

the worst, that's when we're at our best.

Sometimes childhood dreams come true. Other times they veer down an unexpected path.

Three generations of Nixon men in the South Plains ended up on the same path, leaving earlier ambitions in the dust.

Danny Nixon, 66, grew up wanting to be an anesthesiologist. But he fell in love and ran out of money, and he left Texas Tech University after one semester. Soon thereafter he began a career at Lighthouse Electric Cooperative that has lasted nearly 47 years, the first 20-plus spent as a lineworker.

Son Scott, 40, who grew up in Floydada with a dad often away on call, wanted to be a firefighter, but by the time he went off to college, he planned to pursue a career in agriculture. He left Tarleton State University after two years and has been a lineworker at neighboring South Plains Electric Cooperative for 20 years.

Camden, 21, a tall, strapping grandson and son in this family, was sure he'd be a pro baseball player. Did he come close? Not very, he admits.

Camden remembers how his dad, Scott, missed too many of his childhood games as co-op duties called. He's not ever at any of my baseball games. What the heck? Camden says he wondered. But then my mom talked to me about it, and she was like, he's at work. I was like, well, he's always at work.

Fast-forward to 2024, and Camden is often—if not always—at work, 21 1/2 years into his career as an apprentice lineworker at another neighboring co-op, Lyntegar Electric Cooperative.

Their shared mission of serving co-op members from atop a pole, especially when storms knock out power, is a great source of satisfaction for the patriarch.

Am I proud? Yes. I'm extremely proud, says Danny, who in 1999 became superintendent at Lighthouse EC and has since been promoted to operations manager.

Camden, the youngster, is proud, too, but he's quick to point out it's not always easy bearing the Nixon name in the West Texas co-op world. He looks first at his dad and then at the man he calls Pops. A lot of people know him, but everybody knows him, Camden says. I say my last name and they're like, oh, OK.

You don't want to mess up, Camden says. You don't want to do something wrong. I mean, everybody's going to do something wrong, but you don't want it to be bad enough to where they tell my granddad or tell my dad and we're going to have to talk about this at Christmas.

Of course, they might not be together at Christmas. The crews who keep the power on don't get to schedule when

storm recovery and other mishaps call them out on jobs. Thus, the Nixons sometimes find it all but impossible to get together for birthdays and holidays—like Father's Day. It's been that way since Danny started his career, and Scott grew up knowing that.

But he also saw the rewards of the job.

Dad made a good living and provided us with nice things, Scott says. I got to do a lot of stuff and go on nice vacations and such that most kids didn't get. It makes it worth the hardships to get to provide my wife and kids with the same things.

It's also kind of a pride thing. I'm proud to be a lineman. There are not very many people in the world who can do my

job.

As parents tend to do, Danny remembers hoping Scott would find his own way in the world.

Did I put my wishes and dreams on him? No, I did not, Danny says. I wished for both of these young men anything but becoming a lineman. And I don't mean that in a bad way, but I'd rather him been a doctor or a lawyer or an animal husbandry guy or a vet.

Both of these guys. You always want better for your kids and certainly your grandkids.

Scott certainly wanted better for the final home football game in Camden's high school career. Senior night is always a big deal—even more so because the Shallowater Mustangs were closing out an undefeated regular season. But an early

winter storm socked West Texas that week in October 2020, coating most everything in ice and whipping power lines with wind gusts up to 50 mph.

South Plains EC crews, including Scott, were working on short rest to restore power, and it seemed impossible that he could get away to walk onto Todd Field with his wife and Camden for the traditional senior tribute.

We worked 16-hour shifts in this ice storm, and I begged my supervisor to [let me] walk out on the field with him—and then I'd get in that truck and go to work, Scott says. With permission granted, Scott, dressed in his fire-retardant work clothes, briefly joined his family in the stadium.

My bucket truck was sitting

in the parking lot—running, ready to roll, he says. I didn't get to see him play.

By that age, Camden understood—as co-op families do—that Dad had a responsibility to the community. I was just glad he was able to be there for a little bit, Camden says.

It meant a lot.

The Nixons agree: Working for a co-op is a calling.

It does set us apart from Acme brand, Danny says.

We don't go home till the lights are on, Scott says.

For the members, Camden says.

Yes, Camden walks the path of Scott and Pops. And as has been the case since September 1977, a Nixon is quite likely to rush down that path when a storm strikes the South Plains.

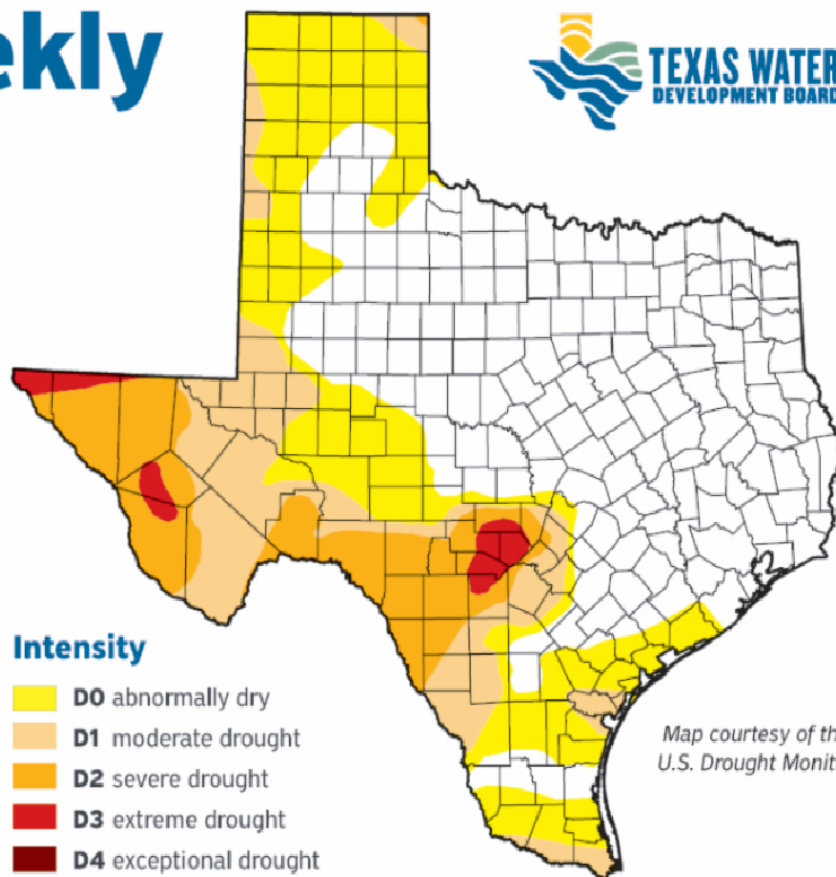
Water Weekly

For the week of 06/03/24



Water conditions

The latest drought map for conditions as of May 28 shows a small uptick in drought from the previous week. This is the first week that drought area has increased in more than a month, and it re-emerged in an area of South Texas centered on San Patricio County.

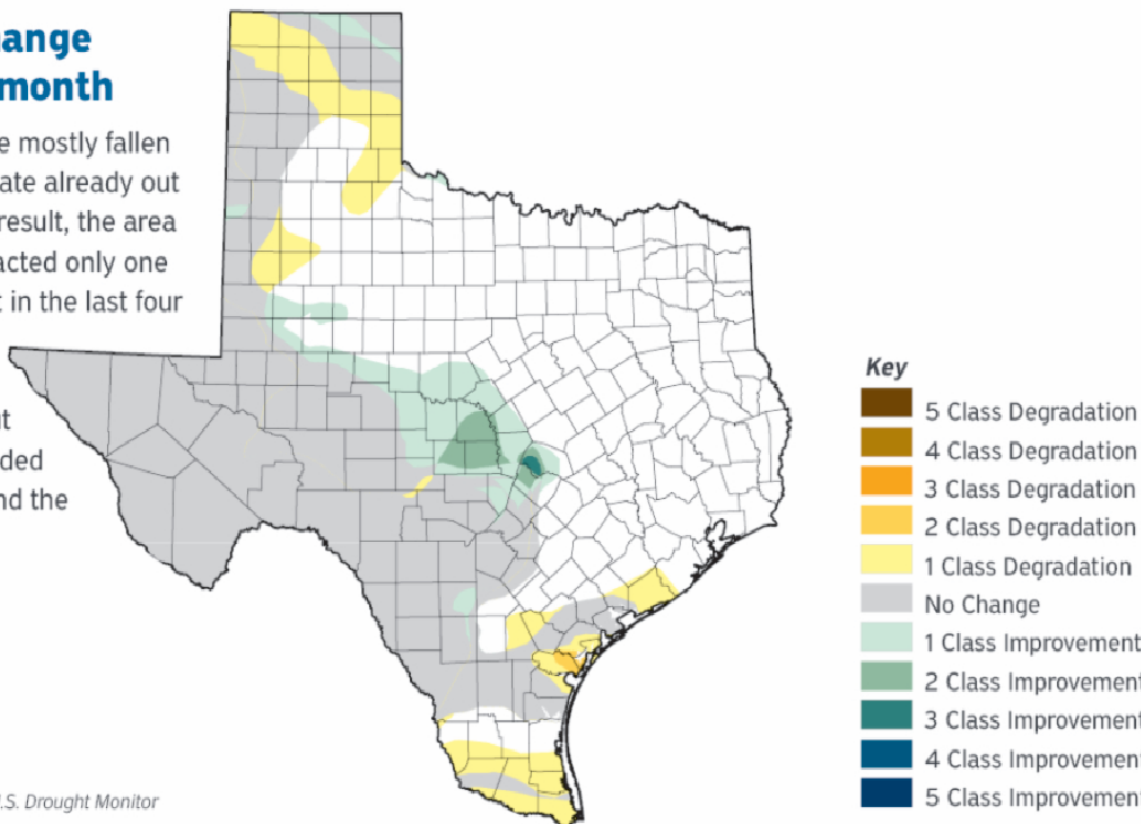


Drought conditions

- 26% now
- 26% a week ago
- 23% three months ago
- 34% a year ago

Drought change in the last month

Recent rains have mostly fallen in areas of the state already out of drought. As a result, the area of drought contracted only one percentage point in the last four weeks. Drought improved in Central Texas, but conditions degraded in South Texas and the Panhandle.



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