briscoe PGMA be added to the High Plains Water District.

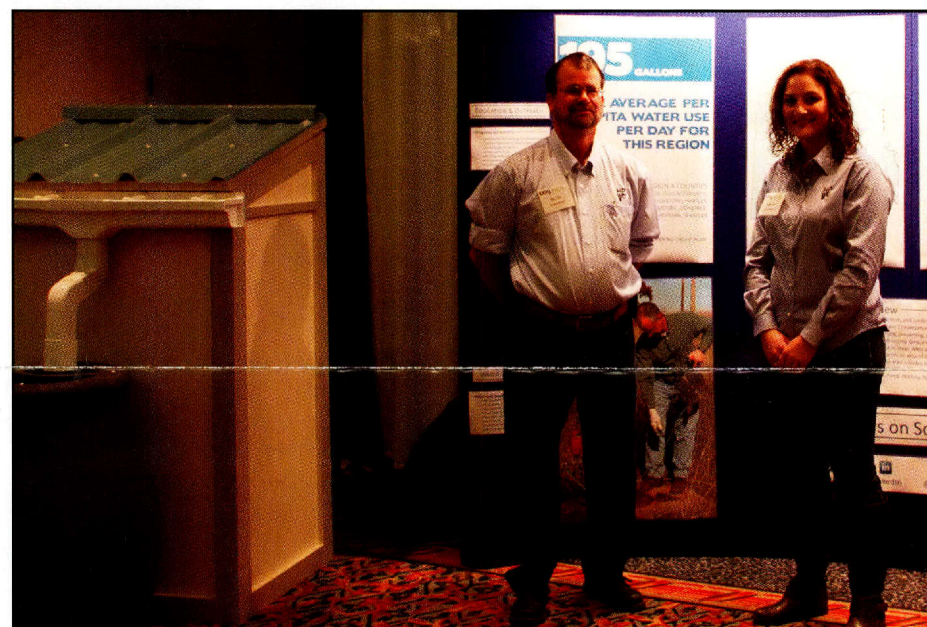
A copy will be forwarded to the HPWD Board of Directors, who will have 120 days to vote on the

addition of the PGMA territory to the district and advise the TCEQ of the outcome of the vote.

According to the TCEQ report, there are two options available if the HPWD Board of Directors votes against accepting the Briscoe County PGMA territory into the district.

"The first (option) is to create a GCD. The second is, if creating a GCD is not feasible, to include a recommendation for the future management of the PGMA in the biennial report to the Texas Legislature as required by (Texas Water Code) Section 36.018."

Additional information will be published in *The Cross Section* as this process unfolds during 2014.



Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show

Staff members Ray Eads and Adeline Fox operated the district's rainwater harvesting simulator (at left) and provided information about other water conservation techniques at the HPWD booth during the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show, Dec. 3-5.

THE CROSS SECTION

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**Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year**
High Plains Water District

**Board of Directors
County Secretaries
County Advisory Committees
& Staff**

District now accepting orders for cost-in-water data for 2013 tax returns

The High Plains Water District is accepting orders for data to support landowners' claims for a cost-in-water income tax depletion deduction to 2013 federal income taxes.

"We encourage landowners to submit their requests as soon as possible since data are provided on a first-come, first-served basis, upon receipt of a written request," said Keith Whitworth, field technician supervisor.

Landowners within the district who utilize groundwater produced from the Ogallala aquifer in the business of **irrigation farming** may claim a cost-in-water income tax allowance.

This is permitted under strict guidelines of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and results from a 1962 lawsuit filed by the district.

The allowance requires that taxpayers must have paid more for a tract of land because it had groundwater in storage beneath it as compared to a similar tract of land in the same area with little or no groundwater in storage.

The allowable annual depreciation is directly related to the Internal Revenue Service approved annual decline in water levels for individual tracts of land. These decline values are derived from measured changes in water levels in a select network of observation wells within the district.

Land sales in portions of the district are documented each year and an average per-acre sales value for dryland and irrigated land is determined.

An Internal Revenue Service engineer meets with District officials and "cost-in-water" guidelines are developed for each county. These annual guide-

lines are valid for use only for those land acquisitions occurring during a sales study year.

NEW REQUESTS

A \$50 fee is charged for the basic information to establish a claim, including saturated thickness and annual decline for up to three prior years and cost-in-water sales data for the year of land acquisition.

For a new request, taxpayers must provide:

- A complete legal description of the tract of land on which the claim is to be filed;
- The date of land acquisition;
- The number of acres in the tract;
- The landowner's name, address, Social Security number or Federal Identification number, and telephone number.

EXISTING REQUESTS

Each year following the initial set-up, data may be requested using the permanent reorder number shown on the invoice. A

\$10 fee is charged for decline data on existing requests, if a decline occurs. If there is no decline, no fee is charged.

"There is no need to send money with the requests. Invoices will be sent out with the completed decline information. The High Plains Water District will not supply any water depletion data to anyone with an unpaid balance from the previous year—until the balance is paid in full," said Whitworth.

An instruction sheet, initial request form, and reorder request form in PDF format are available for downloading at <http://www.hpwd.com/ag-and-urban-water-use/income-tax-depletion-allowance>

Requests may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the district office in Lubbock.

Landowners may also stop by and complete a request form during office hours.

Requests for the depletion

data should be directed to Keith Whitworth, High Plains Water District, 2930 Avenue Q, Lubbock TX 79411-2499.

He may also be reached at (806) 762-0181 or via e-mail at keith.whitworth@hpwd.com

Want the digital Cross Section? Sign up now at HPWD web site

The High Plains Water District reminds subscribers to *The Cross Section* that a digital version of the newsletter is set for distribution beginning in Jan. 2014.

"The HPWD Board of Directors and management envision the new publication to be a mini-version of the current newsletter that can be distributed every other week via e-mail," said Carmon McCain, editor. "We want to provide more timely information to stakeholders within the district," he said.

Persons wanting to receive the new digital publication are encouraged to visit the district's

web site at www.hpwd.com. Clicking on the blue "newsletter" button on the far right side of the web page allows visitors to join an e-mail list to receive the latest news and information from the High Plains Water District.

"The district appreciates everyone's understanding and patience as we make this transition. Comments and suggestions are certainly welcome," McCain said.

The district's information/education group may be contacted at (806) 762-0181 or by e-mail at info@hpwd.com or adeline.fox@hpwd.com

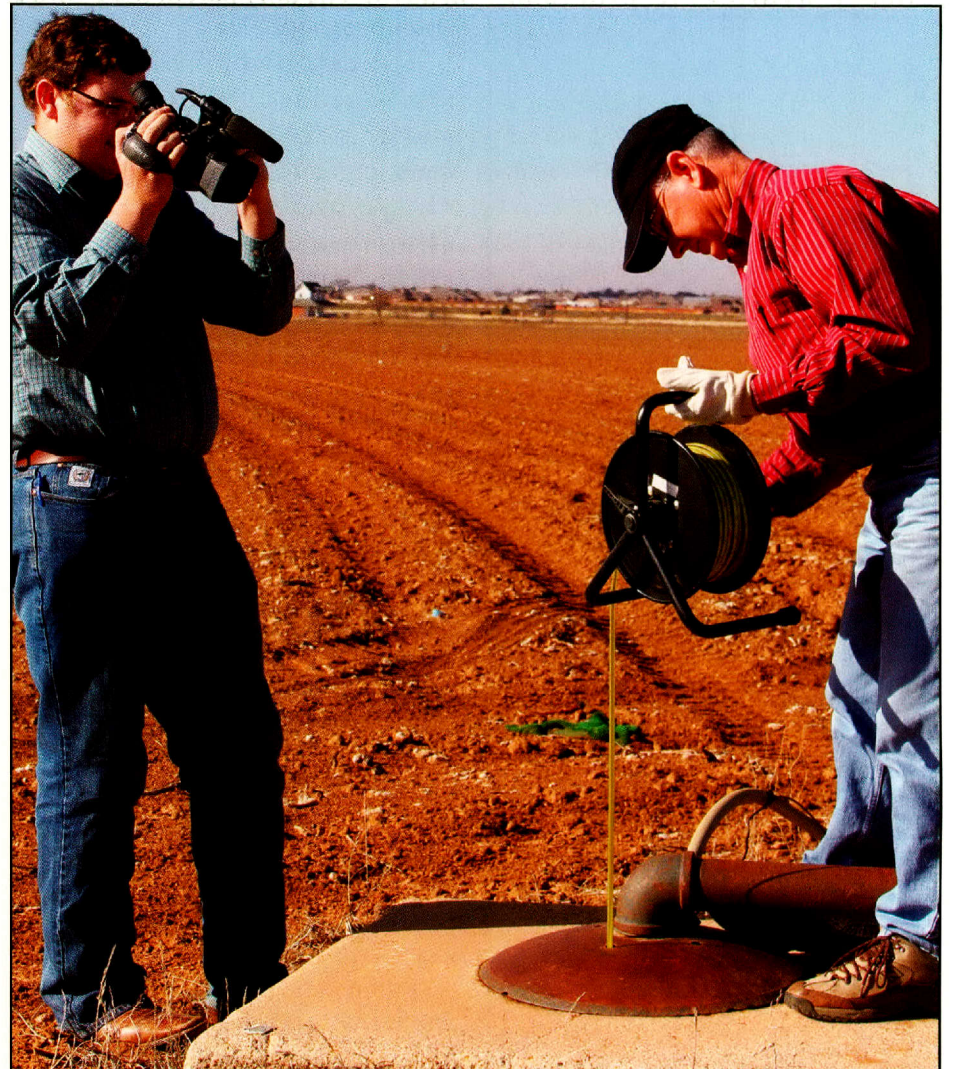
A reminder as 2014 nears ...

The High Plains Underground Water Conservation District Board of Directors remind groundwater users that the current moratoriums in the district's rules have been extended through calendar year 2014.

"No fine will be assessed, presently or retroactively, for failure to install an approved meter on a new well, failure to submit a groundwater production report, or production of groundwater in an amount greater than specified in the HPWD rules," said HPWD Board President Lynn Tate of Amarillo.

In addition, groundwater users are reminded that all applications for a water well permit within the district shall be accompanied by a \$250 non-refundable fee, beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

Previously, all permit applications were accompanied by a refundable \$250 deposit. Permits are required for non-exempt wells producing more than 17.5 gallons of water per minute.



Annual Water Level Measurements

Field Technician Supervisor Keith Whitworth uses an e-line to make a water level measurement in a Lubbock County observation well while reporter Joshua Koch films the process for a segment on Fox 34's Ag Day Lubbock program.

High Plains Ag Conference: Irrigation efficiency essential

Dr. Dana Porter, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agricultural engineer, discussed irrigation management, chemigation, and updated local producers on High Plains Water District rules during the Dec. 13 High Plains Ag Conference in Lubbock.

Porter's presentation emphasized one common theme: efficiency within each method of irrigation.

Keeping input factors in mind during the growing season is vital to making a profitable yield by harvest.

While water is an important input, nutrient management, variety selection and integrated pest management all have to be accounted for in each process, too.

With many water efficiency technologies already present in irrigation, Porter says refining current water management techniques will be essential for sustainability.

"I think it comes down to

managing current technologies in a better way," Porter says. "The more soil and water management awareness available, the better producers can pinpoint what their crops need and when they need it."

As in any irrigation application, successful water application starts with good design, installation, maintenance and management.

Many producers on the Texas High Plains have implemented some type of efficient irrigation systems, which helps spread awareness on water efficient methods.

Staying informed of new technologies and facing challenges is important now, as well as in the future.

"Economics will continue to be challenging for future producers," Porter says.

"Whether it is inputs, markets, labor or insurance, challenges exist on many levels, but increased awareness of best management practices will always be useful for any operation."

For more information regarding irrigation efficiency or Texas water in general, persons are encouraged to refer to these sites.

- <https://watermgmt.tamu.edu>
- <http://water.tamu.edu>
- <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us>

Water efficiency study completed

From Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Drought tolerance in wheat has been increased through breeding over the years, but a group of Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists in Amarillo wanted to know what plant physiological characteristics were making the biggest difference.

The results of this study, "Yield Determination and Water-Use Efficiency of Wheat Under Water Limited Conditions in the U.S. Southern High Plains," will be published in the *Crop Science* journal in January.

Funded in part by the Ogallala Aquifer Program and Texas Wheat Producers Board, the study featured a two-year field experiment with 10 different wheat varieties. The varieties were grown under dryland and irrigated conditions, looking primarily at yield determination and water-use efficiency.

Conservation Conversation

News briefs and other conservation-related information

2014 CROP CONFERENCES—Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has announced the following January 2014 crop conferences within the HPWD service area.

- Lamb County Ag Conference, Jan. 22, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Lamb County Ag and Community Center, Littlefield;
- Caprock Crop Conference, Jan. 23, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friends Unity Center, Muncy.
- Llano Estacado Cotton Conference, Jan. 24, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bailey County Electric Cooperative, Muleshoe.

2014 LAND AND WATER SUMMIT—"Drought as an Opportunity for Change" is the theme of the 2014 Land and Water Summit, sponsored by the Xeriscape Council of New Mexico and Arid Low Impact Design (Arid LID). Formerly known as the New Mexico Xeriscape Conference, this event will be held Feb. 20-21 in Albuquerque. The conference agenda and speakers as well as registration information is available at <http://xeriscapenm.com/xeriscape-conference/>

LOCAL PRODUCER HONORED—Eddie Smith of Floydada was honored as the 44th recipient of the *Cotton Grower* Achievement Award during Dec. 2 ceremonies at the Overton Hotel and Conference Center in Lubbock. The award, organized and managed by *Cotton Grower* magazine and co-sponsored by Case IH and Deltapine, recognizes and honors growers who are outstanding innovators, sound stewards of the environment, and leaders in both the cotton industry and their respective communities. "Eddie has given his time and counsel to individuals and organizations at all levels of the industry for many years. We're excited to welcome him to this prestigious list of recipients for this annual award," said Beck Barnes, senior editor. You can learn more about Smith's story and the *Cotton Grower* Achievement Award in the Jan. 2014 issue of *Cotton Grower* Magazine or by visiting www.cotton247.com

REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP MEETING—The Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group ("Region O") meets January 16 at 10:00 a.m. in the A. Wayne Wyatt Board Room of the High Plains Water District office. Additional information about the regional water planning group is available at www.llanoplan.org.

TALL CLASS XIV—The Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program is seeking applicants for its newest class which begins in July. TALL is a two-year leadership development program managed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. "The program invests 455 hours of intensive training per person in agriculture-related seminars, speakers, and domestic/international study trips. It is the equivalent of obtaining a master's degree in agriculture," said Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, AgriLife Extension leadership program director. The typical class size is 25 and tuition is \$3,000. Applications for the newest class are due March 15 and may be found online at <http://tall.tamu.edu>. Participants include crop producers, ranchers, bankers and attorneys, as well as those who work in lumber, food processing, agricultural corporations and horticultural industries, he said.

TEXAS GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION—The Texas Ground Water Association will hold its annual convention, Jan. 29-31, at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center.

TWDB OMBUDSMAN NAMED—Doug Shaw, a sixth generation Texan from a farm family, has been named the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) first Agriculture and Rural Texas Ombudsman. Shaw has worked in the water planning division at TWDB since 2006. "Doug has worked extensively with rural and agricultural stakeholders, helping them with regional water planning. He has educated many Texans across the state about TWDB's funding programs," said TWDB Executive Administrator Kevin Patteson.

PERIODICALS PERMIT

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CONSERVATION DISTRICT NO. 1

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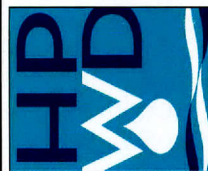
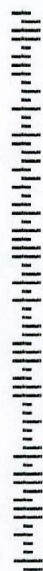
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