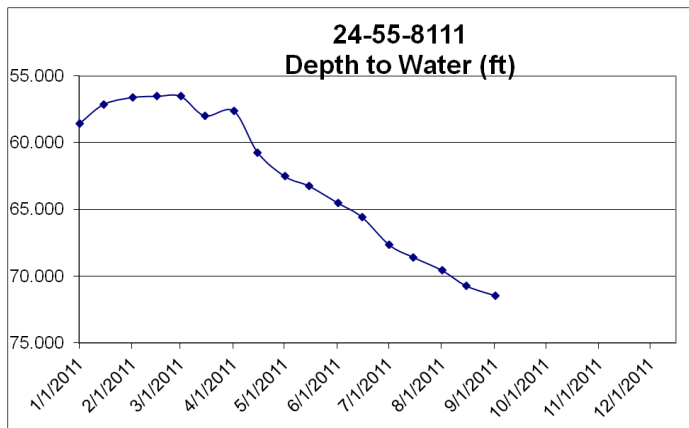


Be Informed...continued from page 1

Secondly, we present a hydrograph of water level changes from one of the District's observation wells. This site is equipped with continuous monitoring equipment which records water levels daily. Notice that this site has almost 15 feet of drawdown this year. Hopefully this data helps you understand the consequences of heavy pumping during a drought. This data is updated approximately every 3 months, and is available on the District's web site.

Third, we have included an article on Page 4 which concerns the most recent report from the Texas Drought Preparedness Council. We encourage you to read these highlights carefully, since water supply issues are specifically listed. Both surface water and groundwater sources are being depleted, and remain at risk during this drought.



Please consider all of this information and do your part to help conserve water, our shared resource. In light of the current drought forecast, we will face more challenges for quite some time. 💧

2011 Irrigation Estimates Complete

The District recently completed its analysis of the estimated irrigation usage for the 2011 crop. These estimates are shown in Table 1.

The numbers are developed from our network of producer cooperators, using approximately 70 irrigation system meters. Obviously, the numbers are much higher than average for this year, due to total absence of rainfall during the growing season. The averages shown, where applicable, are based on the past ten years of data from this program. The third column in the table shows the percent increase in the 2011 values compared to the average. Since the irrigation usage numbers are so much higher than average, there is a greater likelihood that water level declines will exceed the average of -1.15 ft, which is the District's adopted DFC. Water level measurements from our continuously monitored wells support this belief. 💧

Table 1

	2011	Average	% Difference
Cotton	17.89"	10.06"	78%
Peanuts	24.21"	14.65"	65%
Wheat	7.54"	7.26"	4%
Alfalfa	36.75"	n/a	n/a
Watermelons	19.24"	15.46"	24%

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. 💧

Calendar of Events

• Nov. 24-25—Thanksgiving Holiday Office closed	• Jan. 2, 2012—New Year's Holiday Office Closed
• Dec. 6—Board Meeting District Office	• January 10—Board Meeting District Office
• Dec. 26-27—Christmas Holiday Office Closed	• Feb. 14—South Plains Ag Conference and Trade Show

GROUNDWATER NEWS

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

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- In this issue**
- Education Update
 - How Much Do You Know?
 - Texas Drought Committee Report
 - Reminder for Irrigated Landowners
 - 2011 Irrigation Estimates Complete
 - 2012 Calendars Nearing Completion

GROUNDWATER NEWS

November 2011
Volume 19, Number 1

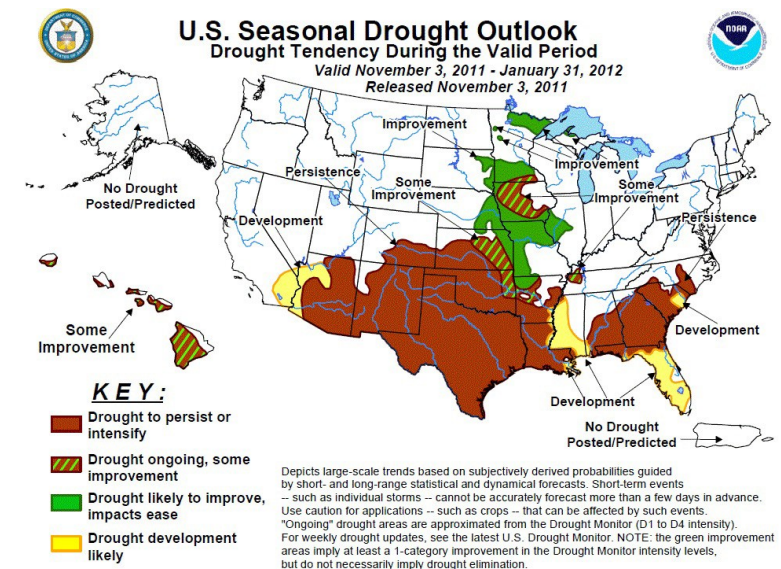
www.spuwcd.org 806-637-7467
PO Box 986, Brownfield, TX 79316

Be Informed... How Much Do You Really Know?

At the time of this writing, the official precipitation total for Brownfield is 3.49 inches, according to National Weather Service records. That means that the year-to-date total is 13.27 inches below the long-term average.

Everyone is aware of the dry conditions we are experiencing. However, there may not be as much awareness of the shortage in water supplies the whole state is facing. For this reason, we provide specific information in this edition of the *News* so that you may be *really* informed, and better understand the magnitude of potential water supply shortages.

First, let us consider the available information concerning the current and forecasted weather patterns. Pictured below is the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released November 3, 2011. Notice that our area (and all of Texas) is forecast to experience drought through January 31, 2012. In fact, we see the drought is likely to persist or intensify during the forecast period.



The next outlook will be issued November 17, 2011. Furthermore, the Office of the Texas State Climatologist recently issued a weather report stating, "This is looking more and more like a

multi-year drought." The state climatologist also says, "I'm concerned because the same ocean conditions that seem to have contributed to the 1950s drought have been back for several years now and may last another 5 to 15 years."

Be Informed...continued on page 5

Education Update

Kids & Kows & More

Area fourth and fifth graders recently attended the 8th annual Kids & Kows & More program, sponsored by the Terry County AgriLife Extension and the Southwest Dairy Farmers. Over two hundred fourth graders from Brownfield, Meadow and Wellman-Union schools participated this year.



The Kids & Kows program lets 4th graders experience the world of agriculture up close. The events are designed to help kids learn about some of the different types of agriculture in this area.

Rainwater Harvesting

The program offers great activities and presentations that teach children the importance of conservation and agriculture in their lives.

SPUWCD Education Coordinator, Crystal Hogue, spoke to the students on the topic of rainwater harvesting. Hogue explained the rain harvesting process. The students and Hogue discussed ways that rainwater can be used at their homes and at their schools. Her presentation ended with a rainwater harvesting game. The students raced against one another to see who could harvest the most rain with their rain barrel.

The last presentation of the day occurred at Birdsong Peanut Company, where the students toured the peanut shelling plant. Birdsong employees guided each class through the facility and explained how peanuts are processed.

Other presenters for this year's event included: Southwest Dairy Farmers, Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas Farm Bureau, USDA-NRCS, and the Meadow Coop Gin. ♠



Mobile Dairy



Entomology

Education...continued on Page 3

For more information on our education program, visit the cooperative website at www.savingh2o.org. Stories and pictures are updated weekly on our blog—www.savingh2o.blogspot.com

Education...continued from Page 2

Outdoor Classroom



Birds of the High Plains
Gail Barnes

were given classroom presentations. The following day, they applied those lessons during a field trip. All of the presentations addressed the importance of our natural resources, and the outdoor portion let the students touch, see and observe them first hand. The students collected plant and wildlife samples which they will study throughout the school year.

We showed the students important hydrologic features within the District. This lesson was illustrated at a stop southeast of Brownfield along Lost Draw. We taught the students the importance of seeps and springs found along draws and the reasons why springs disappear. We learned that many archeological artifacts are frequently discovered near these ancient water sources. We also taught the importance of water conservation, and shared several conservation practices. ♠

For the second year, area elementary schools attended our outdoor classroom events. Fifth graders from Brownfield, Dawson, Meadow, Plains, and Wellman-Union participated. The SPUWCD, Terry County NRCS and AgriLife Extension offices helped sponsor the programs.

At the two-day event, experts presented information about water, ecosystems and plant and animal life. On the first day, the students



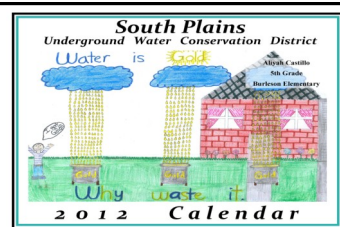
Draws and Groundwater
Jason Coleman



Salt Cedar/Beetle
Manuel DeLeon

2012 Calendars Nearing Completion

Year 2012 calendars are currently being printed at the District office. These include water conservation artwork from 4th and 5th 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 fifth year that the District has conducted this program. The calendars are available free of charge by contacting the District office. ♠



COMMITTEE REPORT IDENTIFIES WATER SHORTAGES

The Texas Drought Preparedness Council (TDPC) was authorized and established by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999. The TDPC's responsibilities include:

1. Assessment and public reporting of drought monitoring and water supply conditions.
2. Advising the governor on significant drought conditions.
3. Recommending specific provisions for a defined state response to drought-related disasters for inclusion in the State Emergency Management Plan and the State Water Plan.
4. Advising the regional water planning groups on drought-related issues in the regional plans.
5. Ensuring effective coordination among state, local and federal agencies in drought-response planning.
6. Reporting to the State Legislature, not later than January 15 of each odd-numbered year, regarding significant drought conditions in the state.

The most recent report from the TDPC, dated October 12, 2011, contains some alarming information. Some of the most notable items include:

- "Every region in Texas was officially experiencing drought conditions throughout September, whether it was in moderate, severe, extreme, or exceptional stages."
- The percentage of Texas with exceptional drought (D4) designation escalated from 81.08% to 85.75% in August.
- "According to the Climate Prediction Center, drought conditions are forecasted to persist or worsen through October, November and December."
- "The drought is worsening daily in most of Texas climate regions. No relief is in sight. The situation is desperate."
- 58 public water systems have restricted ALL outside watering.
- As of September 30, 2011, all 254 counties in Texas were classified as having extreme to high fire danger.

Also listed in the October report are reservoir conditions (% of capacity) as of September 29, 2011. Area reservoir figures were:

- O. C. Fisher—1%
- Greenbelt—19.02%
- Meredith—0%
- White River—17.15%
- Twin Buttes—8%
- Mackenzie—9.67%
- Alan Henry—81.15%

The TDPC was also notified that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) recently listed **23 public water systems** as high priority, since each has the potential of running out of water in the next 180 days. These systems are scattered throughout the state, stretching from Morton to Llano to Leander. So, as you can tell, there are very real dangers of water supplies being exhausted due to the drought.



Dust cloud rolls into Lubbock
October 17, 2011 (Google Images)

The full October Report is available online at www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/CouncilsCommittees/droughtCouncil/stateDroughtPrepCouncil.htm. ♠