

# GROUNDWATER SOUTHERN PLAINS NEWS

AUGUST 1999

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

## DIRECTORS ADOPT RULE CHANGES

Originally adopted on March 9, 1994, the South Plains Water District rules have remained unchanged for over six years. However, changes in State water law, coupled with several dry years in the 90s provided an incentive for Directors to update the policies and guidelines of the District.

After careful consideration of recommended rules changes made by the Rules Review Committee (see related story on pages 2-3), the Board of Directors of the South Plains Water District approved several changes and additions to the current rules at their regular meeting on June 1, 1999.

Some of the changes made by the Directors are as follows:

- Any water well to be drilled in the District must be registered and, if required, permitted prior to being drilled.
- Spacing **between** wells on one's own property based on well capacity is now required **in addition to** spacing from property lines

- Any commercial water well driller or pump installer must be registered with the District prior to conducting drilling or installation operations in the District.

- Civil penalties may apply to persons who violate District rules (no more than \$5,000 per day of violation).

- Irrigation systems must be registered with the District and registrations must be updated annually.

- In most cases, there will be a \$250 nonrefundable fee required for requesting an exception to the District's well spacing guidelines.

- The total aggregate pump age allowed per year is **4 acre-foot** (48 inches) per contiguous acre owned.

The rule changes went into effect July 1, 1999. Copies of the revised rule book are available at the District office (802 Tahoka Road, Brownfield). ☀

## District Hires Field Services Manager

Longtime Meadow resident Jason Coleman joined the District staff on July 1. Officially carrying the title of Field Services Manager, Jason's initial responsibilities will include field work and data collection, along with getting the long awaited IRS tax depletion program in place.

Jason graduated from Meadow High School in 1990 and went on to Texas A&M where he successfully completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1994. Many of you may have become acquainted with Jason during his past work with gins and farmers in Terry County.

Jason, his wife Kristi, and twin girls, Sydney and Bailey, are thrilled to be living back home again. The District staff and Directors are glad to have someone of Jason's caliber on board.

# STAKEHOLDERS MEET TO REVIEW DISTRICT RULES

For the last couple of years, the Directors of the District have contemplated the possibility of needing to make changes in the South Plains Water District's rules. Changes in State water law coupled with the 90s drought spurred the District's leaders to rethink the existing language of the rules.

The Directors felt that they should involve the public in the process in order to receive input directly from the people that would be most affected by any rule changes. They put together a list of 60+ people representing landowners, ag producers, industry, agribusiness, water well drillers/pump installers, and County organizations and held a meeting on February 22 to review the current rules and relevant issues surrounding each rule. Monty Henson was asked to chair the meeting. After two hours of serious discussion, Mr. Henson appointed three sub committees and asked each subcommittee to address four issues.

Andy Timmons was asked to chair Subcommittee "A" which would consider: 1) irrigation system registration, 2) the drilling permit process, 3) requirements of driller's logs and deposit returns, and 4) water well completion guidelines. Subcommittee "B", chaired by Brent Hogue, was to consider: 1) maximum allowable production, 2) spacing of wells, 3) procedures for reworking or replacing of wells, and 4) exceptions allowed to the spacing rules. Jackie Burris' Subcommittee "C" was asked to consider: 1) registration of water well drillers and pump installers, 2) rule enforcement, 3) regionalized management within the District, and 4) rules regarding transfer of groundwater out of the District.

Each of the subcommittees met, determined recommendations on each issue presented to the group, and reported back to the overall committee on March 25th with their suggestions. After each subcommittee chairman presented their recommendations, each person present was asked to fill out a survey indicating their opinion of each of over 24 recommenda-

tions.

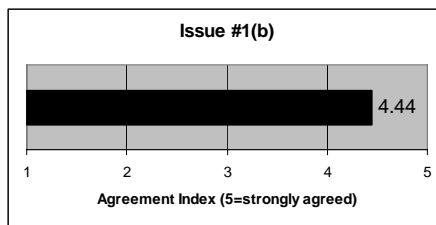
The following recommendations and survey responses represent some of the items considered.

## Irrigation System Enrollment

A. The subcommittee recommended that irrigation systems continue to be enrolled; that the enrollment be required to be updated in the fall or spring of every year.



B. The subcommittee recommended that, in order to provide an incentive for a person to comply with District rules (including irrigation system enrollment), any services, loan programs, or drilling permits, be withheld until that person is in compliance with District rules.

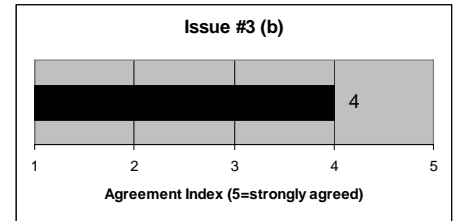


## Maximum Allowable Production

A. The subcommittee recommended that the current maximum allowable production rate of 5 gallons per minute per acre owned remain unchanged.

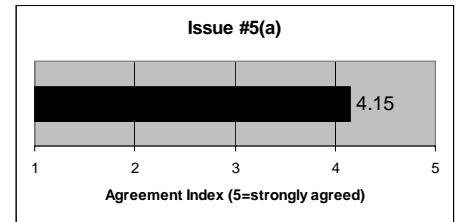


B. The subcommittee recommended that the total aggregate water use, per year, be limited to no more than 4 acre-feet per year (48 inches per acre per year).

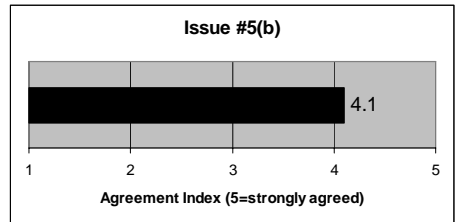


## Spacing of Wells

A. The subcommittee recommended that the current well spacing rules of the District remain the same.

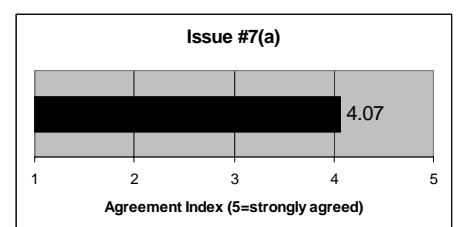


B. The subcommittee recommended that the District's Board of Directors consider implementing rules regarding minimum distances between wells in addition to the current rules requiring spacing from property lines.



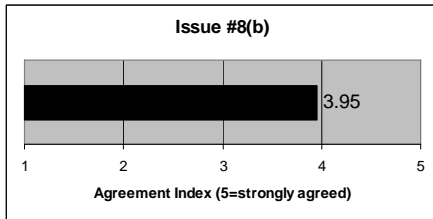
## Well Completion

A. The subcommittee recommended that the District adopt state water well completion rules as the rules of the District.

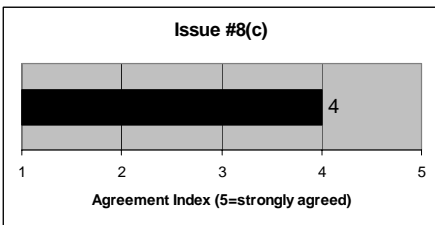


### Reworking or Replacing of Wells

B. The subcommittee recommended that a replacement well, to be considered as such, be drilled no more than 75 feet from the well being replaced, no closer to the property line, and produce no more water (gallons per minute) than the well being replaced.

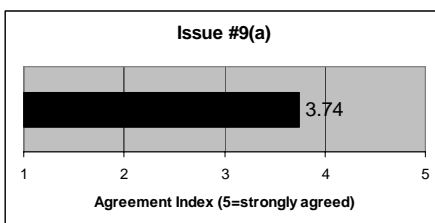


C. The subcommittee recommended that an existing "grandfathered" well (a well drilled before March 1993) not currently being produced may be brought back into production at the rate it originally produced. However, if the well must be replaced due to catastrophic circumstances, it must be drilled in accordance with the replacement well guidelines and be allowed to produce no more than 265 gallons per minute.



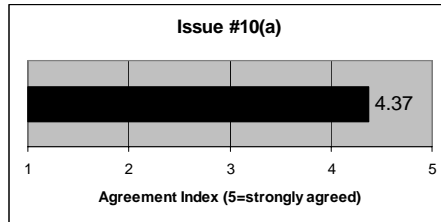
### Transferring Groundwater out of District

A. The subcommittee recommended that, due to the private property rights nature of regulating the transfer of groundwater out of the district, that the District not institute rules regarding this issue at this time. Instead, allow the current maximum allowable production rates to regulate the resource while keeping options open to landowners regarding the marketing of their water resources.



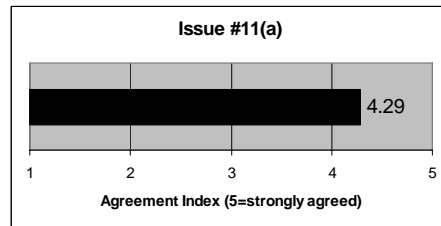
### Registration of Water Well Drillers and Pump Installers

A. The subcommittee recommended that all water well drillers and/or pump installers doing business in the District, be registered with the District prior to conducting business in the District. The subcommittee felt that through registration, water well drillers and pump installers can be apprised of District rules and information while protecting the interests of the constituency of the District.

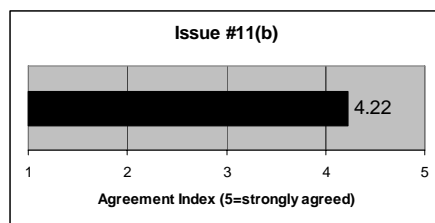


### Enforcement of Rules

A. The subcommittee recommended that the District institute fines as an incentive for individuals to comply with District rules.



B. The subcommittee recommended that should an individual violate a district rule, that he/she be warned and be allowed to correct the violation. If the individual fails to correct the situation or commits the same violation at a later date, the individual be fined \$500 per violation. If the individual commits the same violation a third time, he/she should be fined \$1,000 per violation.



Over 65 individuals met for a cumulative total of over 12 hours to reconsider these issues. When asked to rate the overall process, the participants expressed over 93% approval and suggested that similar meetings be held in the future.

## South Plains/ Llano Estacado Boards Reach Agreement

The Boards of Directors of the South Plains (Terry County) and Llano Estacado (Gaines County) water districts have forged an agreement to share the cost of General Manager Lee Arrington's wages and expenses. The move by the Llano Directors enable them to obtain the services of an experienced manager as well as sharing costs. Benefits to the South Plains District include opening enough budget room to allow the hiring of Jason Coleman, a 1994 graduate of Texas A&M's Ag. Engineering Department.

A 60/40 formula based roughly on each district's acreage will be applied to Arrington's salary and benefits package, while expenses such as vehicle, travel, and cell phone will be equally shared by both districts.

The Llano Estacado District was created in the 1993, 72nd Texas Legislature (same as South Plains). However, the confirmation election required to be passed voicing voter approval of the entity before operations may begin only took place this past November.

Live your life so that your children can tell their children that you not only stood for something wonderful—you acted on it.

## DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT THE BASE OF THE OGALLALA AQUIFER LOOKS LIKE IN TERRY COUNTY?

There is a strong indication that the base of the aquifer in Terry County resembles the contours on this map. Data from over 700 wells in Terry and surrounding counties was used by Water District staff to construct this image.

### Calendar of Events

September 6	Labor Day Holiday Office Closed
September 15	Board Meeting 1:30 pm District Office
September 16	Terry County Farm Tour
October 5	Board Meeting 1:30 pm District Office
November 2	Board Meeting 1:30 pm District Office
November 25-26	Thanksgiving Holidays Office Closed

*SOUTH PLAINS GROUNDWATER NEWS is published by the SOUTH PLAINS UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, PO Box 986, 802 Tahoka Road, Brownfield, TX 79316. Directors: Lewis Waters, Dan Day, Scott Hamm, Matt Hogue, Doyle Moss; General Manager: Lee Arrington; Field Services Manager: Jason Coleman; Administrative Assistant: Lindy Harris. Subscriptions are free upon request.*

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# SOUTH PLAINS GROUNDWATER NEWS

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

*Member*



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