

GROUNDWATER SOUTHEAST PLAINS NEWS

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ADDRESSING WASTE

Waste of groundwater not only violates SPUWCD Rules, it is also a violation of State law. As outlined in Chapter 36, Texas Water Code, waste is defined as a person willfully or negligently permitting groundwater to escape their property, as well as withdrawing more groundwater than is permitted by District Rules. Allowing groundwater to escape into any street, road, highway, road ditch, or neighbor's property is not only wasteful, but potentially dangerous.

Several of the most common instances of a person permitting groundwater to escape their property are:

1. center pivot end guns,
 2. sideroll or handline sprinklers, and
 3. test pumps on new wells.
- Center pivot end guns may not only contribute to waste, but are also an inefficient means of applying water. Runoff and evaporative losses from end gun sprinklers are typically very high.
 - Waste associated with sideroll or handline sprinklers often occurs when watering the last set near the edge of a property.

- Test pumping a new well may last anywhere from a few hours to a week or more. Because the test pump is not delivering water to an irrigation system, the water often winds up in a ditch or road. This scenario is ironic, because the reason for drilling a new well is to help supply irrigation needs. For a person to then allow the water to run off the property into a ditch is pointless.

Waste that occurs as a result of any of these practices may also pose a danger for others. Water may cover a road or highway and potentially cause a traffic accident. This scenario has occurred in other areas, and, in at least one instance, a landowner dealt with the legal implications of his wasteful practices which caused the traffic accident.

Another waste issue that sometimes occurs includes a person pumping more groundwater than is permitted by District Rules. District Rules address this issue in 2 ways:

1. maximum allow production, and
 2. well spacing/production.
- District Rule 7.1 states that no permitted well or well system may produce more than 5 gpm/contiguous

acre owned, and in no event may the total annual production exceed 4 acre-feet/contiguous acre. During the recent drought, the aquifer itself has limited our production. However, there are some systems that may potentially produce more groundwater than District Rules allow.

- District Rules 8.1 and 8.2 address the issue of well spacing/production. These rules outline a permitted well's maximum rate of production (gpm) based on its spacing from the property line and other wells on your property. During the past year, the District has investigated several complaints regarding well spacing/production.

In 1999, the District's Rules Review Committee recommended the District institute fines as an incentive for individuals to comply with District Rules. Hopefully, this process will not be required, but be aware that it does exist.

The District's Board and staff encourage every groundwater user to conserve our resource and implement every action that prevents waste.

If you have any questions regarding compliance with the Rules of the SPUWCD, please contact the District office. ☀

Directors Approve Changes to Loan Program Guidelines

At their November 7, 2000, regular Board meeting, the District's Directors approved several additions and revisions to the General Policy and Guidelines for the water conservation loan program. The Directors considered the changes because of our current drought and the need for improved water conservation practices. These changes affect those applying for a loan this year.

The revisions include:

- Used equipment 10 years old or older will not be considered for a loan. This requirement applies even if a person acquires new land that has an older system in place.

- The applicant agrees that no end gun is installed nor will be installed on the system being financed for the duration of the loan. Traditionally, end guns do not apply water efficiently and often contribute to wasteful practices.

- All financed equipment must be an improvement in conservation practices. As our energy costs continue to rise and our drought continues, the District must work with all producers and implement better water management practices.

- The loan applicant agrees to provide the District with yearly flow meter readings for the duration of the loan. Since 1996, all loan program participants have agreed to purchase and

install an approved flow meter on the system being financed. The flowmeters are a valuable water management tool for producers. By sharing this information with the District, we are better able to estimate our groundwater usage.

These revisions and additions will help producers and the District work together for continued groundwater conservation.

Loan packets are now available at the District office. If you would like a loan packet or have any questions, please come by the District office. ☼

HOW TO FIGURE THE COST OF LIVING:
Take your income and add 10%



Educational Programs Continue Success

Once again, the District is sponsoring the *Major Rivers* education curriculum for all 4th grade students in Terry County. The 2000-2001 school year marks the 7th consecutive year the District has sponsored this program. The *Major Rivers* curriculum teaches students a number of things concerning groundwater and surface water in Texas, such as household water usage and water conservation

practices.

Also, the District has supplied over 4,300 book covers for all Terry County public school students this year. This is also the 7th consecutive year the District has sponsored this program. The book covers contain tips which encourage water conservation.

These programs remind students, teachers, parents and others of our limited resource and its importance to our well-being. ☼

IRS Program Reminder

The District is currently finalizing the data required for the IRS Cost in Water Depletion Program. By mid-December, the District will present its decline maps and cost in water figures to the IRS. After IRS approval, we will begin processing landowner requests for watertable decline information.

If you requested water decline data for this program last year, a reorder form will be mailed to you. If you have acquired new property or did not request this information last year, call or come by the District office. Please remember eligible properties are only those acquired 1979 and after.

New Database Now in Use

Since the SPUWCD began operations in March 1993, over 4,500 water wells have been registered. Also since that time, over 1,100 wells have been permitted, and over 1,300 irrigations systems have been inventoried. All of this information has been collected in an effort to better understand our dynamic groundwater system, as well as fulfill the objectives of the District's Management Plan.

Readily accessing any of this information requires a comprehensive database. After reviewing the District's current system, it was decided a new database was needed. As a result, the District hired Dan Rogotzke, a database programmer, in June. Dan and District staff worked together during the summer and designed a database

which incorporates all of the District's data collection needs.

In October, District staff started entering water well data in the new database. Also, year 2000 irrigation system registration information is currently being added. Using this program, the District may readily access information from several different perspectives (i.e. by individual well, by section, etc.).

Soon the District will also incorporate landowners' water quality data and flow test data as these services are performed. Afterward, when a landowner requests a history of data from their property, the District will provide one form containing a complete history of all pertinent information. ❁

DISTRICT REVIEWS SOUTHERN OGALLALA GAM PROPOSALS

During the 76th legislative session, the Texas Legislature approved funding for the Groundwater Availability Modeling (GAM) program. The goal of GAM is providing reliable and timely information concerning groundwater availability to the citizens of Texas. The expectation is that GAM will provide predictions of groundwater availability through 2050 based on current projections of groundwater usage and future demands during normal and drought-of-record conditions.

Each of the 9 major aquifers in Texas will be modeled in this effort. Development of the model for the Southern Ogallala (which includes the SPUWCD) begins early 2001, and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2002. A contractor, working through the Texas Water Development Board

(TWDB), will develop this model.

In September, six different contractors submitted Southern Ogallala GAM proposals to the TWDB. The TWDB then contacted various groups located in the modeling area and asked if these groups would help evaluate and score the proposals. The SPUWCD was one of the groups which reviewed and scored these proposals.

The TWDB has now collected the groups' score sheets and determined the top candidate. Between now and mid-January, the TWDB will negotiate a budget and scope of work with this contractor. If cost negotiations with the top ranked applicant fail, TWDB staff intends to continue negotiations with the next ranked applicant. After this negotiation is completed, the contractor will begin work. ❁



DISTRICT CREATES NEW WEB SITE

The SPUWCD has recently created a web site, located at <http://www.spuwcd.org>. Included on the web site are the District Rules and Management Plan, as well as a description of the District's programs and activities. The precipitation enhancement page contains a link to the radar images displayed when operations are taking place.

Also listed on the web site are news releases which will be updated as necessary. Look to this page for notices of meetings and articles of interest, such as rainfall totals for the year.

The Board of Directors and staff believe this service allows landowners and producers easy access to District news and information. ❁



*The Directors
and
Staff
of the
South Plains
Water District
wish you a Happy and
Safe Holiday Season*





Just a Reminder--Irrigation System Registrations are Due

Irrigation system Registration forms were mailed in October in accordance with District Rules 13.1 and 13.2. To date, over 350 irrigation systems have been registered. This represents approximately 25% of the irrigation systems in the District. Information contained in these registrations is very important in tracking our groundwater usage and conservation practices.

Beginning December 1, the District will mail letters to those landowners/operators who have not regis-

tered their systems, requesting that they do so before January 31, 2001.

Thanks to those who have already registered your irrigation systems and completed the forms as accurately as possible. Using the District's new database (see related article) we will send each system owner/operator a form next year containing the system information submitted this year. At that time, the system owner/operator will only be asked to make changes as necessary. ❁

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Calendar of Events

Nov. 23-24	Thanksgiving Holidays Office Closed
Dec. 5	Board Meeting 1:30pm--District Office
Dec. 25-26	Christmas Holidays Office Closed
Looking Ahead to 2001	
Jan. 1	New Year's Day Office Closed
Jan. 8	77th Legislative Session Begins
Jan. 9	Board Meeting 1:30 pm--District Office
Jan.	South Plains Ag Conference

A man in the West
will fight over three things;
water, women and gold--
and usually in that order



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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