


## Reminder for Irrigated Landowners

An IRS engineer will visit the District in December and review information for the cost-in-water depletion program. This program allows irrigated landowners to receive a tax benefit due to declining groundwater levels. This program is specific to the High Plains landowners using groundwater from the Ogallala formation.

Each year, the IRS must review and approve land sales data that establishes the cost of water. Also, the District's water table decline map must meet IRS guidelines.

Since 1999, approximately 700 landowner requests have been fulfilled. Eligible properties are those which have been acquired since 1979. Those who have previously requested this information will soon receive a reorder form.

If you would like additional information or have any questions, call or come by the office. 

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

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# GROUNDWATER SOUTH PLAINS NEWS

SOUTH PLAINS UNDERGROUND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
PO BOX 986  
BROWNFIELD, TX 79316

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Merry  
Christmas*

### In this issue

- Daily Data Available
- Education is in the Air
- Local School Conserves Water
- 2011 Calendars Nearing Completion

### Calendar of Events

November 25-26 Thanksgiving  
Holiday  
Office Closed  
December 7 Board Meeting  
8:30 am  
District Office  
December 23-24 Christmas  
Holiday  
Office Closed

### Looking Ahead to 2011

January 3 New Year's  
Holiday  
Office Closed  
January 11 Board Meeting  
8:30 am  
District Office  
February 1 Board Meeting  
8:30 am  
District Office  
February 10 South Plains Ag  
Conference and  
Trade Show

BULK RATE  
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# GROUNDWATER SOUTH PLAINS NEWS

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## LOCAL SCHOOL CONSERVES WATER

During the past few months, Brownfield ISD has installed a rainwater harvesting system at its new campus, the Bright Beginnings Academic Center. Locally, people recognize this facility as the former Court Residential Treatment Center, or CRTC. The newly installed system has a storage capacity of nearly 34,000 gallons of rainwater for landscape irrigation use.

Earlier this year, the school acquired the building and property. Soon after, the school administration began planning for the facility transition to an early childhood learning center, as well as considering the landscape and playground irrigation needs. It was at this time that the school and the District began discussing the possibility of using rainwater harvesting as a means of supplying landscape irrigation water. After some preliminary discussion, the school agreed that this project was worth pursuing.

Soon afterward, State Rainwater Harvesting Extension Specialist, Billy Kniffen, visited the site and discussed the concept with school administrators. After this discussion, Mr. Kniffen submitted a proposed rainwater harvesting system design and landscape for the facility. Interestingly, the roof area of the building is large enough that a 1" rain event generates almost 9,000 gallons of runoff. In the final system design, the storage is comprised of (6) 3,000 gallon poly tanks, as well as (1) 16,000 gallon tank erected on site.

A successful rainwater harvesting project is one that incorporates water wise plants and landscaping with the stored runoff water. In other words, there is some balance with the amount of water stored, and the water needs of the landscape. Accordingly, the new landscape here includes drought-tolerant plants, minimal turf, drip lines, and lots of mulch. The absence of turf right next to the building means that walkways and traffic areas are not irrigated with sprinklers. This eliminates the inconveniences associated with irrigation runoff that are both wasteful, and in the winter, dangerous. School administrators are pleased with the success of the project, and have raised the awareness in our community concerning the benefits of this practice.

If you are interested in rainwater harvesting, the District has many printed resources available for your use. Or, you may be interested to look at the system installed by Brownfield ISD, located at the intersection of US 385 and Texas Highway 137. 





# It's Fall...Education is in the Air

By: Crystal Hogue, Education Coordinator

**O**ur (once small) education program has grown dramatically within the last year. We have participated in programs and events that have helped promote our message of "water conservation" to a great number of students. I have had several parents, throughout the year, mention to me that their child has come home and talked to their family about water conservation. That, to me, is what this program is all about. Here is a brief summary of three of our recent programs...

## Kids, Kows & More

This was my third year to be a guest speaker at the Terry County Kids, Kows & More program. The event is hosted by the Terry County AgriLife Extension and the Southwest Dairy Farmers. This program shows students how important agriculture is to our area. Over two hundred fourth graders from Brownfield ISD, Wellman-Union ISD and Meadow ISD participated this year.

I spoke to the students about rainwater harvesting. After I explained the rain harvesting process, the students and I discussed ways that rainwater could be used at their homes and at their schools. I ended my presentation with a rainwater harvesting game. The students raced against one another to see who could harvest the most rain into their rain barrel.



Other presenters and topics for this year's event included: Southwest Dairy Farmers (mobile dairy exhibit), Texas AgriLife Extension (cheese-making), Texas Farm Bureau (cattle), and NRCS (forestry). Students were also given a tour of the Meadow Coop Gin. Dan Jackson, Gin Manager, guided each class through the facility and explained how cotton is processed.

## Playa Lake Festivals

Playa Lake Festivals are a new program for our elementary schools this year. We believe this program is an important part of our water conservation and education message, because playa lakes are recharge features for our underground water supply.

The festivals involve fifth graders in Brownfield, Meadow, and Wellman-Union, as well as other surrounding schools. The SPUWCD, Terry County SWCD, and AgriLife Extension offices helped sponsor the events at Meadow ISD & Oak Grove Elementary in Brownfield.

During the two-day playa festival, experts presented information about water, ecosystems, and plant and animal life. Importantly, all of the fifth grade Science TEKS were addressed during these presentations. Following the classroom presentations, students traveled to the field where they could touch, see, and experience playa features firsthand. The students collected plants and wildlife samples and will study them throughout the school year.

I received positive feedback from all of the schools concerning our efforts. The festivals are such a great



opportunity for our students to experience life outside of the classroom. I am already looking forward to the 2011 playa festivals.

## High School Art Contest

On Thursday, April 27, 2011, the Texas Water Foundation will host Water Conservation Day at the Capitol. The event is held during the legislative session, so that members of the state legislature are exposed to the water conservation programs in our state. As policy makers consider important water conservation legislation, knowledge of existing water conservation programs is helpful.

This year, the SPUWCD is hosting an art contest for high school juniors and seniors. For this contest, the students are asked to create artwork that depicts an original water conservation message. Judges will then select the top two. The winners will display their artwork in the halls of the State Capitol and will also work as a page for a state representative during their two-day visit.

For more information on our education program, visit the website at [www.savingh2o.org](http://www.savingh2o.org). Stories and pictures are updated weekly on our blog at [www.savingh2o.blogspot.com](http://www.savingh2o.blogspot.com).

## Daily Data Available

**D**uring the past year, the District has installed some continuous monitoring equipment that collects rainfall data and water level data. The information obtained from this equipment should provide more comprehensive data and help us better understand the water balance within the District. Specifically, there are now nine continuous monitoring observation well sites, as well as ten continuous monitoring rain gages.

At the observation well sites, the equipment consists of a pressure transducer and data logger. These devices "capture" and then store a water level reading once daily. Periodically, this data is retrieved using a notebook computer. Afterward, it is uploaded to the District's web site at [www.spuwcd.org](http://www.spuwcd.org). Six of the sites are active irrigation wells, and three sites are non-pumping wells.

The rainfall monitoring sites consist of a tipping bucket gage and data logger. These particular rain gages measure rainfall at 0.01 inch increments. In particular, these gages differ from our older ones in that they are attached to a logging device that allows us to review the intensity and duration of each rain event. For now, we are presenting this data as a daily total, which is also published to the web site at [www.spuwcd.org](http://www.spuwcd.org).

Both data sets can be accessed from the **Conservation** link on our home page.

## 2011 Calendars Nearing Completion

**Y**ear 2011 calendars are being printed at the District office. These include water conservation artwork from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Brownfield, Meadow and Wellman schools. The students' conservation messages are illustrated using original ideas that stemmed from water conservation education. This is the fourth year that the District has conducted this program. The calendars are available free of charge by contacting the District office.

