



Panhandle Water News

APRIL 2014

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Rule Amendments Passed at March Board Meeting

During the March Board Meeting, rule amendments consisting of adding a new definition, additional language to existing definitions, and increases in penalties for District Rule violations were passed.

First amendment adoption was to Rule 1, adding "Property Line" as a new definition, being defined as "real property lines and subterranean groundwater property lines when water rights have been severed." The Board agreed to also add additional definition to "contiguous acreage," "initial production allowable" and "permit."

- "Contiguous acreage" means acres within the same contiguous boundary associated with groundwater rights that are owned or leased by a person. Acreages must share a common boundary of at least one-quarter mile to be considered contiguous. Minimal breaks between contiguous acreage caused by railroads and public roads may not disqualify property from being considered contiguous acreage.

- "Initial production allowable" shall be 1 acre-foot per acre per year allowable of water rights owned on each permit granted. This amount is subject to adjustment pursuant to the depletion rule. Acreage of water rights may be evidenced by information on file with applicable county tax appraisal district and/or other legal documentation.
- "Permit" means authorization granted by the Board to construct, drill, operate, install, equip, complete or other work designed for the production of groundwater from the aquifer. The Permit shall contain the production allowable. Permits may be renewed at any time prior to expiration.

Rule 3.3 was amended to include additional definition by adding language to clarify violation compliance and violator cooperation, second and third offense penalty, and increasing and adding penalties. It is stated in part (d) of the rule that:

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Precipitation Enhancement Starts 15th Year

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) will kick off 15 years of precipitation enhancement this month as we move into the spring across the Texas Panhandle. This year has started off dry with all of the Texas Panhandle moving into an extreme to exceptional drought as rainfall remains below average. ENSO (El Nino/La Nina-Southern Oscillation) neutral conditions are in place now and are expected to remain in place throughout the

spring, according to the Climate Prediction Center. ENSO-neutral should bring normal rainfall to the area; however, more than normal rainfall is needed to push the Texas Panhandle out of this extended drought.

The 2013 Precipitation Enhancement season began on April 1 and concluded on September 19. The seeding season was slightly more normal than the previous two years; since it was closer to normal synoptic

conditions across the Panhandle rather than the dominance of La Niña like the previous couple of years. Table 1 (page 3) shows the number of days flown, seeding flights, reconnaissance flights and hours flown per month through the 2013 season.

The rainfall amounts in 2013 were close to or above normal in all counties throughout the summer except Potter County. Potter remained below the county rainfall average

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Amendments Continued from Page 1

The District shall assess the following initial minimum penalties for the listed Rule Violations.

The District will work with the violator to ensure that compliance is reached. The Board may set reasonable penalties for other Rule violations that are not listed. If the violator is not cooperative or does not make reasonable progress towards compliance within a Board-determined timeframe, the Board may assess the penalty for every day that the violation is unresolved. For the second incidence of any offense, the listed initial penalty shall be doubled and the third incidence shall be tripled, up to a maximum fine of \$10,000 per day.

Initial Penalty

Violations:

1. A. Failure to register an exempt well according to District Rules, \$500.
B. Failure to permit a non-exempt well according to District Rules, \$1,500.
This penalty will be assessed against both the well owner and well driller for drilling a well without first having the appropriate well registration or permit from the District, prior to drilling the well. The District shall notify the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation of well drillers receiving this penalty along with the District rule that was violated.
2. Failure to install a meter on a new well, replacement well or any well subject to meter requirements in a Conservation Area within 120 days, \$1,500.
Meters may be alternatively located at the center pivot sprinkler if all production is captured at the center pivot.
3. Use of groundwater that constitutes waste, \$1,500.
4. False statement on records or permit applications, \$1,500.
5. Failure to file documentation or well log with the District within the required time period of 60 days, \$500.
6. Failure to properly plug or cover an abandoned well, \$1,500.

The Board accepted the change of Rule 4.3, Drilling and Production Permits, to include additional wording "of water rights owned or controlled." It now states: "The maximum production shall not exceed 1 acre-foot per acre per year on any contiguous acre of water rights owned or controlled."

The last amendment adopted by the board was adding language to Rule 4.4, Requirement of Driller's Log, Casing, Pump Data and Meters. The following sentence was added at the end of the rule stating: "This rule applies to all wells, including water wells used for oil and gas exploration or production purposes."

2nd Biennial Water Symposium

The 2nd Biennial Texas Panhandle-High Plains Water Conservation Symposium was a huge success. The symposium was hosted by Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD), City of Amarillo, High Plains Underground Water Conservation District (HPWD), and North Plains Groundwater Conservation District (NPWD) on Wednesday, February 12. The event gathered approximately 375 people, significantly more than the previous symposium held in February 2012, and included 18 guest speakers.

The symposium is designed to bring water conservation methods and information to everyone, including agriculture, municipal and public. The event was broken up into two different sessions, morning and afternoon. The morning session focused on what we can expect this year in weather, statewide perspective of agriculture water conservation, the value of water, and what opportunities are available now that Proposition 6 has passed.

After lunch, the attendees broke out into three groups, municipal, agriculture, and public. Industrial and municipal water audits, opportunities of water re-use and municipal water conservation were topics discussed during the municipal breakout session. During the agriculture session, attendees were informed with ag water conservation in the past, present, and future, conservation and economic opportunities, irrigation strategies with limited water, and when to consider drip irrigation. The public session was educated on water efficient landscaping, benefits of quantifying water conservation education and the importance of it, and the benefits and opportunities of rainwater harvesting.

Presented during the morning session at the symposium was the Crown of Texas Water Conservation Award. It was presented to Leon New for his tireless dedication to water conservation on behalf of future generations of Texans. This was the second Crown of Texas Water Conservation Award to be granted, the first granted at the previous Inaugural Texas Panhandle Water Conservation Symposium to Senator Robert Duncan of Lubbock. PGCD plans to continue the symposium every other year and the award will continue to be granted to other distinguished advocates of water conservation.

PGCD would like to thank all the sponsors, volunteers, and help of HPWD, NPWD, and City of Amarillo for helping make this symposium another success, and also for helping us bring water conservation methods and awareness to people in the Texas Panhandle.

New Ag Loan Approval

Recent loan request to Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) for the amount of \$2,000,000.00 for Agriculture Loans through Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) was approved in February by TWDB.

PGCD is accepting loan applications from farmers in the District for sprinklers and other water saving equipment. The loan will be available to farmers with an interest rate of 1.12 percent. For more information about receiving a loan contact Julie at PGCD office at 806-883-2501.



Lawn Sprinkler Gauge

The greatest percentage, up to 35 percent, of water we use for non-agricultural use goes to watering out lawns. Your lawn only needs water twice a week and less if it rains. Overwatering our lawns can not only be costly and wasteful, but can also cause damage to the roots of healthy grass. Knowing how much to water your lawn will diminish these issues that many face in the summertime.

To help you know how much water your lawn is getting, we recommend that you accurately measure using a lawn gauge provided by Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, which can be picked up at numerous locations around the district (see below).

Using the Lawn Sprinkler Gauge

- ◆ Randomly place sprinkler gauge on your lawn and run the sprinkler for 15 minutes. Record the amount of water collected in the gauge.

- ◆ Repeat and take measurements at three or four different locations around the lawn.

- ◆ Calculate the average of all measurements and multiply average by four.

This will tell how many inches per hour your sprinkler applies to your lawn; e.g., if your sprinkler waters 1/8 inch in 15 minutes, the hourly rate is 1/2 inch, which is the ideal rate for proper soil absorption.

How Much to Water

Apply enough water to wet soil to a depth of 4-6 inches. After watering your lawn, determine the depth the water reaches by using a soil probe or screwdriver. Even during the hottest months, one inch of water per week is usually adequate.

When to Water

Stress for your lawn is natural, especially during the summer. When your lawn is ready for water, it will have a grayish cast and footprints will remain in the turf. Wait for these signs of stress to appear before watering. Avoid watering on a windy day, and only water in early morning or late evening to reduce evaporation.

Lawn Gauge Distributors

Amarillo-Coulter Gardens, Gebo's, Home Depot-Georgia, Home Depot-Soncy, Lowes-Tascosa Rd, Pete's Greenhouse, Potter County AgriLife, Pride Home Center, Sutherland's, Wal-Mart-Grand, Wal-Mart-Tascosa Rd, **Clarendon**-J&W Lumber, Lowes/Ace Hardware, **Claude**-Keith's Service Center, **Groom**-Groom Hardware, **Miami**-Roberts County AgriLife, **Pampa**-B&G Rental-Hobart, Bartlett's Hardware, D&C Greenhouse, Frank's Hardware, Gebo's, Gray County AgriLife, WTL, Wal-Mart, **Panhandle**-Lane's, **Shamrock**-Bartlett's Hardware, **Wheeler**-Hefley's Hardware, **White Deer**-Freeman's Grocery, Joel's NAPA, PGCD Office.

Weather Mod Continued from Page 1

	Days	Seed Flights	Recon Flights	Flight Hours
April	2	1	1	3
May	5	4	1	9
June	7	4	4	12
July	6	4	4	10
August	7	6	1	15
September	4	2	3	11
Totals	31	21	14	60

Table 1 shows the number of days flown, seeding flights, reconnaissance flights, and hours flown per month through the 2013 season.

throughout the summer. When comparing the 2011, 2012 and 2013 rainfall totals for April to October all counties have improved over the last two years with the exception of Potter. Table 2 shows the average rainfall values for the District counties for 2011-2013 and their differences.

April-September Rainfall Averages Comparing 2011-2013 in Inches

	2011	2012	Diff	2013	Diff
Armstrong	4.75	12.62	7.87	16.31	3.69
Carson	5.66	11.74	6.08	16.49	4.75
Donley	3.38	14.78	11.40	16.67	1.89
Gray	4.83	15.68	10.85	20.28	4.60
Potter	2.63	10.42	7.79	9.86	0.56
Roberts	4.97	12.21	7.24	17.22	5.01
Wheeler	4.79	16.68	11.89	20.49	3.81

Table 2 shows the comparison of rainfall from 2011-2013 during April-September in PGCD. Blue indicated positive and red indicates negative.

Last year's seeding season was considered very successful, providing on average a six percent rainfall increase per county according to Active Influence and Scientific Management. This increase calculates out to an average of 0.95 inches of additional rainfall per county within the PGCD target area. Active Influence and Scientific Management analyzed a total of 28 clouds in 20 operational days. The results were evaluated as excellent with timing of seeding at 100 percent and no seeding opportunities missed. The cost of the program per acre was calculated at \$0.0544.

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Panhandle Water News is published quarterly. Subscriptions are free, upon request.

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Illegal Wells Drilled

In December 2013, three wells were drilled in the District without the proper paperwork. Landowners were addressed in the past January board meeting. After discussion and clarification of the matter, board members voted to fine both landowners. The first landowner was fined \$400 for the illegal drilling of one well and the second for \$600 for the illegal drilling of two wells.

The Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) reminds landowners to first contact our office before any drilling is done to acquire the proper paperwork and spacing requirements. Landowners are now able to download the paperwork to fill out and pay the deposit online if preferred. Whether you choose to do the process online or come in to the office, the paperwork must be completed before drilling. Once this is completed and has been returned, a PGCD staff member will come out to verify spacing the well and stake our new blue PGCD flag at the drilling site, indicating that all rules are met and may proceed to drill. If these steps are not completed upon drilling, the PGCD Board will take action and the landowners will be fined by the District.

The District rules and regulations are posted on our website (www.pgcd.us). If you have any questions or concerns about the permitting process please contact Anita at the PGCD office at 806-883-2501.



Above is PGCD's flag that will be placed at drilling site after verification of spacing, indicating all rules are met and individual can proceed to drill.

Flag must be present before drilling can begin.