

Fourth Quarter

2015



PINEYWOODS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Serving Angelina and Nacogdoches Counties

The Water

Newsletter

State News

The United States Court of Appeals for the sixth circuit granted a nationwide stay of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule on October 9th.

“Accordingly on due review of the relevant considerations in light of the briefs filed by petitioners, respondents, and intervenors, and in the exercise of our discretion, we grant petitioner’s motion for rule. The Clean Water Rule is hereby stayed, nationwide, pending further order of the court”, the opinion states. This expansion of EPA jurisdiction over waters in the US and Texas has been blocked for now. This is the action that many commissioner’s courts and agricultural groups in Texas passed resolutions opposing last year.

Texas is fortunate, even though we have our ongoing drought periods, to have a water plan to meet those drought challenges. Unlike California, who is now scrambling to develop a strategy to deal with their current drought. California is currently encouraging homeowners to put down artificial grass surfaces similar to football fields and has even determined that the water that falls from the sky is under their jurisdiction and they prevent homeowners from catching this runoff from their roof tops to use at home.

You may wonder, when you look at the earth from space, why we have a worldwide water shortage when 70% of the earth is covered by water and that does not count our groundwater reserves. The problem is that only 3% of the earth’s water is “potable”. Meaning safe to drink. When we start treating water, it gets expensive, and transporting water from areas of reserve to areas short of water is even more expensive. One more reason to conserve what we do have.

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At a Glance:

- Wells in PGCD Database 11/1/15
- *18 exempt wells and 3 non-exempt wells in progress
- *Total Exempt wells in database– 899
- *Total Non-exempt wells in database– 278
- *Total Production fee based wells– 199
- *Total District wells recorded– 2,434

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER'S DESK

We have gone from wet to dry to wet, all in one year in the district. Scientists call this summer a “flash” drought because it was short in duration. Droughts are challenging, and we constantly have to adjust to meet these challenges. Ongoing conservation should be a normal part of our routine.

The DFC (Desired Future Conditions) process by the Groundwater Conservation Districts in GMA-11 is progressing and should be ready to set proposed DFC's by early 2016 and begin the public hearings on the process in the spring. We will keep you informed as this process continues. These DFC's are set every five years and this is the second cycle of this evolving process.

The Pineywoods Groundwater Conservation District has participated in the following events and has ongoing planning for:

- Participated in the SFASU College Career Day for 330 plus high school seniors by presenting information on careers in water related fields

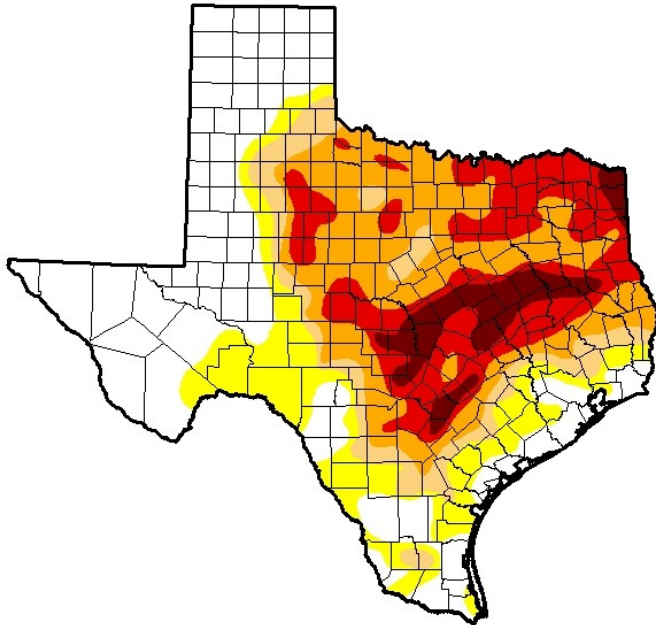
- Participated in the Angelina County Walk in Forest planned by the Texas Forest Service by presenting a program on water issues to 340 5th grade students in Angelina County

- Formed a Poultry Farm Water Use Planning Group to develop a program to best measure total farm use of groundwater. This information is important so we have some of the best information possible to measure how much water we are taking out of our aquifers, so we can better long term plan for how long our water will last.

- Another critical part to planning is the current plans we have to establish monitor wells for water static levels to more accurately measure the “drawdown” of our aquifers as we use water. Currently we use information from wells being pumped, and this creates fluctuations. We are working with our oil and gas companies to establish a series of “static” wells to measure.

**U.S. Drought Monitor
Texas**

October 20, 2015
(Released Thursday, Oct. 22, 2015)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	34.75	65.25	60.28	41.88	21.40	5.52
Last Week <i>10/13/2015</i>	36.47	63.53	47.03	31.88	13.89	1.42
3 Months Ago <i>7/21/2015</i>	95.82	4.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year <i>12/02/2014</i>	34.37	65.63	44.68	25.73	11.70	3.17
Start of Water Year <i>9/29/2015</i>	34.51	65.49	38.32	17.55	6.27	0.00
One Year Ago <i>10/21/2014</i>	29.97	70.03	48.56	27.50	11.53	2.88

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:

Brad Rippey
U.S. Department of Agriculture



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Winterize Your Water Use

Now is a good time to check those lawn sprinkler systems for damaged or improperly functioning rotor heads and emitters. Also, remember the “on” and “off” switches. Use them to water this winter only when needed. Check lawns and beds by digging a few inches deep every so often to check soil moisture levels and only apply water when soils are dry. Plants will use a lot less water when they are dormant, so demand will be down.

Oil and Gas Rig Supply Water Wells Closing

The PGCD board has adopted new rules concerning water wells used for rig supply needs during the drilling process. These wells should be plugged within 18 months of the exploration rig leaving the pad site. Also, the nearly 700 existing rig supply wells in the district have been declared “abandoned”, as many of these wells are 10 or more years old and not being used. Some are in bad shape and a threat to the groundwater quality and must be plugged. Landowners who are approached by the oil and gas companies about transferring ownership of these wells to the landowner, should contact the PGCD to find out all the liabilities and facts of accepting ownership of these water wells from the companies. What may seem to be a positive, might well be a liability to the landowner.



PINEYWOODS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

P.O. Box 635187
Nacogdoches, Texas 75963-5187

Phone: (936) 568-9292
Fax: (936) 568-9296
Email: pgcd@sbcglobal.net
202 E. Pilar, Room 132

Serving Angelina and Nacogdoches Counties

The Water Newsletter is published quarterly as needed by the Pineywoods Groundwater Conservation District to help the public and the professional stay current on state and local issues dealing with water conservation, rules and groundwater. The District Office is located in room 132 in Nacogdoches City Hall at 202 E. Pilar Street, Nacogdoches, TX.



Would you like to receive the newsletter in digital form? Let us know and send us your email address.

Board of Directors

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Jackie Risner - General Manager

Cheryl Benke—Administrative Assistant

Calendar of Events

2015

Regularly Scheduled Meetings of the Pineywoods Groundwater Conservation District, 1:30 PM

@ Kurth Lake Lodge

December 10, 2015

[Meeting dates subject to change, please check with the office for any changes. All meetings are posted in the courthouses of each county in the District, in the District office and on our website.]

THE DISTRICT OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS

2015

January 1-- New Years Day

January 19- MLK Day

April 3- Good Friday

May 25- Memorial Day

July 3- Independence Day

September 7- Labor Day

November 11- Veteran's Day

November 26-27- Thanksgiving

December 24 & 25- Christmas