Panhandle Water News

2016 SPECIAL EDITION

"Conserving Water for Future Generations"

Special Edition Points of Interest

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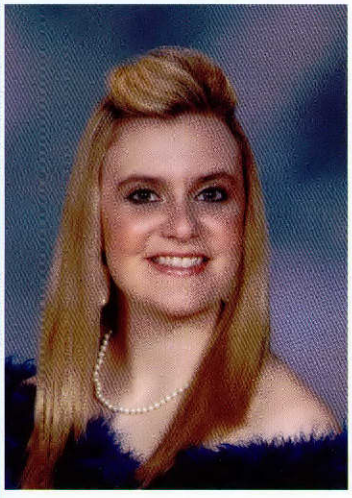
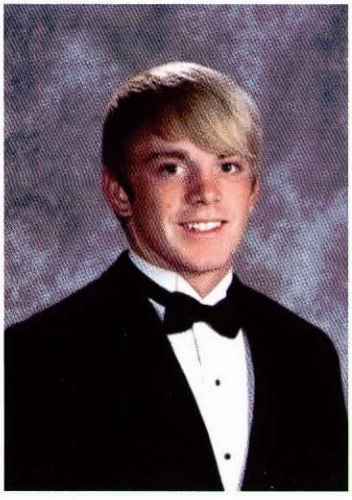
PGCD Announces Scholarship Winners



Jordan Pohnert
1st Place Winner
White Deer High School



Riley Graham
2nd Place Winner
Panhandle High School

Evelyn Baylon
3rd Place Winner
Miami High School

In 2002, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District established a scholarship program for graduating seniors throughout the District. The applicants are required to write a 500-1,000 word essay on a topic chosen by PGCD and to enroll as a full-time student at the college of their choice the fall semester immediately following selection. Also, they must maintain at least a 2.5 college GPA. A committee of three board members and a staff member select the winners. The student awarded first place receives a $4,000 scholarship, second place receives $3,000, and third place receives $2,000. The scholarship total is paid out over four years.

PGCD's topic this year was **"During a year with record rainfall numbers, water conservation may not be at the forefront of our minds. Why is it important to remember the keys to successful water conservation through years of drought and also years with substantial rainfall?"** PGCD had twenty-two applicants this year and is proud to announce Jordan Pohnert, Riley Graham and Evelyn Baylon as the top three winners of PGCD's scholarship.

Jordan Pohnert, daughter of Dudley and Cindy Pohnert of White Deer, is our First Place winner. Pohnert is set to graduate from White Deer High School with a 4.0 GPA. Her future plans include attending West Texas A&M University to study Agribusiness.

Riley Graham, son of Frank and M'Leigh Graham of Panhandle, received second place. Graham will graduate from Panhandle High School with a 3.83 GPA. He plans to attend West Texas A&M University to study Biology.

Evelyn Baylon, daughter of Roman and Dora of Miami, received third place. Evelyn will graduate from Miami High School with a 4.0 GPA. She plans to attend the University of Texas at Arlington to study Computer Science.

PGCD wants to thank all of the applicants and congratulate the winners. We thoroughly enjoyed each essay and perspective on the topic. We wish you all the best of luck on your

PGCD Rule Changes

On April 22, 2016, per District rules, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District held a hearing to discuss proposed rule changes to PGCD's current rules. Most of the amendments were mandatory changes for the District to become statutorily compliant with the Chapter 36 Water Code changes made in 2015. The District Board of Directors approved one change proposed by the District staff members regarding meter deposits.

To view a complete copy of the District's Rules, please visit our website at www.pgcd.us and click on the "Rules" tab at the top of the Homepage.

Below are the approved changes underlined in italics.

Rule 1 - Definitions

(f) - ***"Best available science"*** *means conclusions that are logically and reasonably derived using statistical or quantitative data, techniques, analyses, and studies that are publicly available to reviewing scientists and can be employed to address a specific scientific question.*

Rule 3.1 - General Rules

(c) SHOW CAUSE ORDERS AND COMPLAINTS

The Board, either on its own motion, or upon receipt of sufficient written protest or complaint, may at any time, after due notice to all interested parties, cite any person operating within the District to appear before it in a public hearing and require him to show cause why a suit should not be initiated against him in a district court *or assess an authorized administrative penalty in Rule 3.3* for failure to comply with the orders or rules of the Board or the relevant statues of the State or for failure to abide by the terms and provisions of the permit or operating authority itself. The matter of evidence, and all other matters of procedures at any such hearing, will be conducted in accordance with Rules 10.5 and 10.7.

- Rule 3.3 can be viewed at www.pgcd.us.

Rule 4.3 - Drilling and Production Permits

(3) *the drilling of a water well authorized under a permit issued by the Railroad Commission of Texas under Chapter 134, Natural Resources Code, or for production from the well to the extent the withdrawals are required for mining activities regardless of any subsequent use of the water. The District may require a production permit for or restrict production from a well if the groundwater withdrawals that were exempted under Subsection (a)(3) are no longer necessary for mining activities or are greater than the amount necessary for mining activities specified in the permit issued by the Railroad Commission of Texas under Chapter 134, Natural Resources Code.*

Rule 4.5 - Durability of Permits and Time During Which Permitted Projects Shall be Completed

Please view changes to Rule 4.5 online - all changes made to this rule were mandatory to become statutorily compliant with Chapter 36 Water Code.

Rule 7 - Deposits

Each application for a permit to drill a well *which requires a meter pursuant to Rule 4.4 (c) shall be accompanied by a $500.00 deposit* or well registration shall be accompanied by a $100.00 deposit, which shall be accepted by the Manager of the District or authorized personnel in the office of the District. Said deposit shall be returned to the application by the District if (1) the application is denied, or (2) the application is granted, upon receipt of correctly completed well completion report, signed Drilling and Production Permit, and driller's log of the well, *and the meter has been installed* or (3) said location is abandoned without having been drilled, upon return and surrender of said permit marked "abandoned" by the applicant.

Rule 10 - Hearings and Public Meetings

Changes were made to Rule 10.1, 10.2, 10.5, 10.7 and 10.8 to become statutorily compliant with Chapter 36 Water Code. Again, these changes can be viewed on the District's website.

If you have any questions regarding recent changes, or would like to request a hardcopy of the rules, please call the office at 806-883-2501.

Board of Director, Charles Bowers explaining the duties of the Board, when asked about private property rights. "Our job is not to regulate beyond capabilities of making a living, but to let people know when their water supply is getting low."

General Manager, C.E. Williams said the District's goal is to treat all constituents in the District the same, whether they're producers, municipalities or the general public.

Lawn Gauges Available

The greatest percentage, up to 35 percent, of water we use for non-agricultural use goes to watering our lawns. Your lawn only needs water once to 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 and help conserve water.

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 right).

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.

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.

Type of Grass

When choosing what type of grass to plant, it is best to choose a type that is best suited for our area.

- **Best Choice:** Buffalo grass-normally remains green on as little as 1.5 inches of water per month, even during the summer. Due to deep root systems, 2 or 3 soakings a summer may be sufficient.
- **Good Choice:** Bermuda grass-requires about one watering a month during the winter and may require 1 to 2 inches per week during the summer.
- **Not Recommended:** Fescue-this type of grass may require as much as 3 inches a week during the summer and 1 inch per week during the winter.

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

Jordan Pohnert's Winning Scholarship Essay

Here in Texas, Farmers are well versed in how unpredictable our weather can be. From the Dust Bowl, to the 1950's to present day drought that had plagued our state for years, those involved in agriculture have come to expect the good along with the bad. However, in our lifetime we are sure to see more weather events threaten the ability of agriculturists to produce enough food to feed our nation and the world. Why then are more people not insisting on drought preparedness plans before and even during an event? Part of that could have to do with historical education.

"Civilization as it is known today could not have evolved, nor can it survive, without an adequate food supply." said Norman Borlaug, leader of the Green Revolution that began to provide nutritional stability in places such as Africa, the Middle East and South America. "Yet food is something that is taken for granted by most world leaders despite the fact that more than half of the population of the world is hungry. Man seems to insist on ignoring the lessons available from history." Thankfully, Borlaug's statement on the historical ignorance of the population toward drought and food production has not been lost in the farmers and water conservationists of the Texas Panhandle. Undoubtedly, water conservation is vitally important so that we can provide food, clothing, and other necessities for the world.

In the past, such as during the Dust Bowl , it was extremely crucial for people to conserve water and practice farming methods to prevent loss of soil moisture, win erosion and damage to agriculture and ecology in the area.

The basics of conserving water should apply to every household.

DISTRICT OFFICE
201 W. Third St, PO Box 637
White Deer, TX 79097
Phone: 806/883-2501
FAX: 806/883-2162
Web Page: www.pgcd.us

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PANHANDLE GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 637
WHITE DEER, TEXAS 79097

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Winning Essay Continued

About 95 percent of the water used in the average home is wasted daily. Repairing leaky valves, faucets, and toilets could save one drop per second which equates to 2,700 gallons of water per year. Another way to conserve each day? Don't run the faucet while not using the water, for example, while brushing your teeth. Only operate the washer when you have a full load or adjust the water level for the size of load. Watering lawns in the early morning hours before the temperature rises can also significantly reduce immoderate evaporation. Water usage calculators, such as the one offered by the Southwest Florida Water management District can also be a useful tool to help determine how much water is being used as well as wasted throughout your home.

While water conservation may not be at the forefront of our minds because of the ample amount of rainfall we have received in the Panhandle recently, it deeply concerns me that more people are not aware of the state of our aquifer, the Ogallala. Many experts believe that water entering the ground today could take somewhere between 25 to 500 years to reach the Ogallala aquifer. If we're pumping water out of the aquifer, water falling today will have no impact on the Ogallala until sometime in the distant future. Why is that important to understand? Though many people might believe the aquifer is recovering due to a higher than usual volume of moisture, that water has little effect on present conditions. Conserving water is still vitally important and will remain so in the future for both domestic use as well as agriculture uses.

Another way people can make a different in water conservation whether domestic or agriculture is through rain water harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is the collection of rainwater that comes off of roofs which can then be reused. With a filtration system, the water can be reused as drinking water kept for storage and, through its use, groundwater can be saved and left in the ground. Irrigation, gardens and livestock are just a few of the uses that the recycled water can be utilized for. Several farmers on the High Plains, including large scale cow-calf operations, have incorporated rainwater harvesting systems into their working and holding pens in order to use water that otherwise would not be utilized.

The depletion of our aquifer has encouraged farmers to come together and incorporate waters to administer limited irrigation and save water, but still grow high yielding crops for profit. Sprinkler irrigation and drips systems are being utilized in research, along with additions such as drag hoses, to potentially allow farmers to not only deliver water to areas that need it, but also strategically use fertilizers and other inputs so that waste and unnecessary input costs can but cut for agricultural producers. Agriculture is a major part of the economy in the Texas Panhandle. Without it this area we all call home would be much different. With this in mind, many groundwater districts, as well as the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and other entities partner to study how to better use groundwater while still allowing farmers to profit from agriculture in our area. With more research and cooperation from farmers and conservation groups, I am confident that we can come up with more water to make agriculture a profitable and sustainable industry well into the future.

The Ogallala Aquifer is the most valuable natural resource in the Great Plains. Without the aquifer, there would be no water to supply the towns, crops and livestock across the 225,000 square miles that the Ogallala underlies. It's our role to make education and forward-thinking decisions and take all stakeholders into consideration when we use the water from this precious resource. It is our job as stewards of the aquifer to ensure we make every drop count toward a beneficial purpose.