

North Plains Water News



A Publication of the NORTH PLAINS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

VOLUME 63, NO. 4

WINTER 2017

Apply Now for the Master Irrigator Program 2018

The North Plains Groundwater Conservation District is accepting applications for the Master Irrigator Program with funding through the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

The program is an irrigation management curriculum made up of 24 hours of intensive irrigation education conducted over four one-day sessions. Master Irrigator trains farmers in advanced irrigation management and conservation practices that work together to save water, conserve energy and build healthy soil. Tommy Cartrite, 2017 Master Irrigator Graduate said, this is a “great class on irrigation practices with leading edge technology presented by top people in their field.”

Participants who complete the course and receive their Master Irrigator certification will have priority access to the designated North Plains GCD EQIP funding for financial assistance to implement water conservation practices on their operation. Perfect attendance is *required* for graduation from the course.

This year's Master Irrigator Program meeting dates are March 21, March 28, April 4 and April 11. Participants are required to attend all four sessions to qualify as a graduate of the program. The primary focus of the sessions will be on increasing understanding of, and proficiency with, the latest irrigation management tools, technologies and practices such as pivot conversions, variable frequency drives, conservation tillage, irrigation water management and more.

The training is designed to prepare participants to know what tools and strategies are available for water savings, to understand how and why they work, and ultimately to choose and effectively apply them to maximize their return on investment for every drop of water they use. The Master Irrigator Program is designed to incentivize farmers to acquire this information and to apply it throughout their operations in a number of ways. “My primary role in our operation is risk management. In every session, I was able to identify key practices that will benefit our return on investment,” said one 2017 Master Irrigator Graduate.



Every session of the Master Irrigator program is closed with a panel discussion with growers who have direct experience with the topics that were covered during the session. Participants in the 2017 Master Irrigator interact with panelists (l to r) Danny Krienke, Harold Grall and Tom Moore about the latest in high-efficiency center pivot irrigation.

Any irrigator can apply. However, registration will be **limited to 25 participants, or until March 9, 2018**. In the case that more than 25 applications are received by the registration deadline, successful applicants will be determined by the date of application and location of the operation.

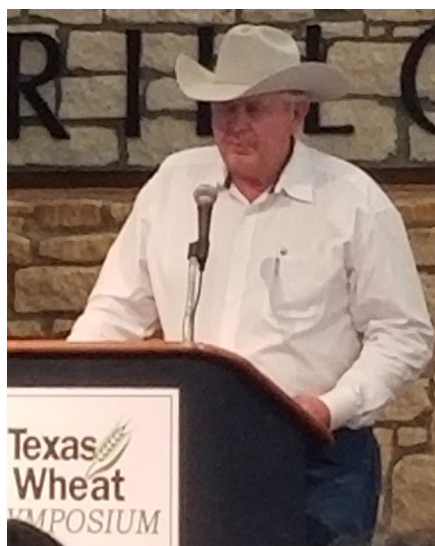
For more information about the Master Irrigator program contact Kirk Welch at kwelch@northplainsgcd.org or go online to northplainsgcd.org/masterirrigator. For additional information about the EQIP program, contact your local NRCS office or access www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. ♦

Farmer Rancher of the Year Mike McLain

Mike McLain of Gruver, TX was honored with the 2017 Farmer Rancher of the Year Award as part of the Amarillo Ag Appreciation Luncheon during the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

According to his wife, Diane, “Farming is in his (Mike’s) genes.” He farms and ranches with his son, Buster and son-in-law, Marty as part of the their family’s Mc Cattle Company. In 1985, Mike was awarded the Hansford Co. Conservation Farmer of the Year award. Mike is a descendant of Leslie Cator, the brother of Bob and Jim Cator, the buffalo hunters who originally settled the Panhandle.

McLain was born in Austin, Texas in 1951 to Don and Gwen McLain. He graduated from Gruver High School in 1969. Mike earned a bachelor of science degree in business, with the intention of attending law school. He applied to Harvard, Columbia, and University of Texas Law schools. He was accepted to both Columbia and the University of Texas law schools. Although he was disappointed that he was not accepted into Harvard, he made the most of his opportunity and went on to graduate with highest honors from the University of Texas Law School in 1973.



Mike McLain of Gruver accepts the 2017 Farmer Rancher of the Year Award as part of the Amarillo Ag Appreciation Luncheon during the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

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2017 Production Reporting Highlights

A schedule for the 2017 production reporting process has been set by the district staff. The 2017 Annual Production Reports were mailed or emailed on Wednesday, November 29, 2017. The district included a conservation reserve worksheet if the property was eligible for conservation reserve in 2017. This worksheet gives producers the opportunity to calculate their conservation reserve for 2018 and is for the producer’s own information and not required to be returned to the district. Anyone who has not received their 2017 Annual Production Reports should contact the district office. The reports are due in the district office by close of business on March 1, 2018.

Please ensure all your production reports include signatures, calculations on worksheets and all supporting documentation based on metering methods used. If any of these required actions or items are missing, the report will be considered incomplete and not filed.

All production reports turned in after the March 1 due date will be subject to daily late filing fees of \$50 per day up to \$500 per report. If there is zero (0) production on the property, the report must still be filed with the district subject to all the requirements and due dates listed. If the wells are not in use, the producer has the option to make the wells inactive and no longer receive a yearly production report until the wells are made active. Please contact the district before the due date if this is the case.

If you turned in your 2016 Production Reports late and paid a late filing fee, the late filing fee will be fully refunded if 2017 Production Reports for the same properties are filed by close of business on January 15, 2018.

Please update any information on the production report as needed. If there are any questions about your report or you need assistance, please contact the district staff at (806) 935-6401 or email production@northplainsgcd.org. ♦

High Plains Irrigation Conference set Feb. 7 in Amarillo

The annual High Plains Irrigation Conference will be Feb. 7 in the North Exhibit Hall of the Amarillo Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St., Amarillo.

The program, hosted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Agricultural Irrigation Association, will address a wide variety of topics of interest, said Dr. Charles Hillyer, program coordinator and AgriLife Extension irrigation specialist in Amarillo.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. with the program starting at 8:30 a.m. and concluding at 5 p.m. Cost is \$30 and includes breakfast burritos and lunch.

Continuing education units for Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide applicators and certified crop advisers as well as Agricultural Irrigation Association certified irrigation designer units are pending.

Topics and speakers on the agenda are:

- Precision Mobile Drip Irrigation, Recent Results in Kansas – Dr. Isaya Kisekka, University of California, Davis assistant professor of agricultural water management and irrigation engineering; and Dr. Susan O'Shaughnessy, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agriculture Research Service agricultural engineer-irrigation automation, Bushland.

- Soil Moisture Sensors – Dr. Saleh Taghvaeian, Oklahoma State University assistant professor and extension specialist in water resources, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

- Update from the Texas Water Development Board, Kathleen Jackson, Texas Water Development Board member, Beaumont.

- Revisiting Chemigation for Insect Pest Management – Dr. Ed Bynum,

AgriLife Extension entomologist, Amarillo.

- Irrigation in the Crop Profitability Analyzer – DeDe Jones, AgriLife Extension risk management program specialist, Amarillo.

- Insurance Changes from Recent Fusarium Issues – Rachel Myers, Myers Crop Insurance Agency, Claude.

- Water Laws and Regulations, Tiffany Dowell Lashmet, AgriLife Extension agricultural law specialist, Amarillo.

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Update – Keith Sides, Lubbock, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- Variable Frequency Drives Panel Discussion – Greg Sokora, USDA-NRCS zone engineer, Lubbock; Cody Ash, Amarillo Industrial Electric Inc., Amarillo; Dr. Paul Colaizzi, USDA-ARS research agricultural engineer, Bushland; and Wayne Winget, Winget Pump and Irrigation Inc., Hereford.

A concurrent trade show will provide opportunities for attendees to see new products and technologies and to visit with experts from industry, non-profit organizations and agencies.

For more conference information, go to the Texas Agricultural Irrigation Association website, <http://www.taia.org/>.

Questions about the program can be directed to Hillyer at 806-677-5600 or charles.hillyer@ag.tamu.edu. Sponsor and exhibitor questions should be directed to Kern Stutler at 806-786-5644.

Reprinted courtesy Kay Ledbetter, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension. ♦

3-4-5 Demonstration Preliminary Results to be Presented at January Meetings

Winter time is the time for many things in the Texas Panhandle. It's time for pheasant season and basketball, and for the North Plains Groundwater Conservation District (NPGCD) it's time for tabulating results for the district's on-farm water conservation demonstration projects. Preliminary numbers for the final year of "3-4-5 Gallon Production Maximization (GPM) Project" show corn yields ranged from 221 to 244 bushels per acre.

As in previous district demonstrations, soil moisture probes guided cooperating growers in strategically managing their irrigations to minimize production costs and groundwater usage, while maximizing yield per inch of groundwater pumped. Project lead Leon New said this year the "3-4-5 GPM Project," further revealed the benefits of strategic irrigation management. "Cooperators produced good corn yields in the 3 and 4 GPM per acre fields by utilizing strategic, precision irrigation, combined with beneficial rainfall, conservation tillage and many other important efficiency practices," said New.

Project results include comparative corn yields, measured irrigation, rainfall and net soil water using center pivot Low Energy Precision Application (LEPA), Precision Mobile Drip Irrigation (PMDI) and Subsurface Drip Irrigation (SDI) systems. New will present the results from the 2017 demonstrations at the Pioneer Hi-Bred, Inc. Crop Production Clinics scheduled for January across the district. The schedule of the meetings is as follows:

- Jan. 8, Rita Blanca Coliseum, 219 Farm-to-Market Road 281, Dalhart.
- Jan. 9, Moore County Community Building, 1600 S. Maddox Ave., Dumas.
- Jan. 10, Sherman County Barn, 501 S. Maple St., Stratford.
- Jan. 11, Hansford County Barn, 607 E. Ave. D., Spearman.



Leon New, "3-4-5" Project Lead, reports on the 2016 demonstrations at last year's Pioneer Hi-Bred Crop Production Clinics. New will report on the 2017 demonstrations at this year's meetings.



Attendees at the Grower Days in Perryton and Etter qualified for part of a \$300,000 fund available to cost share irrigation efficiency tools. Shown here is Harold Grall, NPGCD Board President, addressing the group at the Perryton meeting on September 20.

Save Water: Water Conservation Artwork Contest Winners 2018

Christy Hernandez Zamarrippa from Mr. Smyth's class in Hartley, Texas is the grand prize winner in the 2018 Water Conservation Artwork Contest sponsored by the North Plains Groundwater Conservation District (NPGCD). The annual contest is open to all fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students who reside within the district.



Principal Kurt Koepke presents Christy Hernandez Zamarrippa with the 2018 NPGCD Water Conservation Calendar with her artwork showcased on the cover.

Christy's artwork titled "Save Water" shows two hands in the shape of a heart and a rainbow background with water dripping onto the earth below. Christy received a framed copy of her original artwork and a \$50 cash prize. Her artwork is also featured on the cover of the 2018 NPGCD Water Conservation Calendar. Christy was in Mr. Smyth's class from Hartley School in 2017 when the entries were submitted. The calendars are free to the public.

Other winners in this year's contest are:

Jaron M. Schriber – artwork titled "Don't Leave Us Running". Jaron was in Mrs. Olson's class at Dalhart Intermediate School in Dalhart.

Yunidiana Rojas – artwork titled "The Water Cycle". Yunidiana was in Mrs. Olson's class at Dalhart Intermediate School in Dalhart.

Caitlyn Gatlin – artwork titled "Earth Day". Caitlyn was in Mrs. Mason's class at Hillcrest Elementary in Dumas.

Vriyhana Pizarro – artwork titled "Water Hog". Vriyhana was in Ms. McOmber's class at Hillcrest Elementary in Dumas.

Caitlin Admire – artwork titled "Ways You Can Conserve Water". Caitlin was in Ms. McOmber's class at Hillcrest Elementary in Dumas.

Gisselle Lopez – artwork titled "Don't Waste it! Save it!". Ashley was in Mrs. Resnick's class at Sunset Elementary in Dumas.

Adrian Rivera – artwork titled "Don't Fill Your Pool Everyday". Adrian was in Mrs. Holzworth's class at Morningside Elementary in Dumas.

Elli Bezner – artwork titled "Donut Let Any Water Go to Waste". Elli was in Mrs. Kaul's class at St. Anthony's School in Dalhart.

Diego Padilla – artwork titled "Let's Take Care of Water!". Diego was in Mrs. Kaul's class at St. Anthony's School in Dalhart.

Judd Daniels – artwork titled "Slow the Flow, Save H2O". Judd was in Mrs. Kaul's class at St. Anthony's School in Dalhart.

Lauren Welch – artwork titled "Stop that Drippin'". Lauren was in Mrs. Kaul's class at St. Anthony's School in Dalhart.

Karol Garcia – artwork titled "Save H2O". Karol was in Mrs. Kaul's class at St. Anthony's School in Dalhart.

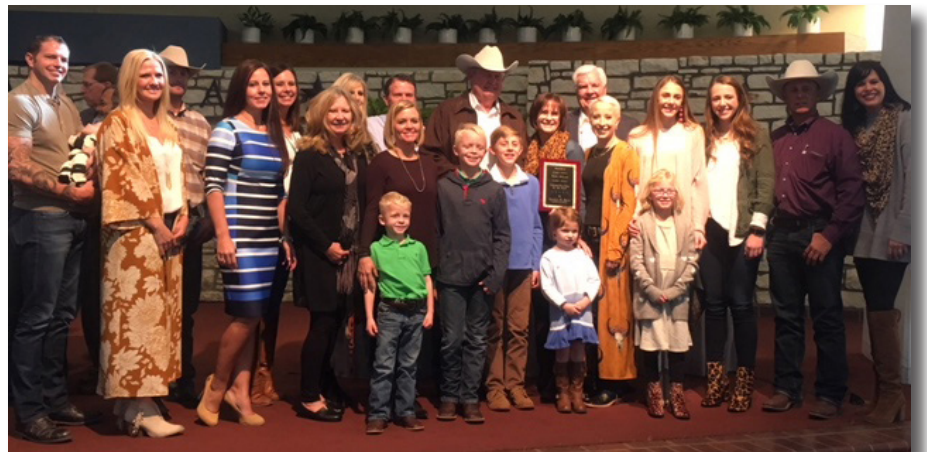
These students received their artwork framed, a \$25 cash award, and their artwork is featured inside the 2018 Water Conservation Calendar. Additionally, each student received copies of the calendars to share with friends and family.

The water conservation calendars serve as colorful reminders of how we can be better stewards of our water throughout the year. The calendars are available to the public at no cost at the North Plains Groundwater Conservation District office at 603 East 1st Street in Dumas, and at water utility offices in each town within the district. You can also request copies of the calendar by calling the district office at 806-935-6401.

The district would like to thank all the students who participated in this year's contest. We also appreciate the parents and teachers who encourage their students to enter this contest each year. It is an excellent way to challenge students to think about ways they can conserve water, while allowing them to communicate a water conservation message to others through their art. 💧

Farmer Rancher of the Year

(continued from page 1)



Multiple generations of McLain's family attended the luncheon to help him celebrate the recognition as Farmer Rancher of the Year 2017.

Mike met the love of his life Diane, and they married June of 1973. Mike and Diane have three children: Mika Devaney and husband Matt of Ft. Worth, Molly McCloy and husband Marty of Spearman, and Buster McLain and wife Holly of Gruver. They are the proud grandparents of eight beautiful grandchildren.

For 24 years Mike has served on the board of Amarillo Production Credit Association, which became Great Plains Ag Credit, and is now Ag Texas. Throughout his tenure on the board, he has also served on various State committees, such as the Farm Credit Bank State Advisory Board and the Association Business Advisory Committee.

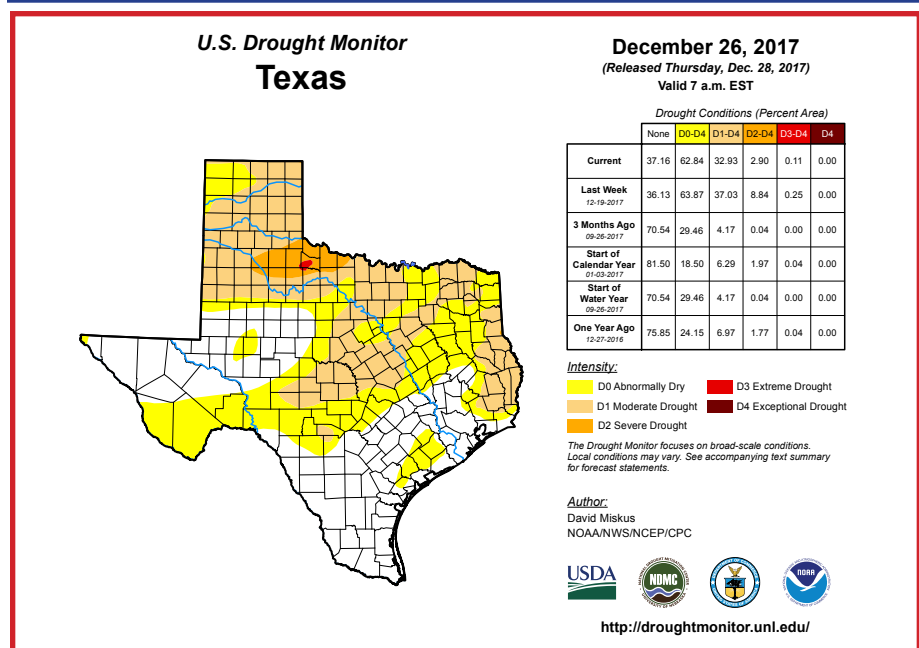
Mike has always been, and continues to be, involved in the community. In the 1980's, for several years, Mike coached Little Dribblers basketball teams in Gruver, and in the early 1990's, he coached girls AAU basketball.

In his spare time, Mike enjoys watching his grandchildren in their activities, basketball, going to the movies, muscle cars and five-window Chevrolets.

Duncan & Boyd Jewelers has proudly supported the Farmer Rancher of the year for the last 25 years. Recognizing farmers and ranchers are the backbone of the Panhandle and the hard work these community members do year-round, Duncan & Boyd is proud to honor Mike McLain. 💧

Save Paper and Water by Choosing our E Newsletter

North Plains GCD now offers our district newsletters by email. If you would like us to send you a digital copy of the newsletter, you can go online at www.northplainsgcd.org/sign-e-news/ and fill out the form, or just email info@northplainsgcd.org. You can also go online to download previous newsletters, and find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



“Save the Planet’s Water Festivals” Recruiting Volunteers

Each year the district presents what amount to conservation boot camps known as the Save the Planet’s Water Festivals (STPWF). The STPWF’s are open to all 4th graders throughout the district and are designed to train future Water Rangers with the desire and ability to protect and defend water resources everywhere!

The festivals take place in Dalhart, Dumas and Perryton on three consecutive days, engaging over 800 students and adults in a full day of hands-on interactive learning about groundwater and other natural resources. This year’s festivals are scheduled for April 18 in Dalhart, April 19 in Dumas and April 20th in Perryton.

“These festivals are a way for the district to participate in the lives of these young stewards of our environment at a time when they are forming opinions and ideas about the world around them,” said District General Manager, Steve Walthour. “They are only ten years away from the right to vote and impact decisions about our natural resources,” said Walthour.

The festivals are about learning, but they are also about having lots of fun, with the possibility of getting wet! The idea of being a Water Ranger adds a sense of adventure to a subject that may not be that exciting, despite its desperate importance to our society. “When the day is over we want to see big smiles and we usually do, but we also want the students to realize they can have an impact on this critical

resource, even as soon as when they get to their homes that very day,” said District Assistant General Manager for Outreach, Kirk Welch. “This is empowering to the students and they take ownership of the responsibility and the opportunity to make a difference,” said Welch.

Students will have the opportunity to attend eight different interactive presentations during the day to learn more about water and water conservation, as well as aquatic organisms and Panhandle wildlife.

“While we have great corporate and community partners who support the festivals each year, there are many opportunities for groups and individuals to participate in this worthwhile, rewarding and just plain fun event,” said Walthour. For information about volunteering for the “Save Our Planet’s Water” Festival, contact Kirk Welch at 806-935-6401 or kwelch@northplainsgcd.org.

For more information about the Save the Planet’s Water Festivals, contact Kirk Welch at 806-935-6401 or email kwelch@northplainsgcd.org , or visit our website at www.northplainsgcd.org.



Students wearing their Water Ranger t-shirts experience minerals, some of which may be found in their water, at the 2016 Dalhart Save the Planet’s Water Festival.

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Upcoming Events

- January NPGCD Board Meeting, North Plains WCC, Jan. 9
- Pioneer Crop Production meetings, Jan. 8-11
(See story for locations)
- High Plains Irrigation Conference, Amarillo Civic Center, Feb. 7
- Soil Health Symposium, Bayer Museum of Agriculture, Lubbock, February 13-14
- 4th Biennial Texas Panhandle Water Conservation Symposium, Amarillo Civic Center, Feb. 28
- Master Irrigator 2018, North Plains WCC, March 21 & 28, April 4 & 11
- 13th Annual Children’s Water Festivals April 18, 19 and 20
(See story for locations)

Education Program Request

Interested in getting a North Plains Groundwater Conservation District staff member into your classroom? The district offers a variety of conservation education programs appropriate for grade levels K-12 that we would love to share with your students. For more information, please contact Kirk Welch at 806-935-6401 or at info@northplainsgcd.org.

