

# PANHANDLE WATER NEWS

JUNE 2022 SPECIAL EDITION

## PGCD ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



**Kollier Miller**  
1st Place Winner  
Panhandle High school



**Keely Harding**  
2nd Place Winner  
Panhandle High school



**Anthony Haiduk**  
3rd Place Winner  
White Deer High School



PANHANDLE GROUNDWATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### POINTS OF INTEREST

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Scholarship Winners Announcement

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New Staff Announcement

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10 year Service Award for Julie Bennett

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Precipitation Enhancement Update

*"Conserving Water for Future Generations"*

# SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS CONTINUED

In 2002, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District established a scholarship program for graduating seniors throughout the District. Over the years, the District has given \$180,000 of scholarship money to many deserving recipients. The applicants are required to write a 500–1,000 word essay on a topic chosen by PGCD and to enroll at a full-time college of their choice in the fall semester immediately following selection. They must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA to remain eligible. A committee of three board members and a staff member select the winners. The student awarded first place receives a \$4,000 scholarship, second place receives \$3,000 and third place receives \$2,000. The scholarship total is paid out over four years. PGCD's topic this year was: **"Discuss the importance of the water cycle, specifically the importance of runoff, and why it is crucial to our aquifers and for our very existence."** PGCD had 18 applicants this year and is proud to announce Kollier Miller, Keely Harding and Anthony Haiduk as the top three 2022 winners of PGCD's scholarship. PGCD wants to thank all of the applicants and congratulate the winners. We thoroughly enjoyed each essay and perspective on the topic. We wish you all the best of luck on your future endeavors.

## SUMMER INTERN HIRED



The District hired Darby Taylor as a Summer Intern and Field Technician. Originally from Amarillo, Texas, Taylor holds an associate degree in Applied Science and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from West Texas A&M University. Taylor plans to graduate from West Texas A&M University in the fall of 2023. Join us in welcoming Darby to the District!

## DISTRICT PILOT HIRED

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District hired Ben Thomas as a new Pilot. Thomas is from Amarillo, Texas and has his commercial pilots license along with instrument rating. The District is excited to have him join the team!



## 10 YEAR SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED TO JULIE BENNETT



*General Manager, Britney Britten (Left)  
Permitting Administrator, Julie Bennett  
(Center) Board President, Jim Thompson  
(Right)*

The Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District recognized Permitting Administrator, Julie Bennett, for her 10 years of working with the District during the May board meeting. "Julie has been the backbone of the District for the past 10 years" said General Manager, Britney Britten. "Her loyalty, kind heart and customer service she provides to our constituents is unmatched. I am so proud to have her on our team."

## PRECIPITATION ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

Last year across the Panhandle, we saw drier than normal conditions for the second year in a row with Amarillo recording 15.03 inches of total liquid precipitation for the year, the average being 19.31 inches. The last month Amarillo saw above average precipitation was last July where 2.82 inches fell. With Amarillo already more than 3 inches behind for the year, we desperately need some rainfall. The main culprit for this is ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation) which can be characterized by the sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. When the SSTs are cooler than normal in the east Pacific, this is known as La Niña. This allows for an amplified pattern over the western half of the U.S. as high pressure dominates the east Pacific. This usually brings dry and warm air into our area. An increase of severe weather can also occur during the spring and in the Atlantic, an active hurricane season can be expected as sinking air allows less wind shear to disrupt the development of tropical systems. If the reverse occurs, where SSTs are warmer than normal in the east Pacific, El Niño develops. These two together make up the phenomenon ENSO and drives a lot of our weather patterns.

NOAA (National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration) has a 59% chance of La Niña continuing through August and a 50% into the fall. With La Niña now expected to persist for at least the next several months, an extensive period of dry weather is anticipated. This would be the third year in a row with La Niña conditions which is rare, occurring only two other times since 1950. The Climate Prediction Center has a high likelihood of above average temperatures and below average precipitation in their 3-month seasonal outlook which goes through August. This is not a good combination as the rate of evaporation will exceed the rate of precipitation. You do not have to venture far to physically see this. For example, some of our lakes around the region continue to feel the effects of a drier climate such as Lake Mackenzie which is now only 7% full. In addition to the dry weather, we have seen very warm conditions, as well. We have already had 14 days of 90+ degree weather, 8 days of 95+ degrees, and 4 days of 100+ degrees with 5 records being set for the year, with 8 record breaking days since April 1st. Unfortunately, with La Niña expected for the foreseeable future, another dry and hot summer is on the horizon.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Water Conservation Promo night at the Sod Poodles Stadium is on Sunday, July 17th
- Next Board Meeting is set for Thursday, July 28th

PANHANDLE GROUNDWATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
P.O. BOX 637  
WHITE DEER, TEXAS 79097

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## DISTRICT OFFICE

201. W. Third St, PO Box 637  
White Deer, TX 79097  
Phone: 806-883-2501  
Fax: 806-883-2162  
Website: [www.pgcd.us](http://www.pgcd.us)

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## WATER QUALITY PROGRAM UPDATE

Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District is constantly improving its activities to monitor, evaluate, and protect groundwater resources within the District. Since 1987, PGCD has used a District Water Quality program to monitor any changes in water quality to local aquifers.

Measuring water quality requires reliable, consistent, and quality-assured data; therefore, the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District will no longer be accepting public requests for water quality sampling. District staff will now refer all water quality requests to be sent to a National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) laboratory for individuals with concerns about the quality of their well water. Additionally, the District will contract with accredited laboratories for accurate results and reporting for the PGCD Annual Water Quality Program. By using NELAP laboratories, the same methods will be used by everyone collecting water samples which uses reliable procedures that yield repeatable, more accurate results. Additionally, this allows for consistent comparisons of data collected by different individuals, staff, and organizations. These changes will take place as of May 26, 2022. For more information, go to [pgcd.us/water-quality-testing](http://pgcd.us/water-quality-testing), or call Ashley Ausbrooks at 806.883.2501.