



DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL

RICK PERRY
Governor

5805 N. Lamar Blvd.
P.O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0220
Phone: (512) 424-2138
Fax: (512) 424-2444

NIM KIDD
Council Chairperson

October 12, 2011

TO: The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor, State of Texas
The Honorable David Dewhurst, Lieutenant Governor, State of Texas
Ms. Esperanza Andrade, Secretary of State, State of Texas
The Honorable Steve Ogden, President Pro-Tempore of the Senate, State of Texas
The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House, State of Texas
The Honorable Steve Ogden, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Troy Fraser, Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Tommy Williams, Chairman, Senate Committee on Transportation & Homeland Security, State of Texas
The Honorable Jim Pitts, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Allan Ritter, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Rick Hardcastle, Chairman, House Agriculture & Livestock Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Pete Gallego, Chairman, House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, State of Texas
Mr. Ray Sullivan, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Mr. Steven McCraw, Texas Governor's Office of Homeland Security

FROM: Assistant Director Nim Kidd, Texas Division of Emergency Management

SUBJECT: Statewide Drought Situation Report

Nim Kidd, Chairman
Texas Division of Emergency Mgmt

Lance Williams, Member
Texas Department of Agriculture

Gilbert Jordan, Member
Texas Department of Transportation

Chris Loft, Member
Texas Commission on Environmental
Quality

Michael Dunivan, Member
Texas Forest Service

Brenner Brown, Member
Texas Water Development Board

Dr. Travis Miller, Member
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

David A. Van Dresar, Member
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts

Tad Curtis, Member
Office of the Governor
Economic Development & Tourism

Gus Garcia, Member
Texas Department of Rural Affairs

Richard Egg, Member
State Soil & Water Conservation Board

Cindy Loeffler, Member
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Suzanne Burnham, Member
Texas Department of State Health Services

Dr. John W. Nielsen-Gammon, Member
Office of the State Climatologist

Marisa Callan
Texas Department of Housing and
Community Affairs

1. NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

November 10, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. DPS Headquarters

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

September 2011 was yet another month that contributed to the ongoing, already devastating drought in Texas as across the state, temperature averages were above normal and the dryness persisted. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM), the drought intensified in every category. 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 at least extreme drought (D3) conditions sharpened from 95.04% to 96.65% and the percentage of Texas with exceptional drought (D4) designation escalated from 81.08% to 85.75% during August. There was not a single climate zone that had improved drought conditions during the month of September. Every region was affected, and because of the significant increase in the D4 designation, the widespread nature and culminating effects of the drought became more apparent than ever before.

While Texas did receive more rainfall in September than in August, the precipitation had little effect on the statewide drought conditions. San Antonio was just under its percent average of normal precipitation, and Waco was a little bit over its percent average, but both areas remained in D4 drought. The rain carried a large hit-or-miss factor during the month because numerous areas received measurable precipitation, while others did not. Take this situation for example: along the I-35 corridor, San Antonio and Waco received significant rainfall, yet Austin received only 0.18 inches. Because of the variability, accurate estimations for the effects of the rain could not be made for the climatic regions. Water supply levels continued to decrease and values were extremely low in the High Plains and Trans Pecos regions, according to the Texas Water Development Board. In addition, wildfires continued to rampage across the state and caused severe damage in the Bastrop area. The drought and warm temperatures were a critical factor in the strengthening of wildfire risks.

According to the Climate Prediction Center, drought conditions are forecasted to persist or worsen through October, November, and December. Temperatures are expected to be above normal for the entire state and the forecast for rainfall looks fairly grim. Most of Texas is predicted to observe below normal values for precipitation over the next three months. However, experts believe that frontal systems will begin to bring rain into the state as winter closes in. In addition, there is still the small chance of a tropical system making its way toward the Gulf Coast.

3. OVERALL STATEWIDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

The drought is worsening daily in most of Texas climate regions. No relief is in sight. The situation is desperate.

Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI):

Based on this index, Texas was in Extreme Dry, the highest drought level in this category, except the small tip in south (Lower Valley), which was in Severe Dry.

Crop Moisture Index (CMI)

Significant relief was seen on this index in September. Now only one region was in Extreme Dry, five less than a month ago, and three regions in Severe Dry, one less than a month ago. The rest were all in Excessively Dry or Abnormal Dry only. All Extreme and Severe Dry regions were in south and south central Texas.

Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

Based on this index, Texas was in Extreme Drought, the highest drought level in this category.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI)

This index was improved in some degree, too. Three regions had Exceptionally High fire risk, two less than a month ago, five regions had Extremely High fire risk, one region in Very High and another in High fire risk.

Stream Flow Index (SFI)

Streams were drier than a month ago: four regions were in Exceptionally low flow, three more than August, other three regions in Extremely low flow. The rest were in Severe or Abnormal lows.

4. WATER UTILITY STATUS

Over the past month, 75 additional water systems have asked their customers to restrict water use by following outdoor water use restrictions. Overall there are 931 public water systems that are asking their customers to restrict water use, compared to 856 a month ago. Of these systems, 627 are asking customers to follow a mandatory watering schedule and 304 are asking customers to follow a voluntary watering schedule. There are 58 public water systems that have restricted all outside watering, compared to 36 a month ago. A total of 810 water systems have reported to the TCEQ regarding their status using the online form on the TCEQ public website.

Seasonal forecasts continue to predict the drought to persist or intensify in many areas of the state. Increasing demands and the lack of consistent rainfall are resulting in more water systems implementing the various response stages of their Drought Contingency Plans.

5. WATER RIGHTS – STATEWIDE

New temporary water use permit applications are being reviewed on a site-specific basis and issued if there is sufficient surplus water at the requested source. The number of applications for new water use permits and amendments to existing permits was normal for the month. Owners of water rights in the Brazos River Basin with restrictions are reminded to call the “Hale Clause Hotline” on a weekly basis to determine if diversion of water is allowed.

On September 16, 2011 the executive director of the TCEQ provided additional guidance in response to questions that were received from a Junior municipal water right holder whose water rights have not been suspended in an area where there is a senior call.

The availability of unappropriated water for new water use permits continues to decrease in all river basins in the State, and the search for long-term, dependable alternate sources of water remains a high priority issue.

6. WATER RIGHTS – LOWER RIO GRANDE / RIO GRANDE WATERMASTER (RGWM)

Current Conditions: On September 24, 2011, the U.S. combined ownership at Amistad/Falcon stood at 70.27% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 2,383,487 acre-feet, IBWC data was unavailable a year ago at this time. Overall the system is holding 68.99% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 4,085,978 acre-feet with Amistad at 87.32% of conservation capacity, impounding 2,860,185 acre-feet and Falcon at 46.31% of

conservation capacity, impounding 1,225,794 acre-feet. Mexico has 67.28% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 1,702,491 acre-feet at Amistad/Falcon.

Allocations: As of printing of the August ownership report, the U.S. has allocated 31,228,738 acre-feet to Class A & B water rights, which include irrigation, mining and recreation. Additionally, we have an amount of approximately 549,066 acre feet for future allocations in 2011.

Storage & Loss Amistad vs. Falcon: The U.S. is currently storing approximately 1.594 million acre-feet at Amistad (86.6%); and approximately 789 thousand acre-feet (50.9%) of normal conservation capacity at Falcon. Evaporation and seepage losses at Amistad cycle, as of 09/24/11, are 274,129 acre-feet. For the same period, the U.S. has lost 295,316 acre-feet at Falcon.

Releases to meet demands: In 2011, (through 09/24/11), Mexico has released 220,346 acre-feet from Amistad and 1,064,684 acre-feet from Falcon Mexico needs. The U.S. has released 1,285,071 acre-feet from Falcon and 553,929 acre-feet from Amistad for U.S. needs. Combined with gains between Amistad and Falcon, U.S. inflows to Falcon have totaled 705,599 acre-feet. The U.S. demand in the lower Rio Grande has been met at a rate of 55% by direct Rio Grande inflows and Amistad releases this year.

Upper Rio Grande (New Mexico): Currently, Elephant Butte in New Mexico is currently storing 201,056 (9.94%) acre feet and Caballo Dam in New Mexico, downstream of Elephant Butte is storing 8,107 (3.57%) acre-feet. This water storage in part is used to meet water needs in the El Paso area.

Outlook: All accounts began 2011 with 100% of their usable balance. The National Weather Service continues to report that the combination of windy days, extremely dry weather and above normal temperatures continue to take a toll on deep South Texas. The drought conditions are mainly affecting agricultural interest and allowing for elevated fire risk danger.

7. SOUTH TEXAS WATERMASTER – GUADALUPE / LAVACA / SAN ANTONIO / NUECES REGION

Area Counties: Bee, Goliad, Victoria, Calhoun, Refugio, Aransas, San Patricio, Nueces, Kleberg, Jim Wells, Duval, Live Oak, Kenedy, Willacy, Brooks, Mc Mullen, Jim Hogg, La Salle, and Webb

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Very little rain occurred during the month of September in this area. Some scattered and isolated rains occurred throughout the area that provided some soil moisture to parched farmland and pastures. Some runoff from these rains provided an increase to area streams, but the stream flows quickly declined to below average for this time of the year. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that all counties in this area are currently experiencing “Exceptional Drought” conditions, except part of Jim Hogg and Willacy, which are experiencing “Extreme Drought” conditions at this time. Most surface water diversions in this area continue to be for municipal and industrial use with little irrigation use being noted.

Approximate Stream flow Conditions:

Site	September Beginning flows CFS	September Ending Flows CFS	September Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River near Victoria	158.00	198.00	1770.00
San Antonio River near Goliad	74.00	93.00	1000.00
San Antonio River at McFaddin below Goliad	76.00	143.00	1200.00
Guadalupe River near Tivoli	286.00	317.00	1650.00
Mission River near Refugio	0.22	0.27	292.00
Nueces River at Calallen Dam	0.00	0.00	1700.00
Aransas River near Skidmore	2.20	3.00	122.00

Stream flows of the Guadalupe River continue to flow over the “saltwater barrier” near Tivoli, Texas.

Corpus Christi Reservoir System: The Corpus Christi Reservoir System received little inflows for the month of September. The level of the reservoir system has decreased and was at 58.4% of capacity at the end of the month, impounding 555,957 acre-feet compared to 89.0% of capacity, impounding 848,213 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Choke Canyon was at 64.1% of capacity, impounding 445,964 acre-feet compared to 85.8% of capacity, impounding 596,231 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Lake Corpus Christi was at 42.8% of capacity, impounding 109,993 acre-feet compared to 97.9% of capacity, impounding 251,982 acre-feet at this time last year. The City of Corpus Christi continues to divert much of their monthly water supply needs from Lake Texana.

Drought Restrictions: The City of Victoria has reached their water right restriction. During this month, the City of Victoria is being allowed to exchange groundwater for water diverted from the Guadalupe River. Several other water rights on the Guadalupe River have also met their restriction, but they are not actively diverting. Several water rights on the San Antonio River have also met their restrictions, but they are not actively diverting.

Area Counties: Atascosa, Dimmit, Karnes, Gonzales, LaSalle, Wilson, McMullen, Dewitt, Guadalupe, Lavaca, Fayette, Colorado, Wharton, Jackson, and Zavala

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The southernmost portions of this area received some rainfall in isolated areas. Some areas received up to 4 inches, but the vast majority of the area received less than .75 inches. The eastern portions of the area, including the Lavaca area, received 1 to 5 inches in spots but most of the area received very little rain. There are no active crops in the area, although some farmers are beginning to plant winter Oats and Rye. Irrigation activity has decreased substantially due to lack of availability of water. Lake Texana is at 48% of capacity.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, this area is experiencing “Exceptional Drought” conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: Many stream flows in this area are at all time lows.

Site	September Beginning flows CFS	September Ending flows CFS	September Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
San Antonio River near Falls City	51.00	55.00	529.00
Cibolo Creek near Falls City	14.00	16.00	165.00
Guadalupe River near Gonzales	147.00	205.00	2700.00
The Lavaca River at Edna	0.93	1.00	379.00
Navidad River near Hallettsville	0.00	0.70	137.00
Atascosa River near Whitsett	0.30	0.61	242.00
Frio River near Tilden	0.00	0.00	243.00
Nueces River near Tilden	0.00	0.00	768.00

Drought Restrictions: Many Water Rights in this area have met the flow restriction stated on the permit. All Temporary Water Rights have been suspended.

Area Counties: Bastrop, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Fayette, Guadalupe, and Hays

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Approximately 2.90 inches of rainfall was measured in the San Antonio Regional Area for the month of September. The U.S. Drought Monitor dated September 27, 2011 indicates the San Antonio Regional Area is experiencing “Exceptional Drought” conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: The flows in the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Blanco Rivers have continued to decrease due to the overall lack of rainfall. The small creeks and perennial creeks have continued to remain dry. Irrigation use has remained constant and industrial use remains constant.

Site	September Beginning flows CFS	September Ending flows CFS	September Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
<i>Guadalupe River at Spring Ranch</i>	0.00	0.00	301.00
<i>San Marcos River at Luling</i>	70.00	79.00	274.00
Blanco River at Wimberley	8.60	23.00	90.00

As of September 30, 2011, Canyon Lake Reservoir was at 900.18 feet elevation and 82.02% of capacity. Lake Medina Reservoir was at 1019.85 feet elevation and 27.9% of capacity. San Marcos Springs were flowing at 91 CFS. The historical monthly average for the San Marcos Springs in September is 183 CFS. Comal Springs were flowing at 174 CFS. The historical monthly average for the Comal Springs in September is 284 CFS. The J-17 Bexar reading was at 644.1 on September 30.

Drought Restrictions: Some water rights restrictions have been met. At this time temporary permits have been suspended in several counties.

Area Counties: Bandera, Blanco, Kendall and Kerr

Rainfall and Area Conditions: This area received 1.50 to 2.5 inches of rainfall for the month of September. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is currently experiencing “Exceptional Drought” conditions. The Crop Moisture Index indicates this area of the hill country is classified as “Excessively to Severely Dry”. Most of the surface water diversions in this area are for municipal and industrial uses with a few surface water permit holders irrigating hay and sod fields.

Site	September Beginning flows CFS	September Ending flows CFS	September Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
Guadalupe River at Kerrville	10.00	13.00	110.00
Guadalupe River at Comfort	7.80	15.00	158.00
Medina River at Bandera	0.00	0.00	92.00

All the major streams and their tributaries are dry or below their historical averages.

Drought Restrictions: Currently Water Right Permits from 1950 to present are still suspended, as well as all temporary water permits above Canyon Lake and Lake Medina. The City of Kerrville’s surface water diversions from the Guadalupe River are currently at 250,000 gallons per day.

Area Counties: Edwards, Real, Kinney, Uvalde, Zavala, Dimmit, Medina, and Frio

Rainfall and Area Conditions: This area received 0.50 to 3.00 inches of rainfall for the month of September. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is experiencing “Exceptional Drought” conditions at this time. There have been very few surface water diversions in this area due to little or no stream flows. Crops being irrigated in the area are wheat, cabbage, onions, hay grazer and pecans. Soil conditions are classified as “Excessively to Severely Dry”.

Stream flow Conditions: Most stream flow readings in this area are at or near historical lows at this time.

Site	September Starting flows CFS	September Ending flows CFS	September Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
Nueces River at Laguna	9.50	11.00	231.00
Nueces River near Brackettville	0.00	0.00	61.00
Nueces River below Uvalde	0.00	0.00	202.00
Frio River at Concan	0.00	11.00	135.00
Sabinal River at Sabinal	0.00	0.00	52.00
Leona River near Uvalde	0.00	0.00	30.00

Drought Restrictions: All Water Rights that are active and not met any flow restrictions have been restricted to pumping schedules.

Area Counties: Sterling, Tom Green, Irion, Concho, Coke, Glasscock, Runnels, Reagan, Schleicher.

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The Concho River Valley received 0 to 1 inch of rainfall for the month of September. The State Drought Monitor Index indicates the Concho Valley as having “Extreme” to “Exceptional” conditions. The Texas Crop Moisture Index indicates the area as having “Severely Dry” soil conditions. There are no major crops in this area at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: Area reservoirs are showing a decrease in the amount of storage from the previous month’s amounts. O.C. Fisher is at 1% of capacity, impounding 1,558 acre-feet. Twin Buttes Lake is at 8% of capacity, impounding 15,570 acre-feet.

Site	September Beginning Flows CFS	September Ending Flows CFS	September Historical Mean Flows
<i>Concho Watermaster</i>			
Spring Creek above Twin Buttes Reservoir	0.00	0.00	9.40
Concho River at San Angelo and Bell St.	2.90	3.60	225.00
South Concho at Christoval	3.80	6.90	59.00

Drought Restrictions: Currently there are restrictions and/or curtailment of diversions based on priority dates in the Concho Valley. All requests for diversion must be approved prior to diversion.

8. UPPER COLORADO (Concho River watershed not included)

The upper Colorado River area received less than normal precipitation during September 2011. The National Weather Service in San Angelo reported monthly precipitation of 0.43 inches. The reported year-to-date annual total is 5.01 inches, which is 11.52 inches below normal. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, area drought conditions in Reagan, Tom Green, and Concho counties are extreme to exceptional. Coke, Sterling, Irion, Crockett, Sutton, Schleicher, Kimble, Menard, Mason, and McCulloch counties have exceptional drought conditions. USGS gauges indicated no flow in the Colorado River near Gail, TX down to Ballinger, TX, except for a trace of flow (0.05 ft³/s) at Colorado City, TX. USGS gauges indicated less than the long term median flow in the San Saba River in Menard, TX, no flow near Brady, TX, and less than the long term median flow in San Saba, TX. The North Llano River above Junction had no flow. The Llano River below Junction, TX to the Llano River below Mason, TX had less flow than the long-term median. The pool levels of EV Spence Reservoir and OH Ivie Reservoir have decreased from August levels. The pool levels are < 1% and 20.5% of capacity, respectively.

9. TEXAS PANHANDLE AND SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

Amarillo Area:

	<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Ending</u>
Greenbelt Lake:	47.06 ft.	46.22 ft.
Lake Mackenzie:	65.58 ft.	64.83 ft.
Lake Meredith:	31.63 ft.	30.95 ft.

Reporting Station: National Weather Service-Amarillo 09.28.11

	Precipitation (in.)	Average(in.)	Departure(in.)
September	0.92	1.80	-0.88
2011 Year-to-date	3.61	17.07	-13.46

Reservoir Status as of 09.29.11

Reservoir (Basin)	Conservation Pool (elevation)	Current (elevation)	Percent of Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Greenbelt (Red)	2664.00	2626.20	19.02	-0.93
Mackenzie (Red)	3100.00	3014.82	9.67	-0.34
Meredith (Canadian)	2936.50	2843.94	0.00	0.00

Lubbock Area:

Reporting Station: Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport (09.29.11)

	Precipitation (in.)	Average(in.)	Departure(in.)
September	1.25	2.44	-1.19
2011 Year-to-date	2.74	15.51	-12.77

Reservoir report: (Status as of 09.30.11)

Reservoir Basin (Brazos)	Conservation Pool (elevation)	Current (elevation)	% of Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Alan Henry	2220.00	2212.96	81.25	-1.50
White River	2372.20	2349.55	17.15	-1.86

10. WILDLIFE CONCERNS

No information was received by the time of this report.

11. AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Much of the state found some relief from the oppressive heat that characterized the summer of 2011. There were beneficial rains in most regions of the state, and many producers are planting winter crops and forages on the moisture. Most of the Texas wheat crop is planted in the time period from early-September to mid-November, with producers seeking grazing from the small grain pastures planting in the early part of that window and those targeting grain production planting in the latter half. The early window has closed and the opportunity for high levels of forage production on our small grain pastures, which are so desperately

needed by our livestock producers is past, particularly in the cooler climates of the northern High Plains with only a few acres planted due to dry soils and continued dry weather. The opportunity for hay production to feed Texas livestock through the winter is also past, as cooler temperatures and shorter days have put an end to that opportunity. In the central and southern Texas, some winter grasses and forbs may germinate with the recent rainfall, providing some winter grazing. Those livestock producers who have not sold out continue to buy and import hay from out of state, paying very high prices due to scarcity and freight costs. Livestock sale barns are still very active as ranchers continue to try to cut losses by culling and liquidating herds.

Cotton harvest is beginning on the Rolling Plains and High Plains, with farmers apply defoliant and harvesting early fields. Harvest activity is running about a month early due to excessive heat units and drought stress. The entire dryland crop has been lost and the irrigated crop will be much less than normal. This will result in very short runs by gins, as many are expecting less than half of their normal business.

The following are excerpts from reports of Texas AgriLife Extension regional reporters for the week ending on October 8:

Central: Temperatures cooled, but trees and vegetation remained stressed from the drought. Many counties received rain, from 0.6 inch to 3.25 inches, which helped get small grains already planted up and provided enough moisture to finish planting.

Coastal Bend: Rain over the weekend provided much-needed topsoil moisture, but much more was needed to provide adequate deep-soil moisture. Some producers were plowing fields as weeds and volunteer seedlings begin to emerge. Hay was still expensive and in short supply, and, as a result, cattle producers continued to cull herds.

East: Temperatures were cooler, with scattered showers in some areas. But the showers brought little relief, and most of the region remained extremely dry. Producers continued to purchase hay out of state. Others culled herds in efforts to make it through the drought. Very few winter pastures were planted.

Far West: Most of the region received from 0.2 to 0.5 inch of rain. Parts of Pecos, Ector and Crane counties got from 1 inch to 1.5 inches of rain. Val Verde County saw from 1 inch to 3 inches, and Lola Alta nearly 5 inches. The rain fell hard and fast in some areas, which led to more runoff than filtration into to the soil profile. All counties remained under burn bans. Ranchers began working cows. Pregnancy rates on palpated cows were lower than usual, probably due to the drought. Some producers were still selling down herds, while a few producers continued feeding. Pawnee pecans were being harvested. Western variety pecans began shuck separation. High winds from the storms blew off lots of pecans and broke small limbs. Cotton producers were spraying harvest aids and defoliant to prepare for harvest. Alfalfa growers in some areas finished their sixth cutting. The growers believed if days remain warm, they might get a seventh cutting. Onions growers finished planting. Winter wheat was planted.

North: Conditions remained very dry. Some areas received from 1 inch to 2 inches of rain, which helped alleviate dry conditions, but several counties were passed over. Some small-grain farmers continued to plant wheat into very dry fields in hopes of rain. Ranchers were also planting winter annual pasture grasses, gambling on rain to come. Lack of hay continues to be a problem, and livestock and horse owners were struggling to find enough to carry their animals through the winter. Producers in most counties had to purchase hay out of state, which was expensive. They continued to cull animals to reduce the amount of hay

they will need through the winter. Another critical concern was that many ponds were dried up or extremely low.

Panhandle: Most of the region received from a trace to 1.5 inches of rain. The counties reported soil moisture as very short. The corn harvest was ongoing. Cotton producers in some areas were applying harvest aids. Some growers began to harvest cotton. Producers continued to plant winter wheat. In some instances, they were irrigating wheat in an attempt to speed up growth to provide grazing for cattle. Rangeland and pastures remained in very poor condition. Livestock producers continued feeding cattle and were bringing in more hay from out of region for winter months.

Rolling Plains: The region had several days of rain, with accumulations ranging from 0.75 inch to 6 inches on the more eastern counties. Prior to the rain, farmers and ranchers were racing farm equipment across fields planting wheat. The rain was definitely a blessing to pastures and rangelands. The areas that received more rain reported most stock tanks were filled by runoff. The runoff also helped to replenish reservoirs and lakes. Livestock producers hoped the rain was enough to stimulate the growth of winter weeds and grasses, which could provide some grazing through the winter. Early defoliated cotton was harvested. Other cotton producers were about two weeks from harvest. Feed reserves for feeding winter cattle were very short. Cow/calf producers were evaluating livestock, rangeland and hay conditions, trying to decide how many cows they could afford to feed this winter. The pecan crop was expected to be short, with nuts on the small side.

South: Soil-moisture levels ranged from short to very short throughout the region. Temperatures were milder during the days and cooler in the evenings. In response to the rains in some areas, rangeland and pastures greened up quite a bit, and most winter forages were doing better. But rangeland and pastures continued to deteriorate in many parts of the region. Many cattle were still being sold, and livestock producers continued supplemental feeding. Ranchers found it more and more difficult to find hay to buy. Webb County reported price increases of about \$120 per round bale and \$10 per square bale. In Atascosa and Frio counties, some oats began to grow, green beans were being planted and peanut growers were irrigating. In Zavala County, irrigators continued applying water to cabbage, carrots, spinach, wheat, oats and ryegrass. Producers in that area were also very busy planting more spinach, wheat and cabbage. Cameron County producers were irrigating winter vegetables, corn and sorghum. They were also actively preparing fields for the planting of the last of their fall crops and early spring crops.

South Plains: The cotton harvest was under way in most of the region. There was some scattered light rain, with most counties reporting a half inch or less. All crops were being harvested, and some winter wheat was being planted on dryland acres with hopes forecast rain would be enough to bring it up. Some hay has been harvested and grass on some Conservation Reserve Program land was being baled. Producers continued to provide supplements to maintain body condition of cattle. Pumpkin producers were winding down harvest, reporting yields of about 50 percent of last year's.

Southeast: Rainfall amounts varied throughout the region, with some counties receiving 3 to 4 inches. Other counties remained dry. No winter pastures were planted yet in some counties. Cattle sell-offs were ongoing.

Southwest: From two to five inches of rain fell across the region. The rain helped, but extreme drought conditions continued. Planting of winter grains and pastures was ongoing.

West Central: The region had warm days and cool nights, with much-needed rain reported in many areas. The producers who planted wheat into dry soils will benefit from recent rainfall. Most cotton and grain sorghum crops failed. Rangeland and pasture continued to decline, with no grass for grazing and no fieldwork being done for cool-season crops. Water remained very scarce. Livestock producers continued to reduce herds and increase supplemental feeding. Feed and hay costs soared. The pecan crop was spotty at best.

12. WILDFIRE CONCERNS

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is used to help determine the potential for fire risk. It is a numerical index where each number is an estimate of the amount of precipitation, in 100ths of an inch, needed to bring the soil back to saturation. The index ranges from 0 to 800, with 0 representing a saturated soil, and 800 a completely dry soil. The relationship of the KBDI to fire danger is, as the index increases, the vegetation is subjected to increased moisture stress. KBDI levels and their relationship to expected fire potential are reflected in the following:

KBDI = 0 – 200: Soil moisture and large class fuel moistures are high and do not contribute much to fire intensity. This is typical of the spring dormant season following winter precipitation.

KBDI = 201 – 400: Typical of late spring and early growing season. Lower litter and duff layers are drying and beginning to contribute to fire intensity.

KBDI = 401 – 600: Typical of late summer and early fall. Lower litter and duff layers contribute to fire intensity and will burn actively.

KBDI = 601 – 800: Often associated with more severe drought and increased wildfire occurrence. Intense, deep-burning fires with significant downwind spotting can be expected. Live fuels can also be expected to burn actively at these levels.

As of September 30, 2011, there were 254 counties (illustrated in Attachment 2) with KBDI values in excess of 400. The values indicate areas within these counties are beginning to experience or sustain dry conditions which could result in an increased fire risk potential.

The Drought Preparedness Council is comprised of state agencies concerned with the effects of drought and fire on the citizens of the State of Texas. The attached information was compiled and provided by representatives listed below. Points of contact, telephone numbers, and web site addresses are also provided.

Nim Kidd, Texas Division of Emergency Management, (512) 424-2436, fax (512) 424-2444, website: <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem>

Brenner Brown, Texas Water Development Board, (512) 475-1128, fax (512) 475-2053, website: <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us>

Chris Loft, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, (512) 239-4715, fax (512) 239-4770, website: <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us>

Richard Egg, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board, (254) 773-2250, fax (254) 773-3311, website: <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us>

Lance Williams, Texas Department of Agriculture, (512) 463-3285, fax (800) 835-2981, website: <http://agr.state.tx.us>

Dr. Travis Miller, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, (979) 845-4808, fax (979) 845-0456, website: <http://texasextension.tamu.edu>

Cindy Loeffler, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, (512) 912-7015, fax (512) 707-1358, website: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>

Gilbert Jordan, Texas Department of Transportation, (512) 416-3270, fax (512) 416-2941, website: <http://www.txdot.state.tx.us>

Michael Dunivan, Texas Forest Service, (830) 997-5426, website: <http://txforests.tamu.edu>

Suzanne Burnham, Texas Department of State Health Services, (512) 801-9816, fax (512) 458-7111, website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>

Tad Curtis, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism, (512) 936-0047, website: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/ecodev>

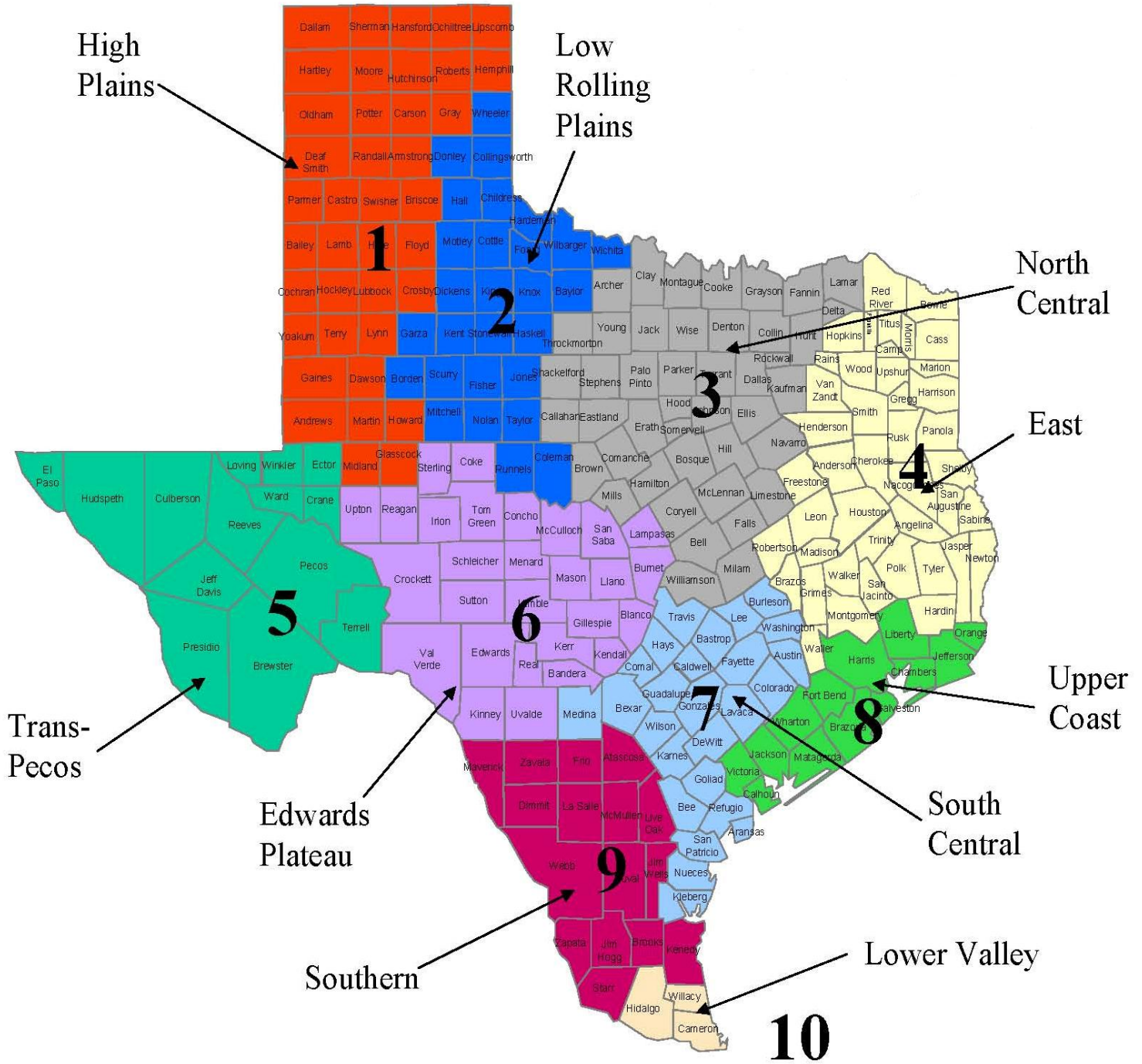
David A. Van Dresar, Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts, (979) 968-3135, fax (979) 968-3194, website: <http://www.texasgroundwater.org/>

Dr. John W. Nielsen-Gammon, Office of the State Climatologist, (979) 862-2248, fax (979) 862-4466, website: <http://www.met.tamu.edu/osc/>

Gus Garcia, Texas Department of Rural Affairs, (979) 968-8307, fax (979) 968-8714, website: <http://www.tdra.texas.gov>

Marisa Callan, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, (512) 475-3964, website: <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us>

Attachment 1 Climatic Regions



Attachment 2

Counties with Extreme to High Fire Danger

