

# PANHANDLE WATER NEWS

JUNE 2023 SPECIAL EDITION

## PGCD ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



**Abigail Britten**  
1st Place Winner  
Claude High School



**Braylee Lewis**  
2nd Place Winner  
Highland Park High School



**Binh Nguyen**  
3rd Place Winner  
Highland Park High School

In 2002, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District (PGCD) established a scholarship program for graduating seniors throughout the District. Over the years, the District has given \$189,000 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 as a full-time student at the college of their choice in the fall semester immediately following selection. They must maintain 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 \$8,000 scholarship, (continued on page 2)

### POINTS OF INTEREST

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Scholarship Winners Announcement

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TWDB Ag Grants Available

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Precipitation Enhancement Update

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TWDB approves funds for a water supply project in Donley County

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*"Conserving Water for Future Generations"*

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS CONTINUED

Second place receives \$6,000 and third place receives \$4,000. The scholarship total is paid out over four years. PGCD's topic was: **"How many ways do we rely on water in our community? Consider municipal, agricultural, and industrial uses."** PGCD had 26 applicants this year and is proud to announce Abigail Britten, Braylee Lewis and Binh Nguyen as the top three 2023 winners. We thoroughly enjoyed each essay and perspective on the topic. We wish you all the best of luck on your future endeavors.

## TWDB AWARDS GRANT FOR TELEMETRY SYSTEMS



PGCD has received grant funds from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to help local producers purchase telemetry systems for their center pivots.

Producers can use a telemetry system of their choice (AgSense, PivoTrac, FieldNET, etc.), these are a great way to replace meters that are approaching the end of their lifespan.

TWDB will provide a 50/50 cost share with producers interested in participating in the program. Due to limited funds, the program will be run on a first come first serve basis. For more information, please reach out to Meter Specialist, Jake Robinson at 806-883-2501, [jrobinson@pgcd.us](mailto:jrobinson@pgcd.us)

## GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA 1 UPDATE

In 2005, the Texas Legislature created 16 groundwater management areas across the state of Texas with HB 1763. These joint planning areas were created "in order to provide for conservation, preservation, protection, recharging, and prevention of waste in the groundwater reservoirs or their subdivisions..."

Panhandle GCD is located within GMA 1, along with North Plains GCD, Hemphill County Underground Water Conservation District, and High Plains Water District. The GMA is tasked with developing and adopting Desired Future Conditions (DFC) for the relevant aquifers located in the GMA. Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code says DFCs must "provide a balance between the highest practicable level of groundwater production and the conservation and preservation of the aquifer."

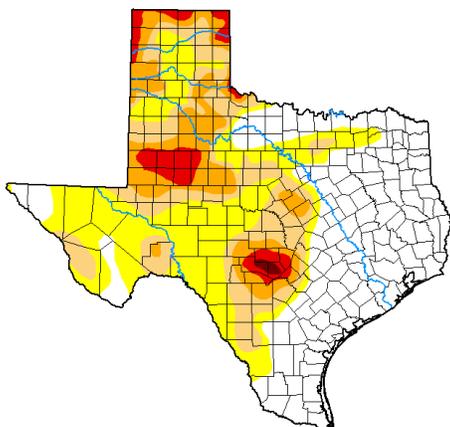
GMA 1 completed the third round of joint planning in August of 2021. TWDB then reviews the explanatory report and resolution to determine if the report is administratively complete. GMA 1 received notification of administrative completeness in December of 2022. In March of 2023, TWDB sent each of the Districts their estimated modeled available groundwater for each of the relevant aquifers. This information will be used to help inform and create the 2026 regional and state water plans.

If you would like more information about the joint planning process, please visit <http://www.panhandlewater.org/> or contact Britney Britten by emailing [britney@pgcd.us](mailto:britney@pgcd.us).

# PRECIPITATION ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

After a rare three consecutive years of La Niña, we have finally entered a neutral phase of ENSO. As the ocean waters over the equatorial Pacific continue to warm, signals are that we will be transitioning to more of an El Niño phase over the next couple of months with a 90% chance of it persisting into the winter. Before we entered a neutral phase, the year started off quite dry for the Panhandle as the first four months were well below average. Amarillo saw only 1.88 inches of total liquid precipitation as La Niña was still holding on. Going into the spring, La Nina weakened, and we started to see an active pattern taking shape by the middle of May, an indication that El Niño is closing in. This is great news for the Panhandle as some locations are still experiencing a moderate drought, even with the recent rains. To see what is in store for us, we can look at the last three El Niño years, 2010, 2015, and 2019. During these years, precipitation was above average with 2015 seeing 14 inches above normal. We are starting to see some of the effects of El Niño as Amarillo has seen nearly 6 inches of rainfall for the month of May, bringing the total for the year 1.50 inches above average. Borger is even more impressive with over 8.00 inches for the month, just shy of breaking the record. This pattern is expected to continue through June with near normal precipitation by July. With El Niño likely sticking around through the winter, we may finally be able to get some much needed relief from this long lasting drought.

U.S. Drought Monitor  
Texas



May 30, 2023  
(Released Thursday, Jun. 1, 2023)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

**Intensity:**  
 None  
 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. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

# PGCD WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Board Members were sworn in on May 11, 2023. Left to right: **David Hodges** (Precinct 2). Hodges won the election with 231 votes. **Charles Bowers** (Precinct 4). Bowers ran unopposed. **Wes Stockett** (Precinct 6). Stockett won the election with 174 votes. and **Marcus Hardcastle** (Precinct 8). Hardcastle also ran unopposed.

The District is thankful for their willingness to help conserve water for future generations!

# LONGTIME BOARD MEMBERS RECOGNIZED



Danny Hardcastle (left) Charles Bowers (right) Not pictured: Jim Thompson- due to not being able to attend the meeting

Directors Danny Hardcastle and Jim Thompson were both recognized for their many years of service on the PGCD Board. They both have been huge assets to the District. The staff is very thankful for their wisdom, input and encouragement throughout the years. They will both be missed, tremendously!

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 88th Session of the Texas Legislature adjourned sine die on Monday, May 29, 2023. However, Tuesday, May 30th marked the first day of a special session focusing on property tax and border security.

The District tracked over 100 bills that affected Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code and also local government bills. Of the many bills tracked, few made it through both chambers.

In the next edition of our newsletter, we will provide a more detailed update with bills that are signed by Governor Greg Abbott later this month.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Bill Breeding, Director  
Marcus Hardcastle, Director  
Wes Stockett, Director

Britney Britten, General Manager

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## TWDB APPROVES \$18,110,000 FOR A WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

In April 2023, The Texas Water Development Board approved by resolution financial assistance in the amount of \$18,110,000 to the Greenbelt Municipal and Industrial Water Authority (Donley County), consisting of \$8,110,000 in financing and \$10,000,000 in principal forgiveness, from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF).

The Authority will construct three water wells, well field piping, electrical distribution equipment, and a 12-mile transmission line to transport water to its existing water treatment plant.

The TWDB is charged with collecting and disseminating water-related data, assisting with regional water and flood planning, and preparing the state water and flood plans. TWDB conducts cost-effective financial assistance programs for the construction of water supply, wastewater treatment, flood control, and agricultural water conservation projects.