

# Water authority ready to shop for rights

By KEVIN WELCH  
[kevin.welch@amarillo.com](mailto:kevin.welch@amarillo.com)  
Amarillo Globe-News

If plans work out, more Panhandle water will be set aside for local use.

Canadian River Municipal Water Authority directors voted Wednesday to sell bonds to finance more water-rights purchases.

"They authorized up to an additional \$50 million in bonds for water-rights purchases," said CRMWA General Manager Kent Satterwhite.

The money will go to groundwater purchases that are already planned and others yet to be negotiated.

The move came one day after the water authority sold another \$50 million in bonds to pay for well field expansion and water purchases in Roberts and Carson counties. Much of that water came from owners who had previously aligned themselves with Mesa Water, headed by T. Boone Pickens, which is trying to market Panhandle water to cities such as Dallas and San Antonio.

CRMWA's purchase price is about \$33 million.

In a move to preserve some of the groundwater it already owns, CRMWA also will increase the amount of water it pumps from Lake Meredith.

"The lake has recovered some since we made the decision to cut back allocations in October," Satterwhite said.

Currently, the authority is using half lake water and half groundwater. The directors voted Wednesday in Plainview to make that closer to 60 percent lake water.

The addition of groundwater not only increases the quantity of water available but also dilutes the amount of salt in the water, improving the taste.

Directors also authorized a petition to put more CRMWA acreage under the regulation of the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District. The move will help decrease the rate of depletion assessed to CRMWA.

"They've owned the water rights all along and we haven't given them credit because it was outside our boundaries," said C.E. Williams, general manager of the conservation district.

The land to be added to the groundwater district is in Roberts and Hutchinson counties, Williams said.