



DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL

RICK PERRY
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NIM KIDD
Council Chairperson

March 10, 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 Robert Duncan, 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 Kip Averitt, Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable John Carona, 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 Yvonne Gonzalez-Tourelles, 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. Josh Havens, 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

Carla Baze, Member
Texas Department of Transportation

Chris Loft, Member
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Michael Dunivan, Member
Texas Forest Service

John Sutton, Member
Texas Water Development Board

Dr. Travis Miller, Member
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

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

Thomas Walker, 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

April 14th, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. DPS Headquarters

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

The month of February saw an increase in the coverage and severity of drought conditions in Texas. Many of the outdoor burn bans that had recently been lifted went back into effect, as wildfires became an increasing threat as the month progressed. During the month of February, the percentage of Texas with at least a moderate drought (D1) designation increased from 53.00% to 72.91% and the percentage of Texas with extreme drought (D3) increased from 6.93% to 12.72%. The Big Bend area, the Piney Woods, and portions of the Prairies and Lakes region in eastern Texas saw little to no precipitation and drought conditions in these regions intensified throughout February.

The vast majority of the western half of Texas recorded less than 0.10" of precipitation, with many portions of the Trans-Pecos, Edwards Plateau, South Texas and Lower Valley not even recording a trace of precipitation during the month of February. In the Edwards Plateau, an area of D3 now stretches from Terrell County east into Maverick and Uvalde Counties. The largest area of D3 now covers much of the Brazos Valley and East Texas, extending from Lee County east into Orange County. The percentage of Texas with at least severe drought (D2) was 35.11% as of March 1st, with East Texas, the Trans Pecos, and the southern Edwards Plateau being the areas of greatest concern entering March.

According to the Climate Prediction Center the increase in drought conditions across the state will only continue to worsen over the next three months as all of Texas is forecasted to have drought conditions by May. In March 2011, the entire state of Texas has a greater than equal chance for below normal precipitation, with the chances for a dry March increasing from the Panhandle (33-40%) to the Upper Coast and South Texas (> 50%). Over the next three months (March-May 2011), most of the state has a 33-40% chance of below normal precipitation. During this period, the Low Rolling Plains, North Central Texas and Northeastern Texas have equal chances of above normal, near normal, and below normal precipitation.

3. OVERALL STATEWIDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Based on drought indices through the end of February 2011, the drought is developing throughout the state: we now see more climate regions moved into dry/drought conditions, as well as regions that were already in drought escalated to higher drought degree levels. The NOAA Climate Prediction Center predicts that drought is likely to develop, persist, or intensify for most of the state over the next three months.

Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI):

By this index, 7 out of 10 climate regions in Texas were drought / dry spell:

- the East Texas region was back to "Severe drought";
- the Trans-Pecos region escalated from "Mild" to "Moderate" drought,
- the Edwards Plateau and Upper Coast escalated to Mild drought, and
- High Plains, Low Rolling Plain, and North Central regions were in incipient dry spell.

Crop Moisture Index (CMI)

All regions were in slightly dry condition except for the Trans-Pecos region which turned around from wet to Moderate dry condition.

Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

Compared to a month ago, while only one region was in Moderate dry, now 4 regions are in the same condition, indicating a spread of dryness in the state.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI)

Seven out of state's 10 climate regions were either in High or Very High fire risk conditions. East Texas is the only region that fire risk remained at or below average.

Stream Flow Index (SFI)

Stream flows were near normal or high range in all regions.

4. WATER UTILITY STATUS

On March 1, 2011, there were 61 public water systems on the drought list that are asking customers to restrict water use by following outdoor water use restrictions. Of these systems, 33 are asking customers to follow a mandatory watering schedule and 28 are asking customers to follow a voluntary watering schedule. The recent precipitation events in January and February have resulted in 15 public water systems relaxing water-use restrictions on their customers.

Despite recent rainfall events, seasonal forecasts continue to predict the drought to persist or intensify in many areas of the state. As the traditional outdoor growing season approaches, water systems can expect to have increased water demands which may trigger the 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. Applications for new water use permits and amendments to existing permits remained normal for the month. Water right owners in the Brazos River Basin whose permits contain Hale Clause restrictions are observing the less severe streamflow restrictions of their permits during the winter months. The availability of unappropriated water for new 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 February 19, 2011, the U.S. combined ownership at Amistad/Falcon stood at 97.26% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 3,409,036 acre-feet, up from 81.96% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 2,779,925 acre-feet a year ago at this time. Overall the system is holding 94.77% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 5,795,766 acre-feet with Amistad at 101.44% of conservation capacity, impounding 3,289,861 acre-feet and Falcon at 88.73% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 2,519,687 acre-feet. Mexico has 91.43% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 2,386,730 acre-feet at Amistad/Falcon.

Allocations: As of the printing of the January 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, the U.S. has approximately 666,613 acre-feet for future allocations in 2011.

Storage & Loss Amistad vs. Falcon: The U.S. is currently storing approximately 1.841 million acre-feet at Amistad (100%), and approximately 1.567 million acre-feet (94.2%) of temporary conservation capacity at Falcon. Evaporation and seepage losses at Amistad cycle, as of 02/19/11, are 42,402 acre-feet. For the same period, the U.S. has lost 53,995 acre-feet at Falcon.

Releases to meet demands: In 2011, (through 2/19/11), Mexico has released 34,317 acre-feet from Amistad and 286,680 acre-feet from Falcon for domestic use. The U.S. has released 215,814 acre-feet from Falcon and 88,150 acre-feet from Amistad for domestic needs. Combined with gains between Amistad and Falcon, U.S. inflows to Falcon have totaled 174,387 acre-feet. The U.S. demand in the lower Rio Grande has been met at a rate of 81% by direct Rio Grande inflows and Amistad releases this year.

Upper Rio Grande (New Mexico): Currently, Elephant Butte in New Mexico is at 24.84% of capacity, impounding 502,639 acre-feet and Caballo Dam in New Mexico, downstream of Elephant Butte is at 11.07% of capacity, impounding 25,132 acre-feet. This water storage in part is used to meet the needs in the El Paso area.

Outlook: All accounts began 2011 with 100% of their usable balance. Falcon Reservoir remains on a temporary conservation level of 303.42 feet through the winter months. The National Weather Service continues to report that moderate to strong La Nina conditions resulting in extremely dry weather across deep South Texas. The drought conditions are mainly affecting agricultural interest and are elevating fire risk danger.

Additionally, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, the entire Rio Grande Basin continues to experience drought conditions ranging from “Abnormally Dry” to “Severe Drought” in areas from between Presidio and Cameron Counties.

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, and Jim Hogg

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Some scattered rainfall events occurred during the month of February in this area. These rainfall events provided soil moisture to the area farmland. The rainfall events provided for some runoff into the area streams, but the streams have quickly declined. Stream flows of most area streams are currently flowing below the mean average for this time of the year. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that counties to the far west and inland counties in the southern part of this area including Jim Hogg and parts of Live Oak, Duval, Brooks and Willacy are currently experiencing “Moderate Dry” conditions at this time. While counties in the central part of this area including, Live Oak, parts of Bee, Duval, Jim Wells, Brooks, Kenedy and Willacy Counties are currently experiencing “Abnormally Dry” conditions. Other counties including Nueces, San Patricio, Aransas, Refugio, Goliad, Victoria, Calhoun and part of Bee County are not experiencing any drought conditions at this time. Most of the 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	March Beginning flows CFS	March Ending Flows CFS	March Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River near Victoria	833.00	681.00	1990.00
San Antonio River near Goliad	374.00	325.00	707.00
San Antonio River at McFaddin below Goliad	481.00	449.00	890.00
Guadalupe River near Tivoli	1360.00	1100.00	2360.00
Mission River near Refugio	33.00	19.00	104.00
Nueces River at Calallen Dam	2.20	0	134.00
Aransas River near Skidmore	9.80	9.30	17.00

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 did not receive significant inflows for the month of February. The level of the reservoir system has decreased and was at 81.0% of capacity at the end of the month, impounding 771,827 acre-feet compared to 68.2% of capacity, impounding 649,455 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Choke Canyon was at 78.9% of capacity, impounding 548,747 acre-feet compared to 70.5% of capacity, impounding 489,907 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Lake Corpus Christi is at 86.7% of capacity, impounding 223,080 acre-feet compared to 62.0% of capacity, impounding 159,538 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: There are no permits being restricted due to drought conditions in this area.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The southernmost portions of this area received 0 to 0.2 inches of rainfall for the month of February, and the eastern portions of the area, including the Lavaca area, received 0.75 to 4.25 inches. Oat, wheat and rye crops are still doing fairly well at this time. Farmers have not started planting corn due to low soil moisture levels throughout this area. There has been very little irrigation activity in the area. Lake Texana is at 80% of capacity, which is equal to 40.35 ft. above mean sea level. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, this area is experiencing “No Drought” to “Abnormally Dry” conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions:

Site	March Beginning flows CFS	March Ending flows CFS	March Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
San Antonio River near Falls City	259.00	225.00	472.00
Cibolo Creek near Falls City	69.00	62.00	117.00
Guadalupe River near Gonzales	1120.00	877.00	1690.00
The Lavaca River at Edna	59.00	45.00	388.00
Navidad River near Hallettsville	10.00	6.900	159.00
Atascosa River near Whitsett	9.10	6.20	91.00
Frio River near Tilden	.57	.33	104.00
Nueces River near Tilden	.88	1.00	138.00

Drought Restrictions: There are no Water Rights permits being restricted due to drought conditions in this area at this time

Area Counties: Bandera, Blanco, Comal, Kendall and Kerr Counties

Rainfall and Area Conditions: This area received 0.50 to 1.10 inches of rainfall for the month of February. The Crop Moisture Index indicates this area of the hill country is classified as “Slightly Dry” to “Favorably Moist”. 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. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is currently experiencing “Severe Drought” to “Extreme Drought” conditions.

Stream flow Condition:

Site	March Beginning flows CFS	March Ending flows CFS	March Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River at Kerrville	53.00	53.00	132.00
Guadalupe River at Comfort	103.00	91.00	219.00
Medina River at Bandera	31.00	27.00	124.00

All the major streams and their tributaries are below their historical averages

Drought Restrictions: Currently two water right permits along the South Fork of the Guadalupe River (SFGR) have reached their flow restrictions and are not allowed to divert. Temporary water permits along the SFGR are suspended. All other temporary water rights issued in the San Antonio River Basin, (above Lake Medina), and the Guadalupe River Basin, (above Canyon Lake), are reviewed on a case by case basis.

Area Counties: Edwards, Real, Kinney, Uvalde, Zavala, Dimmit, La Salle, and Webb

Rainfall and Area Conditions: There was no relief from the severe drought conditions across the South West Texas area during the month of February. There was no reported rainfall for the month. 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: cabbage, onions, hay grazer and pecans. Soil conditions are exceptionally dry. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is experiencing “Moderate Drought” to “Extreme Drought” conditions at this time.

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

Site	March Beginning flows CFS	March Ending flows CFS	March Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Nueces River at Laguna	35.00	29.00	116.00
Nueces River near Brackettville	.14	.14	18.00
Nueces River below Uvalde	6.60	4.90	91.00
Frio River at Concan	24.00	24.00	94.00
Sabinal River at Sabinal	.87	.37	17.00
Leona River near Uvalde	2.10	0.00	37.00

Drought Restrictions: A permit on the Leona River has met its restrictions and is no longer about to divert. Permits that have not met their stream flow restrictions are being regulated. The Zavala/Dimmit Water District is not allowing diversions other than for Domestic and Livestock use.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Approximately 0.49 inches of rainfall was measured in the San Antonio Regional Area for the month of February. The U.S. Drought Monitor dated February 22, 2011 indicates the San Antonio Regional Area is experiencing Moderate 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 lack of rainfall for the month of February. The small creeks and perennial creeks have continued to remain dry. Irrigation use has started to increase and industrial use remains constant.

Site	March Starting flows CFS	March Ending flows CFS	March Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River at Spring Branch	105.00	106.00	365.00
San Marcos River at Luling	192.00	161.00	544.00
Blanco River at Wimberley	52.00	43.00	165.00

As of February 28, 2011, Canyon Lake Reservoir was at 907.45 feet elevation and 96.67% of capacity, impounding 366,167 acre-feet. Lake Medina Reservoir was at 1046.32 feet elevation and 62.51% of capacity, impounding 159,289 acre-feet. San Marcos Springs were flowing at 146 CFS. The historical monthly average for the San Marcos Springs in February is 193 CFS. Comal Springs were flowing at 308 CFS. The historical monthly average for the Comal Springs in February is 315 CFS. The J-17 Bexar reading was at 670.2 on February 28.

Drought Restrictions: There are no additional drought restrictions on the San Antonio River at this time.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The Concho River Valley received below average rainfall amounts for the month of February. Rainfall in San Angelo was less than 0.1 inch. Areas surrounding San Angelo received slightly higher rainfall amounts. The average rainfall for the month of February is 1.18 inches. The total amount of rainfall for the year is 0.27 inches. The Texas Crop Moisture Index indicates the area as having “Slightly Dry” to “Favorably Moist” soil conditions. The State Drought Monitor Index indicates the Concho Valley as having “Moderate Drought” to “Abnormally Dry” conditions.

Stream flow Conditions: Area reservoirs are showing a decrease in the amount of storage from the previous month’s amounts. Lake Nasworthy is at 81% of capacity, impounding 8,216 acre-feet. O. C. Fisher is at 2% of capacity, impounding 1,968 acre-feet. Twin Buttes Lake is at 18% of capacity, impounding 33,377 acre-feet.

Site	March Beginning Flows CFS	March Ending Flows CFS	March Historical Mean Flows
<i>Concho Watermaster</i>			
Spring Creek above Twin Buttes Reservoir	11.00	4.80	19.00
Concho River at San Angelo and Bell St.	52.00	5.80	32.00
South Concho at Christoval	6.10	3.80	20.00

Drought Restrictions: Currently there are no restrictions on diversions in the Concho Valley. A drought notification of potential restrictions based on current flows will be sent to water right holders in the near future as a measure of preparedness.

8. UPPER COLORADO (Concho River watershed not included)

The upper Colorado River area received less than normal precipitation during February 2011. The National Weather Service in San Angelo reported monthly precipitation of 0.31 inches, which is 0.87 inches less than normal. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, area drought conditions in Crockett, Sutton and Kimble counties are severe to extreme; Schleicher, Menard, Mason, and Reagan counties have severe drought conditions; Irion and McCulloch counties have moderate to severe drought conditions; Coke county has abnormally dry drought conditions; and Sterling, Tom Green and Concho counties have moderate drought conditions. USGS gauges indicate that flow in the Colorado River near Gail down to Colorado City was near USGS long term medians, and less than the USGS long term medians from Silver, TX to Ballinger, TX. The San Saba River has flow less than the USGS long-term median from Menard, TX to San Saba, TX. The North Llano River above and the Llano River below Junction, TX to the Llano River below Mason, TX are flowing lower than the USGS long-term median. The pool levels of EV Spence Reservoir and OH Ivie Reservoir have decreased from January levels. The pool levels are 2.5% and 31.3% of capacity, respectively.

9. TEXAS PANHANDLE AND SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

Amarillo Area:

Lake Greenbelt started the month at 52.59 feet, and ended February at 52.67 feet. Lake Mackenzie started the month at 71.45 feet, and ended February at 71.21 feet. Lake Meredith started the month at 38.24 feet, and ended February at 38.4 feet. The National Weather Service in Amarillo has recorded a total of .43 inches of moisture since February 1, 2011. This is .12 inches below the average for February.

Reservoir report: (status as of 3.02.11)

Reservoir (Basin)	Conservation Pool (elevation)	Current (elevation)	% of Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Greenbelt (Red)	2664.00	2632.67	27.25	n/a
MacKenzie (Red)	3100.00	3021.18	12.79	n/a
Meredith (Canadian)	2936.50	2851.40	0.51	n/a

Lubbock Area:

Reporting Station: Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport

	Precipitation (in.)	Average(in.)	Departure(in.)
February	0.43	0.71	-0.28
2011 Year-to-date	0.49	1.21	-0.72
Snowfall	3.3	2.4	+0.9

Reservoir report: (Status as of 3.02.11)

Reservoir Basin (Brazos)	Conservation Pool (elevation)	Current (elevation)	% of Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Alan Henry	2220.00	2217.48	92.99	-0.68
White River	2372.20	2355.69	33.32	- 0.45

The long term drought situation has not changed. All communities previously noted as initiating water restrictions remained on those restrictions. There was no change to the list since the previous report. The Cities of Amherst, Levelland, and Lubbock remained on mandatory drought restriction status. The Cities of Ralls, Crosbyton, Spur and Post, White River MWD, and Valley WSC in the South Plains area remained on voluntary drought restriction status. Lake Meredith is temporarily no longer supplying water to the City of Lubbock.

10. WILDLIFE CONCERNS

No information was received by the time of this report.

11. AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

In general we had a statewide decline in agricultural conditions over the last month. Although wheat conditions in the northern Blacklands and the Gulf Coast are generally good, the wheat crop as a whole continues to decline due to damage for drought and the very cold weather of January and early February. Statewide, the crop is rated at 41 percent of normal, with 82 percent of the crop rated fair to very poor. This rating compared to a 68 percent of normal at this time in 2010. Wheat is emerging from dormancy over much of the western production region (Rolling Plains, South Plains and High Plains) and is suffering from very dry conditions.

Farmers are planting corn and sorghum in the Gulf Coast, Central and North Texas. Moisture ranges from excellent to poor. Warmer than normal weather in late February hastened planting except for areas which were too dry. Ranchers in East, West Central, the Trans Pecos and southwest Texas are facing seriously dry conditions that are requiring much feeding of livestock. Pastures are slow to green due to drought and damage from very cold weather.

Attached are comments from AgriLife Extension field reporters on drought conditions that impact agriculture across the state as of March 4:

Central: Dry weather made fields accessible and crop work proceeded at a rapid pace. Farmers were preparing fields for corn and sorghum planting. Others were getting ready for sprigging Bermudagrass. Pastures and hay meadows were being fertilized and sprayed for weeds. Warmer weather and sunshine helped oats and wheat recover from the freezes two weeks ago.

Coastal Bend: Warm weather, with little rain exacerbated dry conditions. High winds continued to deplete topsoil moisture. Row-crop producers began planting corn, sorghum and sunflowers. Some producers gambled based on forecasts for warmer-than-normal

weather and began to plant cotton earlier than normal. Winter wheat looked good in most areas. Rangeland and pastures will need moisture soon as the warmer weather causes them to come out of winter dormancy. Livestock producers were supplementing cattle with hay and protein. Livestock ponds were very low in many areas.

East: Some areas received as much as 0.5 inch of rain, but dry soil conditions remained the rule throughout the region. Warmer temperatures and light rains stimulated the growth of ryegrass and other winter forages. Warm-season grasses emerged too. Hay supplies were short as feeding continued. Some producers were still purchasing hay out of the area. Livestock were in fair to good condition, with spring calving ongoing. Farmers were planting vegetables and preparing fields for the planting of summer crops.

Far West: Dry winds and lack of moisture caused wildfires. Producers continued pre-watering in cotton fields prior to planting. Land preparation for cotton, chilies and corn was ongoing. Fall-planted onions were recovering from freeze damage two weeks ago and showed new leaves. Pecan trees remained dormant, and growers began pruning and irrigating orchards. Spring wheat seed was germinating.

North: The region had warm and cloudy days for most of the reporting period. Soil moisture was mostly adequate. With the drier weather and fields, some small-grains producers were able to apply fertilizer. Small grains and ryegrass looked very good, appearing to have bounced back from the two weeks of extremely cold temperatures with snow and ice. Winter wheat emerged and was in fair to good condition. With the drier weather, cattle producers were able to turn cattle back in on small grains and winter pastures. Livestock was in fair to good condition. Expanded feeding during cold weather drained some livestock producer's hay stocks, but if there are no more severe storms, they may have enough hay to last out the remainder of the winter. Land preparation for spring-planted crops continued. Rangeland and pastures were in poor to good condition. Feral hog damage greatly increased with the warmer weather.

Panhandle: Days were warm and dry. High winds, with gusts ranging from 50 -70 mph, drove many wildfires out of control. The region remains under a high wildfire danger. Soil moisture was very short to short. Wheat was mostly poor. Rangeland was in very poor to poor condition. Some producers were preparing fields for spring planting. Cattle were in good condition, with producers continuing to supply supplemental feeding.

Rolling Plains: Scattered rain showers fell in some counties, but most of the district remained dry. Higher temperatures, sustained winds and lack of moisture contributed to the increase of wildfires. Fire burned 40,000 acres in Motley County on Feb. 27, and 400 people in Roaring Springs and Matador were evacuated. Fires were also reported in Foard, Jack, Palo Pinto, Parker and Wichita counties. Wheat came out of dormancy but needed rain for the chance to make even average yields. Some producers top-dressed (fertilized) their wheat. Livestock producers were feeding hay and supplements several times a week. Livestock were still in generally fair to good condition. Pastures began to green up. Fruit trees were in the full-bud stage.

South: There was some green up of rangeland and pasture grasses, but extremely dry conditions kept grass growth at a standstill. Soil-moisture levels remained short to very short range throughout the region, except for the southern counties where they were 40 to 75 percent adequate. With warmer temperatures in the 90's, field activities were very active in some of the eastern counties. All of the wheat emerged but was in poor condition. About 70 percent of the potato crop also emerged in that area, and farmers were preparing to plant corn. In the western part of the district, farmers were irrigating corn, cabbage, spinach,

wheat and oats because soils were dried out by extremely high winds. Dryland sorghum producers in that area planned to delay spring planting until they get rain. Also in that area, spinach harvesting was very active and onions were progressing well. In the southern parts of the region, producers were busy harvesting freeze-damaged sugarcane as quickly as possible before the crop further deteriorated. Also in that area, growers were busy with vegetable and citrus harvests, and spring plantings. Cattle body-condition scores remained fair to poor, and livestock producers were steadily providing supplemental feed. Ranchers were very concerned about very low or completely dry stock tank water levels.

South Plains: The region remained very dry with numerous wildfires. Burn bans were in effect. High winds — from 50-70 mph — exacerbated the dry conditions and raised the risk of wildfire. Some farmers were applying preemergent herbicides and fertilizer. Dryland wheat was either suffering or a complete failure. Pasture and rangeland remained dry, and producers continued to provide supplemental feed to livestock.

Southeast: Warm days stimulated regrowth in perennial pastures. Ryegrass responded more quickly to the warm weather than the clovers. Soil moisture was becoming short. In Brazoria County, producers began planting crops, even early rice, as soil temperatures were in the high 60s. In Liberty County, another week without rain continued to play havoc on pastures and winter wheat, and delayed spring land preparation.

Southwest: Spinach, onion and cabbage crops were slowly recovering from the hard freezes in early February, but the continued dry weather threatened to significantly reduce farm-and-ranch income in 2011. Since August 1, the total cumulative rainfall, as measured in Uvalde, was about 35 percent of the long-term average and the second-driest on record. High winds added insult to injury by increasing the incidence of roadside fires. Wind-blown dust from plowed fields was prevalent. Rain will be needed very soon to make dryland crop planting possible. Pastures and rangeland remained in winter dormancy. Forage availability was below average. Ranchers were busy with the calving/lambing/kidding season and continued repairing water pipes that broke when frozen.

West Central: Warm, windy days without rain continued to dry out soils. Burn bans remained in effect in most counties. Some hay fields were being tilled to aerate the soils. Large amounts of damage to wheat and other small-grain crops from the extremely cold temperatures and dry conditions became evident. Very little pasture grass was greening up. Livestock remained in fair condition with ongoing supplemental feeding.

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 February 28th, 2010, there were 134 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>

John Sutton, Texas Water Development Board, (512) 463-7988, fax (512) 463-9893, 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>

Carla Baze, 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/>

Thomas Walker, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism, (512) 936-0169, fax (512) 936-0141, 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, (512) 936-7876, fax (512) 936-6776, website: <http://www.tdra.state.tx.us>

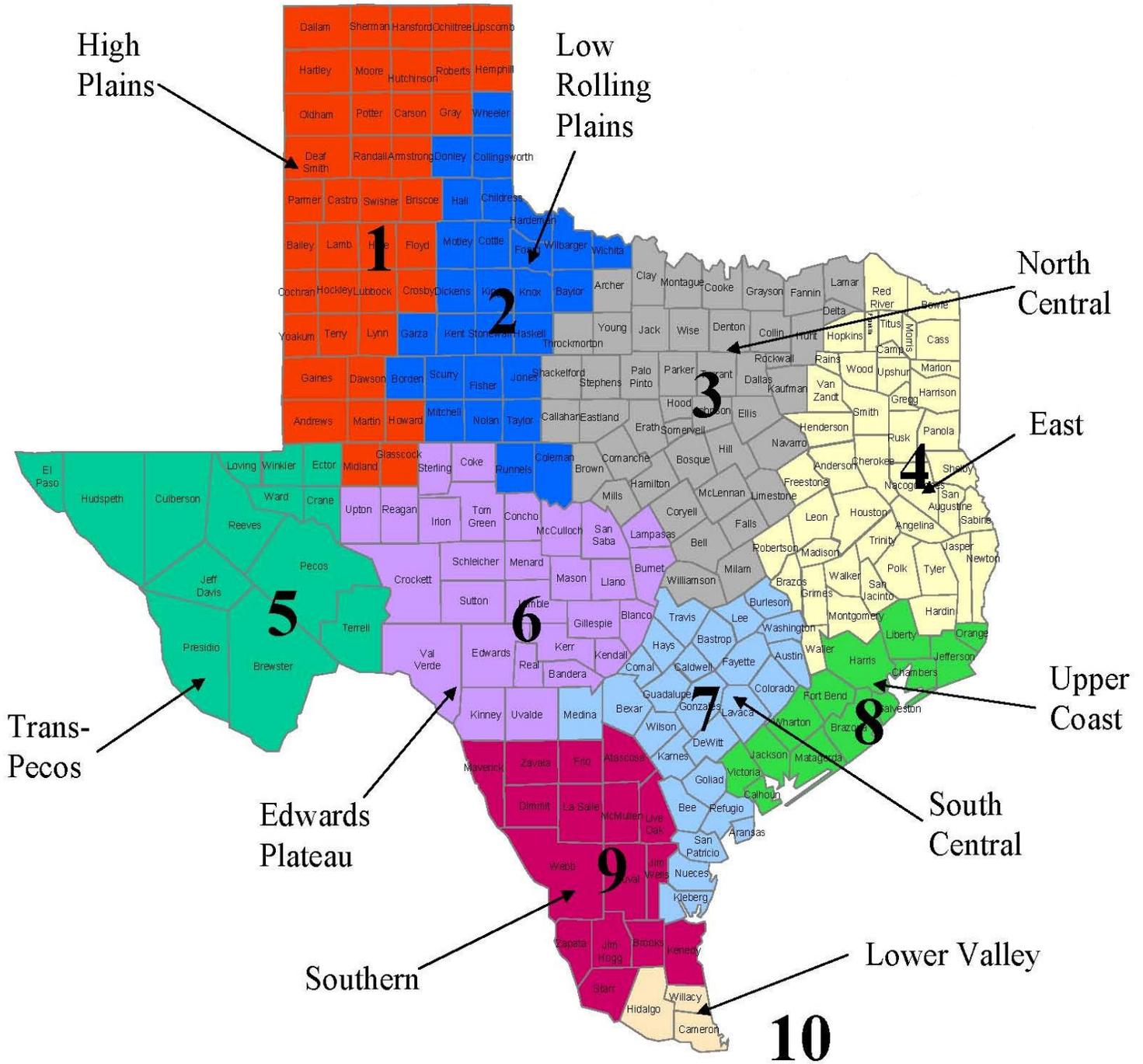
Marisa Callan, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, (512) 475-3964, website: <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us>

cc:

Amy Jeter, Committee Clerk, Senate Finance Committee
Sarah Hicks, Committee Director, Senate Finance Committee
Teddy Carter, Committee Clerk, Senate Natural Resources Committee
Amy Peterson, Committee Clerk, House Appropriations
Elizabeth Fazio, Committee Clerk, House Natural Resources Committee
Jim Terrell, Committee Clerk, House Agriculture and Livestock Committee
Andrew Cates, Committee Clerk, House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee
Zak Covar, Policy Advisor for TCEQ Issues, Governor's Policy Office

Auburn Mitchell, Policy Advisor for Agriculture/TDA, Governor's Policy Office
Carmen Cernosek, Lt. Governor's Natural Resources Policy Analyst
Shane Linkous, Deputy Division Chief, Intergovernmental Relations, Attorney
General's Office
Allan B. Polunsky, Chairman, Public Safety Commission
C. Tom Clowe, Jr., Member, Public Safety Commission
Ada Brown, Member, Public Safety Commission
John Steen, Member, Public Safety Commission
Carin Marcy Barth, Member, Public Safety Commission
Steven McCraw, Director, Department of Public Safety
Lt. Colonel Lamar Beckworth, Deputy Director, Department of Public Safety
Lori Gabbert,, Budget Analyst, Legislative Budget Board (LBB-DPS)
Tom Lambert, Budget Analyst, Legislative Budget Board (LBB-TCEQ)
Ed Perez, Executive Director, Texas Office of State-Federal Relations,
Washington, DC
Brandon Steinmann, Director, Texas Office of State-Federal Relations, Austin,
Texas

Attachment 1 Climatic Regions



Attachment 2

Counties with Extreme to High Fire Danger

