

## Board Approves Annual Report

The District's Board of Directors approved the annual report during the regular meeting of October 4, 2005. Since 2000, the staff has compiled a report at the end of each fiscal year. This report is an evaluation of the District's performance regarding its management goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are listed in the District's management plan.

A copy of the annual report is available at the District office. The report is also available on-line under the *Management Plan* link at [www.spuwcd.org](http://www.spuwcd.org).

## Need Water Info?

If you need any literature or water educational materials, please let us know. The District maintains a number of brochures, periodicals, and videos concerning water conservation. Additionally, a technical file is available for your use. E-mail us or call the District office if you have questions.

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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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## Calendar of Events

Nov. 24-25	Thanksgiving Holiday Office Closed
Dec. 6	Board Meeting 8:30 am District office
Dec. 22-23	Christmas Holiday Office Closed
<b>Looking Ahead to 2006</b>	
Jan. 2	New Year's Holiday Office Closed
Jan. 10	Board Meeting 8:30 am District office
Feb. 7	South Plains Ag Conference and Trade Show
Feb. 14	Board Meeting 8:30 am District office

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# GROUNDWATER SOUTH PLAINS NEWS

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## Legislature Enacts Joint Planning

Following the last regular Texas Legislative session, a number of bills affecting groundwater conservation districts (districts) were signed into law after passage by both the House and the Senate. These laws concern tax notices, permit and rules hearings, elected official training and other related issues. Perhaps the most significant change, though, concerns the joint planning provisions in HB 1763. A brief explanation of this issue and its possible impact is included here.

In 2002, the Texas Water Development Board designated the boundaries for sixteen Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs) in Texas. These boundaries are predominately dictated by major aquifers, although there are some exceptions. Some GMAs encompass a number of districts, while others do not. GMA #2 includes the southern portion of the Ogallala, which stretches from Deaf Smith County to Andrews County. Figure 1 is an illustration of the extent of GMA #2, compared to the whole Ogallala in Texas. This GMA covers ap-

proximately 22,500 square miles, and encompasses seven groundwater conservation districts. These include Garza, High Plains, Llano Estacado, Mesa, Permian Basin, Sandy Land, and South Plains. The areas in GMA #2 not included in a district are Andrews County, Swisher County, Briscoe County, and Borden County; also parts of Deaf Smith, Hockley, Lamb and Howard counties. These areas have no groundwater management or regulation, and do not have a vote regarding joint planning issues. Only districts are involved in this process. In other GMAs, even less of the GMA is managed by districts. For example, about 14% of GMA #8 is covered by districts (see Figure 2).

As groundwater management has evolved recently, other issues have arisen which have caused controversy. Some of these issues include groundwater exportation, historical use permits, and sustainable management. Each of these issues includes a corresponding management scheme available for districts as prescribed by current law. The use of a cer-

tain management method varies by aquifer and water availability, as well as geographical or political boundaries.

Consider a case where several districts overlie an aquifer, and are within the same GMA. Each district's board chooses a management scheme based on the best

**Joint Planning...Continued on page 2**

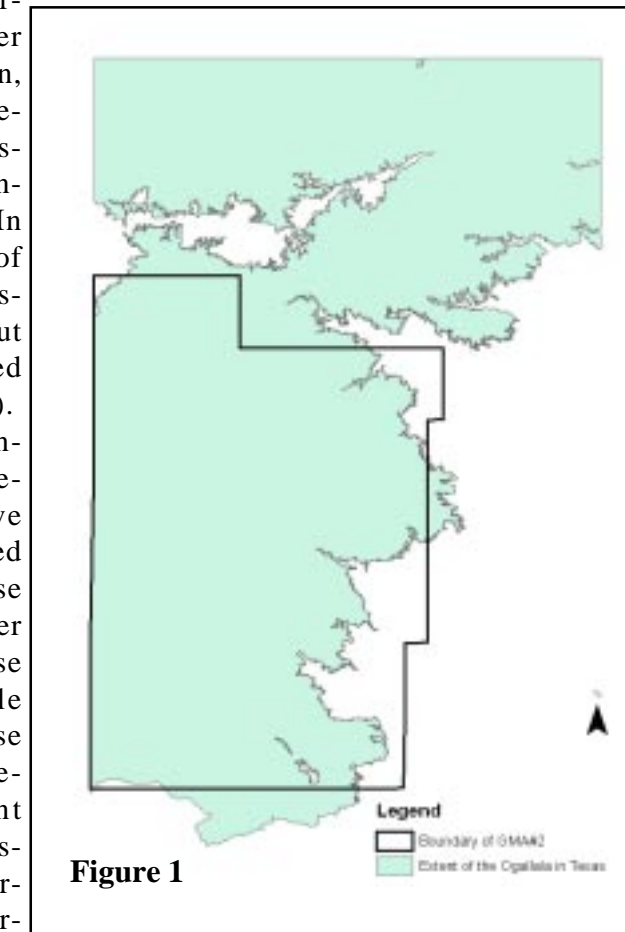


Figure 1

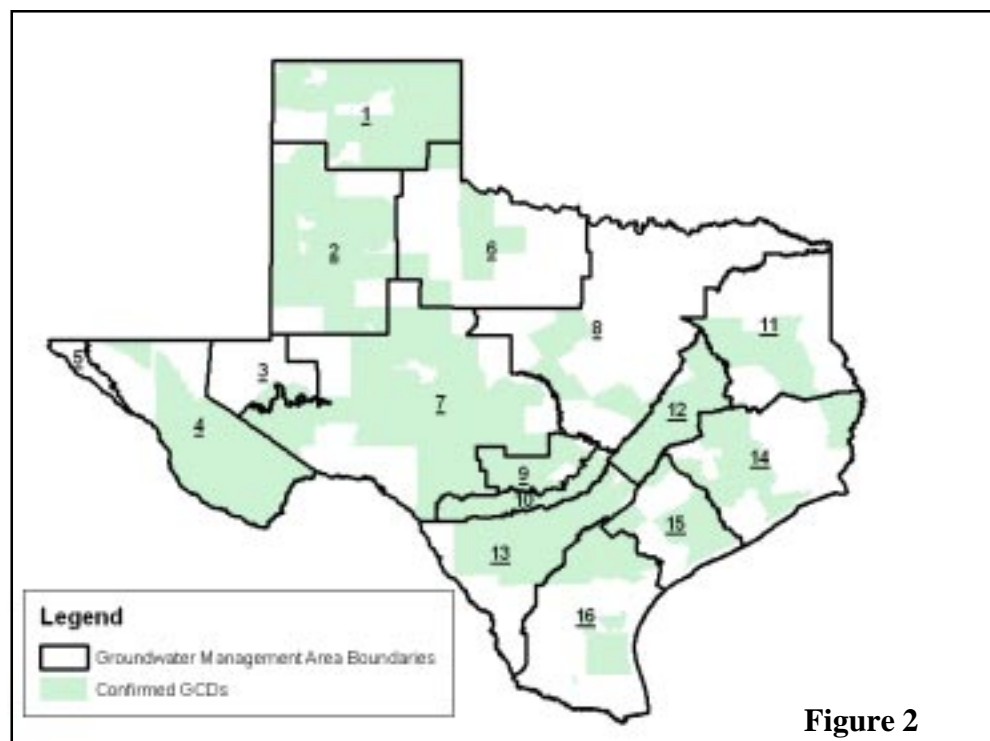


Figure 2

**Joint Planning...Continued from page 1**

available data, and the needs of water users. It is possible that each district will use the same management method, but it is also possible that the methods will vary. After all, the unique conditions for one district are not identical to the others. Thus, this reasoning is sound. However, the differences in management may require that water users in one district be allotted  $X$  amount of usage, whereas the other districts allow  $2X$ . This sort of example is one of many challenges that districts and Texans are facing.

To ensure coordinated and consistent management for an aquifer, the Texas Legislature has passed legislation requiring the districts within each GMA to conduct joint planning. This provision is now a requirement in Chapter 36, Texas Water Code.

During the process, each district is represented by the presiding officer, or the presiding officer's designee. This group must meet at least once a year, and conduct the meetings according to the Open Meetings Act. The joint planning

group must review each district's management plan and goals, and must also establish a desired future condition for the aquifer(s) within the GMA. The initial desired future condition must be adopted no later than September 1, 2010. This condition must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the district representatives present at the meeting. Different future conditions may be adopted for certain subdivisions of the aquifer(s).

Also, the joint planning group must consider groundwater availability models (GAMs) and other data when establishing the desired future condition for the aquifer(s). Once the desired future conditions are approved, then the managed available groundwater is determined. Managed available groundwater is the amount of water that may be permitted by a district, based on the desired future condition of the aquifer(s). For example, assume a joint planning group approves a future condition in five years of maintaining water levels with no decline (i.e. usage may not exceed recharge). Using GAMs and

other available data, it is determined that aquifer recharge is 50,000 ac-ft/yr. For the five year period, the total expected recharge is 250,000 ac-ft. Seemingly, then, the amount of managed available groundwater for this scenario is 250,000 ac-ft during the five year period. Districts must then make certain that their rules and management plans are sufficient for achieving this future condition.

Many questions still exist regarding the implementation of this process. How can a future condition be achieved when there are no districts? After all, without districts, there is no management. Secondly, what time period will the planning groups decide upon when looking at the future? If subdivisions of an aquifer are identified, will the planning group concur that the boundaries are acceptable? Where the GAMs did not meet certain expectations, will there be sufficient data for determining the managed available groundwater?

The South Plains UWCD has created a new page on our website titled "Joint Planning" where additional details will be posted when the process begins. Look for further updates in our newsletter during the coming months. 🇹🇽

*The Board of Directors and Staff of the South Plains UWCD wish you a happy and safe holiday season. May the Lord bring you adequate rain, abundant crops, and peace in the coming year.*

# LANDSCAPE WATER CONSERVATION

According to a recent publication from the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI), Texans use about twenty gallons of water per square foot of urban landscape annually. This amounts to 32 inches/year of landscape irrigation water, which is a higher application than is often applied to agricultural crops within the District. For example, agricultural irrigators have applied (on average) about 16.5 inches of irrigation water to peanuts this year. Peanuts are one of the highest consumptive water use crops in the District. So, the average urban landscape water ap-

plication is nearly twice the amount applied to a high water use crop in the South Plains UWCD.

How can you save water, yet still maintain a healthy and attractive landscape? The following list provides some ideas:

1. Use drought tolerant turf grass, rather than fescue. Bermuda or buffalo grass requires less water.
2. Don't irrigate your landscape during the heat of the day, or when windy conditions create high evaporative losses.
3. Use mulch in flower beds and where other ornamentals are planted. This conserves soil moisture.
4. Install a timer on your sprinkler system or faucets. This pre-

vents the over watering that frequently occurs when you start your water, then forget to turn it off.

5. Don't pour glasses of water down the drain. When clearing the house of dishes containing water, collect the water and apply it to potted plants.

6. Use water-wise plants and shrubs. Choose those that are drought tolerant.

7. Measure your turf irrigation application using empty cans or a lawn rain gage. Check the District's web site for recommended lawn watering amounts.

If you need additional information regarding these water saving tips, contact the District office. 🇹🇽

## A PIECE OF HISTORY

The District recently received a number of documents from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) archives. Among these files are original correspondence from people who were investigating the supply, quality, and availability of groundwater here. We have included a copy of a letter that was found in these archives dated 1956. Notice that the letter is addressed to the Board of Water Engineers, which at the time was one of the few sources for groundwater information.

*First National Bank of Dallas*  
 March 28, 1956  
 Board of Water Engineers  
 302 West 15th  
 Austin, Texas  
 Gentlemen:  
 We have had occasion in the past and plan to continue making loans in Terry County and Deaf Smith County area. To a great extent these are predicated upon a continuing supply of relatively cheap irrigation water.  
 The writer has made several attempts to get some authoritative opinion as to the depletion, adequacy and a reasonable estimate of the projected useful supply. Would you be kind enough to tell me how this information can be obtained, the cost of the information and whether it should be obtained by letter or would it be advisable for me to come to your office.  
 Your courtesy in this matter would be appreciated.

Now, nearly 50 years later, many of the same questions are still asked. However, we now have a much larger knowledge base due to years of data collection. We also have a greater understanding of the aquifers within the District. Because local landowners understood the importance of groundwater, they confirmed the creation of this District 13 years ago. Since then, the South Plains UWCD is responsible for groundwater management, data acquisition, analysis, and public education. As a result, inquiries such as this from 1956 are addressed locally, at the District.

Today, our economy still depends on a continuing supply of irrigation water. The District is committed to the conservation and preservation of our groundwater resources. 🇹🇽