



DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL

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JACK COLLEY
Council Chairman

April 8, 2010

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-Toureilles, 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: Chief Jack Colley, Chairman, Drought Preparedness Council

SUBJECT: Statewide Drought Situation Report

Jack Colley, 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 Cooperative Extension

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

Alfonso Royal III
Texas Department of Housing and
Community Affairs

1. NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

June 10, 2010 at 2:00 p.m., Audit & Inspection Conference Room, Texas Department of Public Safety Headquarters, Building A, 5805 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas.

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

March 2010 continued a span of colder than normal months across Texas, although precipitation was not nearly as abundant as during the first two months of the year. Other than the High Plains, North Central Texas, and the eastern Edwards Plateau regions, precipitation was below normal, with the largest deficits in the Far East Texas region. Due to the above-normal precipitation across the majority of the State during the past six months, the United States Drought Monitor (USDM) depicted Texas as “drought free” for the month of March.

The Trans-Pecos and Southwest regions near the Rio Grande River received minimal precipitation in March and saw cold-season precipitation deficits. El Paso received only 0.02 inch of precipitation during the month. The average March precipitation is only 0.25 inch. The 1.43 inch of precipitation in February, which included some snow, was more than three times above normal. Concern over the March dryness in Southwest Texas was tempered, given that March is climatologically the driest month over South Texas. The Trans-Pecos and Southwest regions were categorized as “Abnormally Dry” by the USDM.

An area of slight concern was the Far East Texas region, near the Sabine River, which has been relatively dry since October. Over the past five months, rainfall in this region was roughly equivalent to the October 2009 monthly total and approximately 50%-75% of normal. Concerns in East Texas were alleviated due to exceptionally wet periods during late summer and early autumn. Springtime is a climatologically wet period in East Texas, so this area bears monitoring for the development of drought conditions if there are significant periods of little to no precipitation.

The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) predicts that El Nino will continue through the Northern Hemisphere spring. The current one-month forecast calls for a 33-40% chance of above-normal March precipitation across the majority of the State. The Trans-Pecos and Edwards Plateau regions may prove to be the exception as the area has equal chances of above, below, and near normal precipitation. The three-month forecast by the CPC, valid for April through June 2010, calls for equal chances of above-normal, below-normal, and near-normal precipitation across much of Texas. A 33-40% chance of above-normal precipitation is predicted across the northern Panhandle. The CPC three-month drought outlook does not indicate the development of drought conditions in the Trans-Pecos, Southwest, or Far East regions of the state.

3. OVERALL STATEWIDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

During March, Texas remained under “Wet” conditions as indicated by four of the six major drought indices. The Crop Moisture Index (CMI), however, indicated “Slightly Dry” conditions in all ten climate regions and the Reservoir Storage Index (RSI) indicated six of ten regions in various degrees of dryness.

The Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) indicated the Trans-Pecos and Upper Coast regions were under a “Slightly Wet” condition. The High Plains, Low Rolling Plains, and Edwards Plateau regions were under a “Moderately Wet” condition. The East Texas, South Central, and Southern regions were under a “Very Wet” condition, and the North Central region was under an “Extremely Wet” condition.

All climate regions were listed under a “Slightly Dry” condition, according to the CMI.

The Six-Month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) indicated the North Central, East Texas, South Central, and Southern regions were under a “Very Wet” condition. The Edwards Plateau, Upper Coast, and Lower Valley regions were under a “Moderately Wet” condition. The remaining regions were in a “Near Normal” condition. The SPI conditions range from “Extremely Wet,” “Very Wet,” “Moderately Wet,” “Near Normal,” “Moderately Dry,” “Severely Dry,” and “Extremely Dry” in order of increasing severity.

The Trans-Pecos region was in an “Above Average” fire risk, according to the Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI), while the remaining regions were listed as “Average” to “Low” fire risk.

4. WATER UTILITY STATUS

April 2010 began with 172 public water systems with water conservation restrictions. A total of 91 water systems removed all water restrictions and returned to normal operations. Mandatory watering schedules were imposed by 54 water systems and 27 asked for voluntary reductions in usage.

Continued rains in the forecast will allow many of the public water systems on the list with current watering restrictions to review the Drought Contingency Plans, relax restrictions, and return to normal operations.

5. WATER RIGHTS – STATEWIDE

New temporary water use permit applications were reviewed on a site-specific basis. Permits were issued if sufficient surplus water existed at the requested source. Applications for new water use permits and amendments to existing permits remained normal for the month. The water rights owners in the Brazos River Basin, whose permits contain Hale Clause restrictions, were notified that the more severe summer water use restriction will be implemented beginning April 1, 2010 and continue through August. The availability of unappropriated water for new water use permits continued to decrease in all river basins in the State. The search for long-term, dependable, and alternate sources of water remains a high priority issue.

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

Current Overall Conditions: As of March 27, 2010, the U.S. combined ownership at Amistad/Falcon stood at 81.74% of conservation capacity (2,772,628 acre-feet of temporary conservation capacity). Overall, the system is holding 83.78% (4,962,356 acre-feet of conservation capacity), with Amistad at 94.70% (3,102,587 acre-feet) and Falcon at 70.26% (1,859,769 acre-feet). Mexico currently holds 86.52% of the water storage at Amistad/Falcon.

Allocations: As of the printing of the February ownership report, the U.S. had not allocated Class A and Class B water rights, for irrigation, mining, or recreation. Additionally, the U.S. held an amount in excess of 190,770 acre-feet for future allocations in 2010.

Storage & Loss - Amistad vs. Falcon: The U.S. is currently storing approximately 1.72 million acre-feet (93.3%) at Amistad and approximately 1.05 million acre-feet (68%) at Falcon.

Releases to Meet Demands: In 2010, Mexico released 106,916 acre-feet from Amistad and 26,583 acre-feet from Falcon for Mexico’s needs. The U.S. released 118,461 acre-feet

from Amistad and 180,554 acre-feet from Falcon for U.S. needs. Combined with gains between Amistad and Falcon, U.S. inflows to Falcon totaled 200,526 acre-feet. From January 1, 2010 to date, the U.S. met 2.2% of the overall needs of the Middle and Lower Rio Grande directly from Middle Rio Grande and Amistad inflows.

Upper Rio Grande (New Mexico): Elephant Butte in New Mexico is currently at 26.7% capacity. Caballo Dam, downstream of Elephant Butte, is storing 57,560 acre-feet (25.6% of capacity). This water storage, in part, was used to meet water needs in the El Paso area.

Outlook: All active accounts began 2010 with 50% usable balances. To help alleviate losses in Falcon, the U.S. will continue to monitor ownership and elevation levels in both Falcon and Amistad, maximizing the efficiency of U.S. transfers of water from Amistad to Falcon.

There were still “Abnormally Dry” areas in and around the Corpus Christi area west to Webb County, and along the Rio Grande in Maverick, Val Verde, and Kinney counties, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The Rio Grande Valley currently has no drought conditions. During the past month, several cold fronts with precipitation were experienced in the area. The moisture created less demand for water in the Rio Grande Valley which, in turn, allows for water conservation.

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

March brought significant showers throughout most of the South Texas and Concho Watermaster areas. Most of the flow conditions for area rivers held steady or increased slightly.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The area received scattered rainfall ranging from two to three inches during March. The Texas Crop Moisture Index classified the area of the Hill Country as “Slightly Dry” to “Favorably Moist.” Most of the surface water diversions in the area were for municipal and industrial uses with a few surface water permit holders irrigating hay and sod fields. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicated the area is currently under “No Drought” conditions.

Stream Flow Conditions:

Site	Ending Flows CFS	Historical Mean CFS
Guadalupe River near Kerrville	90	125
Guadalupe River near Comfort	202	213
Medina River at Bandera	135	167

Drought Restrictions: In the Guadalupe River Basin above Canyon Lake, none of the State permit holders reached their flow restrictions. State water permit holders in the San Antonio River Basin above Lake Medina are not diverting at this time. All Temporary Water Permits are reviewed on a case by case basis.

Area Counties: Bee, Goliad, Victoria, Calhoun, Jackson, Refugio, Aransas, San Patricio, Nueces, Kleberg, Jim Wells, Duval, Live Oak, Kenedy, Willacy, Brooks, and Jim Hogg.

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The area continued to receive much-needed rainfall during March. Some areas received as much as three inches while other areas received only scattered to isolated rain showers. The majority of area streams flowed at or above normal for this time of the year. The U. S. Drought Monitor indicated most of the counties in the area are not experiencing any drought conditions at this time. Jim Hogg and Duval Counties experienced an “Abnormally Dry” condition. Surface water diversions in the area continue to be primarily for municipal and industrial uses, with little irrigational use.

Stream Flow Conditions:

Site (Years of Record)	Beginning Flows CFS	Ending Flows CFS	Historical Mean CFS
Guadalupe River near Victoria (75)	2,130.0	1,760.0	1,640.0
San Antonio River near Goliad (74)	724.0	734.0	525.0
San Antonio River at McFaddin below Goliad (3)	664.0	397.0	395.0
Guadalupe River near Tivoli (2)	2,410.0	2,770.0	2,020.0
Mission River near Refugio (70)	47.0	32.0	81.0
Nueces River at Calallen Dam (10)	0.3	1.0	173.0
Aransas River near Skidmore (45)	15.0	12.0	64.0

Guadalupe River stream flows continued over the saltwater barrier near Tivoli, Texas.

Corpus Christi Reservoir System: The Corpus Christi Reservoir System received some inflows during March and the level of the reservoir system rose slightly. The Corpus Christi Reservoir System was at 67.3% of capacity (641,135 acre-feet) compared to 72.9% of capacity (693,929 acre-feet) during the same time last year. The level of Choke Canyon rose to 60.7% of capacity (156,254 acre-feet). Lake Corpus Christi was at 62.3% of capacity (160,325 acre-feet) compared to 58.2% of capacity (149,682 acre-feet) last year. Corpus Christi continued to divert much of its monthly water supply needs from Lake Texana.

Drought Restrictions: No drought restrictions of water rights were reached.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The area received more relief from the drought during March. Heavy rain showers were reported throughout the month for the entire area. The range of rainfall in the area was one to three inches during the month. Diversions of surface water were primarily for irrigational use, with small amounts for municipal and industrial uses. Crops irrigated in the area included cabbage, hay grazers, and pecans. Soil conditions improved due to the rainfall, though the U.S. Drought Report indicated the area is experiencing an “Abnormally Dry” condition at this time.

Stream Flow Conditions:

Site	Ending Flows CFS	Last Month CFS	Historical Mean CFS
Nueces River at Laguna	87.00	114.00	127.00
Nueces River at Brackettville	0.31	0.83	25.00
Nueces River below Uvalde	8.30	7.00	69.00
Frio River at Concan	67.00	78.00	93.00
Sabinal River at Sabinal	0.87	1.40	25.00
Leona River near Uvalde	9.40	0.43	48.00

Stream flows of intermittent and tributary streams in the area were well below average for this time of year.

Drought Restrictions: One permit with stream flow restrictions was curtailed and permits that have not met their stream flow restrictions were regulated. The Zavala/Dimmit Water District has a rotational diversion schedule on the Nueces River to ensure adequate water for domestic and livestock use. Temporary permits were curtailed on the Nueces, Sabinal and Leona rivers.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The southern portions of this area received one to 1.5 inch of rainfall during March. The remainder of the area, including the Lavaca area, received two to 4.5 inches. Winter oat and rye crops flourished and farmers began to prepare fields for the corn planting season. Irrigation activities decreased to a minimum due to the significant precipitation in the area. Lake Texana was at 100% of capacity, or 44.06 feet above mean sea level. This is the fifth consecutive month Lake Texana is at 100% capacity.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitoring System, most of the area is not experiencing drought conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: Stream flow conditions in this area improved over the last few months.

Site	Beginning flows CFS	Ending flows CFS	Historical Mean CFS
San Antonio River near Falls City	416.0	647.0	285.0
Cibolo Creek near Falls City	105.0	116.0	33.0
Guadalupe River near Gonzales	1,800.0	2,630.0	1,120.0
The Lavaca River at Edna	164.0	143.0	81.0
Navidad River near Hallettsville	44.0	65.0	45.0
Atascosa River near Whitsett	48.0	32.0	14.0
Frio River near Tilden	2.9	3.2	29.0
Nueces River near Tilden	11.0	11.0	4.0

Drought Restrictions: Currently, there are no restricted permits due to drought conditions in the area.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Continued widespread rain fell across the San Antonio Regional Area during March. Month-to-date rainfall measured at the San Antonio International Airport was 2.01 inches; the average rainfall for March is 1.89 inch. The total year-to-date rainfall is 10.92 inches. Normal year-to-date rainfall is 5.24 inches. The U.S. Drought Monitor, dated March 23, 2010, indicated the San Antonio Regional Area is experiencing “No Drought” conditions. Ground moisture was excellent with widespread rainfall, cooling temperatures, and cloud cover. Fields were plowed for spring planting, and were prepared for the summer growing season.

Stream Flow Conditions: The Guadalupe, Medina, and Blanco Rivers flowed above February historical means. Small creeks, springs, and perennial creeks flowed. Municipal use increased due to residential lawn irrigation. Industrial use remained constant.

The Canyon Lake Reservoir was at 100.0% of capacity, impounding 378,781 acre-feet. The Lake Medina Reservoir was at 41.13% of capacity, impounding 104,806 acre-feet. On March 29, 2010, the Edwards Aquifer level at the J17 well in Bexar County was at 669.1 feet.

Site	Ending Flows CFS	Historical Mean CFS
Blanco River at Wimberley	194	156
San Marcos River at Luling	535	403
Guadalupe River at Spring Branch	359	362
San Marcos Springs	274	176
Comal Springs	362	306

Drought Restrictions: Currently, there are no drought restrictions on surface water permits in the San Antonio Regional Area.

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

The Concho River Valley received an average amount of rainfall during March. According to information provided by the USDA, the State Drought Monitor listed the Concho Valley in a “No Drought” condition.

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Rainfall in San Angelo was measured at 1.16 inch, while areas surrounding San Angelo received slightly higher rainfall amounts. The average rainfall amount for March is 1.08 inch. The total amount of year-to-date rainfall is 6.03 inches. Area reservoirs showed a slight increase in amount of storage from the previous month. The Texas Crop Moisture Index indicated the area is under “Slightly High” to “Favorably Moist” soil conditions. There was a reduced demand by appropriated surface water rights in the Concho Valley and there are adequate supplies of surface water in the area.

Stream Flow Conditions:

Site (Years of Record)	Ending Flows CFS	Historical Mean CFS
USGS Gauging System at Spring Creek/Twin Buttes (6)	19	18
USGS Gauging System at Concho River/San Angelo (79)	18	19
USGS Gauging System at South Concho/Christoval (73)	19	18

Lake Nasworthy was at 84% of capacity, impounding 617 acre-feet. O.C. Fisher was at three percent of capacity, impounding 3,897 acre-feet. Twin Buttes was at 26% of capacity, impounding 48,875 acre-feet.

Drought Restrictions: There are no restriction permits issued for the area at this time.

8. UPPER COLORADO (Concho River watershed not included)

The Upper Colorado River area received above-normal precipitation during March. The National Weather Service reported monthly precipitation was 1.17 inch for the region, 0.18 inch above normal. The U.S. Drought Monitor noted the area was under “No Drought” conditions. USGS gauges indicated little to near-normal flow in the Colorado River between Gail and Robert Lee. The San Saba River flowed near the USGS long-term medians in the upper reaches, but significantly higher than the historical medians in the middle and lower reaches. The North Llano River and Llano River flowed above historical USGS long-term median. The pool levels of E.V. Spence and O.H. Ivie Reservoirs decreased slightly during March, holding at levels of 4% and 43% capacity, respectively.

9. TEXAS PANHANDLE AND SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

Amarillo Area: Lake Meredith ended the month at 45.97 feet; Lake Greenbelt ended March at 52.35 feet; and, Lake MacKenzie ended the month at 70.22 feet. The National Weather Service in Amarillo reported the total rainfall amount during March was 1.61 inch and 6.7 inches of snow.

Lubbock Area: Lubbock received 2.85 inches of rain during March which is above average. The year-to-date rainfall total for Lubbock is 6.04 inches, 4.07 inches above normal. The long-term drought situation did not change. Communities previously noted on mandatory water restrictions remained on restrictions. No new communities were added to the water restrictions list during March and none were removed.

Lubbock and Amherst remained on mandatory drought restriction status. Ralls, Crosbyton, Spur, Post, White River WCS, and Valley WCS in the South Plains area remained on voluntary drought restriction status.

White River Lake: The lake pool elevation was 24 feet below full capacity.

Lake Alan Henry: The lake’s pool elevation was five feet below full capacity. The City of Lubbock began construction on the new water pipeline between Lake Alan Henry and the

City of Lubbock on March 23, 2010. The plans include laying pipeline and a new surface water treatment plant to be constructed in Lubbock sometime during 2012.

10. WILDLIFE CONCERNS

No information was received by the time of this report.

11. AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Drought is currently not a significant issue in Texas agriculture. Farmers in parts of Southwest Texas, the Edwards Plateau and a small portion of the Trans-Pecos regions reported crops are in need of rain. Throughout the majority of the remainder of the State, soil moisture was in good supply and the planted crops responded favorably to warmer weather. Winter pastures and warm season grasses responded to warmer weather and good soil moisture, reducing the need for supplemental feed for livestock after a long, wet winter with short supplies of feed.

Central: The agricultural situation continued to improve with warmer weather and sunshine. Wheat growers treated for wheat stripe rust (yellow rust) and leaf rust (brown rust) in fields dry enough to cross with spray rigs. Wet weather delayed corn planting and some producers expected to plant sorghum instead. Small grains and pastures provided beneficial growth. Peach trees looked better than average.

Coastal bend: Farmers continued to plant sorghum, cotton, and rice. Planting of sesame was also underway and seed rice will be planted soon. Rain was expected in the area, and producers attempted to complete fertilizer applications while fields were dry. Warmer temperatures encouraged pasture growth though the showers predicted for the region did not materialize.

East: Grass conditions improved as a result of warmer temperatures and producers were preparing to plant vegetables. Livestock conditions were fair to good with some producers still providing supplemental feed.

Far west: The weather was mild with warm days and cool nights. No precipitation was reported, and top soils dried out. Some alfalfa farmers made their first cutting. Spring-weed growth provided grazing for sheep and goats.

North: Soil moisture was adequate to surplus and warm, windy weather helped dry out fields, allowing producers to plant crops. Wheat planted last fall was in fair to good condition. Rangeland and pastures were in poor to fair condition. Warm-season grasses began to come out of dormancy. Livestock were in fair to good condition and most beef producers were finished or almost finished with winter feeding. Sweet potato growers prepared to plant. Bermuda grass spriggers began digging. The peach crop looked promising.

Panhandle: Conditions in the region were warm, dry, and windy and producers were able to get into fields to fertilize wheat, spray for weeds, and finish field preparations for spring planting. Wheat was in fair to good condition, showing growth with the warmer days and good soil moisture. Warm-season grasses began to come out of dormancy and cattle began to exhibit some weight gain after a long, cold winter.

Rolling plains: Warm, windy weather dried out the upper layer of the soil profile, although deeper soil moisture remained. Producers prepared cotton fields and waited for soil temperatures in anticipation of planting. Plowing in preparation for planting sudan/sorghum was in full swing. The wheat showed positive progress and producers wrapped up fertilizer, top-dressing and herbicide treatments as the crop neared the boot stage. Insects, including green bugs, were not a problem. Wheat rust was not a problem to any extent. Area producers pulled cattle off of any wheat they plan to harvest for grain. Pastures continued to improve daily with warmer, dry weather. Livestock were in good condition. Cool-season grasses provided much-needed grazing for cattle, thereby reducing the need for supplemental feeding.

South: Cool nights, warmer daytime temperatures and windy conditions were consistent throughout the region. Crop planting was almost at an end and spring crops progressed well in the southern parts of the region. Soil moisture levels were adequate in most of the region but short in the western counties. Forage availability in rangeland and pastures increased and the condition of cattle improved in response. Corn and sorghum crops emerged with corn approximately a foot tall. Growers planted watermelons. In the northern counties, potatoes progressed well due to warmer weather. In the eastern counties, corn and sunflowers emerged, and most stands were well established. Cool nights slowed the progress of cotton. Irrigators applied water to wheat, cabbage, onions, sorghum and cotton. Producers harvested cabbage and irrigated wheat progressed well. However, in the western counties, dryland wheat and oats showed signs of stress due to the lack of rain.

South plains: The region experienced warm, windy weather with highs near 90 degrees and a low of 32 degrees. The region remained dry, though soil moisture remained adequate. Winter wheat responded well to the warm days and producers continued to prepare fields, applying fertilizers and herbicides. Pastures and rangeland were in fair to good condition and cattle were in good condition.

Southeast: Warmer days and drier weather encouraged forage growth and rangeland was green and lush. Beef cattle body condition scores were above average. Spring planting and land preparation were under way as fields dried. Cattle condition improved this week with better forage growth conditions. Native grasses made some progress while Bermuda grass and Bahia grass were slow to produce as nights remained cool.

Southwest: The total rain for March was approximately 70% of the long-term average. The year-to-date cumulative amount was approximately 1.5 times the average and soils had considerable moisture. Mild, cool, open weather accelerated spring growth, and the region was green. Although less-palatable winter weeds used up soil moisture, overall forage availability improved significantly. Livestock and wildlife made good use of the improved forage availability and corn and sorghum produced good stands. Frost or cold injury to potatoes and onions in mid-March appeared to be minor. The spinach harvest wound down and growers continued to harvest cabbage, broccoli, and carrots. Wheat, oats, and late-planted cabbage made excellent progress. Farmers planted cotton, cantaloupe, watermelon, and cucumbers. Fruit and pecan growers were optimistic the fruit set would be above average.

West central: Warmer temperatures and high winds led to drier conditions and crops were in need of more rain. As fields dried out, producers prepared for spring planting, spraying herbicides and applying fertilizer. Weeds are expected to be a problem this season. Small-grains showed some signs of rust and growers sprayed in response. Rangeland and pastures continued to improve with the warmer temperatures. As pastures greened up,

producers decreased supplemental feeding of livestock and beef producers culled their herds.

12. WILDFIRE CONCERNS

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is used to help determine 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 its 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 spring dormant season following winter precipitation.

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

KBDI = 401 – 600: Typical of late summer, 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.

There are currently 19 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 Council, which is chaired by Jack Colley, Assistant Director, Texas Division of Emergency Management, is composed 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.

Jack Colley, Assistant Director, Texas Division of Emergency Management, (512) 424-2443, fax (512) 424-2444, web site: <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem>

John Sutton, Texas Water Development Board, (512) 463-7988, fax (512) 463-9893, web site: <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us>

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

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

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

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

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

Carla Baze, Texas Department of Transportation, (512) 416-3270, fax (512) 416-2941, web site: <http://www.txdot.state.tx.us>

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

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

Thomas Walker, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism, (512) 936-0169, fax (512) 936-0141, web site: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/ecodev>

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

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

Gus Garcia, Texas Department of Rural Affairs, (512) 936-7876, fax (512) 936-6776, web site: <http://www.tdra.state.tx.us>

Alfonso Royal III, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, (512) 475-4273, 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 2 Counties with Extreme to High Fire Danger

