

## The hydrologist and the climatologist must be friends.

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**By Asher Price | Wednesday, November 28, 2007, 11:22 AM**

I spent yesterday morning at a climate change lecture given by Gerald North, a Texas A&M University atmospheric scientist, at the Texas Water Development Board.

The backstory: In January, the Water Development Board issued its state water plan, which lays guidelines how the state should divvy up its water supplies to meet municipal, industrial and agricultural demands. The plan also gives suggestions for conservation programs. It's a thick document, but I'll guide you to the six-page summary relevant to Central Texas [here](#).

Just after it was released, North criticized the plan, saying it paid only lip service to predictions of climate change. So, presumably in an effort to make up, the state agency invited North to give a lecture.

North's lecture concentrated on the Hadley cell, a weather system above the equator. North said the Hadley cell could expand as the globe warms, eventually shaking up weather in Texas.

He also drew attention to a 2007 article in the journal *Science* titled "Model Projection of an Imminent Transition to a More Arid Climate in Southwestern North America."

"Where it's dry, it's going to get drier; where it's wet, it's going to get wetter," North told the audience of about 60 people.

During the question-and-answer period, Bill Mullican, the deputy executive administrator at the Texas Water Development Board and an author of the water plan, challenged North about why he hadn't bothered to lodge his complaints about the water plan during a 60-day comment period.

"I go out and tell my story when I'm invited," North said.

Mullican also pointed out that the water plan is updated every five years, in part to respond to changes in climate as they happen.

"If part of the state goes into a drought worse than the drought of record, then we'll update the water supply data in the water plan," he said to me. Same goes if Congress passes a farm bill that means corn farmers can take out more water than before, or if the demographics of the state suddenly changed.

"It's a beautiful document," North told him. "But it's a 200-page document and it's got this one paragraph on climate change."

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