



DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL

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NIM KIDD
Council Chairperson

December 13, 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 Steve Ogden, 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 Troy Fraser, Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Tommy Williams, 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 Rick Hardcastle, Chairman, House Agriculture & Livestock Committee, State of Texas
The Honorable Pete Gallego, Chairman, House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, State of Texas
Mr. Jeff Boyd, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Mr. Steven McCraw, Director, Texas Department of Public Safety

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

Gilbert Jordan, Member
Texas Department of Transportation

Chris Loft, Member
Texas Commission on Environmental
Quality

Michael Dunivan, Member
Texas Forest Service

Brenner Brown, Member
Texas Water Development Board

Dr. Travis Miller, Member
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

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

Tad Curtis, Member
Office of the Governor
Economic Development & Tourism

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 12, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. DPS Headquarters

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

November 2011 marked the fourteenth consecutive month with drier than normal weather for the state of Texas as a whole. When combined with above normal average monthly temperatures, the current drought worsened throughout November in every region of Texas other than North Central Texas, the High Plains, and East Texas. According to the US Drought Monitor (USDM), the percentage of Texas with at least extreme drought (D3) designation decreased from 90.87% to 82.66% and the percentage of Texas with exceptional drought (D4) conditions decreased from 69.61% to 52.67% during November. The spatial extent and severity of drought throughout the state is evidenced by the presence of D4 conditions in all ten Texas climate divisions on the November 29, 2011 USDM depiction of drought.

Although precipitation during November 2011 was more appreciable than in recent months across much of the state, the rainfall received was averaging about 50% of normal in most areas. Elsewhere, Abilene, Victoria, and Corpus Christi all picked up less than 20% of normal November precipitation. Throughout the state, the current drought had a devastating impact on non-irrigated agriculture. In most regions of the state, the dryness eliminated any hope of a productive yield. Ranching in Texas was devastated as many cattle herds were a complete loss.

According to the Climate Prediction Center, drought conditions across most of the state are expected to worsen over the next three months, though seasonal precipitation events will still occur. During December 2011, most of Texas will have a 40-50% chance of below normal precipitation, with a 33-40% chance of below normal precipitation in the Lower Valley, South Texas, and West Texas. During the period December 2011 through February of 2012 (DJF), most of Texas is expected to have below normal precipitation totals. Winter temperatures are expected to be above normal during the DJF period across the entire state, with a greater chance of above normal temperature in the southern and eastern part of the state.

3. OVERALL STATEWIDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

The drought is worsening daily in most of Texas climate regions. No relief is in sight. The situation is desperate.

Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI):

Based on this index, nine of the ten Texas climate regions were in Extreme Dry, the highest drought level in this category. The North Central region remained in Severe Dry. Overall the regional status is same as a month ago.

Crop Moisture Index (CMI)

The Lower Valley region was in Excessively Dry, Trans-Pecos and Southern regions were in Abnormally Dry, and all other regions were in Slightly Dry condition.

Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

Based on this index, nine of the ten Texas climate regions were in Extreme Dry, the highest drought level in this category. The North Central reduced from Extreme Dry to Severe Dry.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI)

Lower Valley region was in Exceptional High fire risk, High Plains, Trans-Pecos, and Upper Coast regions were in Very High fire risk, and all other regions were in High fire risk.

Stream Flow Index (SFI)

Streams went drier in the month. Trans-Pecos was in Exceptionally low flow, Edwards Plateau, Southern, and East Texas regions were in extremely low flow, Low Rolling region was in Severely low flow, South Central region was in Moderate low flow, Upper Coast region was in Abnormally low flow, and High Plains and North Central regions were in normal condition.

4. WATER UTILITY STATUS

Over the past month, 43 additional water systems have asked their customers to restrict water use by following outdoor water use restrictions. Overall there are 1,004 public water systems that are asking their customers to restrict water use. Of these systems, 670 are asking customers to follow a mandatory watering schedule and 334 are asking customers to follow a voluntary watering schedule. There are 53 public water systems that have restricted all outside watering.

Seasonal forecasts continue to predict the drought to persist or intensify in many areas of the state. Increasing demands and the lack of consistent rainfall are resulting in more water systems implementing the various 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. The number of applications for new water use permits and amendments to existing permits was normal for the month. Owners of water rights in the Brazos River Basin with restrictions are reminded to call the “Hale Clause Hotline” on a weekly basis to determine if diversion of water is allowed.

On November 10, 2011 the executive director of the TCEQ provided additional guidance in response to a senior water right holder’s priority call in the Neches River Basin; therefore, suspending diversions for water right holders with a priority date of August 13, 1913 or later until further notice. Water rights for municipal uses, domestic uses, and power generation are not suspended at this time.

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 19, 2011, the U.S. combined ownership at Amistad/Falcon stood at 65.63% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 2,226,210 acre-feet. Overall the system is holding 65.78% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 3,895,462 acre-feet with Amistad at 84.87% of conservation capacity, impounding 2,779,925 acre-feet and Falcon at 42.15% of conservation capacity, impounding 1,115,537 acre-feet. Mexico has 65.97% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 1,669,252 acre-feet at Amistad/Falcon.

Allocations: As of printing of the October ownership report, the U.S has allocated 478,015.662 acre-feet to Class A & B water rights, which include irrigation, mining and recreation.

Storage & Loss Amistad vs. Falcon: The U.S. is currently storing approximately 1.529 million acre-feet at Amistad (83.1%); and approximately 696 thousand acre-feet (44.9%) of normal conservation capacity at Falcon. Evaporation and seepage losses at Amistad cycle, as of 11/19/11, are 14,176 acre-feet. For the same period, the U.S. has lost 15,564 acre-feet at Falcon.

Releases to meet demands: In 2011, (through 11/19/11), Mexico has released 239,404 acre-feet from Amistad and 1,135,079 acre-feet from Falcon for Mexico needs. The U.S. has released 1,480,470 acre-feet from Falcon and 686,417 acre-feet from Amistad for U.S. needs. Combined with gains between Amistad and Falcon, U.S. inflows to Falcon have totaled 842,383 acre-feet. The U.S. demand in the lower Rio Grande has been met at a rate of 57% by direct Rio Grande inflows and Amistad releases this year.

Upper Rio Grande (New Mexico): Currently, Elephant Butte in New Mexico is currently storing 231,052 (11.42%) acre feet and Caballo Dam in New Mexico, downstream of Elephant Butte is storing 11,350 (5.00%) acre-feet. This water storage in part is used to meet water needs in the El Paso area.

Outlook: The National Weather Service continues to report that the drought conditions are affecting 100% of counties and while temperatures have started to cool down there is no rain in the immediate forecasts.

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, Mc Mullen, Jim Hogg, La Salle, and Webb

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Some scattered and isolated rains occurred throughout the area that provided some soil moisture to parched farmland and pastures. Runoff from these rains provided an increase to area streams, but the stream flows quickly declined. The U. S. Drought Monitor indicates that Brooks, Goliad, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Mc Mullen, Victoria, Webb and Willacy Counties are currently experiencing “Extreme to Exceptional Drought” Conditions at this time. Aransas, Bee, Calhoun, Duval, Jim Wells, Live Oak, Kleberg, Nueces, Refugio, and Nueces Counties are experiencing “Exceptional Drought” Conditions at this time. Most 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	Nov Beginning flows CFS	Nov Ending Flows CFS	Nov Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River near Victoria	234	357	2,010
San Antonio River near Goliad	200	591	750
San Antonio River at McFaddin below Goliad	254	289	863

Guadalupe River near Tivoli	492	426	2,520
Mission River near Refugio	.48	.57	93
Nueces River at Calallen Dam	.25	3.5	835
Aransas River near Skidmore	4.0	4.9	16

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 received some inflows during the month of November. At the end of November, the level of the reservoir system has decreased and was at 54.9% of capacity at the end of the month, impounding 522,513 acre-feet compared to 84% of capacity, impounding 800,063 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Choke Canyon was at 62% of capacity, impounding 431,070 acre-feet compared to 81.4% of capacity, impounding 565,684 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Lake Corpus Christi was at 35.5% of capacity, impounding 91,443 acre-feet compared to 91.1% of capacity, impounding 234,379 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: During this month, the City of Victoria is exercising their water right. During the month of November, the restriction for the City of Victoria is 150 CFS. No water rights are currently affected by water rights restrictions.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: The southernmost portions of this area received rainfall in isolated areas. Some areas received up to 1 inch, but the vast majority of the area received 0 to .75 inches. The eastern portions of the area, including the Lavaca area, received approximately 1 inch in spots but most of the area received very little rain. There are no active crops in the area, although some farmers are beginning to plant winter Oats and Rye. Irrigation activity has decreased substantially due to lack of availability of water. Lake Texana is at 39.52% of capacity.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, this area is experiencing “Extreme” to “Exceptional Drought” conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: Many stream flows in this area are at all time lows.

Site	November Beginning Flows CFS	November Ending Flows CFS	November Historical Mean CFS
South Texas Watermaster			
San Antonio River near Falls City	171	280	451
Cibolo Creek near Falls City	24	45	139
Guadalupe River near Gonzales	294	409	2710
The Lavaca River at Edna	4.6	19	390
Navidad River near Hallettsville	.3	1.1	178
Atascosa River near Whitsett	1	1.6	68
Frio River near Tilden	0	0	105
Nueces River near Tilden	9.3	0	300

Drought Restrictions: Many Water Rights in this area have met the flow restriction stated on the permit. All Temporary Water Rights have been suspended.

Area Counties: Bandera, Blanco, Kendall and Kerr Counties

Rainfall and Area Conditions: This area received 0.80 to 1.60 inches of rainfall for the month of November. The Crop Moisture Index indicates this area of the hill country is classified as “Normal”. 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 “Exceptional Drought” conditions.

Stream flow Conditions:

Site	November Beginning Flows CFS	November Ending Flows CFS	November Historical Mean CFS
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River at Kerrville	37	47	148
Guadalupe River at Comfort	34	44	190
Medina River at Bandera	0.00	0.00	121

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

Drought Restrictions: Currently Water Right Permits from 1950 to present are still suspended, as well as all temporary water permits above Canyon Lake and Lake Medina. The City of Kerrville’s surface water diversions from the Guadalupe River are currently at 250,000 gallons per day.

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

Rainfall and Area Conditions: Approximately 1.81 inches of rainfall was measured in the San Antonio Regional Area for the month of November. The U.S. Drought Monitor dated November 29, 2011 indicates the San Antonio Regional Area is experiencing Extreme to Exceptional Drought conditions at this time.

Stream flow Conditions: The flows in the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Blanco Rivers have increased slightly due to rainfall the area received for the month of November. The small creeks and perennial creeks have continued to remain dry. Irrigation use has declined compared to last month and industrial use remains constant.

Site	November Beginning Flows (CFS)	November Ending Flows (CFS)	November Historical Mean (CFS)
<i>South Texas Watermaster</i>			
Guadalupe River at Spring Branch	4.6	21	300
San Marcos River at Luling	93	95	603
Blanco River at Wimberley	10	16	132

As of November 30, 2011, Canyon Lake Reservoir was at 79.20% of capacity, impounding 300,009 acre-feet. Lake Medina Reservoir was at 23.84% of capacity, impounding 60,749 acre-feet. San Marcos Springs were flowing at 95 CFS. The historical monthly average for the San Marcos Springs in November is 204 CFS. Comal Springs were flowing at 201 CFS.

The historical monthly average for the Comal Springs in November is 307 CFS. The J-17 Bexar reading was at 649.9 on November 30.

Drought Restrictions: Some water rights restrictions have been met. At this time temporary permits have been suspended in several counties.

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 November. Rainfall in San Angelo was .32 inches. The average rainfall for the month of November is 1.29 inches. The total amount of rainfall for the year is 7.59 inches. The Texas Crop Moisture Index indicates the area as having “Slightly Dry, Favorably Moist” soil conditions. The State Drought Monitor Index indicates the Concho Valley as having “Exceptional” to “Severe” conditions. Cotton has been harvested. Wheat has been planted and is established.

Stream flow Conditions: Area reservoirs are showing a decrease in the amount of storage from the previous month’s amounts. Lake Nasworthy is at 80% of capacity, impounding 8,188 acre-feet. O. C. Fisher is at 1% of capacity, impounding 1067 acre-feet. Twin Buttes Lake is at 6% of capacity, impounding 11,032 acre-feet.

Site	November Beginning Flows (CFS)	November Ending Flows (CFS)	Historical Mean Flows for Month (CFS)
Concho Watermaster			
Spring Creek above Twin Buttes Reservoir (08130700)	0.0	0.0	8.6
Concho River at San Angelo and Bell St. (08128000)	6.9	6.7	30
South Concho at Christoval (08136000)	5.9	7.3	22

Drought Restrictions: Currently there are restrictions and/or curtailment of diversion based on priority dates in the Concho Valley. All requests for diversion must be approved previous to diversion.

Area Counties: Edwards, Real, Kinney, Uvalde and Medina

Rainfall and Area Condition: This area received 0.30 to 3.40 inches of rainfall for the month of November. 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 classified as “Normal”. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is experiencing “Exceptional 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
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South Texas Watermaster			
Nueces River at Laguna	13	21	169
Nueces River near Brackettville	0.00	0.00	20
Nueces River below Uvalde	0.23	0.31	140
Frio River at Concan	13	19	111
Sabinal River at Sabinal	0.74	1.1	21
Leona River near Uvalde	0.00	0.00	36

Drought Restrictions: All Water Rights that are active and not met any flow restrictions have been restricted in the amount and time of pumping. All temporary permits in the area are currently suspended at this time.

8. UPPER COLORADO (Concho River watershed not included)

The upper Colorado River area received less than normal precipitation during November 2011. The National Weather Service in San Angelo reported monthly precipitation of 0.32 inch. The reported year-to-date annual total is 8.24 inches, which is 12.16 inches below normal. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, area drought conditions in Irion, Sterling, Crockett, Schleicher, Sutton, Menard, Kimble and McCulloch counties are extreme to exceptional. Tom Green and Concho counties have severe to exceptional drought conditions. Coke County has extreme drought conditions. Reagan and Mason counties have exceptional drought conditions. USGS gauges indicated mostly no flow in the Colorado River near Gail, TX down to Ballinger, TX, except for trace flows at Colorado City and near Ballinger. These gauge readings are less than long term median flows. The San Saba River had decreased flow that is lower than the USGS long-term median in Menard, TX to San Saba, TX. The North Llano River above Junction had less than the long-term median. The Llano River below Junction, TX to the Llano River below Mason, TX had less flow than the long-term median. The pool levels of EV Spence Reservoir and OH Ivie Reservoir have decreased from October levels. The pool levels are < 1% and 18.4% of capacity, respectively.

9. TEXAS PANHANDLE AND SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

Amarillo Area:

Lake Levels:

	Beginning	Ending
Greenbelt Lake	45.56 ft.	45.06 ft.
Lake Mackenzie	64.44 ft.	64.10 ft.
Lake Meredith	30.46 ft.	30.01 ft.

Reporting Station: National Weather Service Amarillo 11/29/11

	Precipitation (in.)	Average (in.)	Deficit (in.)
November	0.62	0.76	- .14
2011 Year-to-date	5.46	19.61	- 14.15

Reservoir Status: 11/29/11

Reservoir (Basin)	Conservation Pool Elevation	Current Elevation	% Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Greenbelt (Red)	2,664.00	2,625.04	17.76	- .58
Mackenzie (Red)	3,100.00	3,014.10	09.35	- 0.16
Meredith (Canadian)	2,936.50	2,843.59	0.00	- 0.00

10. WILDLIFE CONCERNS

No information was received by the time of this report.

11. AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Rains over the last two months have significantly improved agricultural conditions over large areas of North Central Texas, the Blacklands and most of East Texas. Rainfall accumulations of 3 to 6 inches over the last week, coupled with significant rains in the month of October have dramatically improved small grain and winter pastures in this region. While soil profiles and stock tanks over much of this region still need a great deal of water, conditions are much improved for winter forages and crops. Ryegrass and small grain pastures are beginning to provide some relief to livestock producers who are critically short of hay and continue to import hay from out of state.

Far west Texas, the High Plains, most of the Gulf Coast and the Rio Grande Valley remain exceptionally dry with little prospect for winter crops and forages. Most of the more than three million acres of wheat on the High Plains is very late in emerging and stands are uneven due to dry conditions. Cotton and other row crop farmers are not able to prepare land as conditions are too dry across the High Plains. Snow over the last week will improve surface moisture conditions, but the risk of winterkill and loss of stands due to dry conditions on this very juvenile wheat is significant. Although the plains received scattered showers over the last month, very few wheat fields in the High Plains have sufficient growth to sustain stocker cattle. Some producers have been irrigating to get enough forage on wheat pastures for grazing with little success. Livestock producers are finding very little forage available and continue to feed and to cull herds. Wheat and winter pastures in the Rolling Plains, particularly in the eastern parts of that region are faring much better, as heavy rains in October dramatically improved crop and pasture conditions.

A significant risk of large scale wind erosion exists across most of the Plains region as farmers go into the winter with no soil moisture or crop residues. Sand storms of magnitudes not seen in many years have scoured the plains this fall. Soil erosion of this magnitude causes significant loss of productivity on highly erodible soils. We are facing this problem as hundreds of thousands of acres of former cropland come out of CRP contracts which have protected soils with perennial grasses.

The following observations were made for the week ending November 25 by Texas AgriLife Extension district reporters:

Central: Rainfall totals across the area varied from 0.5 inch to 2 inches. Cool-season grasses responded well and were growing rapidly. The cotton harvest was in full swing, though the crop has been slow to mature. Wheat and oat fields looked very good, considering conditions. Livestock producers were still heavily supplementing cattle and looking for hay outside the state.

[Coastal Bend:](#) No rain, strong winds and low humidity continued to keep the area extremely dry. The exception was Matagorda County, which received more than 2 inches of rain. Overall, dry weather continued to diminish rangeland and pasture conditions. Some areas had their first freeze on Nov. 27, which was expected to send native pasture into dormancy. Winter crops had not received enough moisture and were in poor shape. Farmers finished most field preparations and were waiting for rain before planting.

[East:](#) Thanks to recent rains, burn bans in all counties were lifted. The rain helped winter forages and, in some areas, raised the levels of stock ponds and lakes. The drought continued but was not as severe. Producers continued to purchase hay from out of state. Temperatures dropped into the 30s and upper 20s, giving some areas their first frost. Feral hogs were active.

[Far West:](#) Foggy and misty weather came to the region late in the reporting period, carrying with it only a trace of rain. High winds quickly dissipated what little moisture was received. The region was still under extreme drought conditions, with large fuel loads for wildfire in most counties. Pastures, greasewood and some trees died due to the drought. Cedars on hillsides were also dying. Temperatures dropped below freezing several times and the effects were seen on forages. Pecans were being harvested with low yields reported. Winter wheat and oats under irrigation were off to a good start. Red chilies were harvested. Alfalfa was dormant. Ranchers were working fall-born calves. Cows and calves were in poor condition. Several producers reported losing cows to over-consumption of mesquite beans, due to lack of other forage. This diet causes impaction of the intestines and shutting down of the rumen.

[North:](#) Recent rains helped, but soil-moisture levels remained very short to adequate. Most growers got all their intended wheat acres planted, and stands looked good. Late-planted small grains and winter annual pasture grasses emerged. Hay supplies continued to be short. Many livestock producers continued to search for enough hay to make it through the winter and spring. Livestock were in fair to good condition. Stock-pond levels were up somewhat because of heavy rains two weeks ago.

[Panhandle:](#) Rain fell over parts of the region, with accumulations ranging from a trace to as much as 1.5 inches in isolated areas. Temperatures were near normal most of the week, but by the end of the week, days were cold and very windy. Soil-moisture levels continued to be mostly very short. The cotton harvest was ongoing, and wheat growers continued planting. What winter wheat was already planted was struggling, and producers were irrigating in hopes of producing forage. Some irrigated wheat looked good. Rangeland and pastures were in very poor to fair condition, with most counties reporting very poor. Livestock producers continued supplemental feeding of cattle.

[Rolling Plains:](#) Parts of the region received rain, from a trace to more than 2.5 inches, which helped winter wheat. However, the moisture was followed by high winds that blew some wheat fields out. Producers were debating whether to replant or leave partially blown-out fields as they were. With pastures and rangeland in poor condition, earlier-planted wheat was already being grazed. Livestock were in poor to fair condition, with producers providing supplemental feed daily. Winter pasture was trying to grow but generally needed more rain to do so. The cotton harvest was in full swing, but yields were poor. The non-irrigated pecan crop was poor in most orchards, fair where irrigated.

South: Most of the region remained dry as winter approached. Only Maverick County reported rain, about 1 inch, which improved soil-moisture levels a bit. Overall, rangeland and pasture remained in fair to very poor shape, and soil-moisture levels were short to very short throughout the region. Livestock producers were still dealing with no grazing and expensive hay and supplemental feeds. They continued to cull or liquidate herds. In Atascosa and Frio counties, the peanut harvest was nearly finished, and wheat and oat planting was completed, with most of the plantings emerged and doing well. In Maverick County, winter crops such as spinach and oats were on schedule, and farmers were preparing fields for the next crop. In Zavala County, the harvesting of cabbage and spinach was ongoing, onions were doing well, and cotton gins were still busy. In Cameron County, farmers were actively irrigating onions and other vegetables. In Hidalgo County, the harvesting of sugarcane, citrus and corn was ongoing.

South Plains: The region had widely scattered rains with the most significant accumulations in Floyd County, which reported from 0.8 inch to 1.5 inches. Other counties did not fare as well with accumulations of about 0.5 inch. A cold front on the weekend of Nov. 26-27 brought gusty winds. The cotton harvest wound down, and most gins were predicted to be finished with this year's crop by the first week of December. Yields were well below average, lower than expected. Winter wheat needed rain. Livestock producers continued supplemental feeding of cattle. Rangeland greened up in low-lying areas where there was rain, but more moisture was needed.

Southeast: Rain fell across the region, with accumulations ranging from 0.3 inch to 2 inches. Temperatures were moderately warm. Some ryegrass was planted. Pastures were in poor shape, and livestock producers continued to destock. Baling of the ratoon rice-crop stubble was completed. Pond levels remained low.

Southwest: Precipitation over Thanksgiving ranged from 0.1 inch in the western part of the district to 1.25 inches in the central and eastern counties. Some landowners began planting oats for livestock grazing. Livestock producers continued supplemental feeding of cattle, as well as culling and selling off herds due to the continued drought conditions and hay shortages. Pastures greened up with some winter forbs and grasses. Cooler weather slowed or stopped the growth of summer perennial grass.

West Central: Days were mild with cold nights. A few areas reported light showers, but most counties remained very dry. The cotton harvest neared completion; only irrigated fields were being harvested. Growers were almost finished planting small grains. Some earlier planted fields were up and being grazed. Winter wheat was in poor condition due to low soil moisture. Rangeland and pasture conditions continued to decline. Hay was in short supply, and no grazing was available in many areas. Livestock producers further increased supplemental feeding of cattle.

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 November 30, 2011, there were 155 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>

Brenner Brown, Texas Water Development Board, (512) 475-1128, fax (512) 475-2053, 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>

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Gilbert Jordan, 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/>

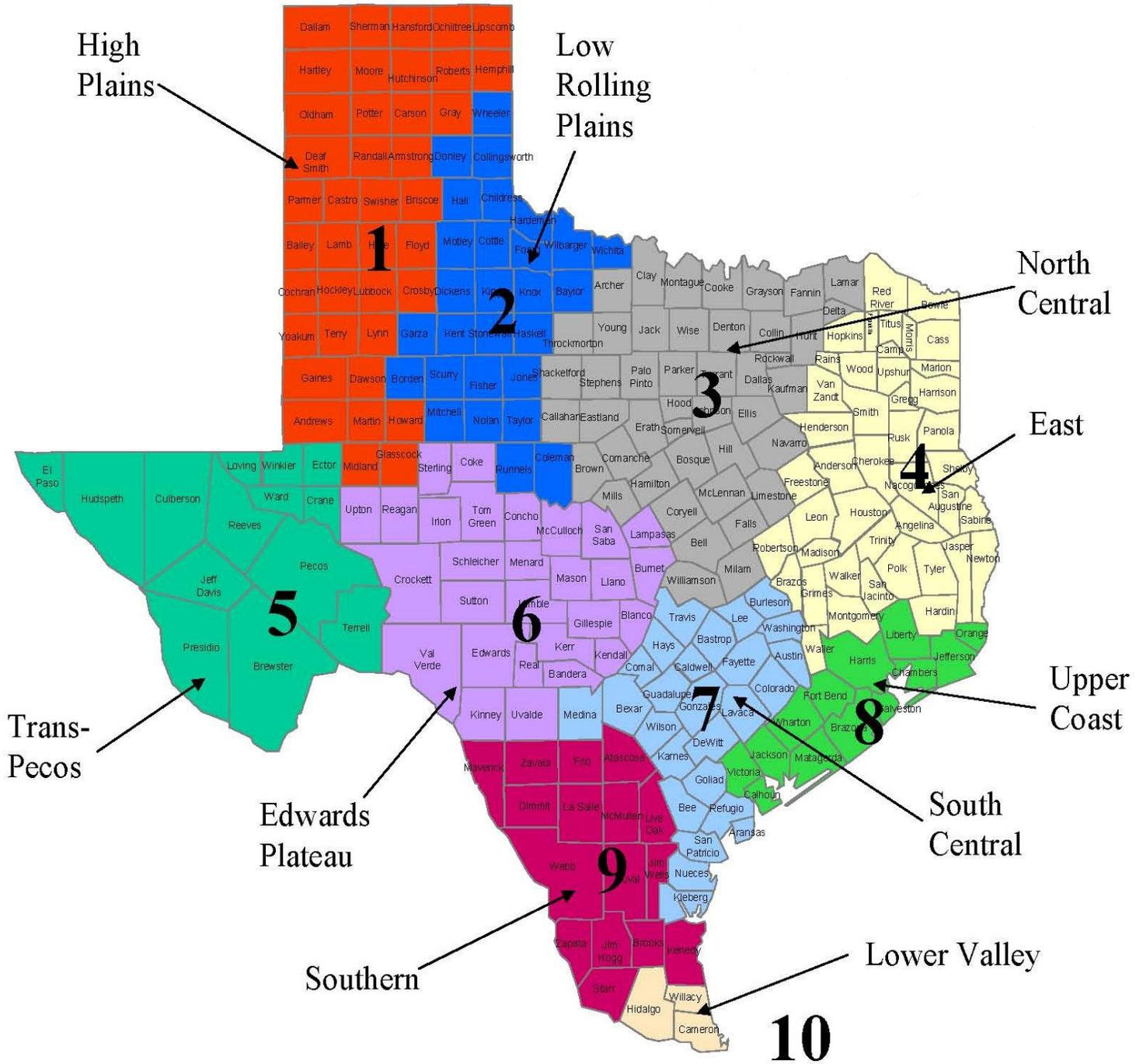
Tad Curtis, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism, (512) 936-0047, website: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/ecodev>

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/>

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

Attachment 1 Climatic Regions



Attachment 2 Counties with Extreme to High Fire Danger

