



Heartbeat of the Hickory

State of the Aquifers

Every summer and winter we measure a series of wells to determine the state of the various aquifers in the area. The largest sample group is made up of Hickory wells. The news this summer was not good. Water levels fell an average of 4.4 feet since winter levels. Much of this drop can be attributed to lack of rain.

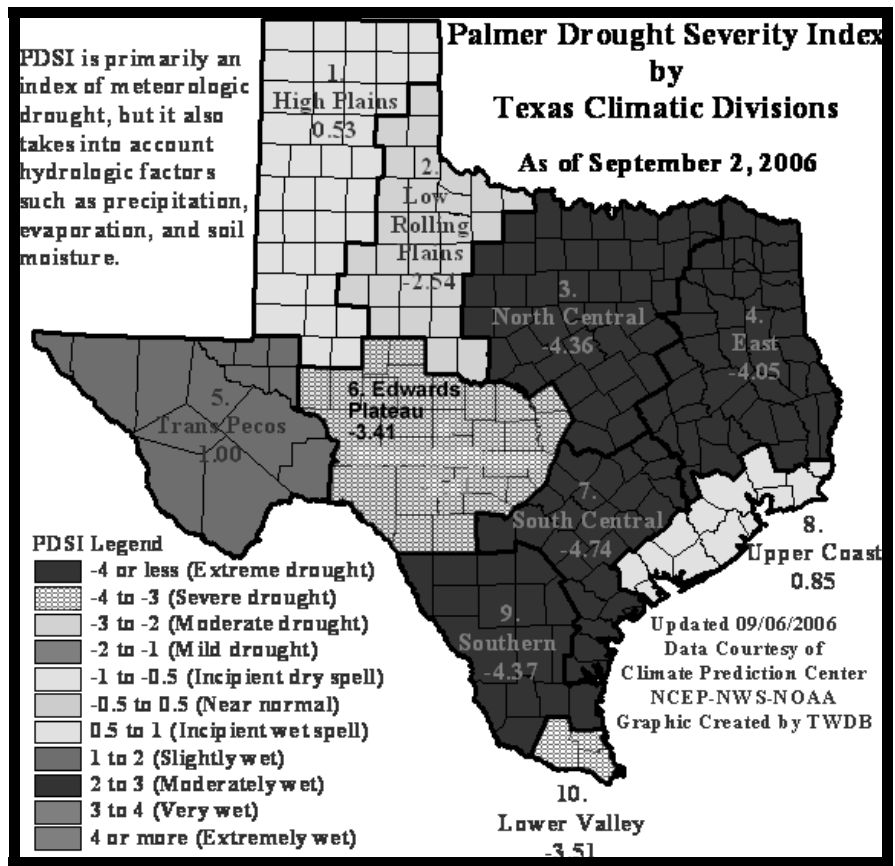
Unfortunately the prospect for a wet fall is disappointing. According to NOAA's U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released August 17, 2006, the drought will be ongoing with only some improvement through November 2006.

This cycle is almost a repeat of 10 years ago. The drought of 1996 produced crop failures, declines in the water table

and other environmental stresses. In 1998 there was another short period of drought-like conditions. These events are evident in well level measurements as well as reservoir levels across Texas.

According to the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) article *The Drought in Perspective 1996 - 1998*, the 1996 drought caused a statewide drop in reservoir levels to 68 percent of storage capacity. Currently we are at 74%. "Some aquifer levels also dropped significantly in 1996. For example, the Edwards aquifer's J17 observation well in San Antonio dropped to 639.5 feet above mean sea level, but not as far

as in the 1950s when levels reached an all time recorded low 612.5 feet above mean sea level." Things have been worse though. Dendrochronology, the science of dating events and variations in environment in former periods by comparative study of growth rings in trees, indicates that during the last 1,000 years in Texas there have been much worse droughts than any of those in recently recorded history. However, according to TWDB, "It is only a matter of time before a drought of the proportions of the 1950s or even worse occurs. This points out the limitations of conventional water supply in Texas."



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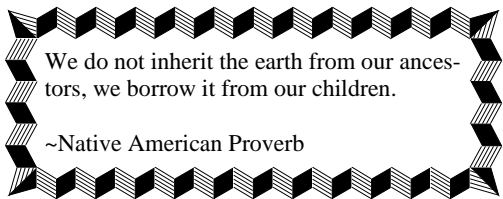
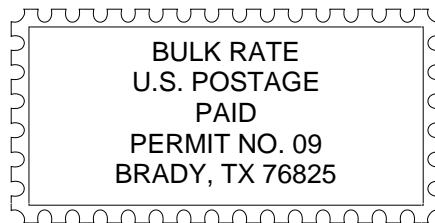
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New Hickory Hours

In order to better accommodate the public, the District has changed its hours. We are now open from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

We're still requesting that all landowners with wells within the District boundaries permit or register their wells. We want to reiterate that we are in no way attempting to infringe upon the rights of landowners. Rather we are attempting to protect the water rights of all the citizens within the District.

We fully believe that water will be the 'hot topic' during this next legislative session. More stringent guidelines could be set down for all groundwater users in the state of Texas. This is why we advise all individuals to get their wells officially recorded, permitted or registered in the next six months.

We hope our new hours make this process a little easier for everybody. We are also willing to meet with landowners at their convenience to complete paperwork and answer questions. Please, if you have a well that is NOT registered or permitted within the District Boundaries, do not hesitate to contact our office at 325-597-2785 or by email at hickoryuwcd@yahoo.com. You can also just drop in. We're located on the north-east side of the square in Brady. Registration and permit forms can be downloaded from our website <http://www.hickoryuwcd.org>. If you choose to use the forms from the website, please submit a map with the location of your well or latitude and longitude of that well.

State Water Plan

Water, more than any other resource, will determine Texas' future in the decades to come. The amount and manner in which this basic resource is provided will define, to a large degree, the state's economic potential, and its environment and quality of life in the future. The 2007 State Water Plan guides how Texans will meet their water needs through 2060.

Water for Texas – 2007 is the second state water plan to be developed by the TWDB through the regional water planning process established by Senate Bill 1 during the 1997 Texas legislative session. This planning process is based on local and regional decision making and public participation at each step of planning when producing the regional water plans.

The TWDB is holding public meetings on the draft 2007 State Water Plan in order to receive public comment.

Everyone interested in the future of water for Texas is invited to attend. Date, time and location details are available online at:

<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/RWPG/main-docs/2007SWPMeetings&Hearing.doc>

The final public hearing will be held October 2, 2006 in Austin. The final plan will be delivered to the Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House, and the Senate and House Natural Resources Committees on or before January 5, 2007.

Local Student Assists Water District

Nicolas Garcia, son of Ernie and Ruthie Garcia of Brady, has been spending his spare time this summer learning about the role and mission of the Hickory Underground Water Conservation District and assisting the staff. Nicolas, a Brady High School Junior, is a busy young man. He's participated in 4H Congress, attended Leadership Lab and was this year's sole recipient of the nationwide Lead America scholarship. Nicolas is also responsible for designing a model of the rain-water harvesting system at Brady Middle School.

On several occasions during summer vacation, Nicolas went to the field with District Staff, learning how to measure water levels in wells, draw water samples for later analysis, and decontaminate wells. In the office he utilized lab equipment to analyze water samples for the presence of bacteria and other constituents such as iron and nitrates. At the August 10 Regular Meeting of the Hickory Board of Directors, Nicolas' very informative Power Point presentation headed up the evening's agenda. At the same meeting, the Board presented Nicolas with a letter of appreciation and a Certificate of Achievement for all his hard work and initiative. Nicolas' interest in hydrology and related subjects is very wise and forward-looking. As water becomes a greater sociological, demographic, and political issue, demand for experts in water conservation fields should increase. We hope that others will look toward Nicolas as an example and take an interest in water conservation and the groundwater conservation district.

