



Research & Demonstration Grant Funding Program Annual Report

Please return the completed form along with the below referenced supplemental information to Jason Coleman at jason.coleman@hpwd.org.

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PROJECT TITLE: Mapping Playa Wetness and Estimating Playa Recharge with Scalable Tools	
TOTAL FUNDING: \$10,722.52	
PROJECT COMPLETED: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE: Dec 31, 2020
PREFERRED PRESENTATION MONTH: January (flexible)	

Attached to this document please provide the following supplemental information:

- Financial report showing expenses, remaining funds, and financial contributions from cooperators and other funding sources.
- Any supplemental materials you would like the HPWD Board of Directors to review.
- A copy of the presentation materials for the HPWD Board of Directors meeting presentation.

1. Describe your progress to date with the project (Word Limit 150):

In the winter, we completed our first phase of outreach to producers and other stakeholder groups (biologists, agency staff) through two in-person focus group meetings, one in Lubbock and one in Amarillo, with the help of HPWD. Producers shared valuable feedback about what they'd like to see in a water resources calculator tool and how they approach decision-making for their playas. We held complementary meetings in Clovis, NM and Leoti, KS, funded separately. In the spring and early summer, we synthesized feedback from those meetings to develop design specifications for a prototype water resources calculator. We contracted with a web development team, who have nearly completed a working prototype that we will then share back with producers for further feedback and iteration. Meanwhile, we have compiled lists of producers whom we can offer the chance to try the prototype when it is ready.

2. Describe successes or setbacks observed with implementing the project (Word Limit 150):

We consider our focus group process a great success. The depth of reflection and feedback from attendees was invaluable, and has shaped how we approach the design of the tool. The development phase faced a small setback with the departure of a staff member who would have been responsible for web development work, but we've overcome this situation by working with an experienced web development team with whom we've had previous contracts. Though we had planned to offer in-person events as an option for a second round of feedback (once a working prototype was developed), we've had to make alternative plans due to COVID-19 restrictions. Our communications team has put together an outreach plan to offer remote feedback opportunities instead, which will likely suit our project well, as the product we'd like producers to review is online.

3. Describe the results of the proposed work objectives and expected impact of the research/demonstration being conducted (Word Limit 250):

We anticipate that the playa water resources calculator will be an excellent way for producers, landowners, and field biologists to better understand how playas under their care can affect the bottom line and the water balance of the farm or ranch. In many cases, it will be an eye-opening conversation starter. Our goal for the design of the online tool is to provide an easily navigable map that producers can explore, comparing their own experiences of when a playa is wet and how much it recharges to our data on the same topics. To share a few examples of how producers might use this information:

- Recharge estimates can help a family weigh the benefits of restoring a playa for future generations against the financial return of farming through it.
- Seasonal wetness statistics may help a producer gauge risk in planting decisions, letting him or her know the historical likelihood that a playa may hold water during a critical time for crops.
- A waterfowl hunter may also use seasonal wetness statistics to determine which playas would be most beneficial to conserve for hunting opportunities.
- A field biologist may share information on conservation programs with owners of playas with high-risk inundation patterns who may be looking for alternative options. Wetness frequency can be extrapolated to dollars lost if a crop fails.

4. Describe the conservation impacts to the District (Word Limit 150):

As an online tool, every resident of the district will have access to useful information about playa water resources. Community members who ranch or farm may explore the map out of curiosity, and find the benefits of healthy playas (or the risks of farming through playas) compelling. As a primarily educational tool, we anticipate that it will be a point of first contact for many farmers with playas who have not previously considered conservation. We also anticipate that communities who are looking to

do innovative water planning for the future will find it an easy way to quantify the potential benefits to playa restoration, as we've seen happen in communities in New Mexico and Kansas already.

5. Please describe any outreach and communication plans you have for this project, including any awards submissions or potential opportunities for publishing (Word Limit 150):

We plan to execute a beta testing process for the prototype calculator, allowing any interested producers to play with the map and see how the calculations work. We'll then use this feedback to revise the tool. We plan to work with HPWD to extend the invitation to review the prototype to anyone who attended the focus group, as well as other interested producers in the region. The HPWD Board will also have the opportunity to participate. If in-person meetings are again possible later this year, we'll plan to offer sessions at local conservation district meetings or other local group events. Once complete, we'll also promote the finished product through multiple channels, including conservation districts, crop consults, producer groups, and our organizational newsletter. We'd like to work with HPWD to refine this list as well, to ensure maximum reach.

High Plains Water District - Mapping Playa Wetness & Estimating Playa Recharge												
Grant expires December 31, 2020												
	Grant Expenses							Matching				
	Month of	Total Expenses	MH	Travel	Supplies	Stipends	Contractors	MB	Travel	Other	Indirect	Matching
2019	August	324.50	324.50									
	September	292.05	292.05									
	October	0.00										
	November	0.00										
	December	0.00										
2020	January	1,352.20		1,352.20				2,124.96			212.50	2,337.46
	February	2,252.11		1,197.80	254.31	800.00		1,637.99	1,241.82		287.98	3,167.79
	March	0.00						1,283.83			128.38	1,412.21
	April	194.70	194.70					2,346.31			234.63	2,580.94
	May	1,005.95	1,005.95					1,678.81			43.70	1,722.51
	June	0.00										
	July	0.00										
	August	0.00										
	September	0.00										
	October	0.00										
	November	0.00										
	December	0.00										
Total Expended		5,421.51	1,200.65	2,550.00	254.31	800.00	0.00	9,071.90	1,241.82	0.00	907.19	11,220.91
Budget		10,722.00	1,872.00	2,550.00	300.00	2,100.00	3,900.00	9,071.90	2,550.00	300.00	907.19	12,829.09
Balance		5,300.49	671.35	0.00	45.69	1,300.00	3,900.00	0.00	1,308.18	300.00	(0.00)	1,608.18