

INSPIRING CHANGE

My granddad owns 15 acres close to the community I call home, Rankin. All around my granddad's land (within a three mile radius to the city limits) new fresh water sales and water disposals have been built. The water is taken from the water table underneath the surface for oil field purposes and then for other oil field purposes tainted water is disposed into tanks underground. There are two problems my granddad is awaiting: 1. When will he run out of water from his personal water well; 2. When will those tanks underground settle, move and begin to leak? My granddad could have built a water sales station and/or a disposal and get "rich" like everyone else, but he didn't and he has no desire to do so. Being a student in the middle of West Texas during the oil boom as part of the graduating class of 2014 the idea of the drought and a lack of water is a significant current issue in my home town. My family and I have watched as community members have constructed five new fresh water sales stations around our small community. Along with these fresh water sales for oil field benefits, there have been four water disposal sites constructed as well. All of these water sales and disposals are within a three mile or less radius of the community Rankin, TX. Area long time ranchers are not selling land so all of these things seem to be surrounding the community on lots and sites that only a few people were willing to build and take chances. The change perceived by my family who has lived in this community for 48 years is the change that could occur with in our small community involving scenarios of what happens without rain or with rain.

Without rain the water tables under ground are going to drop considerably. My granddad has had water well problems for the past two years always happening in the months of November

and December. Knowing how far to run water lines below the surface when he first drilled compared to now the water lines and the knowledge of my grandfather supports that the underground water level is dropping.

Substantial rainfall would help the issue of the water underground, but at this point in the west Texas area water and rain are becoming a delicacy. Lack of rain fall not only affects water underground, it also affects life above the ground. Area ranchers depend on rainfall for weeds and grass in the pastures. For the past 4 years now ranchers have sold their livestock due to lack of grazing land. If there is nothing for the livestock to graze on, then the ranchers must buy feed and hay. When ranchers have to do that there is no profit from the livestock. The domino affect of lack of rain concludes that with out rain there is less feed and less feed means higher demand and higher prices for the consumer. Higher prices means harder to produce a herd for the packer market and with that ranchers go broke trying to keep the process of produce and reproduce at a reasonable cost. Other concerns encountered by the community is on water rations when it comes to watering lawns and gardens. One side of town has to water on Monday and Wednesday while the other side of town can only water on Tuesday and Thursday. Everyone must water between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.; however, everyday truckloads of water are hauled to drilling rigs. Where is the equal balance of water rationing with that scenario? Seems a small community of 1500 people have more to offer conservation than trucking companies.

Now what happens if it does begin to rain? With rain the water tables would be helped, and

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ranchers would again be able to build their herds back to a substantial number with land having weeds and grasses; nevertheless, the community of Rankin will have a new man-made problem. The surface water run off paths have been altered significantly. In several areas low water crossings and small creek beds have had caliche pads constructed and water stations and trailer parks constructed. The flood zone in the Rankin community from water run off has been pushed out by almost 100 feet and this poses a huge problem now on the southwest side. Several streets and homes will be significantly affected with a substantial amount of rain. The population that does live in those homes have voiced their opinions and worries to city and county officials more than once, and unfortunately it is causing many heated debates concerning the welfare of Rankin as an anticipated event to see what is going to happen to Rankin when a substantial amount of rainfall does happen and which way the water will flow.

The water issue for all large and small towns in west Texas has many concerns about the water crisis. On such a huge issue of debate how does someone my age inspire change. Just in the community of Rankin the enforcement of water rationing is lacking. Enforcement requires personnel to spend time ensuring that everyone is doing their part to conserve. Conserving also removes the selfishness of not caring about anyone else. Enforcement of building and construction in areas which are close to flooding areas is change that should be coded and followed. Enforcement of officials having the safety and wellbeing of a community in mind rather than how much money taxes and other sources would bring is another item to code and follow. As change has hit the community of Rankin with much oil field activity, the inspiration for change is encouraged with local and state officials advocating for safety and wellbeing for all.