



DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL

RICK PERRY
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W. NIM KIDD
Council Chairperson

December 9, 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-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 W. Nim Kidd, Texas Division of Emergency Management

SUBJECT: Statewide Drought Situation Report

W. 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

Vacant
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

January 10, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. via teleconference

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

For the second straight month, most of Texas had below-normal precipitation, with most areas outside of the Panhandle picking up only a small fraction of normal precipitation amounts. The dryness was most evident in West Texas, where several stations (Del Rio, El Paso, Midland, and San Angelo) saw less than 1% of their normal precipitation for the month of November. By the end of month, the two main areas of drought concern were in Southeast Texas and in the southern Edwards Plateau. For the first time in 2010, extreme drought (D3) was present in the United States Drought Monitor (USDM) depiction of Texas for November 30th. The D3 area covered Edwards, Kerr, and Real counties, and most of the Edwards Plateau was covered by severe drought (D2). Elsewhere, D2 conditions stretched from Angelina County in East Texas to Lee County in South Central Texas.

During November, drought conditions in the Edwards Plateau generally deteriorated by a category from moderate (D1) to D2. Similarly, the D2 area present in Southeast Texas by the end of November was a D1 area on the first of November. In the Texas areas currently designated as D1 and D2, the dryness is most severe from 3-6 months, indicating impacts of the drought should be primarily agricultural. There have been several reports indicating the dryness has had a negative impact on the growth of winter pastures and the planting of winter wheat. Since the beginning of September, most of the D2-D3 areas of Texas have received less than 25% of normal precipitation during the time period.

The major concern over the winter is the high likelihood of an active wildfire season, particularly in areas of northern Texas where vegetation growth was extensive during the past year because of an abundance of precipitation. La Nina conditions are in place across the equatorial Pacific Ocean and are expected to continue at least into the spring of 2011, according to the Climate Prediction Center (CPC).

During December 2010, there are equal chances of above-normal, below-normal, and near-normal precipitation in East Texas. The probability of below-normal December precipitation increases as you head west, with a 33-40% chance in most of North Central and South Central Texas, a 40-50% chance in the Panhandle, Edwards Plateau, and South Texas, and a greater than 50% chance in the Trans Pecos. There is a 40-50% chance of below-normal 3-month precipitation (December-February) in the southern half of the state, and a 33-40% chance in the northern half of the state. Current drought areas are expected to persist over the next 3 months. Across the rest of the state, drought is expected to develop in most areas outside the Panhandle and along the Red River in North Texas.

3. DROUGHT INDICES

The state became slightly drier compared to 30 days ago, but no region is in serious drought condition.

Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI):

The East Texas region remained in "Moderate Drought," but all others were in conditions ranging from "Near Normal" to "Wet," with two regions listed as "Very Wet."

Crop Moisture Index (CMI)

Trans-Pecos, Edwards Plateau, and Southern regions were in "Moderately Dry" condition. All others are depicted as "Slightly Dry."

Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

All regions were in "Normal" conditions.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI)

Three regions have fire risks listed as “Above Average,” with the rest shown as “High.”

Stream Flow Index (SFI)

Flows were near normal or high in all regions

4. WATER UTILITY STATUS

December 2010, began with 200 public water systems on the drought list. Of this total, 125 have removed all watering restrictions and returned to normal operations for the year. Of the remaining water systems with restrictions, 43 are asking that customers follow a mandatory watering schedule based on address and day of the week, and 32 are asking for voluntary reductions in outside usage.

Future forecasts continue to predict a warmer than normal winter with very little rain. If this holds true 2011 will begin with little recharge of existing water supplies that are already low. This may result in additional public water systems implementing outside watering restrictions near spring.

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. The water rights owners in the Brazos River Basin whose permits contain Hale Clause restrictions are observing the less severe stream-flow restrictions of their permits during the winter months. The availability of unappropriated water for new water-use 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 November 27, 2010, the U.S. combined ownership at Amistad/Falcon stood at 99.53% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 3,504,091 acre-feet, up from 79.23% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 2,687,504 acre-feet a year ago at this time. Overall the system is holding 99.73% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 6,098,971 acre-feet, with Amistad at 100.44% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 3,289,861 acre-feet, and Falcon at 99.40% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 2,822,892 acre-feet. Mexico has 100.00% of temporary conservation capacity, impounding 2,610,486 acre-feet at Amistad/Falcon.

Allocations: As of printing of the October ownership report, the U.S. has allocated 552,219.751 acre-feet to Class A & B water rights, which include irrigation, mining and recreation. Additionally, the U.S. has approximately 602,122 acre feet for future allocations in 2010.

Storage & Loss Amistad vs. Falcon: The U.S. is currently storing approximately 1.841 million acre-feet at Amistad (100%) and approximately 1.639 million acre-feet (98.50%) of temporary conservation capacity at Falcon. Evaporation and seepage losses at Amistad

cycle, as of 11/13/10, are 4,124 acre-feet. For the same period, the U.S. lost 5,540 acre-feet at Falcon.

Releases to meet demands: In 2010 (through 11/13/10), Mexico released 220,554 acre-feet from Amistad and 493,416 acre-feet from Falcon for Mexico needs. The U.S. has released 459,487 acre-feet from Falcon and 376,881 acre-feet from Amistad for U.S. needs. Combined with gains between Amistad and Falcon, U.S. inflows to Falcon totaled 550,990 acre-feet. The U.S. demand in the lower Rio Grande was met at a rate of 146% by direct Rio Grande inflows and Amistad releases this year.

Upper Rio Grande (New Mexico): Currently, Elephant Butte Reservoir in New Mexico is at 19.47% of capacity, impounding 394,004 acre-feet, and Caballo Dam in New Mexico, downstream of Elephant Butte, is at 8.93% of capacity, impounding 20,268 acre-feet.

Outlook: No Charge diversions have been in effect since July, 2010 between Amistad Reservoir and the Gulf of Mexico. Falcon Reservoir is currently on a temporary conservation level of 303.42 feet. The National Weather Service reports that moderate to strong La Nina conditions resulted in extremely dry weather across deep South Texas during October. Only portions of Zapata and Starr Counties received isolated showers. Furthermore, according to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, topsoil moisture levels rapidly decrease during these dry conditions.

Additionally, according to the Palmer Drought index, the Rio Grande Basin is experiencing drought conditions ranging from “Abnormally Dry” to “Severe Drought” in areas between Presidio County and Zapata County along the Rio Grande to Starr County.

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: This area received little rainfall during the month of November, although some isolated showers occurred during the first part of the month. These showers provided some runoff into the area streams, but the stream flows quickly declined. Stream flows of 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 of this area are currently experiencing “Moderate Drought” conditions at this time. Counties in the southernmost part of this area are experiencing “Abnormally Dry” 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	November Beginning flows CFS*	November Ending Flows CFS *	November Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
Guadalupe River near Victoria	817.00	861.00	2,030.00
San Antonio River near Goliad	339.00	402.00	754.00
San Antonio River at McFaddin below Goliad	478.00	501.00	649.00
Guadalupe River near Tivoli	1,170.00	1,190.00	2,520.00
Mission River near Refugio	2.04	19.00	94.00
Nueces River at Calallen Dam	0.00	0.00	996.00
Aransas River near Skidmore	8.70	9.20	16.00

* USGS Gage values obtained on 12/01/10

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 November. The level of the reservoir system has decreased and was at 83.7% of capacity, impounding 797,701 acre-feet, compared to 58.5% of capacity, impounding 556,870 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Choke Canyon was at 81.3% of capacity, impounding 565,452 acre-feet, compared to 68.3% of capacity, impounding 474,691 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Lake Corpus Christi is at 90.3% of capacity, impounding 232,249 acre-feet, compared to 31.9% of capacity, impounding 82,179 acre-feet at this time last year. The City of Corpus Christi continues to divert much of its 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 2 inches of rainfall for the month of November, while the eastern portions of the area, including the Lavaca area, received 1 to 4 inches. All summer crops in this area have been harvested. Therefore, demand for irrigation is low, with some irrigation for winter oats and rye. Lake Texana is at 88% of capacity, 41.76 ft. above mean sea level.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, this area is experiencing “Abnormally Dry” to “No Drought” conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: Stream flow conditions in this area are normal at this time.

Site	November Beginning flows CFS*	November Ending flows CFS*	November Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
San Antonio River near Falls City	282.00	350.00	451.00
Cibolo Creek near Falls City	49.00	48.00	139.00
Guadalupe River near Gonzales	864.00	833.00	2840.00
The Lavaca River at Edna	41.00	42.00	394.00
Navidad River near Hallettsville	4.00	8.10	181.00
Atascosa River near Whitsett	2.30	5.00	69.00
Frio River near Tilden	0.10	0.17	109.00
Nueces River near Tilden	0.00	0.00	300.00

* USGS Gage Values Obtained 11/1/2010 and 11/30/2010

Drought Restrictions: There are no water rights permits being restricted due to drought in this area at this time.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Less than half an inch of rainfall was measured in the San Antonio Regional Area for the month of November. The U.S. Drought Monitor, dated November 30, 2010, indicates the San Antonio Regional Area is experiencing “Abnormally Dry” to “Moderate Drought” conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: The flows in the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Blanco Rivers have dropped significantly due to the lack of rainfall. The smaller perennial creeks are ceasing to flow. Irrigation use has decreased and industrial use remains constant.

Site	November Starting flows CFS	November Ending flows CFS *	November Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
Guadalupe River at Spring Branch	118	103	302
San Marcos River at Luling	247	222	617
Blanco River at Wimberley	78	65	133

*USGS Gage Value for 11/30/10

As of November 30, 2010, Canyon Lake Reservoir was at 908.73 feet elevation and 98.21% of capacity, impounding 378,781 acre-feet. Lake Medina Reservoir was at 69.08% of capacity, impounding 176,028 acre-feet. San Marcos Springs were flowing at 174 cubic feet per second (CFS). The historical monthly average for the San Marcos Springs in November is 205 CFS. Comal Springs were flowing at 321 CFS. The historical monthly average for the Comal Springs in November is 307 CFS. The J-17 Bexar reading was at 673.9 on November 30, 2010.

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

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: There was little relief from the severe drought conditions across the Southwest Texas area during the month of November. The range of rainfall in the area was 0 to 1 inch. Surface water diversions in this area have been minimal due to little or no stream flows. Crops being irrigated in the area include onions, greens and turnips. Soil conditions are very dry.

The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is experiencing “Severe 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	November Beginning flows CFS	November Ending flows CFS	November Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Nueces River at Laguna	34.00	29.00	171.00
Nueces River near Brackettville	0.17	0.17	21.00
Nueces River below Uvalde	6.60	6.20	142.00
Frio River at Concan	22.00	24.00	112.00
Sabinal River at Sabinal	0.37	1.40	21.00
Leona River near Uvalde	5.10	4.00	41.00

Drought Restrictions: Permits that have not met their stream flow restrictions are being regulated. The Zavala/Dimmit Water District is allowing no diversions other than for Domestic and Livestock use. Also, temporary permits have been restricted.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: This area received rainfall ranging from a trace to 0.49 inches during the month of November. The Crop Moisture Index indicates this area of the hill country is classified as “Abnormally Dry.” 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 “Abnormally Dry” conditions.

Stream flow Condition:

Site	November Beginning flows CFS*	November Ending flows CFS+	November Historical Mean CFS+
South Texas Watermaster			
Guadalupe River at Kerrville	53	56	152
Guadalupe River at Comfort	70	75	192
Medina River at Bandera	35	33	124

*USGS Gauge value for 11/01/10 +USGS Gauge value of 11/30/10

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

Drought Restrictions: There are currently no permits being restricted in this area. 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: Sterling, Tom Green, Irion, Concho, Coke, Glasscock, Runnels, Reagan, Schleicher.

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The Concho River Valley received below-average amounts of rainfall for the month of November. No rainfall was recorded in San Angelo. Areas surrounding San Angelo received trace rainfall amounts. The average rainfall for the month of November is 1.20 inches. The total amount of rainfall for the year is 19.18 inches. The Texas Crop Moisture Index indicates the area as having “Abnormally Dry” soil conditions. Cotton is being harvested. The State Drought Monitor Index indicates the Concho Valley as having “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 8,228 acre-feet. O. C. Fisher Reservoir is at 2% of capacity, impounding 2,147 acre-feet. Twin Buttes Lake is at 18% of capacity, impounding 33,510 acre-feet.

Site	November Beginning Flows CFS	November Ending Flows CFS	Historical Mean Flows
Concho Watermaster			
Spring Creek above Twin Buttes Reservoir	0.0	0.0	11.0
Concho River at San Angelo and Bell St.	9.2	8.7	30.0
South Concho at Christoval	8.7	12.0	22.0

Drought Restrictions: The diversion rates in this area are currently being restricted due to low flow conditions. The diversions are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis according to adjudicated priority date.

8. UPPER COLORADO (Concho River watershed not included)

The upper Colorado River area received a trace amount of rain during November. The National Weather Service in San Angelo reported monthly precipitation of a trace amount, which is 1.10 inches below normal. The reported year-to-date total is 19.14 inches, 0.83 inches below normal. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, area drought conditions in Crockett, Sutton and Kimble counties are experiencing “Severe Drought” to “Moderate Drought” conditions. Schleicher, Menard and Reagan counties are experiencing “Moderate Drought” to “Abnormally Dry” conditions. Mason and McCulloch counties are experiencing “Moderate Drought” conditions. Irion, Concho and Sterling counties are experiencing “Abnormally Dry” conditions. Tom Green and Coke counties have no drought conditions. USGS gauges indicate a slight flow (0.01 CFS) in the Colorado River near Gail, TX and a flow slightly higher than the USGS long-term median near Colorado City, TX. USGS gauges indicate diminished flows in the Colorado River above Silver, TX down to Ballinger, TX. The San Saba River has significant decreases in flow that are lower than the USGS long-term median in 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 O.H. Ivie Reservoir have decreased to 3.4% and 33.3% of capacity, respectively.

9. TEXAS PANHANDLE AND SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

Amarillo Area:

Lake Meredith is at 38.58 feet. Lake Greenbelt is at 52 feet, down 0.14 feet from October. Lake MacKenzie is at 72.09 feet, down 0.45 feet from October. The National Weather Service in Amarillo reported a total rainfall in November of 2.88 inches, 0.68 inches above the monthly average for November. Amarillo also received 3 inches of snowfall in November.

Lubbock Area:

Reporting Station: Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport

	Precipitation	Average	Departure
November	0.07	0.69	-0.62
2010 Year-to-Date	26.46	18.00	+8.46

Reservoir report:

Reservoir Basin (Brazos)	Conservation Pool (Elevation)	Current (Elevation)	% of Capacity	% Change (From Last Report)
Alan Henry	2220.00	2218.41	95.53	- 1.02
White River	2372.20	2356.27	35.08	- 1.10

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 during November. 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.

10. WILDLIFE CONCERNS

No wildlife information available at the time of this report.

11. AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Small areas of the northern panhandle, North Texas and East Texas have been the beneficiaries of recent rainfall, but surface moisture is generally lacking over most of the state. Drought conditions exist over a wide area of the state, with the most severe in southwest and central Texas. These dry conditions have limited growth of winter pastures and increased supplemental feeding to livestock over much of the state. The prolonged drought in East and Central Texas is causing low livestock water supplies and large feed bills as ranchers provide supplemental feed normally provided by winter pastures.

Dry conditions are impacting the state's wheat and oat crop. While areas that have received significant fall rains are in good shape, much of the wheat crop is stressing with dry conditions. Stands are marginal in many wheat fields and dry weather is reducing or eliminating the potential for fall and winter grazing.

A positive note was the large cotton harvest. Farmers are wrapping up the harvest of the largest cotton crop on record in the High Plains. Quality has been good and prices are favorable.

AgriLife Extension district reporters compiled the following summaries for the week ending December 4, 2010:

CENTRAL: The region remained dry. Winter wheat and other small gains made little progress, and pastures were stressed. However, the dry conditions allowed farmers to finish field preparations for spring planting. Producers continued supplemental feeding of cattle.

COASTAL BEND: The region had no rainfall, with near-normal temperatures and some nighttime freezing temperatures. While much of this region has good sub-soil moisture, surface conditions are very dry. Producers began applying fertilizer to fields for spring crops. Livestock producers continued to supply supplemental feeding for livestock as winter forages stopped growing due to lack of rainfall.

EAST: Most of the region continued to struggle from the lack of rain. Ponds, creeks and other groundwater sources were extremely low. Soil-moisture levels remained critical in most areas. Winter pastures were stressed. Some areas, such as Henderson County, were in much better shape as far as moisture was concerned, and winter forages made good progress. Elsewhere, producers increased rations of hay and protein supplements for cattle. However, livestock were in fair to good condition.

FAR WEST: The region remained dry. Wildfire danger was extremely high with several wildfires reported. The red chilies and paprika harvests were finished. The pecan harvest just began but was in full swing. The cotton harvest was almost complete. Fall-planted onions emerged with good stands.

NORTH: Soil-moisture levels ranged from short to adequate. Some counties had freezing temperatures. Ponds levels were low. Wheat and oats were in fair condition. There was just enough rain for small grains to emerge, and some fields, including wheat, look good. However, rain has been slight and too late for some. Most livestock appeared to be in good

body condition going into the winter. As bermudagrass pastures went dormant, some producers started to feed hay. Most winter annual pastures were not quite ready for grazing. Rangeland and pasture conditions ranged from poor to good.

PANHANDLE: Producers had favorable weather to finish harvests and prepare fields for 2011. Most cotton harvest has been stripped, and producers were waiting for modules to be picked up. Cotton yields were reported to be good or above average across much of the region. However, winter wheat continued to struggle due to lack of moisture in some areas. Counties reported the crop in poor to excellent condition, depending on moisture levels. Cattle were doing well on wheat pastures. Rangeland and pastures were holding up, but the combination of dry conditions and winter dormancy caused grass to decline and the risk of wildfires to increase.

ROLLING PLAINS: The cotton harvest was almost complete. If weather conditions remain favorable, producers expect to finish the harvest within the next few weeks. Although the dry weather was a blessing to cotton farmers, ranchers needed moisture. Pastures and winter wheat were looking poor. Wheat pastures in particular were showing signs of stress from lack of moisture. Stock-water tank levels dropped to very low levels. The risk of wildfire remained high. Producers expected to spend more money this year on supplemental feed because of poor wheat pasture growth. Cattle remained in good condition due to supplemental feeding.

SOUTH: In the northern and eastern counties, wildfire potential increased in rangeland and pastures as a result of freezing temperatures and no rainfall. Brooks County reported their first wildfire, which burned close to 6,000 acres and took 24 fire crews to bring under control. Producers in those counties had to increase supplemental feeding as the quality of forage continued to decline. Livestock producers had to use well water for livestock and wildlife as stock-tank water levels continued to decline. However, cattle body-condition scores were fair. In the northern counties, the peanut harvest and some winter-pasture planting continued. In the western counties, wheat and oats continued to struggle from the dry conditions, and the spinach and cabbage harvests were ongoing. In the southern counties, fall vegetables progressed well, the harvesting of sugarcane, citrus and some vegetable crops continued, and growers prepared to harvest tomatoes.

SOUTH PLAINS: The region had mild, dry weather with a record daytime high of 82 degrees set on December 3, 2010. November ended dry with only 0.07 inch of rain recorded for the month. Harvest activities wrapped up with only a few isolated fields of cotton, sorghum and sunflowers remaining. Field operations included shredding stalks and applying fertilizer. Wheat needed rain to germinate and continue growing. Rangeland and pastures were mostly in fair condition with rain needed as well. Livestock were in good to fair condition across the region. Producers were providing cattle some supplemental feed on colder days and on pastures that had limited forage. In some counties, pastures and rangeland were in critical need of moisture. Cattle in those counties may lose earlier gains due to no wheat grazing.

SOUTHEAST: Madison County remained dry. Many livestock producers were already feeding hay. Montgomery County winter annuals showed good growth with moderate temperatures but little reserve moisture. Oats, ryegrass, wheat and clover emerged and showed growth. However, very few fields showed enough growth to be grazed. Liberty County had limited showers, and warm temperatures with some cooler temperatures close to freezing or slightly below. The ratoon rice harvest was completed in some areas with good yields. Producers were preparing land for spring planting.

SOUTHWEST: The region has been dry for almost three months. The total rainfall since Aug. 1 is only about 35 percent of the long-term average. Fields were ready for the 2011 planting, but growers will need rain soon to plant. Pastures and rangeland went into winter dormancy early due to lack of moisture and freezing temperatures in the early mornings. Forage availability was rapidly declining except for irrigated pastures seeded with small grains and annual ryegrass. Winter vegetables made excellent progress under heavy irrigation. The harvesting of cabbage, lettuce and spinach continued. The green-bean harvest was completed. The peanut and pecan harvests were nearly complete.

WEST CENTRAL: The region continued to have windy, dry weather. Days were cool and nights cold. Red-flag warnings and burn bans were in effect in most areas due to extremely dry conditions. The cotton harvest continued with good yields reported. The grain sorghum harvest was complete. The planting of wheat and oats was almost complete. Winter wheat was off to a slow start due to very dry conditions. Rangeland and pastures continued to show signs of stress from lack of moisture. Stock-tank water levels continued to drop. There was limited forage available for grazing. Producers increased supplemental feeding of livestock. The pecan harvest was well under way.

12. WILDFIRE CONCERNS

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is used to help determine the potential for fire risk. It is a numerical index in which 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 November 30, 2010, there were 163 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.

W. Nim Kidd, Texas Division of Emergency Management, (512) 424-2436, fax (512) 424-2444, website: <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem>

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

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