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DETERMINATION OF THE MINIMUM TARGET SATURATED
THICKNESS NEEDED FOR DROUGHT
PROTECTION IN A CRITICAL CELL

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Grand Prairie region of Arkansas is underlain by a Quaternary aquifer which is utilized primarily for the irrigation of rice and soybeans. Irrigators have been concerned with wells going dry and with decreased well capacities. In this report the term "drawdown" refers to the distance between an arbitrarily assigned datum at or above the ground surface, and the elevation of the groundwater table. The cumulative drawdown (day to day decrease in the groundwater table elevation) resulting from withdrawal of groundwater from interacting wells has caused yields in some wells to be less than design discharge. Drawdown is a function of the groundwater withdrawal rate and various aquifer characteristics including saturated thickness. The saturated thickness is the difference between the bottom of the aquifer and the groundwater table. If preventing loss of well design capacity during the irrigation season is to be achieved, adequate saturated thickness must be maintained at all well locations.

Computation of the cumulative drawdown in any well within a network of neighboring wells by the Theis formula (Theis, 1935) becomes complicated as the number of wells increases. "Pumping" is used in this report to mean withdrawal of groundwater from an aquifer. The degree of recovery during non-pumping periods is also difficult to calculate. AQUISIM (Verdin, et al, 1981) is a dynamic aquifer computer simulation model which considerably simplifies the computation of cumulative drawdowns. Most groundwater table elevation measurements in this region are made in the spring. The determination of the spring saturated thickness necessary for maintenance of adequate well capacities throughout the irrigation season is, therefore, an important management tool. This paper describes a method for determining

the minimum spring saturated thickness needed to assure groundwater availability in a particular cell. Desirable (target) spring saturated thicknesses for average and dry climatologic conditions are presented. These values can subsequently be used to determine target groundwater levels needed for drought protection.

1. Selection of the critical cell

The Grand Prairie region was divided into cells 3 miles x 3 miles square as shown in Figure 1 (Peralta, et al, 1984). The elevation of the bottom of the Quaternary aquifer was determined for the center of each cell based on elevations reported by Engler, et al (1945) and used by Griffis (1972) and Peralta, et al (1984). The spring 1982 groundwater table elevation for the center of each cell was determined from U. S. Geological Survey data by Peralta, et al (1984). The non-artesian saturated thickness is the distance between the bottom of the aquifer and the groundwater table. The cell with the smallest saturated thickness in the spring of 1982 was selected for examination in this study. This cell, referred to as the critical cell, is located approximately 7.5 miles south of Stuttgart, Arkansas at coordinates I=13, J=9 (Figure 1). The spring 1982 saturated thickness in this cell was approximately 12 feet.

2. Explanation of universal kriging

Universal kriging is an estimation procedure used for automatic contouring of point observations (Olea, 1975). It is based on the theory of regionalized variables. A regionalized variable is any numerical function with a spatial distribution which varies from one place to another with apparent continuity, but the changes of which

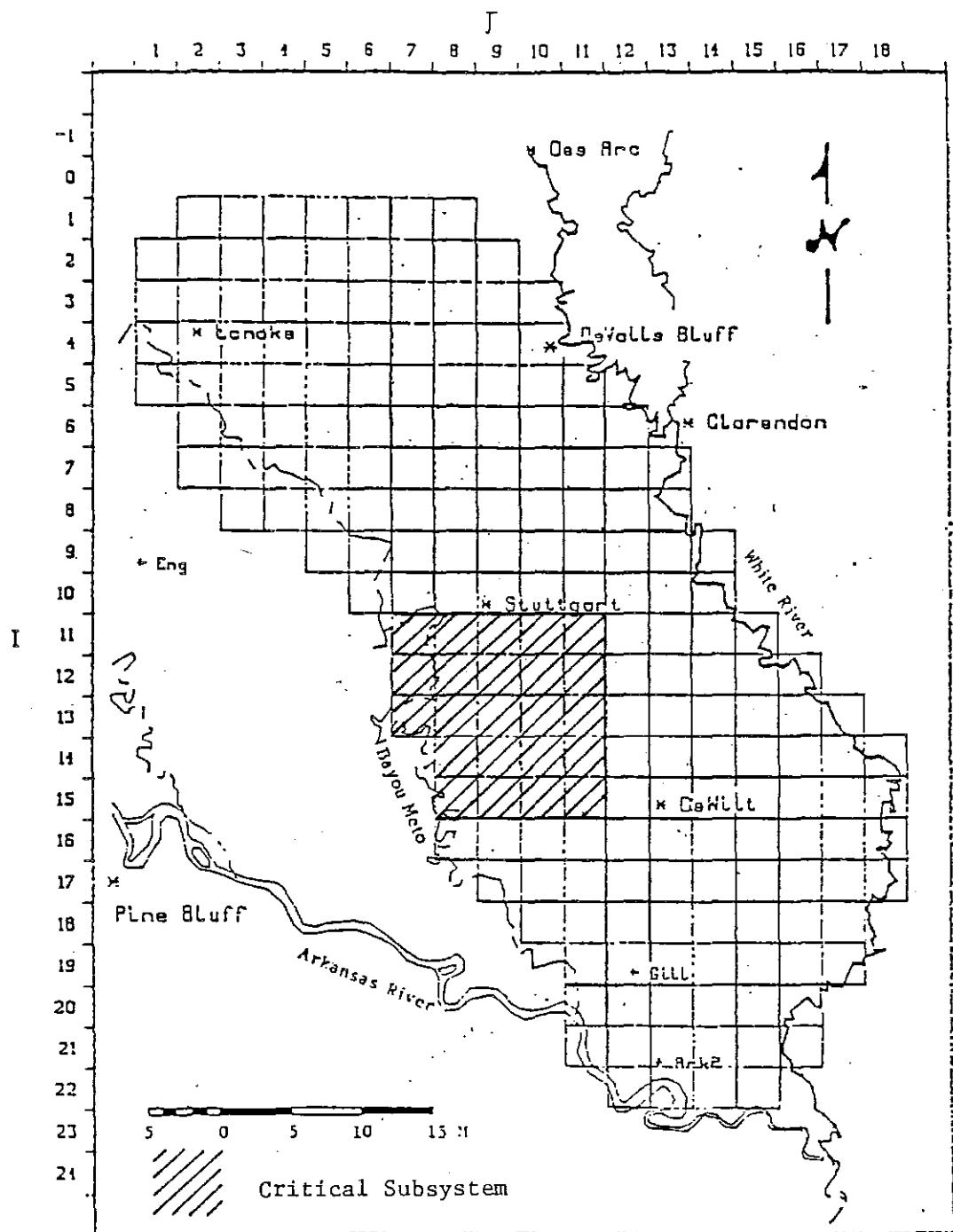


Figure 1 : The Grand Prairie Study Area

cannot be represented by any workable function (Olea, 1975). The variation in the spatial distribution is known as the trend. The aquifer bottom and the water table are trending surfaces, generally represented by point observations, which may be contoured by universal kriging. This method has the advantages of being more reliable and unbiased than other estimation methods (Olea, 1975). Additionally, this method yields the variance of the estimation for every kriged point.

3. Explanation of AQUISIM

AQUISIM performs dynamic simulation in two dimensions of the responses to various stresses in an unconfined (non-artesian) aquifer. It consists of two computer programs, GENERAT and SIMULAT. The model is based on the use of discrete kernel theory. Discrete kernels which represent the unit response to a unit excitation (stress) are generated first by GENERAT. The discrete kernels describe the effect, based on the Theis equation, of a unit of pumping at a particular well on the groundwater level at other points. The number of units of groundwater withdrawal (excitation) at each pumping location is input in SIMULAT. The response at chosen observation locations to those excitations is also determined by SIMULAT. The model computes an average area response to an area excitation, an average area response to a point excitation, and a point response to a point excitation. The areas are square cells of selectable size. The point excitations are withdrawals due to pumping at wells. The point responses are drawdowns in observation wells. The AQUISIM groundwater simulation model has been validated for use in the Grand Prairie (Peralta, et al, 1984) using 3 mile

x 3 mile cells. Values of hydraulic conductivity (270 ft/day) and effective porosity (0.3) chosen for this study are those used in validation of the model (Engler, 1945; Griffis, 1972; Peralta, et al, 1984).

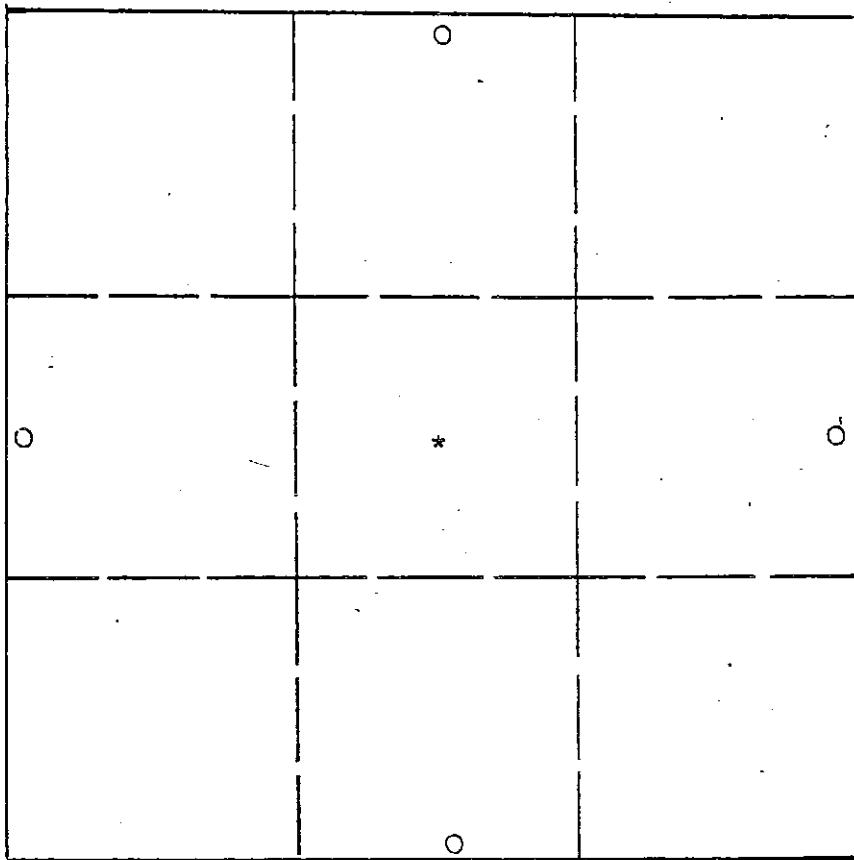
4. Selection of the critical subsystem

To reduce the size and complexity of the simulation, it was decided that a subsystem of cells should be defined consisting of those cells in which pumping had an effect on the critical cell. Examination of the grid shown in Figure 1 reveals that each cell has eight adjacent cells. The critical cell and the eight cells adjacent to it - a 3 x 3 array - was selected for simulation. AQUISIM requires a boundary of constant head cells, therefore, the critical subsystem modeled consists of a 5 x 5 array of cells. The critical subsystem for this study is near the edge of the Quaternary aquifer. Cells I=14, J=7 and I=15, J=7 are not part of the Quaternary aquifer model. They were, therefore, not included in the critical subsystem model, which consists of twenty-three cells (Figure 1).

5. Simulation to determine radius of effects of maximum theoretical pumping in the critical cell

The maximum effect on groundwater levels in the critical cell would result if all the acreage were cropped to rice. In the simulation described in this section, the entire critical cell was hypothetically provided with 750 GPM irrigation pumps, one for each 75 acres.

(AQUISIM does not calculate the point drawdown at an observation point outside the cell containing the excitation well. Due to this limitation a single 9 mile x 9 mile cell containing the 3 x 3 array of the critical cell and its eight adjacent cells was used. Simulated observation points were centered along each of the boundaries (Figure 2).



solid cell = 9 mi. x 9 mi.

dashed line cells = 3 mi. x 3 mi.

O = observation point

* 81 equally spaced 750 gpm wells (one well/75acres)

Figure 2: Location of Wells for Simulation to Determine Maximum Distance of Pumping Effects

A layer of constant head cells, required by AQUISIM, was placed around the 9 mile x 9 mile cell. The pumps were simulated to operate simultaneously on a rigorous four day on, two day off schedule for 92 days to simulate a droughty three month irrigation season (June-August) in the Grand Prairie region. (This is similar to the irrigation schedule needed during the dry 1980 growing season.) No decline of the water table resulted at the observation points during the simulation. The effects of pumping in one 3 mile x 3 mile cell, therefore, do not extend any further than the outer boundaries of the adjacent 3 mile x 3 mile cells. Conversely, only pumping in those cells adjacent to the critical cell has any effect on the critical cell. The 5 x 5 critical subsystem (Figure 3) defined in section 4 is therefore large enough to adequately simulate the effects on the critical cell of nearby ground-water withdrawals.

6. Simulation to determine the effects of pumping in the entire region on the critical cell

Pumping in surrounding cells has very little effect on water levels in the critical cell during a one year time span. This was verified by simulation of the entire Grand Prairie region (Figure 1). Monthly pumping values for a climatically average year were used in all except the critical cell. No pumping was simulated in the critical cell. Any change of the water table elevation in the critical cell for this simulation was, therefore, totally a result of pumping in the surrounding cells. Due to the gradient which exists in the vicinity of the critical cell, the simulated water table actually rose in the critical cell throughout the simulated irrigation season. In other words, recharge to the cell was greater than discharge from it. Therefore, drawdowns

	J				
	1	2	3	4	5
I					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

each cell = 3 mi. x 3 mi.

Figure 3: The Critical Subsystem

in the critical cell can be properly simulated using the critical subsystem only. Simulation of the entire Grand Prairie is not needed to predict water level response in the critical cell for a single season.

7. Well locations and selection of simulated irrigation schedules

Information on all domestic and irrigation wells in the critical cell were obtained from a questionnaire distributed to well owners (Figure 4). All well owners pumping from the Quaternary aquifer responded. A summary of pertinent results from the questionnaire is found in Table 1. At the time of the questionnaire, no domestic wells were located in the critical cell. Seven irrigation wells which pump groundwater from the Quaternary aquifer under normal climatic conditions were identified. The location of each well is shown in Figure 5. In the simulations described later in the report it was assumed that all wells fully penetrated the aquifer.

TABLE 1: Well Owners Questionnaire Results

Well #	Yield (GPM)	Diameter (in.)	Acres Normally Irrigated	Acres Irrigated in Drought
1	600	8	*	65
2	900	8	*	95
3	900	24	*	160
4	700	24	80	80
5	500	8	50	50
6	350	10	30	30
7	400	12	40	40

* Used only as supplementary irrigation wells in normal seasons.

1. Please place the number from the top right hand corner of this page on the map at the approximate location of the well you are describing (if you have more than one well, please use a separate questionnaire for each).
2. What is the depth of the bottom of this well from the ground surface?
3. What is the yield of this well?

gallons per minute
or _____ gallons per hour
4. What is the diameter of the well casing?
5. What is the purpose of this well (irrigation, domestic, etc.)?
6. If this is an irrigation well, during which months is it operated?
7. What crops and how many acres of each crop normally rely on this well for irrigation water?
8. For each crop, what is the approximate first date of irrigation and the approximate last date of irrigation?
9. During irrigation what is your normal pumping cycle?

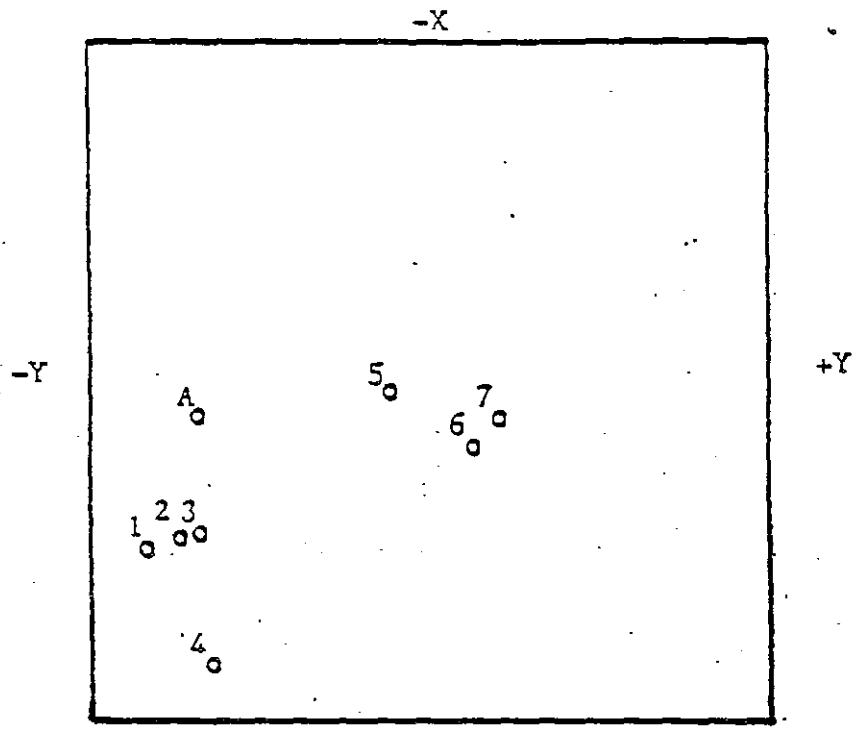
hours on, _____ hours off
or _____ days on, _____ days off
10. If surface water were not available from reservoirs during a drought season, what crops and how many acres of each crop would rely on this well for irrigation water?
11. What is the horsepower of the pump you use (horsepower shown on the pump's label)?
12. What is the source of energy for your pump?

electricity _____ diesel _____
propane _____ other _____
13. If your power source is electricity, what electric rate schedule do you operate under during the irrigation season:

\$/Hp-month, and _____ \$/kw-hr

off season:
_____/Hp-month, and _____ \$/kw-hr
14. It may help us to contact you personally if any further assistance is needed. We ask you to provide your name, mailing address, and phone number if you choose to do so. Please feel free to return any comments to us that you may wish.

Figure 4: Well Owners Questionnaire



well location (ft) x y	diameter (in)	capacity (gpm)	+X
			-Y
1 5238 -7826	8	600	
2 5213 -6965	8	900	
A 1320 -6600	24	700	
3 5189 -6462	24	900	
4 7871 -6453	24	700	
5 880 -1173	8	500	
6 2295 1326	10	350	
7 2222 1735	12	400	

* measured from the center of the cell

Figure 5 : Well Locations and Data

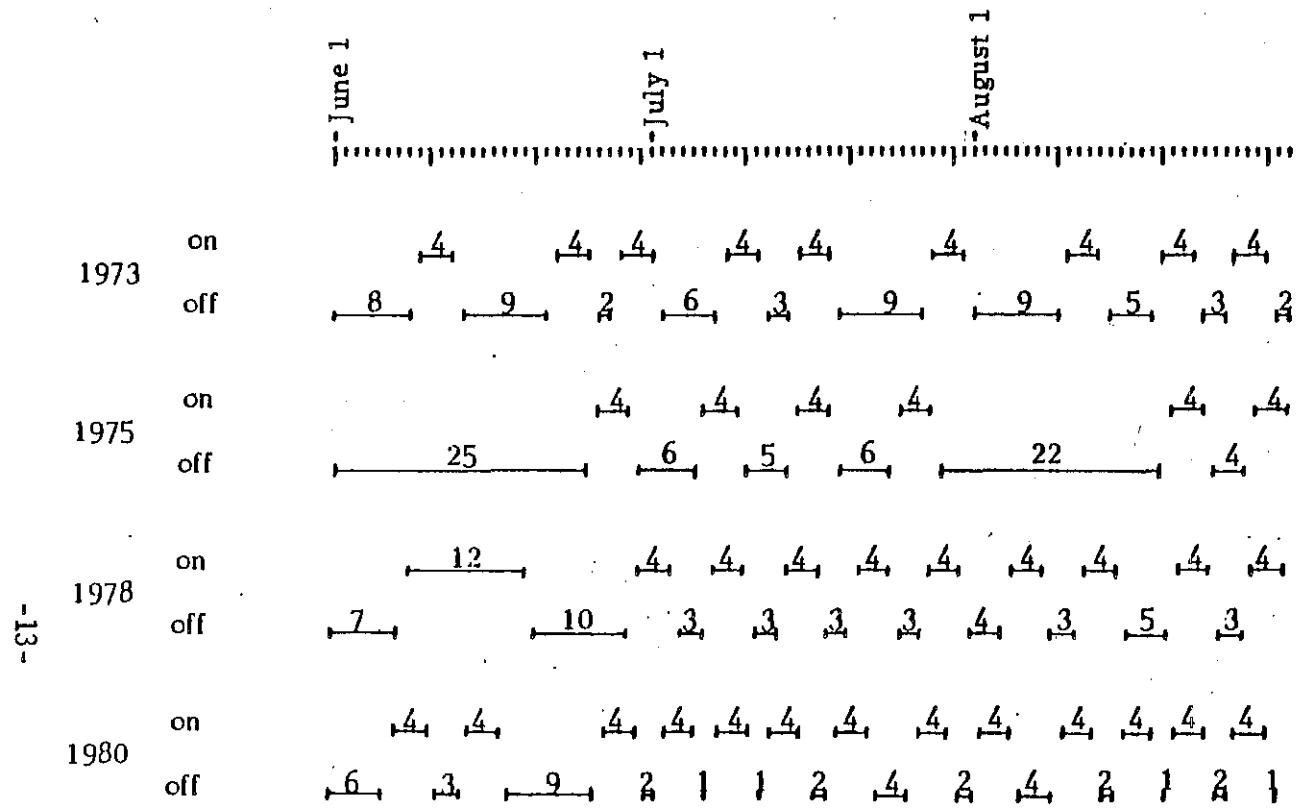
All irrigators were employing a rice-soybean crop rotation scheme. It is possible that all irrigable crop acreage may be cropped to rice simultaneously. Because this practice would require the greatest quantity of irrigation water, the groundwater pumping requirement for each well was determined using simulated daily rice irrigation schedules for the proper acreages (Figure 6). The model used to develop the daily rice irrigation schedules is described in Peralta and Dutram (1984).

Climatologic data for the years 1970-1979 and 1981 were assumed representative of "normal" (non-droughty) years. For those years, the average seasonal pumping requirement was 18.8 inches, which closely approximates the 1973 demand. The pumping requirement is based upon the assumption that some source other than groundwater (i.e. reservoirs) is used for initial flooding of the fields. The non-droughty seasonal pumping requirement ranged from a minimum of 12.5 inches in 1975 to a maximum of 25.6 inches in 1978. Data from 1980 was selected to represent conditions in a droughty season. Therefore, pumping schedules based on 1973, 1975, 1978 and 1980 climatic conditions were used in the groundwater simulations.

Irrigators reported that well supply capacity was adequate in "normal" (non-droughty) years for the reported irrigated acreage. During drought conditions (similar to 1980), however, an additional 700 GPM well is needed at location A (Figure 5) to provide sufficient capacity for the acreage which would require irrigation water.

8. Validation of AQUISIM for computation of point drawdowns

AQUISIM was validated for computation of point drawdowns by comparing its results with those obtained using the Theis equation. Due



Reference: Peralta and Dutram, 1984

**Figure 6 : Simulated Daily Rice Irrigation Schedules
for 1973, 1975, 1978, and 1980**

to limitations of the Theis equation, a uniform transmissivity (4050 ft²/day) and a horizontal water table were used in AQUISIM. The results of this comparison with three adjacent wells (wells 1, 2, and 3 of the critical cell), for four days of continuous and uniform pumping are found in Table 2. Column 5 of the table shows the Theis estimate of the total drawdown in well number 2 resulting from pumping in wells 1, 2, and 3. Column 6 shows the AQUISIM estimate for the same hypothetical operation.

TABLE 2: Drawdown in Well Number 2 Calculated Using the Theis Equation and AQUISIM for Four Days of Pumping, Assuming an Initially Horizontal Water Table, Uniform Transmissivity of 4050 ft.²/day, and the Pumping Rates of Table 6.

as a result of pumping in Well #	CALCULATED DRAWDOWN (FT.)				AQUISIM
	1	2	3	1+2+3	
Day					
1	0.0	42.7	5.5E-03	42.7	42.6
2	3.0E-04	45.0	0.1	45.1	45.1
3	4.3E-03	46.4	0.3	46.7	46.7
4	1.7E-02	47.4	0.6	48.0	47.9

9. Determination of aquifer bottom elevations in the critical subsystem
Region-wide kriging of the bottom of the aquifer assigns a single elevation value to the center of each cell. Because the bottom is an irregular surface, that single value cannot with complete accuracy represent the actual bottom topography. The bottom of the aquifer in the critical subsystem was, therefore, kriged using data obtained from

Arkansas Reports of Water Well Construction and from United States Geological Survey records for that area. Aquifer bottom values for 112 locations in the critical subsystem were obtained. The aquifer bottom elevation above sea level for the center of each cell in the critical subsystem and each well in the critical cell is given in Table 3.

10. Identification of the critical well

Of the well sites considered, the kriged elevation of the bottom of the aquifer is equally high at several wells (Table 3). The 1982 water table elevations in the center of each cell of the critical subsystem and in each well in the critical cell are shown in Table 4. Assuming the slope of the water table in the critical subsystem will remain fairly constant over time, the saturated thickness will be thinnest under well seven.

Well seven was designated the "critical well". This is the well which, in a management scenario, will most likely be monitored to estimate the saturated thickness in the critical cell if no other observation wells are drilled. The sum of the initial saturated thickness and the aquifer bottom elevation of each well site was used as the initial water table elevation in the simulations. The kriged elevation of the aquifer bottom in the center of the critical cell is six feet higher than the kriged elevation of the aquifer bottom at the critical well (Table 3). The elevation of the sloping water table at well seven and at the center of the critical cell is approximately the same. Thus, the minimum saturated thickness needed in the center of the cell is six feet less than that needed at well seven.

TABLE 3: Elevations Above Sea Level of the Aquifer Bottom (ft)

		cells				
		J				
		1	2	3	4	5
I	1	63	90	70	80	70
	2	85	100	87	65	62
	3	95	96	106	75	67
	4		70	60	67	67
	5		45	80	80	50

wells							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	A
89	90	90	83	100	100	100	100

TABLE 4: 1982 Water Table Elevations Above Sea Level
 in the Center of Each Cell of the Critical
 Subsystem and in Each Well in the Critical
 Cell (ft)

		cells				
		J				
		1	2	3	4	5
I	1	144	127	112	107	108
	2	147	131	114	104	102
	3	154	137	117	102	97
	4		148	123	103	96
	5		158	136	111	102

wells							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	A
129	129	128	129	121	118	117	126

11. The hydraulic gradient of the critical subsystem

The hydraulic gradient of the critical subsystem shown in Table 4 was the same for the beginning of each simulation. To accomplish this, elevation relationships (Table 5) of the spring 1982 groundwater table at all wells in the critical cell and at the centers of all cells in the critical subsystem were determined from Table 4 in the following manner. The cell with the highest 1982 water table elevation at its center, cell I=5, J=2, was assigned a value of zero. The difference between the 1982 water table elevation at the center of each cell and the water table elevation in cell I=5, J=2 is the elevation relationship for each cell. Similarly, the difference between the 1982 water table elevation at each well in the critical cell and the water table elevation in cell I=5, J=2 is the elevation relationship for each well.

In sections 11-14, drawdown refers to the distance between a horizontal datum, 300 feet above sea level, and the groundwater table elevation. As input, AQUISIM requires the initial drawdown in each cell and at each observation point. The cell with the highest water table elevation has the smallest initial drawdown. The drawdown in the other cells and at each observation point is greater by the amount of the elevation relationship value. Therefore, the elevation relationships are positive values.

12. Determination of inputs for the simulation model

An initial saturated thickness under the critical well (well 7) was arbitrarily selected and added to the aquifer bottom elevation at that location. This value was subtracted from 300 feet to establish the

initial (spring) drawdown in the critical well. From the elevation relationships in Table 5 it can be seen that the initial drawdown in the critical well (well 7) is 41 feet greater (the elevation is 41 feet smaller) than the initial drawdown in cell I=5, J=2. The initial drawdown in all other cells and wells is determined by adding their elevation relationship value to the initial drawdown value in Cell I=5, J=2.

Subtracting the aquifer bottom elevation from the elevation datum (300 ft) yields the maximum possible physically feasible drawdown value for each cell and well. The initial saturated thickness beneath each cell and well is determined by subtracting its initial drawdown value from its maximum possible drawdown value. Multiplying the saturated thickness beneath each cell by the hydraulic conductivity (270 ft/day) produces the transmissivity value for each cell.

TABLE 5: Elevation Relationships at the Center of Each Cell in the Critical Subsystem and at Each Well in the Critical Cell for the Spring 1982 Groundwater Table (ft)

		cells				
		J				
		1	2	3	4	5
I	1	14	31	46	51	50
	2	11	27	44	54	56
	3	4	21	41	56	61
	4		10	35	55	62
	5		0	22	47	56
wells						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	29	30	29	37	40	41
						A
						32

Simulations which estimated the annual pumping values for each cell were performed for each year from 1972 through 1982 by Peralta, et al (1984). The percent of pumping attributable to each month was determined by Peralta and Dutram (1984). From that data, monthly pumping values for each cell adjacent to the critical cell were determined. Those monthly values were divided by the number of days per month to yield an average daily pumping value for each cell adjacent to the critical cell (Table 6). The I,J cell coordinates in Table 6 correspond to those in Figure 3. The daily pumping values in the adjacent cells were entered as distributed excitations, i.e. withdrawals taken uniformly from the entire area of the cell. The sum of the responses in the critical cell to point excitations in the critical cell and to distributed excitations in the adjacent cells represents the total response to all pumping which affects the critical cell. In the simulation, irrigation wells in the critical cell were pumped according to the requirements of the daily rice irrigation schedule for the appropriate year. Well A was pumped only for the drought simulation (1980). In order to simulate the maximum drawdowns possible, all wells were pumped simultaneously in the simulation. All simulated pumping wells (excitation points) were also simulated observation points since the drawdowns in the wells resulting from pumping were desired. The simulation was run from April 1, the approximate date of spring water table measurements in the region, through August 31, the end of the irrigation season.

13. Selection of the maximum acceptable drawdown constraint

In the simulations the maximum acceptable seasonal drawdown in a

TABLE 6: Daily Groundwater Pumping Values for Each Pumping Cell in the Critical Subsystem and for Each Well in the Critical Cell (cu.ft./day)

					cells J
			2	3	4
June 1973	I	2	0.8440E+06	0.8363E+06	0.7970E+06
		3	0.7183E+06	*	0.7107E+06
		4	**	0.7460E+06	0.8363E+06
July 1973	I	2	0.5900E+06	0.5845E+06	0.5571E+06
		3	0.5023E+06	*	0.4968E+06
		4	**	0.5213E+06	0.5845E+06
August 1973	I	2	0.7219E+06	0.7152E+06	0.6816E+06
		3	0.6142E+06	*	0.6077E+06
		4	**	0.6377E+06	0.7152E+06
June 1975	I	2	0.6767E+06	0.6700E+06	0.6390E+06
		3	0.5757E+06	*	0.5697E+06
		4	**	0.5977E+06	0.6700E+06
July 1975	I	2	0.4729E+06	0.4684E+06	0.4465E+06
		3	0.4023E+06	*	0.3981E+06
		4	**	0.4177E+06	0.4684E+06
August 1975	I	2	0.5787E+06	0.5729E+06	0.5465E+06
		3	0.4923E+06	*	0.4871E+06
		4	**	0.5110E+06	0.5729E+06
June 1978	I	2	0.1287E+07	0.1274E+07	0.1215E+07
		3	0.1095E+07	*	0.1083E+07
		4	**	0.1137E+07	0.1274E+07
July 1978	I	2	0.8990E+06	0.8906E+06	0.8490E+06
		3	0.7652E+06	*	0.7571E+06
		4	**	0.7948E+06	0.8906E+06
August 1978	I	2	0.1100E+07	0.1090E+07	0.1039E+07
		3	0.9365E+06	*	0.9265E+06
		4	**	0.9726E+06	0.1090E+07
June 1980	I	2	0.1588E+07	0.1573E+07	0.1499E+07
		3	0.1351E+07	*	0.1336E+07
		4	**	0.1403E+07	0.1573E+07
July 1980	I	2	0.1110E+07	0.1099E+07	0.1048E+07
		3	0.9445E+06	*	0.9342E+06
		4	**	0.9806E+06	0.1099E+07
August 1980	I	2	0.1358E+07	0.1345E+07	0.1282E+07
		3	0.1155E+07	*	0.1143E+07
		4	**	0.1200E+07	0.1345E+07

*critical cell

**constant head cell

									well s
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	A		
1.15E+05	1.73E+05	1.73E+05	1.35E+05	9.62E+04	6.74E+04	7.70E+04	1.35E+05		

well was that value which would leave one-third of that well's initial saturated thickness remaining. This was done for the following reasons. For the sake of efficiency, the maximum seasonal drawdown in a pumping well should not exceed approximately two-thirds of the initial design saturated thickness (Johnson, 1966; McWhorter and Sunada, 1977). Since the range of the estimate of the bottom elevation in the center of the critical cell is \pm 13 feet at the 95% confidence interval, allowing seasonal drawdowns of only two-thirds the initial saturated thickness provides a margin of error to compensate for uncertain knowledge of the bottom elevation.

Two-thirds of the initial saturated thickness in each well was added to the initial drawdown in each well to calculate the maximum acceptable drawdown in each well. If a simulation resulted in a drawdown greater than the maximum acceptable drawdown in any well, a new simulation was performed. For the subsequent simulation, initial water table elevations were uniformly increased (to maintain the 1982 hydraulic gradient of the critical subsystem). Revised initial drawdowns, saturated thicknesses, transmissivities, and maximum acceptable drawdowns were computed. This procedure was repeated until the simulated maximum drawdown was less than the maximum acceptable drawdown for all wells.

14. Results of the simulations

The resulting drawdowns of the final simulation using 1973 climatological data are found in Appendix 1. These drawdowns represent the difference in elevation between the datum elevation and the elevation of the water table. For time period 1 (day 1), the initial drawdown at

the critical well (number seven) is 185 feet. This corresponds to an April 1 water table elevation of 115 feet and a saturated thickness of 15 feet. The maximum acceptable drawdown in this well is 195 feet, i.e. the initial drawdown (185 feet) plus two-thirds the initial saturated thickness (10 feet). In the simulation, no groundwater pumping occurred through day 69, by which time the water table had risen slightly. Simulated pumping commenced on day 70 and continued for four days during which time the drawdown increased to 193.88 feet. Upon cessation of pumping, the water table in the vicinity of the well began recovery which continued until the next period of irrigation pumping. This pumping and recovery cycle continued until the end of the simulation period on day 153 (August 31).

The greatest simulated drawdown at well seven amounted to 195.14 feet and occurred on day 151. The difference between this value, to the nearest foot, and the initial drawdown of 185 feet is 10 feet. Since 10 feet is two-thirds of the initial saturated thickness of 15 feet, a 15 foot initial saturated thickness at well seven is adequate to maintain sufficient well capacity during climatological conditions such as those occurring in 1973. All other wells were evaluated in the same way.

Since well seven has been designated the critical well, the desirable spring saturated thickness at well seven is shown in Table 7. The minimum desirable saturated thickness necessary in the center of the critical cell is also found in Table 7. Table 7 also shows values of 15 ft, 16 ft, and 19 ft for climatic conditions of 1975, 1978, and 1980 respectively. Simulated drawdowns for the 1980 irrigation season are found in Appendix 2. For all years, the ratio of final/initial saturated thickness was greater than 1/3 for all wells (Table 8).

TABLE 7: Necessary Initial Saturated Thickness

	Saturated Thickness (ft)		
	Well Seven	Center of Critical Cell	
Minimum (1975)	15	9	
Mean (1973)	15	9	
Maximum (1978)	16	10	
Drought (1980)	19	13	

The saturated thicknesses determined by this study are smaller than those which would be necessary under conditions of a more level water table gradient. The water table gradient across the critical cell is approximately 1:1100 (20 feet in 4.2 miles) when measured along a southwest to northeast course. The gradient effectively causes increased flow into the cone of depression of a pumping well. This results in less drawdown than would result in an area with a horizontal water table.

It should be emphasized that the reported results are dependent on assumed pumping capacities, information on existing wells, and kriged estimates of aquifer bottom elevations. The range of the estimate of the bottom elevation in the center of the critical cell is \pm 13 feet at the 95% confidence interval. The aquifer bottom elevation estimates are the best that can be made without additional borings. In addition, changes in irrigated acreage and pumping rates, or addition and deletion of wells in the critical cell would produce different results.

TABLE 8: Ratio Of Final To Initial Saturated Thickness

	Well #	Final Saturated Thickness	Initial Saturated Thickness	Ratio, Final/Initial Saturated Thickness
1973	1	16	38	0.42
	2	12	36	0.33
	3	14	36	0.39
	4	29	44	0.66
	5	7	19	0.37
	6	7	16	0.44
	7	5	15	0.33
1975	1	16	38	0.42
	2	14	37	0.38
	3	16	36	0.44
	4	30	44	0.68
	5	7	19	0.37
	6	7	16	0.44
	7	5	15	0.33
1978	1	17	39	0.44
	2	13	38	0.34
	3	15	37	0.41
	4	30	45	0.67
	5	8	20	0.40
	6	8	17	0.47
	7	6	16	0.38
1980	1	22	42	0.52
	2	14	41	0.34
	3	18	40	0.45
	4	33	48	0.69
	5	12	23	0.52
	6	11	20	0.55
	7	9	19	0.47
	A	14	28	0.50

SUMMARY

The concept of reasonable use is a major facet of Arkansas groundwater law. One perception of reasonable use of groundwater is that use which permits interacting wells to maintain their design discharge capacity throughout the year. Assuring that capability requires insuring that an adequate saturated thickness exists throughout the year. In Arkansas, most water table elevation measurements are made in the spring, prior to the irrigation season. For agricultural areas, the most practical way of assuring that an adequate saturated thickness exists throughout the year, is to assure that there is a satisfactory spring saturated thickness.

This report presents a method for determining the springtime saturated thickness that must exist in a particular cell in order to insure adequate groundwater availability even during a droughty irrigation season. This is a powerful management tool which can be utilized in the design of target groundwater levels for drought protection. (A discussion of the target level approach to groundwater management in Arkansas is presented by Peralta and Peralta, 1984).

A dynamic computer model was used to simulate water table response to Quaternary groundwater withdrawals in existing wells within a particular 3 mile by 3 mile portion of the Grand Prairie. Simulations were performed to determine the minimum desirable spring saturated thickness (i.e., target saturated thickness) for non-droughty and droughty irrigation seasons. The target saturated thickness for the center of the examined cell is 9-10 feet for non-droughty seasons and 13 feet for a droughty season. These values are based on the assumptions: that no new wells will be drilled in the Quaternary aquifer in that cell, that the acreages currently being irri-

gated by groundwater will continue to be irrigated, and that existing wells are fully penetrating.

Based on water elevations reported by the USGS, the saturated thickness which existed in the center of this cell in the spring of 1982 is estimated to be 12 feet. These elevations are calculated using the ground surface elevation at an observation well. The ground elevation is estimated from topographic maps that have a 5 feet contour interval. For this reason alone a water table elevation estimate may be as much as 5 feet in error.

It is predicted (Peralta et al, 1984) that the saturated thickness in this cell will decline as much as 5 feet by 1992, if current groundwater withdrawal rates continue. The continuing availability of adequate Quaternary groundwater in this cell is dependent on future water needs, and groundwater usage, and on future rules or laws for water management.

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APPENDIX 1: Resulting Drawdowns of the Final Simulation
Using 1973 Climatological Data

Daily Well Drawdowns (April 1 - August 31, 1973)

	well number						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+ TIME = 1	0.17300E 03	0.17300E 03	0.17400E 03	0.17300E 03	0.18100E 03	0.18400E 03	0.18500E 03
+ TIME = 2	0.17300E 03	0.17300E 03	0.17400E 03	0.17300E 03	0.18100E 03	0.18400E 03	0.18500E 03
+ TIME = 3	0.17300E 03	0.17300E 03	0.17400E 03	0.17300E 03	0.18100E 03	0.18400E 03	0.18500E 03
+ TIME = 4	0.17300E 03	0.17300E 03	0.17400E 03	0.17300E 03	0.18100E 03	0.18400E 03	0.18500E 03
+ TIME = 5	0.17299E 03	0.17299E 03	0.17399E 03	0.17299E 03	0.18099E 03	0.18399E 03	0.18499E 03
+ TIME = 6	0.17299E 03	0.17299E 03	0.17399E 03	0.17299E 03	0.18099E 03	0.18399E 03	0.18499E 03
+ TIME = 7	0.17299E 03	0.17299E 03	0.17399E 03	0.17299E 03	0.18099E 03	0.18399E 03	0.18499E 03
+ TIME = 8	0.17299E 03	0.17299E 03	0.17399E 03	0.17299E 03	0.18099E 03	0.18399E 03	0.18499E 03
+ TIME = 9	0.17299E 03	0.17299E 03	0.17399E 03	0.17299E 03	0.18099E 03	0.18399E 03	0.18499E 03
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+ TIME = 56 0.17293E 03 0.17293E 03 0.17393E 03 0.17293E 03 0.18093E 03 0.18393E 03 0.18493E 03
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APPENDIX 2: Resulting Drawdowns of the Final Simulation
Using 1980 Climatological Data

Daily Well Drawdowns (April 1 - August 31, 1980)

well number

	1	2	A	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

TIME = 1	0.16900E 03	0.16900E 03	0.17200E 03	0.17000E 03	0.16900E 03	0.17700E 03	0.18000E 03	0.18100E 03
TIME = 2	0.16900E 03	0.16900E 03	0.17200E 03	0.17000E 03	0.16900E 03	0.17700E 03	0.18000E 03	0.18100E 03
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TIME = 4	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
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TIME = 6	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
TIME = 7	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
TIME = 8	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
TIME = 9	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
TIME = 10	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
TIME = 11	0.16899E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17199E 03	0.16999E 03	0.16899E 03	0.17699E 03	0.17999E 03	0.18099E 03
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TIME = 13	0.16898E 03	0.16898E 03	0.17198E 03	0.16998E 03	0.16898E 03	0.17698E 03	0.17998E 03	0.18098E 03
TIME = 14	0.16898E 03	0.16898E 03	0.17198E 03	0.16998E 03	0.16898E 03	0.17698E 03	0.17998E 03	0.18098E 03
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