



## DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL

RICK PERRY  
Governor

5805 N. Lamar Blvd.  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0220  
Phone: (512) 424-2138  
Fax: (512) 424-2444

NIM KIDD  
Council Chairperson

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**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

T.B.A

## 2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

January 2012 brought substantial precipitation to much of central and northern Texas, though the Panhandle, Trans Pecos, and South Texas picked up little to no precipitation during the month. According to the January 31, 2012 United States Drought Monitor (USDM) most of Texas saw improvement in drought conditions during January. The percentage of Texas with exceptional drought (D4) conditions dropped from 32.36% of the state at the beginning of January to 27.36% by the end of the month. Conditions in a region of North Central Texas stretching from Dallas-Fort Worth to the Red River improved enough during January to be considered drought-free by the end of January. However, 90.66% of the state still had at least moderate drought (D1) conditions according to the January 31, 2012 USDM. The most severe drought conditions were centered in the Panhandle, Big Bend, Hill Country, Coastal Bend, and Brazos Valley regions.

January was very wet for nearly every major city in the state with only Amarillo, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, and Lubbock recording precipitation deficits for the month. Cities such as Austin, Dallas, San Angelo, San Antonio, and Waco all had monthly precipitation totals that were at least two inches above normal. Austin Bergstrom received 7.30 inches of precipitation, which was 5.07 inches above normal and included 5.66 inches on the 25th. A record setting winter storm hit the Permian Basin on the 9th, with Midland breaking its monthly snowfall record on a single day with 10.6 inches of snowfall. The precipitation has benefitted farmers and ranchers, as the soil moisture levels have improved in much of the state, allowing the growth of cattle forage and winter wheat.

The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) is forecasting the persistence of existing drought conditions across most of Texas with some improvement possible in the northeastern part of the state. According to the CPC, almost the entire state has a greater than equal probability for below normal 3-month precipitation totals from February through April of 2012 (FMA), with a 40-50% probability across most of the state and greater than 50% probability in the Coastal Bend and Lower Valley regions. The CPC has forecasted a greater than 50% probability for above normal temperatures during the FMA period, with a 40-50% probability in the northern Panhandle. The current weak-to-moderate La Nina cycle of the El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is expected to weaken during the spring months before dissipating during the late spring or early summer months.

## 3. OVERALL STATEWIDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Cooler temperature and recent rain continued to reduce drought severity in Texas.

### Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI):

Based on this index, only one Texas climate region was in Extreme Dry. In addition, five regions in Severe Dry, three in Moderate Dry, and North Central region was in Slightly Wet! The last time we had a region in wet spell by this index was 12 months ago.

### Crop Moisture Index (CMI)

The areas in wet condition by this index expanded from one in last month to three, now including North Central and Upper Coast regions. Especially, the North central region was in Excessively Wet!

### Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

Based on this index, two of the ten Texas climate regions were in Extreme Dry, two in Severe Dry, four in Moderately Dry, and two in Normal. The last time we had regions in normal condition was March 2011.

#### Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI)

Only Lower Valley region was in Exceptionally High fire risk, High Plains and Trans-Pecos were in Very High fire risk, Southern region was in High fire risk, Low Rolling Plains, Edwards Plateau, and South Central were in Above Average fire risk, and the remaining regions were at average condition.

#### Stream Flow Index (SFI)

Streams were Extremely low in Trans-Pecos and Southern regions, Severely low in Edwards Plateau, Moderately low in Low Rolling Plains, and Abnormally low in High Plains. The rest of the regions were all in Near or Above Normal condition.

### **4. WATER UTILITY STATUS**

Overall, there are 1,011 water systems that are asking their customers to restrict water use, compared with 999 a month ago. Of these systems, 647 are asking customers to follow a mandatory watering schedule and 364 are asking customers to follow a voluntary watering schedule. There are currently 52 PWSs that have prohibited all outside watering by their customers. A total of 1,161 water systems have reported to the TCEQ regarding their status using the online form on the TCEQ public website. 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.

In January, the executive director of the TCEQ provided additional guidance in response to several senior water right holders rescinding their priority calls in the Sabine, Neches, and Brazos River Basins; therefore, allowing for diversions for junior water right holders to resume diversions under the terms of each respective water right.

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 January 21, 2012, the U.S. combined ownership at Amistad/Falcon stood at 63.32% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 2,147,571 acre-feet, down from 98.67% (3,458,489 AF) of temporary conservation a year ago at this time. Overall the system is holding 58.34% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 3,455,246 acre-feet with Amistad at 79.85% of conservation capacity, impounding 2,615,350 acre-feet and Falcon at 31.73% of conservation capacity, impounding 839,896 acre-feet. Mexico has 51.68% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 1,307,675 acre-feet at Amistad/Falcon.

**Allocations:** As of printing of the December ownership report, the U.S. has allocated 571,765.853 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 1.456 million acre-feet at Amistad (79.1%); and approximately 691 thousand acre-feet (44.5%) of normal conservation capacity at Falcon. Evaporation and seepage losses at Amistad, as of 01/21/12, are 33,669 acre-feet. For the same period, the U.S. has lost 34,544 acre-feet at Falcon.

**Releases to meet demands:** Through January 21, 2012, Mexico has released 91,781 acre-feet from Amistad and 203,328 acre-feet from Falcon Mexico needs. The U.S. has released 65,239 acre-feet from Falcon and 49,882 acre-feet from Amistad for U.S. needs. Combined with gains between Amistad and Falcon, U.S. inflows to Falcon have totaled 47,124 acre-feet. The U.S. demand in the lower Rio Grande has been met at a rate of 45% by direct Rio Grande inflows and Amistad releases this year.

**Upper Rio Grande (New Mexico):** Currently, Elephant Butte in New Mexico is currently storing 324,283 (16.03%) acre feet and Caballo Dam in New Mexico, downstream of Elephant Butte is storing 14,593 (6.43%) acre-feet. This water storage in part is used to meet water needs in the El Paso area.

**Outlook:** 71% of all accounts began 2012 with 100% of their usable balance and 29% of all accounts began 2012 less than 100% of their usable balance of water available. The National Weather Service continues to report that the drought conditions are affecting 100% of counties and while temperatures have cooled down there has been very little rain to ease the drought conditions.

## **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 much needed rainfall occurred during the month of January in this area and provided some soil moisture to parched farmland and pastures. Runoff from these rains provided an increase to area streams, but the stream flows have declined to below normal for this time of the year. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that parts of Brooks, Duval, Kenedy, Willacy, LaSalle, Goliad and Victoria Counties are currently experiencing “Extreme to Exceptional Drought” conditions at this time. Jim Hogg, Mc Mullen, Webb and Live Oak Counties are currently experiencing “Extreme Drought” conditions at this time. Aransas, Bee, Calhoun, Jim Wells, Kleberg, Nueces, San Patricio, and Refugio 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	January Beginning flows CFS	January Ending Flows CFS	January Historical Mean CFS
<b><i>South Texas Watermaster</i></b>			
Guadalupe River near Victoria	442.00	2280.00	1720.00
San Antonio River near Goliad	343.00	642.00	605.00
San Antonio River at McFaddin below Goliad	479.00	1060.00	763.00
Guadalupe River near Tivoli	739.00	3520.00	2500.00
Mission River near Refugio	0.97	0.68	59.00
Nueces River at Calallen Dam	0.41	1.60	78.00
Aransas River near Skidmore	4.50	3.50	12.00

Stream flows of the Guadalupe River continue to flow over the “saltwater barrier” near Tivoli, Texas.

**Corpus Christi Reservoir System:** The Corpus Christi Reservoir System received limited inflows during the month of January. At the end of January, the level of the reservoir system had decreased and was at 52.6% of capacity, impounding 500,970 acre-feet compared to 82.2% of capacity, impounding 782,703 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Choke Canyon was at 60.4% of capacity, impounding 420,122 acre-feet compared to 79.6% of capacity, impounding 553,287 acre-feet at this time last year. The level of Lake Corpus Christi was at 31.4% of capacity, impounding 80,848 acre-feet compared to 89.2% of capacity, impounding 229,416 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:** 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:** Most of the southern portions of this area received rainfall in January. Some areas received up to 3.5 inches, but the vast majority of the area received 1.75 to 2.5 inches. The eastern portions of the area, including the Lavaca area, received approximately 1.5 to 3.5 inches. Winter Oats and Rye are doing very well at this time. Irrigation activity has decreased substantially due to sufficient rainfall at this time. Lake Texana is at 41% 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	January Beginning Flows CFS	January Ending Flows CFS	January Historical Mean CFS
<b><i>South Texas Watermaster</i></b>			
San Antonio River near Falls City	268.00	387.00	425.00
Cibolo Creek near Falls City	38.00	88.00	98.00
Guadalupe River near Gonzales	418.00	1990.00	1420.00
The Lavaca River at Edna	21.00	44.00	298.00
Navidad River near Hallettsville	1.30	62.00	131.00
Atascosa River near Whitsett	4.00	4.30	75.00
Frio River near Tilden	0.17	0.04	94.00
Nueces River near Tilden	0.00	0.00	112.00

**Drought Restrictions:** Most Water Rights in this area are eligible to divert at this time. Most Temporary Water Rights have been suspended.

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

**Rainfall and Area Conditions:** This area received 1.10 to 2.25 inches of rainfall for the month of January. The Crop Moisture Index indicates this area of the hill country is classified as “Slightly Dry/Favorably Moist”. Most of the surface water diversions in this area are for municipal and industrial uses with a few surface water permit holders irrigating hay and sod fields. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is currently experiencing “Extreme to Exceptional Drought” conditions.

**Stream flow Conditions:** All the major streams and their tributaries are dry or below their historical averages.

Site	January Beginning Flows CFS	January Ending Flows CFS	January Historical Mean CFS
<b><i>South Texas Watermaster</i></b>			
Guadalupe River at Kerrville	46.00	49.00	110.00
Guadalupe River at Comfort	57.00	67.00	175.00
Medina River at Bandera	3.90	16.00	109.00

**Drought Restrictions:** Currently all Water Right Permits are able to divert on a limited schedule. All temporary water permits above Canyon Lake and Lake Medina are still suspended.

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

**Rainfall and Area Conditions:** Approximately 4.46 inches of rainfall was measured in the San Antonio Regional Area for the month of January. The U.S. Drought Monitor dated January 24, 2012 indicates the San Antonio Regional Area is experiencing “Extreme Drought” conditions at this time.

**Stream flow Conditions:** The flows in the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Blanco Rivers have increased due to rainfall the area received for the month of January. The small creeks and perennial creeks have continued to remain dry.

Site	January Flows (CFS)	January Ending Flows (CFS)	January Historical Mean (CFS)
<b>South Texas Watermaster</b>			
Guadalupe River at Spring Branch	37.00	69.00	290.00
San Marcos River at Luling	116.00	538.00	446.00
Blanco River at Wimberley	21.00	73.00	125.00

As of January 31, 2011, Canyon Lake Reservoir was at 80.08% of capacity, impounding 303,330 acre-feet. Lake Medina Reservoir was at 20.96% of capacity, impounding 53,421 acre-feet. San Marcos Springs were flowing at 123 CFS. The historical monthly average for the San Marcos Springs in January is 193 CFS. Comal Springs were flowing at 232 CFS. The historical monthly average for the Comal Springs in January is 314 CFS. The J-17 Bexar reading was at 657.2 on January 31.

**Drought Restrictions:** Some water right 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 above average rainfall amounts for the month of January. Rainfall in San Angelo was 3.30 inches. Areas surrounding San Angelo received slightly higher rainfall amounts. The average rainfall for the month of January is .97 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 "Extreme" to "Moderate" conditions. Wheat and hay have been planted and 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 82% of capacity, impounding 8,408 acre-feet. O.C. Fisher Lake is at 1% of capacity, impounding 1,061 acre-feet. Twin Buttes Reservoir is at 6% of capacity, impounding 11,916 acre-feet.

Site	January Beginning Flows (CFS)	January Ending Flows (CFS)	January Historical Mean Flows for Month (CFS)
<b>Concho Watermaster</b>			
Spring Creek above Twin Buttes Reservoir (08130700)	0.0	6.1	15.00
Concho River at San Angelo and Bell St. (08128000)	12.00	5.70	30.00
South Concho at Christoval (08136000)	6.20	4.60	21.00

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

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

**Rainfall and Area Condition:** This area received 0.60 to 1.50 inches of rainfall for the month of January. 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 “Slightly Dry/Favorably Moist”.

The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that this area is experiencing “Extreme to Exceptional 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	January Beginning Flows CFS	January Ending Flows CFS	January Historical Mean CFS
<b><i>South Texas Watermaster</i></b>			
Nueces River at Laguna	24.00	31.00	107.00
Nueces River below Uvalde	0.40	0.40	70.00
Frio River at Concan	21.00	24.00	89.00

**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 more than normal precipitation during January 2012. The National Weather Service in San Angelo reported monthly precipitation of 3.30 inches, which is 2.37 inches more than normal. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, area drought conditions in Irion County are moderate to exceptional. Tom Green, Concho and McCulloch counties have moderate to extreme drought conditions. Mason County has extreme to exceptional drought conditions. Coke, Menard and Sterling counties have severe to extreme drought conditions. Reagan County has extreme drought conditions. Crockett, Kimble, Schleicher and Sutton counties have severe to exceptional drought conditions. USGS gauges indicate flows in the Colorado River near Gail down to Ballinger less than the USGS long term medians, except for the flow above at Silver, Texas, which indicates more than the USGS long term median. The San Saba River had less than the USGS long-term median flow 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 has less than the USGS long-term median flow. The pool level of EV Spence Reservoir had a slight increase from the December level, while OH Ivie Reservoir had a slight decrease. The pool levels are < 1% and 17.7% of capacity, respectively.

## 9. TEXAS PANHANDLE AND SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

### Amarillo Area

Reporting Station: National Weather Service Amarillo 01/29/12

	Precipitation (in.)	Average (in.)	Deficit (in.)
January	0.05	0.66	-0.61
2012 Year-to-date	0.05	0.66	-0.61
Snow	0.00	0.00	Na

Reservoir Status: 01/31/12

Reservoir (Basin)	Conservation Pool Elevation	Current Elevation	% Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Greenbelt (Red)	2,664.00	2,625.04	17.75	-0.08
Mackenzie (Red)	3,100.00	3013.78	09.21	-0.10
Meredith (Canadian)	2,936.50	2,843.21	0.00	0.00

### Lubbock Area:

Reporting Station: Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport 01/29/12

	Precipitation (in.)	Average (in.)	Departure (in.)
December	0.01	0.65	-0.64
2011 Year-to-date	0.01	0.65	-0.64
Snowfall	0.00	0.00	0.00

Reservoir Status: 1/31/12

Brazos Basin	Conservation Pool Elevation	Current Elevation	% Capacity	% Change (from last report)
Alan Henry	2220.00	2211.98	78.42	-0.43
White River	2372.20	2348.62	14.27	-0.80

## 10. WILDLIFE CONCERNS

No information was received by the time of this report.

## 11. AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Much of the state has benefited from significant rainfall or snow over the last one- to two months. Notable exceptions were the lower Gulf Coast, South Texas, the Lower Valley, western portions of the Rolling Plains and Far West Texas which received very little precipitation. Of immediate concern on the crops ledger is the Texas winter wheat crop. The panhandle and High Plains accounts for more than 50% of the planted acres of wheat, and most of this crop is late to emerge due to a dry fall and the majority is in either poor or very poor conditions. The late emergence and dry conditions make the crop vulnerable to damage from cold weather, as winterkill is significantly increased in dry, late emerging wheat. The southern and western regions of the panhandle have received little benefit from the rains.

High winds and warm temperatures are creating high evaporative demand which will reduce the impact of rains received. The wheat crop in the Blacklands and eastern Rolling plains is mostly in good or excellent conditions due to October rains which got the crop up and going and subsequent rains which added to soil moisture and improved crop conditions. The south Texas crop is struggling due to dry conditions.

The rains also improved conditions for livestock, with stock tanks catching water and moisture coupled with warm weather has significantly improved winter forages. Some Central Texas ranchers have begun the process of restocking as pastures are improving and stock tanks have filled.

We are approaching planting seasons for the corn crop in the Rio Grande Valley, the Gulf Coast and Central Texas. Planting begins in much of this region in mid- to late February. This is of significant concern to farmers in South Texas and along the coast, as soils remain dry and planting prospects are poor. Much of the Gulf Coast region remains too dry to adequately prepare fields and apply fertilizer for the impending planting season.

The following summaries of agricultural conditions are from AgriLife Extension district reporters for the week ending February 4, 2012:

**Central:** Rains filled stock ponds and lakes, and raised soil-moisture levels. Warmer than normal weather and sunshine brought small grains to life. Pastures and small grains that had been fertilized earlier were growing exceptionally well. Small grains and pastures were reported to look the best for this time of year since 2009. Wheat and oats were doing well after the recent rains, especially those fields that producers planted late. Ranchers who had been holding off for a rain, began receiving stocker cattle. Sunflower planting was expected to start in the next week or two, followed closely by corn planting. Beef cattle producers are still struggling with the expense of supplemental feeding.

**Coastal Bend:** Some areas received great rains during the reporting period. Soil moisture levels improved, helping plans for row-crop planting within the next 30 days. The moisture, along with warm weather and sunshine, made excellent growing conditions for winter forages and clover. In the region's southern counties, drought conditions persisted. There was very little runoff and stock pond levels remained critical.

**East:** Scattered rains fell across the region. Warmer-than-normal temperatures and the recent rains improved winter forages. Some producers were able to graze cattle on pastures, helping relieve some of the stress of finding quality hay. Lake, pond and creek levels rose. Farmers continued preparing fields for spring vegetable planting. Wild pigs remained a problem due to reduced forage resources, with the animals increasing their invasion of residential areas of larger cities.

**Far West:** The first week of February brought foggy, drizzly and damp mornings, but no measurable rainfall. Temperatures were above normal, with highs in the upper 60s to 70s and lows near freezing to the 40s. By the weekend, daytime highs dropped to the upper 40s, and windy conditions raised the danger of wildfire. Pastures were greening up some with cool-season forbs and grasses, but their growth was not sufficient to provide additional nutrition for livestock. Producers were still feeding cattle, both stockers and brood cows, while others were shipping livestock to feedlots. It was the middle of calving season for most herds. Ranchers were struggling to maintain the condition of cattle they hung onto throughout the drought and were providing large amounts of supplemental feed. There were reports of locoweed in Presidio County. Small grains under irrigation were in fair condition and provided some grazing. Lambing and kidding season was expected to begin soon. Farmers were preparing cotton fields for

planting by applying pre-emergent herbicides and pre-watering. Fall-planted onions were coming out of dormancy. Pecans growers were pruning orchards.

**North:** Received from 2 to 5 inches of rain and raised soil-moisture levels. Days were unseasonably warm, with highs in the 70s. Cattle producers were taking advantage of the warm weather to turn cattle in on winter pastures and reduce the amount of hay and supplements they were feeding. Producers were very optimistic about the upcoming hay and summer-grazing season. Warm temperatures caused trees to bud prematurely, which caused concern for some for fruit and nut crops. The heavy rains also replenished stock ponds. Most were now full for the first time in a year. Feral hogs remained a major problem.

**Panhandle:** Temperatures were above average for most of the reporting period, then dropped to near average. Part of the region received some moisture late in the week, with accumulations ranging from a trace to 1.5 inches. Soil-moisture levels varied from adequate to very short with most reporting short to very short. Winter wheat was in poor to very poor condition. Most rangeland and pastures were in poor to very poor condition. Cattle were reported as mostly in good condition, with a few herds on irrigated wheat experiencing bloating issues. Livestock producers continued supplemental feeding of livestock.

**Rolling Plains:** Conditions remained dry in the region's western counties. Pastures and rangeland were in poor condition as producers fed supplements to cattle on a daily basis. Producers who had access to winter wheat have been grazing cattle on it for the past month, hoping it will hold them through winter. Without any moisture, producers may have to start selling off cattle again. Farmers have begun preparing fields for this year's crop, but without any moisture, there is only so much they can do. As they begin to think about the new crop, the possibility of another drought year lingers in their minds and is playing an important role in how they go about preparing fields and how much money they are willing to invest in production costs. Cotton producers were reserving cottonseed, but were cautious about planting high-dollar varieties. In contrast, the eastern counties reported the recent rains left rangeland and pastures in good condition. The wheat looked great there and stock tanks were full.

**South:** Much of the region received rain, but with few exceptions, accumulations were not enough to improve rangeland and pastures very much. Brooks County received the most with 2 to 3 inches, while Atascosa County got about 2.5 inches. Some pastures showed signs of green-up due to warm weather. However, cattle were generally not doing well. Body condition scores have further declined from fair to poor as calving season continued, and cows needed better nutrition. The cost of hay and protein supplements continued to increase, and stock tanks on many ranches remained at very low levels or were completely dried out. Webb County reported the cost of round bales of hay at about \$150 and square bales at about \$13 each. In Atascosa County, oats and wheat responded very well to the rains. In Jim Wells County, field activities were on hold until more rain was received. In Zavala County, dryland oat and wheat fields were mostly in fair to good condition. In Cameron County, corn harvesting was ongoing, as well as pre-irrigation for spring planting. In Starr County, spring planting was ongoing.

**Southeast:** Temperatures were above average with high humidity. Many parts of the region received from 1.5 to as much as 6 inches of rain over the last couple of weeks. Stock ponds were filling up. Soil moisture conditions were improving. With rains falling in the northern Brazos valley, the Brazos River was once again flowing. Lake levels to the north also rose, which improved the outlook for rice production in the lower Brazos River Basin. However, water companies had not yet indicated that water will be available for rice for the 2012 crop. Cattle producers report that drought-killed trees were being felled by high winds and were falling on fences, causing extensive damage. Though pastures improved from the rain, they still had a

long way to go to full recovery. Livestock producers continued supplemental feeding of cattle that they had kept through the drought.

**Southwest:** As much as 2 inches of rain fell in some areas. The rain and warm weather greatly accelerated winter pasture growth. Topsoil moisture improved. Small grain pastures seemed to be slow going and were being moderately grazed. Winter wheat made good progress. Farmers were preparing to plant corn and sorghum. Trees were on the verge of budding. Lambing and kidding were under way. Livestock producers were maintaining herd numbers for now, and supplemental feeding of cattle continued in some areas.

**South Plains:** Most counties reported no precipitation, above-average temperatures and windy conditions. Winter wheat was struggling due to the drought. Farmers were performing some field preparations for spring planting where conditions allowed. Pasture and rangeland needed moisture.

**West Central:** Temperatures were very mild with warm days and cool nights. Farmers were preparing land for spring planting as weather permitted. Winter wheat improved with the recent moisture and warm temperatures. Rangeland and pastures continued to improve with the growth of cool-season grasses and winter weeds. Livestock owners continued 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 January 31, 2012, there were 80 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>

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

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

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/>

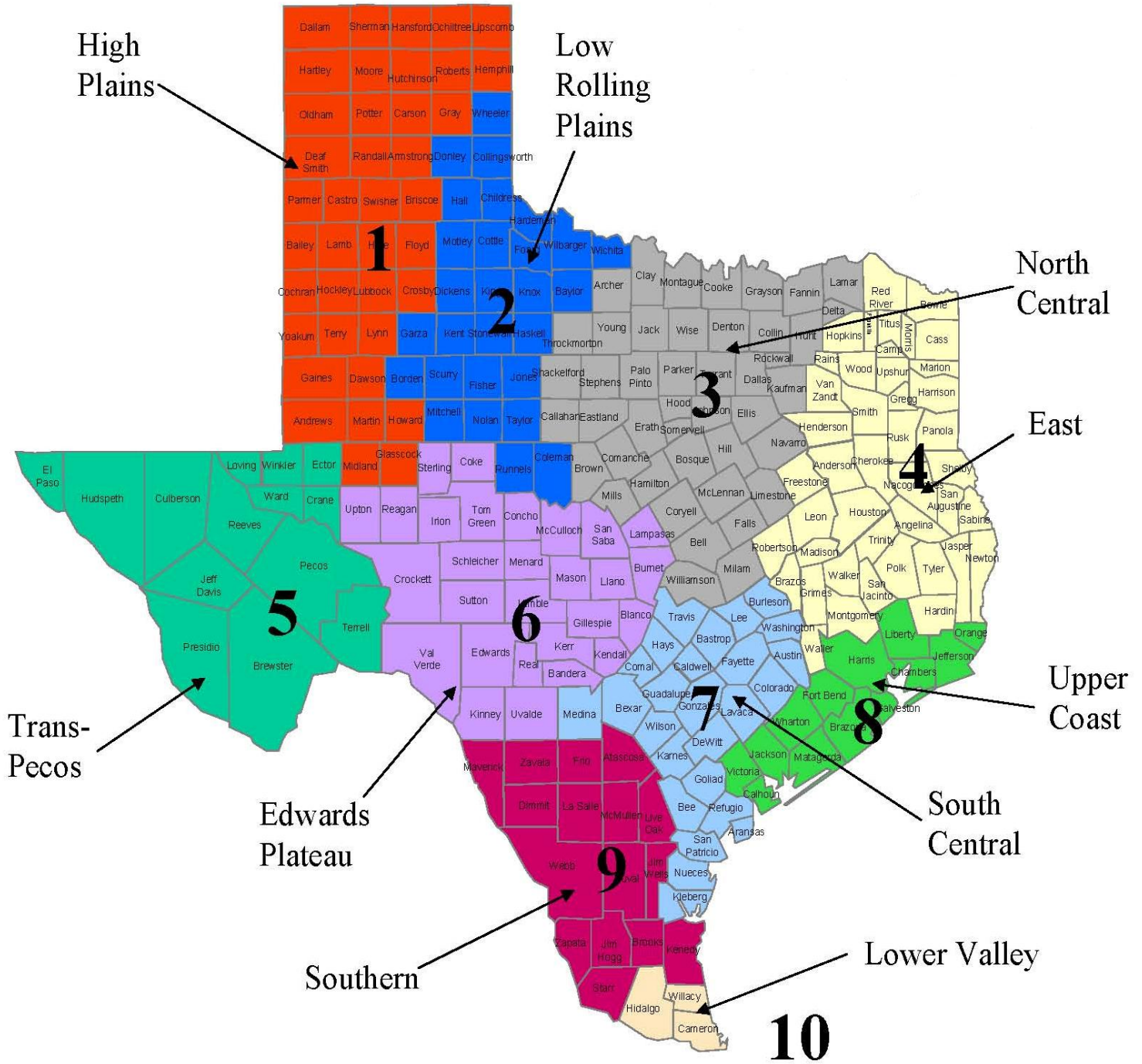
Tad Curtis, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism, (512) 936-0047, website: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/ecodev>

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

