

Ogallala Aquifer

why it matters and what you need to know

An Essential Source of Water

The Ogallala Aquifer is a source of groundwater in the High Plains of the United States that formed 10 million years ago from streams that were covered by sediment over time. Today, it is the number one source of water in the High Plains.



Irrigation

The Ogallala aquifer is responsible for 30% of irrigation in the United States.



Agriculture

1/5 of U.S. wheat, corn, cotton, and cattle is directly supported by the Ogallala aquifer.

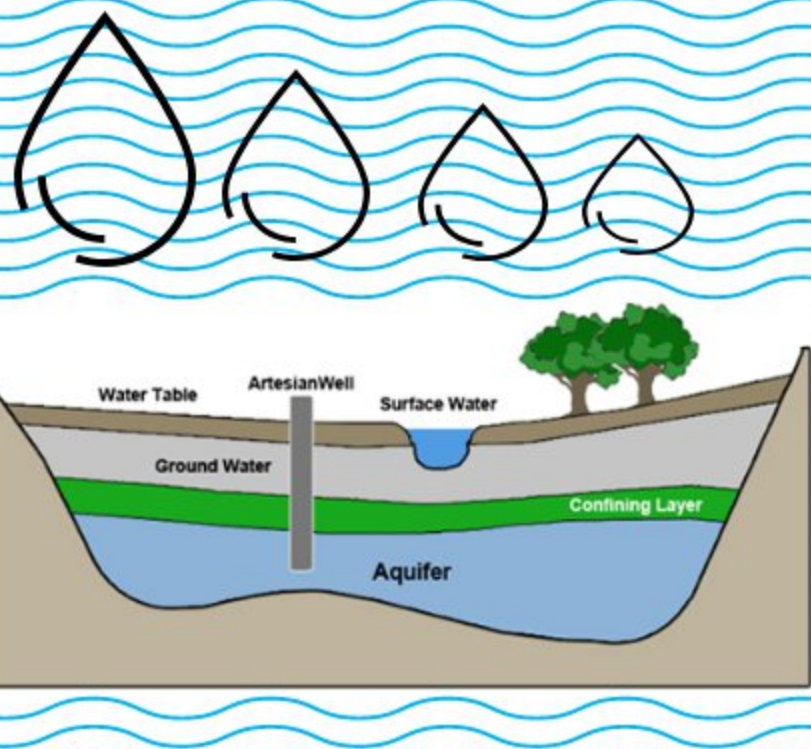


Economy

\$20 billion a year in agricultural production depends on the aquifer.

The Ogallala Aquifer is not a renewable resource.

(At least not at the rate we are using it)

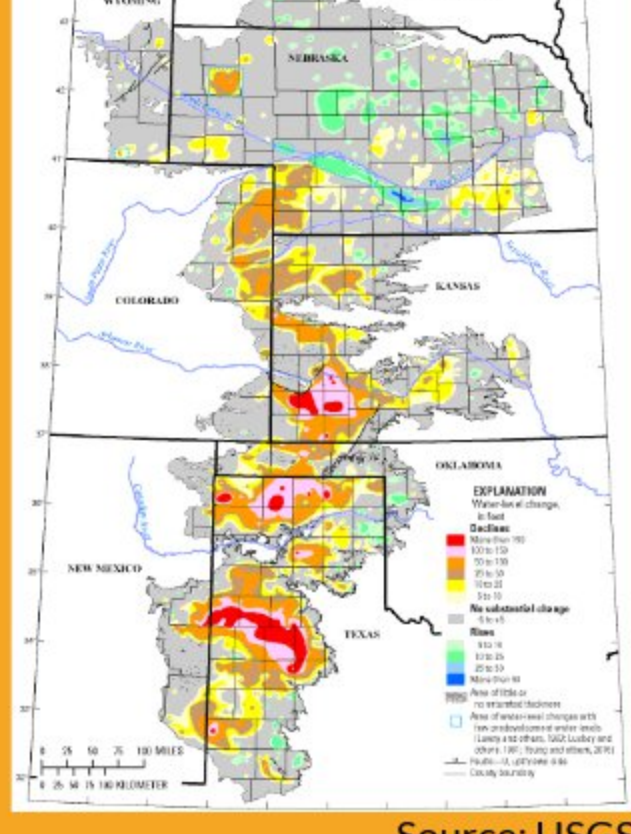


Water is pumped out of the aquifer at alarming rates, but very little is recharging the aquifer with new water.

Over Pumping

170,000 wells pump from the aquifer today.

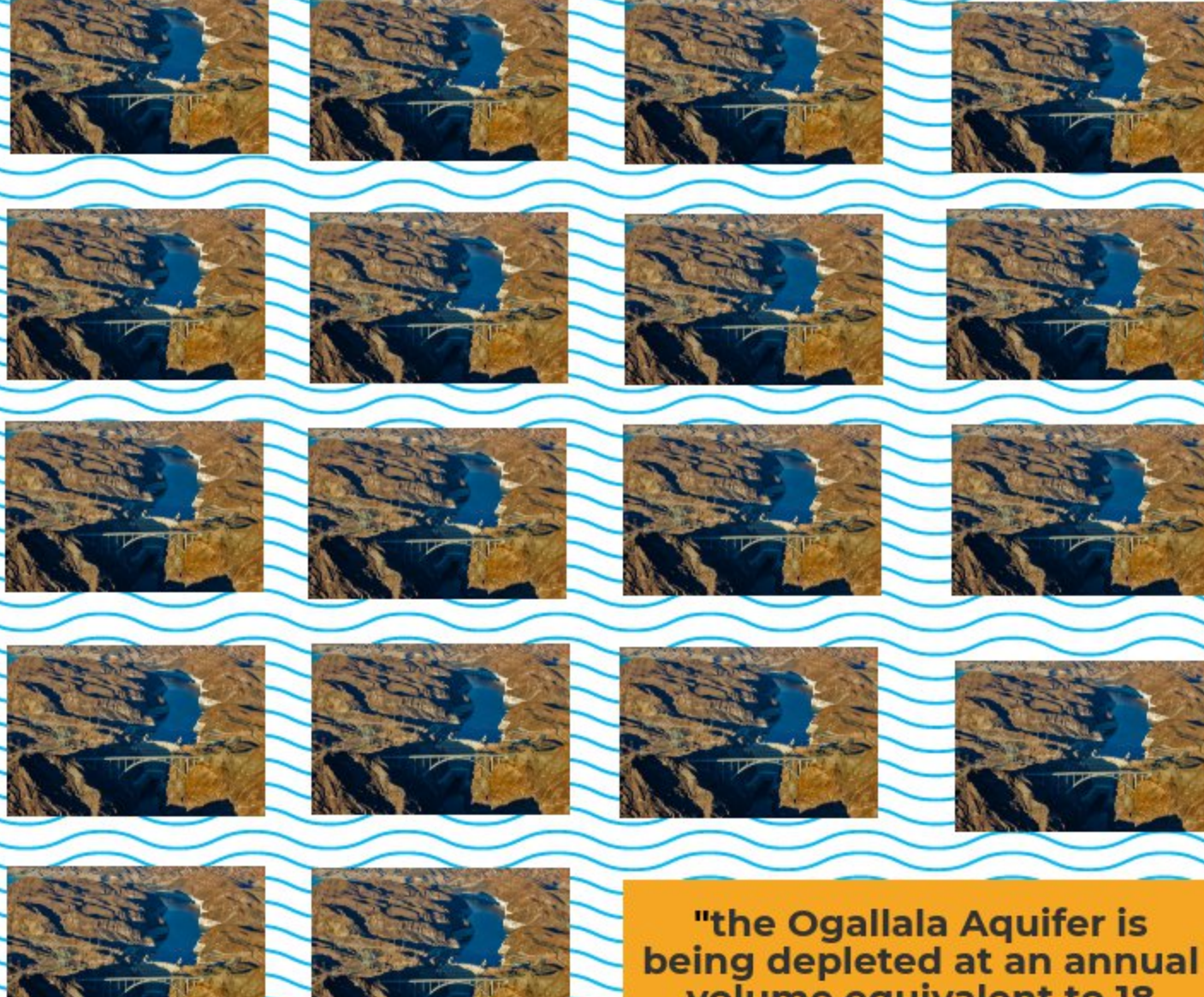
That's about one well for every square mile the aquifer sits beneath.



Source: USGS

The aquifer has dropped an average of 15.8 feet since 1950

Today...



"the Ogallala Aquifer is being depleted at an annual volume equivalent to 18 Colorado Rivers"

-The Scientific American-

It could run dry as soon as within the next 50 years.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Currently, subsidies for crops are higher than subsidies for grassland conservation.

This incentivizes farmers to keep pumping from the aquifer.

Write your Representative to reduce the subsidies for crops to be less than the subsidies for grassland conservation.

Sources:

United States Geological Survey
Science and Issues Water Encyclopedia
The Scientific American
Lubbock Avalanche Journal

Kristine Osborne

powered by

PIKTOCHART