

Appendix 6C
Drought Triggers

Drought Triggers for Surface Water Sources

For surface water sources, a single drought trigger was identified based on reservoir content or stream flow. These trigger levels and associated management actions are for reservoirs outlined in Table 6C-1. Table 6C-2 presents the same data for run-of-the-river sources.

Table 6C-1
Drought Triggers for Region F Reservoirs

Reservoirs	Trigger	Action
Lake J.B. Thomas	Content is below 24,120 ac-ft	Notify City of Snyder of drought conditions. End pumping operations at the Big Spring/Odessa intake. Coordinate with CRMWD and Snyder Drought Contingency Plans.
E.V. Spence Reservoir	Content is below 108,400 ac-ft	Notify Cities of Robert Lee and San Angelo. Limit releases for water quality purposes. Coordinate with Drought Contingency Plans for CRMWD, Robert Lee and San Angelo.
O.H. Ivie Reservoir	Content is below 114,601 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Limit large releases for water quality purposes. Coordinate with Drought Contingency Plans for CRMWD and San Angelo.
Lake Colorado City	Content is below 16,301 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with customers' Drought Contingency Plans.
Champion Creek Reservoir	Content is below 9,918 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with customers' Drought Contingency Plans.
Mountain Creek Lake	Content is below 465 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with customers' Drought Contingency Plans.
Oak Creek Reservoir	Content is below 13,030 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with customers' Drought Contingency Plans.
Lake Ballinger/Moonen	Content is below 1908 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with customers' Drought Contingency Plans.
Lake Winters	Content is below 4,400 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with customers' Drought Contingency Plans.

Table 6C-1 Drought Triggers for Region F Reservoirs (continued)

Reservoirs	Trigger	Action
O.C. Fisher Reservoir	Content is below 9,000 ac-ft	See San Angelo System
Twin Buttes Reservoir	Content is below 12,000 ac-ft	See San Angelo System
Lake Nasworthy	Content is below 9,000 ac-ft	See San Angelo System
San Angelo System	Content is below 30,000 ac-ft	Notify customers of drought conditions. Initiate Drought Contingency Plan for San Angelo.
Lake Coleman	Content is below 18,000 ac-ft (Lake level < 1705.5 msl)	Notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with City of Coleman's Drought Contingency Plan.
Hords Creek Reservoir	Content is below 2,268 ac-ft	Notify public of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use.
Lake Brownwood	Content is below 94,600 ac-ft	Notify customers via local media. Coordinate with Drought Contingency Plans for BCWID and Cities of Early, Brownwood.
Brady Creek Lake	Content is below 9,860 ac-ft	When Brady Reservoir begins to be used for water supply, notify customers of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with City of Brady's Drought Contingency Plan.
Red Bluff Reservoir	Content is below 52,146 ac-ft at the end of January	Notify customers of drought conditions.

**Table 6C-2
Drought Triggers for Region F Run-of-the-River Supplies**

Source	Trigger	Action
Colorado River	Using USGS gage at Winchell, Tx, flows are less than 25 cfs for more than 30 consecutive days between September and June.	Notify public and irrigators of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use.
Concho River	Using USGS gage at Paint Rock, Tx, flows are less than 10 cfs for more than 30 consecutive days between October and February or less than 5 cfs between March and June.	Notify public and irrigators of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with the City of Paint Rock's Drought Contingency Plan (if available)
Llano River	Using USGS gage at Junction, Tx, flows are less than 100 cfs for more than 30 consecutive days.	Notify public and irrigators of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with the City of Junction's Drought Contingency Plan.
San Saba River	Using USGS gage at Menard, Tx, flows are less than 10 cfs for more than 30 consecutive days between November and May or less than 3 cfs between June and October.	Notify public and irrigators of drought conditions. Request voluntary reduction in water use. Coordinate with the City of Menard's Drought Contingency plan.

Groundwater Drought Triggers

Drought contingency plans provide a structured response that is intended to minimize the damaging effects caused by the water shortage conditions. A common feature of drought contingency plans is a structure that allows increasingly stringent drought response measures to be implemented in successive stages as water supply diminishes or water demand increases. This measured or gradual approach allows for timely and appropriate action as a water shortage develops. The onset and termination of each implementation stage should be defined by specific “triggering” criteria. Triggering criteria are intended to ensure that timely action is taken in response to a developing situation and that the response is appropriate to the level of severity of the situation.

Drought response triggers should be specific to each water supplier and should be based on an assessment of the water user’s vulnerability. Groundwater drought triggers may be based on levels of user demand, water treatment plant or delivery system capabilities, water levels within designated monitor wells that have a record of historical measurements or in some cases using short or long term weather patterns. Whichever method is employed, trigger criteria should be defined on well-established relationships between the benchmark and historical experience. If historical observations have not been made then common sense must prevail until such time that more specific data can be presented.

Ground-water triggers are not as easily identified as factors related to surface-water systems. This is attributable to (1) the rapid response of stream discharge and reservoir storage to short-term changes in climatic conditions and (2) the typically slower response of ground-water systems to recharge processes. Wet climatic conditions over a period of one or two years might have a significant impact on the availability of surface water. However, aquifers in the same area might not show comparable levels of response for much longer periods of time, depending on infiltration rates, size and location of the recharge areas, the distribution of precipitation, and the extent to which aquifers are developed and exploited by major users of groundwater.

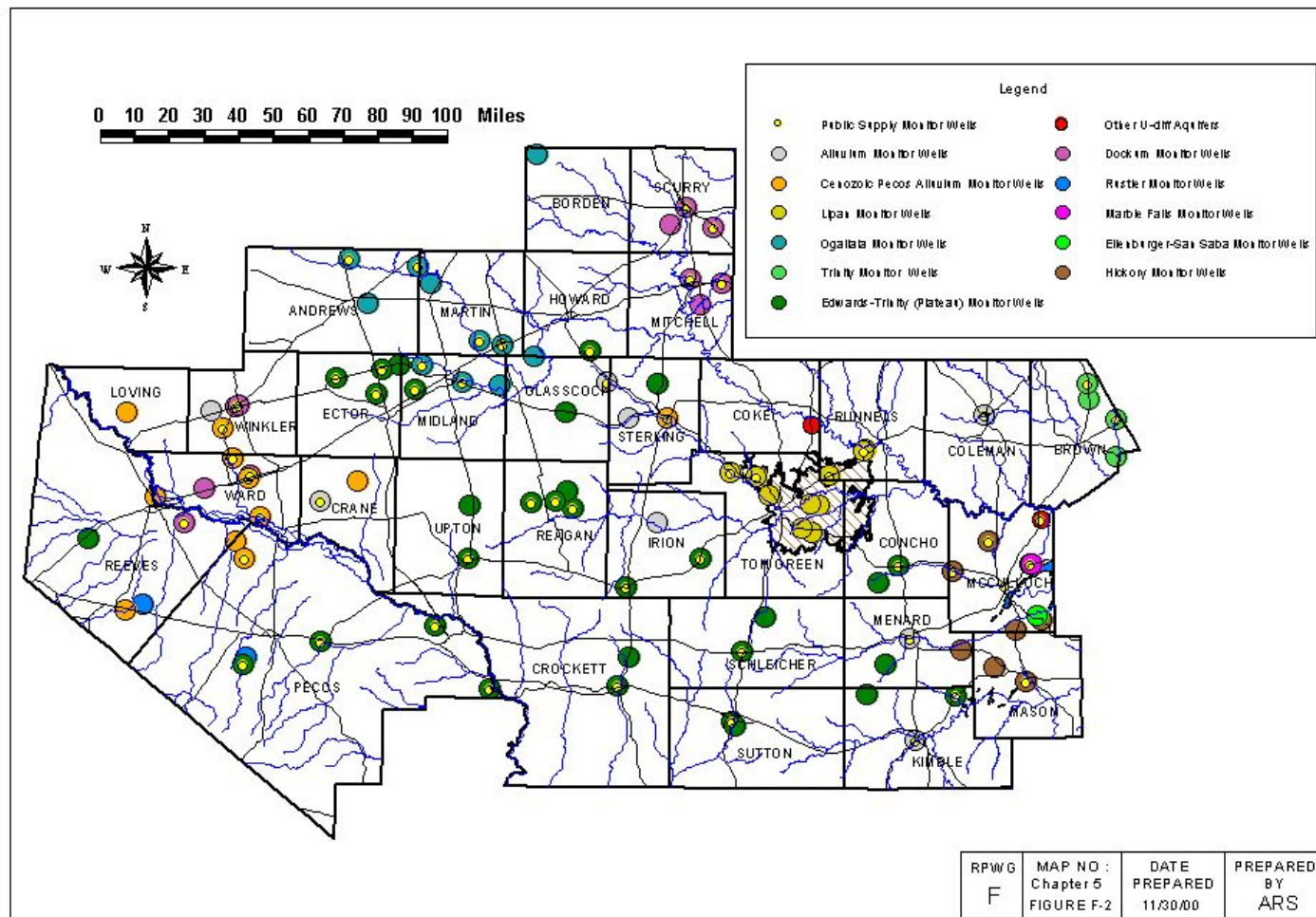
Aquifers that do not receive sufficient recharge to offset natural discharge and pumpage may be depleted of groundwater (e.g., mined) over time. The rate and extent of ground-water mining are related to the timeframe and the extent to which withdrawals exceed recharge. In such aquifers, water levels may fall over long periods of time, eventually reaching a point at which the cost of lifting water to the surface becomes uneconomic. Thus, water levels alone in such areas may not be a satisfactory drought trigger. Instead, communities might consider the average annual rate of water level decline relative to the remaining saturated thickness of the aquifer, and increased well pumping costs as water levels decline as a drought trigger indicators.

Water levels in observation wells in and adjacent to municipal well fields, especially wells completed in aquifers that respond relatively quickly to recharge events, may be established as drought triggers for municipalities if historical water level measurements are available. Water levels below specified elevations for a pre-determined period of time might be interpreted to be reasonable ground-water indicators of drought conditions. Until such historical water-level trends are established, municipalities will likely continue to depend on demand as a percentage of production capacity as their primary drought trigger.

As discussed earlier in this section, ground-water levels in this part of the State have only limited use as drought triggers. Although numerous water-level measurements are available on a number of wells in the Region F, most of this data represents only one measurement a year. This does not allow for observation of seasonal fluctuation or response to recharge events. However, wells have been selected that could monitor water levels in each aquifer, county and for each user group and the locations of these wells are illustrated in Figure 6C-1.

Table 6C-3 lists the individual available well information obtained from TWDB and TNRCC databases including well location, owner, elevation, depth, use and historical water levels. Historical water level trends, aquifer type, well-saturated thickness, drought trigger levels and present drought status were determined from this data. Wells selected in this list had a combination of the most complete record of historical water levels and/or

Figure 6C-1
Location of Water Level Monitoring Wells in Region F



Locations of Water Level Monitor Wells
in Region F

Table 6C-3

Table 6C-3 cont

the most recent water levels (1994 -2000). If water level information was unavailable, the most recent well drilled and/or the deepest well was selected.

When historical water level data was available, a benchmark water level from each well was determined by calculating the average of the historical water levels. Drought trigger levels were set at 50% mark between the benchmark level and the historical low. If the difference in the historical low and benchmark level for a well was less than 10% of the water column in the well, it was assumed that there is not sufficient water level variation to establish drought trigger levels. Also, if the historical water level data indicated the well was being mined, an average mining rate was determined and the trigger level was set at a 25% increase in the average mining rate.

Wells assigned the “Insufficient data” status should not be used for groundwater management decisions until additional data is collected. Drought related decisions of groundwater management in these areas should be based a combination of weather, user demand and or water system delivery capacity to determine drought triggers.

Water-use categories in the Region F other than municipal that are dependent on groundwater as their primary or only source of supply must rely on a number of factors to identify drought conditions. In most cases, atmospheric condition (days without measurable rainfall) is the most obvious factor. Various drought indices (Palmer, Standard Precipitation, and Keetch-Byram) are available from State and local sources. Groundwater conservation districts, agricultural agencies, as well as individuals can access these indices for use in determining local drought conditions and appropriate responses.

The TWDB staff measures water levels of approximately a third of the monitor wells listed in Table 6C-3. Groundwater conservation districts are generally responsible for monitoring conditions within their boundaries and making appropriate public notification. Outside of existing districts, the TWDB should assume responsibility of public notification of drought conditions based on their water-level monitoring network. Appropriate drought responses are the responsibility of and at the discretion of private

well owners. Wells selected for drought contingency triggers should be re-evaluated for appropriateness during each planning cycle.

SWN	County	Aquifer	Owner	Elevation	Well_depth	Drilled	Use	Decade Average Water Levels					Most Recent WL	Direction of WLS/Decade Historocal Trend Rec - Earl/decade	Present Est. Sat. Thickness in Well	
								1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s				1980s
2736201	Andrews	121OGLL	City_of_Andrews	3158	200	1954	P					-99.9	-104.1	-104.2	-1.4	96
2745401	Andrews	121OGLL	Charley_Welch	3098	125	1969	I					-49.9	-73.2	-71.8	-7.3	53
2739405	Andrews	121OGLL	City_of_Midland	2960	215	1985	P							-114.5		

