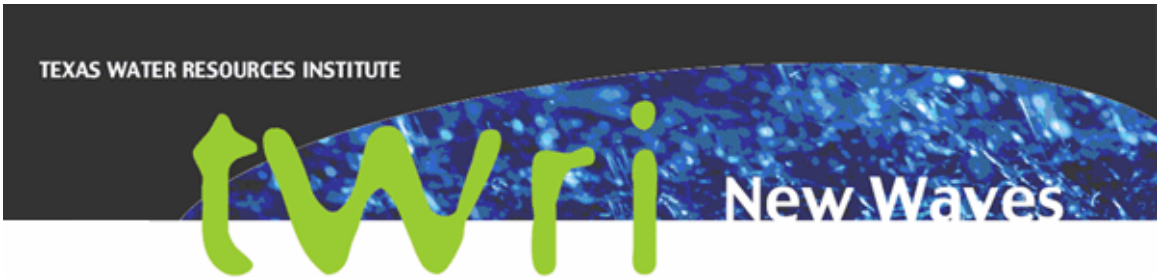

Breaking news about water resources research and education at Texas universities

April 17, 2006

1. TWRI wins environmental award for Fort Hood revegetation project

The Texas Water Resources Institute won the 2006 Texas Environmental Excellence Award for Agriculture for its Fort Hood Range Revegetation Pilot Project. The award, sponsored by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Gov. Rick Perry, is presented to outstanding, innovative environmental programs in 10 diverse categories across the public and private sectors.

The Blackland Research and Extension Center at Temple, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and Fort Hood personnel collaborate with TWRI in the project. The project transports composted dairy manure from the North Bosque River Watershed – where too much phosphorus in run-off is impairing that watershed – to the nutrient-starved and eroded land of the fort. Over 20 scientists and land managers from federal and state agencies and Texas A&M University are involved in the project. **Drs. Bill Fox and Dennis Hoffman,** senior research scientists, are co-leaders of the project.

TWRI will receive the award at the TCEQ banquet May 10.

2. Water conservation, collaborative opportunities featured at Rio Grande conference

By Danielle Supercinski

The fifth annual Rio Grande Basin Initiatives (RGBI) Conference was held March 28-30, 2006, in Ruidoso, NM. The week began with welcoming talks from project and university administrators and an overview of New Mexico region water issues. The first day moved quickly into individual task group and county program presentations, which continued throughout most of the conference. The week ended with other project reports from the U.S. Geological Survey, New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute, an overview of the River Systems Institute, Transboundary Student Center and Edwards Aquifer Center at Texas State University, and closed with wrap-up discussions regarding future collaborations.

RGBI project participants from New Mexico State University (NMSU) and Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) were in attendance along with participants of two other Rio Grande projects from Texas State University System and the University of Texas.

For more information on the Rio Grande Basin Initiative, or to view conference presentations, please visit http://riogrande.tamu.edu.

3. TWRI accepting applications for Mills Scholarship Program

Texas A&M University graduate students pursuing water-related research in diverse disciplines are encouraged to apply for the Texas Water Resources Institute Mills Scholarship program. Application deadline is June 12, 2006

TWRI's Mills Scholarship Program is an endowed fund established by Mills Cox, a former chairman of the Texas Water Development Board, The program supports research in water conservation and management. The Institute will award 15 scholarships during the 2006-07 academic year for $1,500 to those students conducting research that emphasizes issues related to water resources.

Current and prospective graduate students at TAMU are eligible to apply for the program. The goal of the program is to provide students experience in proposal development and water research. A complete scholarship application packet can be obtained at http://twri.tamu.edu/mills.php.

Awards will be announced by July 10. For more information, contact Clint Wolfe at 979.845.1852 or cwolfe@ag.tamu.edu.

4. Beginners SWAT modeling workshop offered

The Grassland, Soil and Water Research Laboratory and Blackland Research Center are co-sponsoring a beginner Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) three-day workshop May 9-11. The workshop will be at the Spatial Sciences Lab in College Station.

This workshop is designed to introduce new users to SWAT2000 model, review necessary and optional inputs, and familiarize the user with ArcView interfaces. Attendees should have a working knowledge of ArcView. The three-day workshop will not review basic concepts on ArcView usage prior to covering the SWAT/ArcView interface.

Workshop fees are $500 per person. Graduate students pay a reduced fee of $300. Payment is required at the time of registration.

For more information or to register for a workshop, please go to http://www.brc.tamus.edu/swat/edu.html.

5. Texas Ag forum in May to examine many issues, including drought

As work begins on the 2007 farm bill, Texas producers are asking how budget deficits, trade agreements, drought, energy prices, and commodity provision changes will influence the new legislation and their bottom line.

Dr. Joe Outlaw, co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University, and a group of Texas commodity group and farm organization leaders have planned the 2006 Texas Ag Forum "as an opportunity for Texas agriculture to come together, discuss these important issues, and voice their opinions."

Scheduled May 1 at the St. Anthony Hotel in San Antonio, the forum will feature Congressman Henry Bonilla, chairman of the House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee.

More information is available at http://agforum.tamu.edu

6. Scientists receive grant to study benefits of composted biosolids .

The International Turf Producers Foundation recently funded an interdisciplinary team of scientists from the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and Texas Cooperative Extension to study improvements in water and nutrient conservation and carbon sequestration during cycling of composted biosolids through turfgrass sod production.

Drs. Don Vietor, Richard White, Xiaoyan Dai, Frank Hons, and **Tony Provin** of Soil and Crop Sciences; **Tom Boutton** of Rangeland Ecology and Management, and **Clyde Munster** of Biological and Agricultural Engineering were funded to evaluate turfgrass, soil, and water quantity and quality responses to management of composted biosolids, fertilizer N, and clippings. Compost amendments are expected to benefit both agricultural and urban landscapes during production and after transplanting of turfgrass sod. Impacts of compost and management factors on turfgrass establishment and regrowth and on retention and losses of water, mineral nutrients, and organic carbon will be quantified in replicated field studies.

7. Burnett receives energy award

David Burnett, director of technology at the Global Petroleum Research Institute at Texas A&M, received the Midland Reporter Telegram-Hearst Newspapers Energy Award for Technology, presented in Midland April 3.

Burnett's research is focused on desalination of brackish brine water and he is developing a desalination unit small enough for small communities or ranchers.

The Midland Reporter Telegram-Hearst Newspapers Energy Awards, presented in five categories, were established in 1996 to recognize significant achievements and contributions of the oil and gas industry. The awards were created by the late John Paul Pitts, oil editor of the newspaper and creator of the Permian Basin Oil and Gas Report.

8. Institute posts Water Quality Agricultural Grant report to Web site

Texas Water Resources Institute's 2005 Agricultural Water Quality Grants final report to the Texas Water Development Board is posted on the institute's web site. The report contains complete technical reports submitted by the principal investigators of the water resources projects funded in 2005.

In January 2005, TWRI selected 10 projects for one-year funding. The final report briefly describes the water-savings that may be achieved through the results or
progress of each project.

Those funded and their project titles are: **James P. Bordovsky,** "Equipment Installation for the Evaluation of Crop Row Direction and Offset Distance from Subsurface Drip Irrigation Laterals;" **John L. Jifon, "**On-farm Volumetric Measurement of Irrigation Water Use as a Best Management Practice Tool for Water Conservation in Drip Irrigated Vegetables;" **Allen Knutson,** "Implementing Biological Control of Saltcedar in the Upper Colorado River Watershed;" and **Leonardo Lombardini,** "Irrigation scheduling in Pecan Orchards using a Soil Water Balance Model."

Others were **G. J. Michels, Jr.,** "Biological Control of Saltcedar at Lake Meredith, Texas;" **Genhua Niu,** "Impact of Drought on Salinity Tolerance of Landscape Woody Plants Irrigated with Reclaimed Water;" **Genhua Niu,** "Determining Plant Water Use and Crop Coefficients of Selected Nursery and Landscape Plants;" **Giovanni Piccinni,** "On-Farm Research to Evaluate Irrigation Scheduling Tools to Increase Yield and Control Diseases;" **John W. Sij,** "Managing Water Resources of the Seymour Aquifer Using Subsurface Drip Irrigation;" and **B.A. Stewart,** "Seeding Dryland Grain Sorghum in Clumps to Decrease Tillering and Increase Grain Yield;"

To read the final report, go to: http://twri.tamu.edu/soil_water_grants/2005/twdb_final_2005.pdf

9. Water Resources develops two Web sites for new projects

The Institute has recently posted two new Web sites to include information about new projects. The Lake Granbury Water Quality project Web site is http://lakegranbury.tamu.edu/. The Impact of Proper Organic Fertilizer Management in Production Agriculture Web site is http://twri.tamu.edu/ipofm/.

New Publications

"Harvesting Rainwater for Wildlife," **James Cathey** , **Russell A. Persyn , Dana Porter , Monty Dozier , Michael Mecke and Billy Kniffen**; a Texas Cooperative Extension publication.

Landowners can attract wildlife to their properties by installing rainwater catchment devices. This publication explains wildlife water sources, management considerations, rainfall catchment areas and wildlife tax valuation. It also illustrates various types of devices used to provide supplemental water for wildlife. To read the publication, visit http://tcebookstore.org/pubinfo.cfm?pubid=2253

"Drinking Water Problems: Copper," **Monty Dozier, Mark L. McFarland, Bruce Lesikar**

High levels of copper in drinking water can cause health problems. This publication explains the effects of copper in water and methods of removing it. To read the publication, visit http://tcebookstore.org/tmppdfs/8007577-2202.pdf

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