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RATES AND AMOUNTS OF RUNGER FOR THE BLACKLANDS OF TEXAS
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1022 (1950)



# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON, D. C.

# Rates and Amounts of Runoff for the Blacklands of Texas

Ву

RALPH W. Batro, project supervisor. Blacklands Experimental Watershed, and William D. Potter, head, Section of Hydrology, Division of Drainage and Water Control, Research, Soil Conservation Service."

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Runoff studies at the Blacklands experimental watershed near Waco, Tex., were started in 1937 as a cooperative project of the Soil Conservation Service and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. By 1939, records were being collected from enough areas of different sizes to indicate the probability of a reasonable relationship between peak rate of runoff and size of area. The collection of records from most of the areas was interrupted by World War II, and measurements from all but three of the areas were discontinued in 1943. Work was resumed on a reduced scale in 1945.

At the time this work was started, little information was available on the runoff from small agricultural watersheds. Some was available for small plots at various erosion experiment stations and State experiment stations and for extensive areas where stream discharge was measured by the United States Geological Survey, but none for

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<sup>&#</sup>x27; Submitted for publication May 19, 1950.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the U. S. Geological Survey and the U. S. Weather Bureau in making available their unpublished records.

areas of 5 to 5,000 acres. The Blacklands experimental watershed and similar experimental watershed projects located near Coshocton. Ohio, and Hastings, Nebr., were established to provide information for areas within this size range.

The results obtained at the Waco watershed are generally applicable to the Blacklands of Texas. Arkansas, and Oklahoma, the

boundaries of which are shown in figure 1.

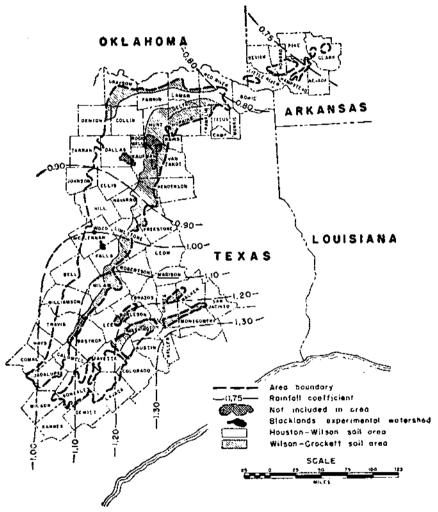


FIGURE 1.—Part of Blacklands area to which this bulletin applies Showing principal soil groups and generalized rainfall coefficients.

# THE BLACKLANDS AREA

# CLIMATE

The climate of the area is characterized by long, hot summers and short, relatively mild winters. Most of the Blackland prairie has an average annual rainfall from 35 to 40 inches. Short storms of high intensities are more common than storms of long duration with large total amounts of rainfall. United States Weather Bureau records for Waco give the normal rainfall by months as follows: January, 2.19 inches; February, 2.37 inches; March, 3.08 inches; April, 4.24 inches; May, 4.56 inches; June, 3.16 inches; July, 2.08 inches; August, 2.33 inches; September, 2.94 inches; October, 2.59 inches; November, 2.69 inches; December, 2.81 inches; annual, 35.04 inches. The actual rainfall in any specific month or year may differ widely from these amounts.

## Асисиллике

The dominant native vegetation of the Blacklands in early days was prairie grasses and scattered patches of mesquite trees. About 1880, the movement began to divide and sell the large holdings of grass lands in smaller blocks and to break the sod for cultivated crops. Cultivation reached a peak during World War 1 and has continued at fairly high levels in subsequent years. Since about 1937, there has been a tendency to reduce row-crop farming slightly, with the result that some land formerly in row crops is now in grass, small grains, or clovers. Also, a considerable acreage of badly croded land has ceased to be profitable for cultivation. Most of this land has grown up to Johnson grass, other grasses, and weeds. Although the acreage of grain crops is increasing, cotton is still the primary cash crop.

# TUE BLACKLANDS EXPERIMENTAL WATERSHED

## WATERSHED CHARACTERISTICS

These studies were made on a tract at the headwaters of Brushy Creek, a small stream in the Brazos River basin southeast of Waco. This area, which is typical of the Blacklands of Texas, lies between latitudes 31–27′ and 31–32′ N, and between longitudes 96°51′ and 96°54′ W. Elevations range from 464 to 595 feet above mean sea level. The total area of the watershed is 5.860 acres. Several smaller experimental watersheds, ranging in extent from slightly less than 3 acres to more than 1,000 acres, were established within the main area. The size, physiographic character, and type of land use in experimental areas of the Blacklands experimental watershed are shown in table 1.

Table 1. - Watershed characteristics

		1 3	i					-	<del></del>		
		i			Slope	e .		1.	and use h	1939	
Watersheil	. Size	Form factor	Less than to 5. Forcent, 1 as	In slop son con	thinks and a solution of the contract of the c	Opererut 9	Average slate	Cultivated land	Permanent grass	Items	Farmstrads
2 3	2, 70 3, 09 3, 04 3, 15 3, 23 3, 17 2, 97 3, 02 3, 17 2, 94 21, 8 20, 9 40, 0 79, 9 132 3, 176 309 42, 0 40,	. 667 . 667 . 787 . 620 . 878 . 896 . 752 . 939 . 711	0 0 11 75 0 0 0 0	100 48 38 89 25 22 77 100 100 100 28 85 67 35 91 67, 99 75,	00 52 62 00 78 23 00 00 15 15 6 36 27 14 148 13	0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0	Percent 1. 911 1. 911 3. 277 3. 18 1. 67 941 3. 807 1. 55 2. 58 1. 83 1. 88 2. 244 3. 21 1. 88 2. 247 2. 63 2. 19 2. 41. 2. 10 2. 14	Percent. 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 10	0 0 0 3		
		<u> </u>			,	į	. 1			·	

## SOIL AND GEOLOGY

Gentle slopes, deep soils, and poorly defined stream channels are characteristic of the experimental watershed and general area, soils are predominantly of the Houston series and have the typical shrinkage cracks when dry. The geologic materials from which the main Blackland prairies developed belong primarily to three groups in the Gulf series of the Cretaceous system. These, in ascending order of the geologic profile, are Austin, Taylor, and Navarro. Small areas have soils from the Eagle Ford and other formations. All of the experimental watershed lies on formations of the Taylor group. In this locality these strata dip approximately 80 feet per mile in a general S. 75° W. direction. Three strata of the Taylor groupsandy mark, chalk, and highly calcareous mark-occur on the watershed. All of these are calcareous, the calcium-carbonate content ranging from 5 to 25 percent in sandy marl and from 70 to 80 percent in the chalk. The calcareous marl has about 50 percent of calcium carbonate. The soils strongly reflect the character of the geologic material from which they are formed. Those developed from the

sandy marl are largely of the Crockett and Wilson series; those from the chalk, of the Austin series; and those from the calcareous marl, of the Houston series. Soils of the Houston series occupy a major portion of the 5,860-acre watershed. The soils of the Crockett and Wilson series occur primarily in the northern part.<sup>3</sup> The various soil types and the average depths of the soils on the individual watersheds of the experimental area are listed in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2.—Soil types and average depth  $^1$  of soil in watersheds C,D, and J

	Water	shed C	Water	shed 1)	Water	shed J
Soli group and type	Area	Average depth	Area	A verage depth	Aren	Average depth
1. Prairie soils, granular structure, alkaline throughout;		;			<u>-</u>	
<ul> <li>a. Normal profile;</li> <li>b. Houston black clay</li> <li>c. Houston black clay</li> </ul>	Percent 0. 8	, Inches 51	Percent 2, 4	Inches 53	Percent 48	Inches 59
gravelly phase 3. Houston-flunt clay:	44, 6	48 55	$\frac{2}{44.3}$	48 49	<sup>2</sup> . 1 17. 8	59 50
4. Houston black clay, saline phase.	0		0		2.1	ļ
Total	45, 5		46. 8			
<ul> <li>b. Shullow to parent material;</li> <li>5. Houston black clay, shallow phase.</li> <li>6. Houston black clay, over chalk</li> </ul>	0		0		4. 2 1. 9	
7. Austin clay, shallow phase. 8. Chalk outcrop	0	· · · · · · · ·	0 0	" <b></b>   	2 . 1	6 0
Total	0		0		6. 4	
2. Prairie soils, moderately cal- careous substrata; a. Dense; 9. Wilson clay 10. Wilson clay loam 11. Wilson fine sandy loam	2, 3 1, 3 2, 4	12	4. 3 1. 8 1. 8			
Total	6.0	Ü	7, 9		10. 3	
b, Moderately friable; 12. Crockett clay loam 43. Crockett fine sandy loam	9, 5 37, 4	6 7	11. 7 13. 2	5 7	4. 8 3. 1	
Total	26, 9		24. 9		7. 9	

<sup>.</sup> Uppth to parent material in soil group 1 and to B horizon in soil group 2. Depth classifications not made for colloyid and alloyed soils.

<sup>\*</sup> Less than 0,1 percent,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The agriculture, soils, geology, and topography of the blacklands experimental water-sned. U. S. Department, Bul. 5, 38 pp. ilius, 1942.

Table 2.—Soil types and average depth  $^{\scriptscriptstyle 1}$  of soil in watersheds  $C,\ D,$  and J—Continued

	Water	shed C 🚶	Water	shed D	Water	shed 3
Soil group and type	Area	A vorage depth	Area	Average depth	Area	Average depth
3. Colluvial soils:			· · · · • •	-		: :
14, Houston-Hunt clay, col- luvial phase	Percent 0	Inches	Percent 0	Inches	Percent 4	Inches
15. Wilson clay, colluvial		j · · · · · · · · · ,	· ·		4	
phase	7.8	· · · · · · · ·	7. 9	<b>.</b>	2. 6	
16. Wilson clay loam, col-						
hyvial phase	7. 7		6. 4		1. 5	j
<ol> <li>Wilson fine sandy loam, colluvial phase.</li> </ol>			0	; !		i
18. Crockett clay loam, col-			. 0	!	. 3	
hivid phase			. 2		. 1	: 
19. Crockett, fine sandy						1
loam, colluvial phase	3, 7		2. 0	, <b>.</b>	. 4	: 
Total	19. 6		17. 3		5, 3	
4. Alluvial soils:	:		- '	44.4	10 80	
	Α.		n		0	[
21. Caralpa clay	1.3		1.8	. • • • · ·	2. 5	;
22. Kaufman clay	. 7		i. 8 . 8		. 2	1
23. Kaufman fine sandy						i
loam	0		. 5		. 1	·
Total.	2. 0		3. 1		4. !	

 $<sup>^{-1}</sup>$  Depth to parent material in soil group 1 and to 10 horizon in soil group 2. Depth classifications not made for collavial and althybit soils.

Table 3.— Soil types and arrange depth of soil in watersheds Y and W and their subdivisions

Watershed	Houston black clay	Houston black clay, eracelly place	Housion binck clay, Smillow Phase	Houston black elny, shallow phase nyor chalk	Austin chay, Trin- shallow lity phase chay
	Aver- Area age depth	Area age	Area age	Area age	Area age (Area
Y Y2 Y4 Y6 Y7 Y8 Y10 W1 W2 W6 W10 12	Percent Inches   65, 7	Precent Jackes 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 16.0 57 0 39.0 57	Percent Inches 15, 2 47 0 0 0 15, 5 48 0 0 133, 4 47 13, 6 46 1, 3 48 0 0 29, 6 24	17. 5 27 22. 5 26 23. 8 26 58. 1 26 7. 0 48 4. 7 24 0 0 0 0	Per-   Cent   Inches   Per-   Cent   Inches   Cent   I.

# LAND USE

In 1939, 15.7 percent of the 5.860 acres in the watershed as a whole (area J) was pasture or hay land, 3.7 percent was in farmsteads and roads, and the remainder or 80.6 percent was cultivated. Of the cultivated land, 38.0 percent was cropped to cotton, 30.0 percent to corn, 13.2 percent to other row crops, and 15.0 percent to broadcast or drilled crops. No crop was grown on 3.8 percent of the cultivated land. This general crop distribution has varied only slightly from year to year. This is a type of land use which, without adequate soil conservation measures, is conducive to large amounts and high rates of innoff and severe erosion damage.

The small experimental areas of about 3 acres each were cropped to several different crops—cotton, corn, and oats—during the period of record, but only one kind of crop was grown on each area in any one year. Area 12 is a small area of native grass which had never been plowed and from which one cutting of hay was obtained each year. The 20-acre tracts consisted entirely of cultivated land except for small areas where cultivation was impractical due to excessive road drainage. Crops on these tracts included cotton, corn, and oats each year. The larger areas have all the land uses mentioned and in proportions comparable to those in the area as a whole (watershed J).

# RAINFALL AND RUNOFF RECORDS

On the experimental watershed, a number of rain gages of the recording type furnished data on both rainfall amounts and intensities. Records from 10 of the gages were used in preparing this report. The records were selected so that a reasonable areal distribution was obtained for each of the watersheds from which runoff measurements were used.

The watersheds from which rumoff measurements were obtained, together with some of the watershed characteristics, are given in table 1. Stages were obtained with automatic water-stage recorders equipped with charts having an open time scale so that rises could be accurately measured. Calibrated flumes were used with the water-stage record to determine the rumoff from the areas of less than 300 acres. For the larger areas, artificial controls were constructed in the stream channels, and the discharges were obtained by means of current-meter measurements and from rating curves developed from the measurements.

## AREA OF APPLICATION

All the studies on the effect of conservation practices were made on deep, fine-textured, slowly permeable soils of the Blacklands. The soil of a major part of the areas studied is Houston black clay. The lands along Brushy Creek include considerable areas of deep, fine-textured, very slowly permeable soils of the Blacklands, mostly Crockett clay loam and Wilson clay and clay loams. There are also smaller areas of deep, medium-textured, very slowly permeable soils, mostly Crockett and Wilson fine sandy loams. The results obtained on the effects of conservation practices on peak rates of runoff are particularly applicable to the deep, fine-textured, slowly permeable soils that, comprise the major portion of that part of the Blacklands area shown

in figure 1 as the Houston-Wilson area. The results are somewhat less applicable to the deep, fine- and medium-textured, very slowly permeable soils of the Wilson-Crockett area and to the shallow, fine-textured, permeable soils found primarily on the Austin formations.

For the areas larger than the 5.860-acre tract where records were obtained by the United States Geological Survey, the major soil types are included in about the ratios that could be expected throughout the Blacklands.

The differences in rainfall in different parts of the Blacklands result in different peak rates of runoff. To compensate for these rainfall differences it is necessary to make appropriate adjustments in runoff values. The degree of adjustment is shown in figure 1 as rainfall coefficients, which are percentages of the rainfall values at Waco.

# FLOOD PEAKS FOR USE IN DESIGN OF CONSERVATION STRUCTURES

# ANNESTICAL PROCEDURES

It is not the purpose of this bulletin to describe in detail the analytical procedures used to determine the flood peaks that might be expected for various recurrence intervals. These procedures have been fully set forth in another publication.\(^1\) A brief outline of the procedures at this point, however, will assist in an understanding of the extent to which the estimated peak rates are supported by the experimental data.

Probability studies were made of the maximum annual flood peaks for the experimental watersheds listed in table 1. Similar studies were also made of United States Geological Survey data for six large watersheds located elsewhere within the Texas Blacklands.

The flood peaks, as determined by the probability studies, were then corrected to what they would have been if the rainfall at each watershed during the period of runoff record had been a good sample of a long-term rainfall record at Waco. To determine these corrections, probability studies based on long-term Waco rainfall were made of maximum annual amounts of rainfall for 10-, 30-, 60-, and 180-minute periods and of the product of annual rainfall and the number of excessive storms. Similar probability studies were made of these rainfall characteristics for each watershed in the experimental area for the period of runoff record.

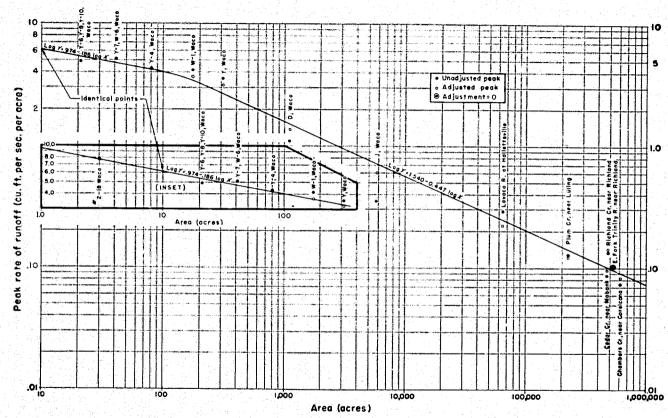
A comparison of the probability curves of rainfall intensities at any watershed with those computed for long-term Waco rainfall formed the basis for correcting the magnitude of the flood peaks. Likewise, a comparison of the probability curves of the product of annual rainfall and number of excessive storms formed the basis for correcting the frequency of the flood peaks.

The corrected values of flood peaks for a recurrence interval of 10 years were then plotted against the corresponding watershed size, and least-square curves were computed to express the relationship. Figure 2 shows these computed curves together with the plotted points of

<sup>\*</sup>POTTER, W. D. EFFECT OF RAINFALL ON MAGNITURE AND FREQUENCY OF PRAKBAYES OF SURFACE RUNDER. Amer. Geophys. Union Trans. 30: 735-754. 1949.

<sup>\*</sup>Potter, W. D. Normally tests of productation and frequency studies of runoff on small watersheds, U. S. Dode, Agr. Tech. Bul. 985, 24 pp., illus. 1949.





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FIGURE 2.—Relationship between area of watershed and peak rate of runoff for a recurrence interval of 10 years.

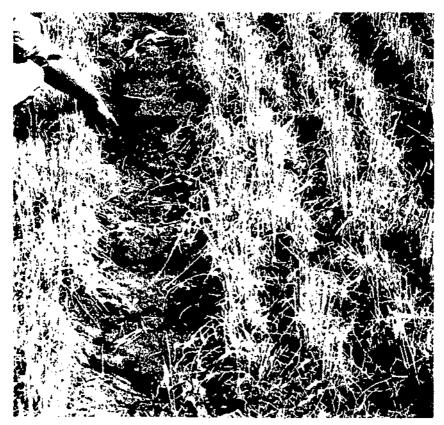
both corrected and uncorrected values of the flood peaks. A comparison of the standard error computed from uncorrected flood peaks with that computed from the corrected values indicated that the correction for rainfall differences had reduced the scatter of the plotted points by more than 50 percent. In other words, the reliability of the computed flood peak versus area relationship had been increased by 50 percent by correcting for rainfall differences.

# REDUCED PEAKS FOR SMALL AREAS

It will be noted in figure 2 that the area versus peak-rate relationship is not constant for all areas but is expressed by two curves; one for areas less than 100 acres and one for areas greater than 200 acres with a transition zone for areas between these limits. If the relationship had been constant and could have been expressed by the curve for areas greater than 200 acres extended to include the smaller areas, then the peak rates for these areas would have been higher than those indicated by the experimental data and defined by the computed curve for areas less than 100 acres. This difference would have been greatest for an area of 1 acre and would have decreased uniformly to zero difference for an area of 150 acres.

Two explanations are advanced for the relatively low flood peaks from the areas less than 100 acres. One explanation ascribes the low peaks to the fact that the small watersheds do not have well-defined drainage channels and that a considerable proportion of the watershed is made up of relatively flat slopes. The ranoff from these flat slopes does not reach the gaging station until some time after the flood peak has passed, and thus does not contribute to its magnitude. The larger the watershed, the greater is the proportion of total area drained by well-defined channels and the smaller is the proportion of flat noncontributing areas. Thus, the effect of the noncontributing areas on the magnitude of the flood peak decreases with the size of the watershed

and is negligible for a watershed of 150 acres. The other explanation ascribes the low peaks from the small watersheds to the amount of excess rainfall that enters surface gracks in the These cracks (figs. 3 and 4) appear at the surface when the soil They are very numerous and may extend many feet into the subsoil. When the soil becomes wet, the soil particles swell and the cracks close. This wetting and closing is many times limited to the surface soil (fig. 4), thus scaling the crack at the surface but otherwise leaving it unaffected. When storms occur at a time when cracks are open at the surface, a large amount of rainfall excess may be intercepted for short periods of time before the soil particles become wet and surface sealing takes place. The rainfall excess thus lost to cracks may amount to a large proportion of the total excess rainfall for these short-time intervals. As the time interval is increased, the ratio of rainfall excess lost to cracks to the (otal rainfall excess for the time interval becomes less. Thus, for small watersheds having an average time of concentration of from 5 to 15 minutes, the rainfall excess lost to cracks has an appreciable effect on the magnitude of flood peaks. This effect becomes less and less as the size of the watershed and the average time of concentration is increased and is negligible when the area of the watershed exceeds 150 acres.



Surface cheas in Houston black clay soil during dry weather,

by tage) yet one tablata are usufficient to determine the relative importance of these factor, but it may be safely assumed that both roboto (1955) big after and outline cracks contribute to the relatively and those parties may be expected from areas of less than 100 acres.

# Use of Troop Prate Darvis Disjon of Structures

Flood peak velor appropriate for nearn the design of conservation that me were derived from the curve shows in figure 2. The values for to rathere experies of of 2, 5, 10, 25, and 50 years and for areas of from 2 to 10,000 was are presented as tabular form in table 4. The value for a testate seep traval of 10 years are presented graphically it by ite of The coefficient that should be applied to my value in the care to obtain corresponding values for 20.50, 250, and 50 year recurrence raterval are as follows:

to the above the bottom alone is a by 0.400.

Total of the transfer of the second process by 0.785; for Zeneral section of the second of the 12.0;

company to the restance with and open for \$170.

# ADJUSTMENT OF FLOOD-PEAK VALUES FOR DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL AND PHYSIOGRAPHIC FACTORS

For areas of 20 acres or less the values given in table 4 and figure 5 were obtained from 100-percent-cultivated areas where approximately 50 percent of the area was in cotton, 25 percent in corn, and 25 percent in oats. No part of the areas was in permanent grass. For areas greater than 20 acres the values were obtained from mixed-



Figure 4.--Crarls in the face of a gully in Houston black clay soil after approximately 3 inches of vain had well the surface soil and closed the cracks in the surface. The cracks in the subsurface remained open.

cover watersbeds where approximately 80 percent of the land was cultivated, the principal crops being cotton and corn with some small grains. The remaining 20 percent of such areas included land in permanent grass, pasture or hay land, brush, farmstead, and roads.

The qualifying physiographic features upon which the flood-peak determinations are based are given in the description of the Experimental Watershed and in tables 1, 2, and 3.

Within the general area of application small local areas may be found where physiographic and cultural conditions differ materially from those prevailing on the experimental watersheds. For such areas the field technician must use his judgment in deciding whether the noted differences would result in larger or smaller flood peaks than those specified in table 4 or figure 5.

# ADJUSTMENT FOR RAINFAUL DIFFERENCES

Figure 1 shows the coefficients that should be applied to the values given in table 4 or figure 5 to compensate for rainfall differences throughout the area of application.

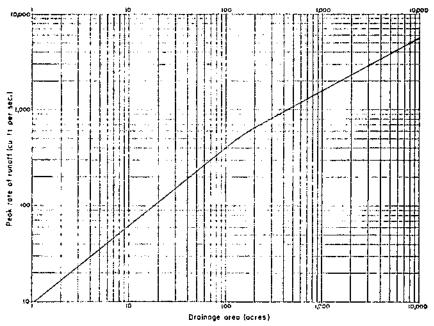


Figure 5. Relation of peak rates of runoff to size of drainage area for recurrence interval of 40 years. This curve is applicable only for physiographic and cultural features similar to those indicated on page 42 and in tables 1, 2, and 3.

### EXAMPLE

The following example illustrates the use of the various figures and tabulations in determining flood peaks:

Given: A 500-acre mixed-cover watershed in the vicinity of Dallas, Tex.

Required: Flood peaks that may be expected for recurrence intervals of 10, 25, and 50 years.

Solution: From table 4, the flood peaks from 500 acres for 10-, 25-, and 50-year recurrence intervals are found to be 1,080 cubic feet per second, 1,370 cubic feet per second, and 1,590 cubic feet per second,

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Table 4.—Peak rates of runoff for design of conservation structures'

		Re	eenrrence interv	al 	
Area (neres)	2 years	5 years	10 years	25 years	50 years
	Cu.ft. per sec.	Cu.ft. per sec.	Cu.ft. per zec.	Cu.ft. ver sec.	Cu.ft. per sec
	7.8	13.0	16.6	21. 1	24.
	ĺ 13. 7	22. 8	29. 1	37. 0	42.
	19. 0	31. 8	40, 5	51.4	59.
	24. I	40, 2	51, 2	65. 0	75.
		48. 2	61, 4	78. 0	90.
		84. 8	108.0	137. 0	159,
		118.0	150. 0	190. 0	220.
	89. 3	149 0	190. 0	241. 0	279.
	107. 0	179.0	228.0	290, 0	335.
		207. 0	264. 0	335, 0	388.
	140.0	235. 0	299. 0	380. 0	440.
	157. 0	262. 0	334. 0	424. 0	491.
	172.0	288. 0	367. 0	466. 0	539.
0		314. 0	400.0	508.0	588
0.		510.0	650. 0	826.0	956
0		638. 0	813. 0	1, 032, 0	1, 200.
0	448.0	748.0	953. 0	1, 210. 0	1,400
0		848.0	1, 080. 0	1, 370, 0	1, 590
0	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	934. 6	1, 190, 0	1, 510, 0	1,750
0	611, 0	1, 020. 0	1, 300. 0	1, 650. 0	1, 910.
0		1, 100. 0	1, 400, 0	1, 780. 0	2,060
0,		1, 170, 0	1, 490, 0	1, 899, 0	2, 190
	2 2 2 2 2	1, 240, 0	1, 580, 0	2, 000. 0	2, 320
000	1 1 1 1 1	1,820,0	2, 320, 0	2, 950, 0	3, 410
000		2, 280, 0	2, 900, 0	3, 680. 0	4, 260
000		2, 670, 0	3, 400. 0	4, 320, 0	5, 000
000		3, 020, 0	3, 850. 0	4, 890, 0	5, 660
000	1	3, 340. 0	4, 260, 0	5, 410, 0	6, 260
000	1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3, 640. 0	4, 640, 0	5, 890, 0	6, 820
	2, 340. 0	3, 920, 0	4, 990, 0	6, 340. 0	7, 340
000		4, 190, 0	5, 340. 0	6, 780, 0	7, 850
000		4, 430, 0	5, 650. 0	7, 180, 0	8, 310

Values in this table are applicable only for physiographic and cultural features approximating those indicated on page 12 and in tables 1, 2, and 3.

respectively, for areas in the vicinity of Waco, Tex. From figure 1, the rainfall coefficient for Dallas is found, by interpolation, to be 0.86.

The expected flood peaks in cubic feet per second are, therefore:

```
1.080 \times 0.86 = 929 for recurrence interval of 10 years; 1.370 \times 0.86 = 1.180 for recurrence interval of 25 years; 1.590 \times 0.86 = 1.370 for recurrence interval of 50 years.
```

As an alternative method, the flood peak from 500 acres in the vicinity of Waco, Tex., is found from figure 5 to be 1.080 cubic feet per second for a recurrence interval of 10 years. The adjustment factors for recurrence intervals of 25 and 50 years are 1.27 and 1.47, respectively. The rainfall coefficient for Dallas is 0.86 (fig. 1).

The expected flood peaks in cubic feet per second are, therefore:

<sup>1.080×0.86 = 929</sup> for recurrence interval of 10 years; 1.080×1.27×0.86=1,180 for recurrence interval of 25 years; 1.080×1.47×0.86=1,370 for recurrence interval of 50 years.

# EFFECT OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES ON PEAK RATES OF RUNOFF

Rainfall and runoff records have been obtained from two similar areas of about 300 acres each and from 10 smaller areas within these 300-acre areas since 1939. Through 1942, both of the 300-acre watersheds were cropped and cultivated as nearly alike as possible in straight rows and with ordinary farm practices. In the fall of 1942 and spring of 1943, conservation practices were established on one area; on the other, the farming practices formerly used were continued. The conservation practices included the conversion of part of the cultivated acreage to grass land, improved rotations, and the planting of legumes and installation of terraces on the reduced area of cultivated crop land. Table 5 gives the land use distribution for individual watersheds within the two 300-acre areas for 1942 before conservation practices were established and for 1948 after the conservation system was fairly stable and well established. The lay-out of the terrace and draininge systems and the extent of grass land before and after conservation treatment are shown in figure 6.

On the conservation area good agronomic practices have been continued, and the terraces, waterways, and structures have been carefully maintained. The terraces have been plowed at least 2 years of every 3 with a two-way plow, turning the furrows toward the terrace ridge and leaving the dead furrow in the terrace channel. Pastures have been moved for weed control at least once each year. A large part of the pasture areas have a good stand of bur clover which has reseeded annually and is spreading. On some pasture areas other legimes have been seeded. Commercial fertilizer has been applied on a few small

areas. No aftempt was made in these studies to isolate and evaluate separately the effect of different conservation practices. Instead, the aim was to determine the combined effect of all the measures included in the conservation plan. This was done by comparing the relationship of the rainfall-minus-runoff values for a pair of areas (W and Y) i; first, when both areas had the same treatment, and then for the period when one area (Y) had conservation practices applied. Sufficient measurements were available for the period July 1943 to May 1946 from two of these areas—Y-2 (432 acres) and W-1 (476 acres)—to serve as the basis for these comparisons. The studies on these areas showed that conservation practices appreciably reduce the peak rates Furthermore, the reduction in peak rate is relatively constant regardless of flood magnitude. For area Y-2 the amount of the reduction is about 0.48 inch per hour. Thus, if the expected flood for a 10-year recurrence interval from an area of this size without conservation practices is 3.80 inches per hour, a peak runoff rate of only 3.32 inches per hour could be expected after conservation practices have been applied. This represents a reduction in peak rate of runoff of 0.48 inch per hour, or approximately 12.6 percent (fig. 7). Fur-

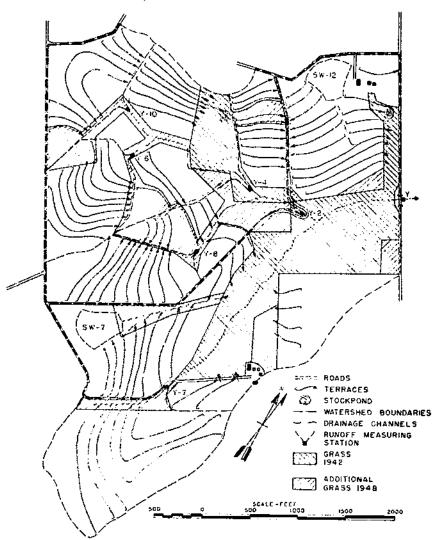
BAHRD, RALPH W. THE EFFECT OF CONSERVATION CRACTICES ON PEAK RATES OF RUNOFF. Ten. Engin. 16(8): 8-15. 1946.

Table 5.—Fercentage of each watershed in crops or other land use, 1942 and 1948

						Kind	of crop or lan	d use			- 124		
Watershed	Year	Cotton	Corn	Oats	Oats with hubani clover	Hubam clover	Sorghum	Pasture	Meadow	Other crops	Farm- steads	Roads	Total area
SW-12	1942	Percent 0	Percent 0	Percent 0	Percent 0	Percent 0	Percent 0	Percent	Percent 100	Percent 0	Percent 0	Percent 0 0	Acres 2. 97 2. 97
SW-17.	1948 - 1942 - 1948	0	0	0 100 0	0	0 0 0	0	0 0 100	100 0 0	0	0	0	2. 99 2. 99 2. 99
Y-10	1942 1948	48, 5 27, 1	25. 2 28. 1	23. 8	0 29	0	0 0	0 13. 3	0	0 0	0	2. 5 2. 5	21 21
Y-8 Y-6	$\begin{array}{c} 1942 \\ 1948 \\ 1942 \end{array}$	50, 0 31, 7 49, 8	24. 0 32. 2 24. 9	23. 5 0 24. 4	30. 3 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 3. 3 0	0 0 0	0	0	2. 5 2. 5 . 9	20. 8 20. 8 20. 9
Y-7	$^{1948}_{11942}$	33. 0	32. 2	ō	19. 1	ŏ	ŏ	14.8	Ŏ	ŏ	Ó	. 9	20. 9 40
Y-4.	1 1948 1942 1948	44. 3 21. 0	20. 9 27. 3	19. 1	0 22. 4	0	3	11. 8 28. 4	0	0	0	. 9	40 79. 9 79. 9
Υ-2.	$\frac{1942}{1948}$	45. 6 18. 3	$\begin{array}{c} 22.4 \\ 27.6 \end{array}$	18. 3	0 23. 9	0	3, 7 0	8, 9 29, 1	0	0	0	1. 1 1. 1	132 132
Y W-10	1942 1948 1942	37. 0 20. 7 49. 3	20. 8 21. 1 25. 9	14. 9 0 24. 8	0 16, 5 0	0 2. 9 0	$\begin{array}{c} 3.3 \\ .3 \\ 0 \end{array}$	20. 5 35. 0	1. S 1. S	0 0 0	. 5 0	1. 2 i. 2 0	309 309 19. 7
W-6	1948 1942	49. 3 39. 2	25. 9 16. 4	24. 8 19. 5	, 0	0 0	ŏ	ŏ 15. 2	0 2. 5	0	0	0 7. 2	19. 7 42. 3
W-2.	1948 1942 1948	19, 2 24, 8 22, 7	19. 5 20. 1 19. 1	36. 4 16. 6 18. 6	0 0 0	0 0 0	$\begin{array}{c} 0 \\ 2.7 \\ 3.6 \end{array}$	15. 2 20. 8 21. 0	2. 5 9. 1 9. 1	$\begin{array}{c} 0 \\ .3 \\ .3 \end{array}$	0 . 7	7. 2 4. 9 4. 9	42. 3 130 130
W-1	1942 1948	45. 2 37. 4	22. 5 18. 0	14. 2 12. 8	0 0	0	3. 4 6. 4	7. 1 14. 6	3. 4 3. 4	0 3. 2	1. 6 1. 6	2. (° 2. 6	176 176

<sup>4</sup> No record of crops-largely private land,

thermore, a smaller flood would be reduced the same amount; i. e., a flood with a peak rate of 1.00 inch per hour without conservation practices would be reduced through the application of conservation practices to 0.52 inch per hour.

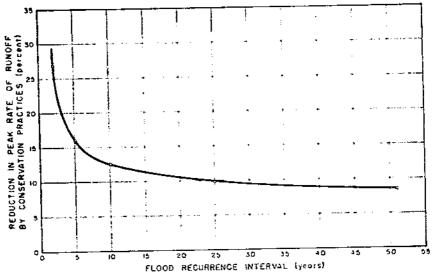


Figure, 6,- Map of area Y showing drainage system, lay-out of terrages, and extent of grass areas before and after conservation treatment.

Much less data are available for the larger area Y (309 acres) and a smaller area Y=6 (20.9 acres). Comparing these 2 areas with areas W=1 (176 acres) and W=10 (19.7 acres) respectively, relationships similar to those at Y=2 are obtained. The larger area shows a reduction in peak rate of runoff of 0.44 inch per hour and the smaller area a reduction of 0.61 inch per hour compared to the 0.48 inch per hour

reduction at Y-2. These reductions, again, are nearly the same regardless of the size of the flood. Also, when these reductions are compared to the corresponding uncorrected probability peaks it is clear that the percentage reductions for the areas are practically the same regardless of the size of the area. Table 6 gives the amount of the reduction in peak runoff cate in inches per hour, the uncorrected probable peak rate of runoff for the three areas (Y-6, Y-2, and Y) for different recurrence intervals, and the percentage reduction in For any recurrence interval the mean reduction peak rate of runoff. can be used for an area of any size up to 500 acres. Since the area from which this type of information is available (area Y) is not larger than 309 acres, direct application of these data to areas greater than 500 acres is not recommended.

Figure 1 shows the coefficients that must be applied to peak rates of runoff to compensate for rainfall differences. Since the percentage



Reduction of peak rates of tunoff by conservation practices for various reenrence intervals.

Reduction in peak rates of ranoff for floods of different recurrence intercals and for areas of different size

		1			R	enerma	<b>~ 1116 EV</b> :	al			
Watershed	\rea	2.1	ear	;-y	tqu	jan.	eir	27-	e iziz	50-1	eger
		Peak rate	Reduc-	Peak rate	Redar-	Post pare	Rednes from	Peak rate	Kodin 1900	Peak rate	Reduc-
Y-6 Y-2	teres 20, 9 132 309	2, 31 1, 78	26.5	3, 86 2, 98	15. S 16. 1	4. 92 3. 80	12 1	6, 22 4, 82	Percent 9, 8 10, 0 9, 6	7. 10 5. 59	Percent 8, 5 8, 6 8, 2
Averaș		<u>-</u> .	26, 8		16.0	<del>-</del> ·	12, 5		9, 8		8. 4

and the second of the second o

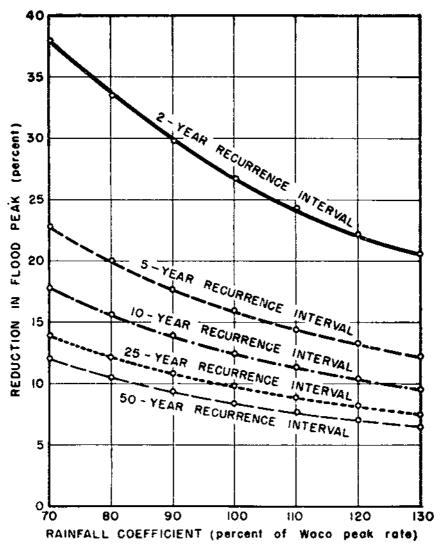


FIGURE 8. Reduction in peak rates of runoff by conservation practices for various recurrence intervals and rainfall coefficients.

reduction that may be expected due to conservation practices is dependent upon the magnitude of the flood peak, corresponding corrections will be necessary when applying the percentages given in table 6. Figure 8 shows the percentage reductions in peak rates of runoff for floods of different recurrence intervals corresponding to the rainfall coefficients in figure 4.

## EXAMPLE

The following example illustrates the use of figure 8 in determining the reduction in peak rate of runoff from areas with conservation practices. Given: A mixed-cover watershed of 400 acres without conservation

practices, near Dallas, Tex.

\* Required: The peak rate of runoff from this area after conservation practices are established, for recurrence intervals of 10 years and 25 years.

Solution: Table 4 shows that the peak rates of runoff to be expected near Waco for 10- and 25-year recurrence intervals would be 953 cubic feet per second and 1,210 cubic feet per second, respectively. Since the rainfall coefficient for areas near Dallas is 0.86 (fig. 1), the corrected values for untreated areas in cubic feet per second would be:

 $0.86 \times 1953.$   $\approx 820$  for a 10-year recurrence injerval;  $0.86 \times 1.210 \approx 1.040$  for a 25-year recurrence interval.

From figure 8 it is found that for a rainfall coefficient of 0.86 the percentage reduction in peak rate of runoff due to conservation practices for 10-year and 25-year recurrence intervals would be 14.5 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively. Therefore, the peak rates of runoff in cubic feet per second to be expected from this area after conservation practices are established would be:

820 14.5 percent of 829 ~704 for a 10-year recurrence interval; 3.040 ~43.3 percent of 1.040 ~922 for a 25-year recurrence interval.

# EFFECT OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES ON AMOUNT OF RUNOFF

Studies have not progressed to the point where definite conclusions can be drawn regarding the extent of reduction in amount of runoff due to the establishment of ronservation practices. There is some evidence to indicate that planting of legumes and possibly other accepted conservation practices will in time have a beneficial influence.

Table 7. Daily amounts of ranoff

					Wagger	વેલવ			
Year	Date								
		SW 17	SW 12	Y-In	YS	1 7	YH	Y 4	Y-2
1946	Apr. 6		н	0.4261	0 4549	0.2656	<b>(-+</b>	0 2797	0, 3152
	lume 15		n	2:117	2954		121	2765	, 2514
	June 21	1.1	U	2212	4178	2730	0.5109	5955	in the state of
	July 3	0.1011	n	4970	(096	17.	151	5023	. 4410
	Oct 31	1 0209	C1	( )	2515	2991	7485	O,	(4)
	Not 22	5.2804	0.3218	1 90003	2 (566)	2 4428	1.8939	1 (4222)	2.0346
	Nov. 24	1 877	7945	1 2657	1.8412	1 3253	1,549,60	1 2705	1, 4(9.9)
	Nov. 21	1 No. 16	1.7612	1 bilaile	1 8147	1 5551	1.6765	1 7923	1 7979
	Nov. 25	2706	1 .	1.1	24.13	25.42	Cit	₩ <sup>1</sup> ¥	. 2753
	Der. R	. 4364	1112		3787	4101	411	4761	. 5786
	Dec. 45	7532	6758	[ ]( K)	. 73116	3731	444.5	4.444	
941.	Jan 13	1 7,427	3 75 10	1 2155	1.4384	177	1 4197	1.5158	1, 5154
	Jan. 14	£.	1.1	1.1	C+	t)	(÷)	L'A	(1)
	Feb. 1	1 4163	1 MHzi	1 1775	1 2643	1/1270	1 2749	1 3669	1. 3924
	Feb. 23	1.4142	1.3648	1 4827	1.33464	1. 2.46	U 3275	200	1, 2930
	Mar. 6	4132	6823	57(0)	5084	1908	. 5745	5238	. 5367
	Mat. 23	55414	174	4 - 4	250	3.500	(9)	(1)	(4)
	Apr 23		1,1	31.115	¢''	2517	(1)	2513	. 2751
	May 4	\$ "	4-4		<b>f</b> +1	E ;	(1)	<b>{</b> `}	(1)
	May 5	6.5	. 2811	ti.	10	2642	14.	C+	.3018
	May 19	5000	445	C	(-4	<b>₹</b> 2•	.3462	(1)	2555
	Moy 20	. 8611	ŧ	3950	. 5339	6137	. 1785	. (40%)	. 53000
	May 22	32400	64	3699	.3476	2701	(4553	36833	,3781
	June 2	6632	641	¢2 )	.3249	2705	3720	.3418	3926
	June ti	£-1	100	174	( )	Line.	(+1	(4)	(1)
	June 7	(2)	£3.1	441	§ 1	(1)	4:0	(2)	(4)
	June 10	2 2043	1.8125	1 (01)	1.7028	1.5241	1. 5066	C 7817	1.8270
	June 16	£ 1	2.51	ti .	g/a	L <sup>2</sup> T	\$ 1	(4)	2544
	July 14	164	£11	3048	4859	ίij	4635	4369	4658
	July to	1.	71	177	(i)	(1)	(4)	(4)	(1)

Occasionally there have been reductions in the total amount of runoff on the area with conservation practices for storms occurring when the soil-moisture content was low. While this effect may be important in the production of crops, an appreciable reduction in the amount of runoff for the major flood-producing storms has not been experienced. Small areas of native grass cut for hay have usually had small amounts of runoff. However, for the rains of November 24, 1940; January 13. February 1, and March 6, 1941; and June 14, and June 14, 1942, the grass area SW-12 has had amounts of total runoff approximately equal to those from cultivated areas, but the rates, have been lower.

For many ranoff periods the volume of water from the areas with conservation practices was about the same as from the untreated areas. Marked changes in ranoff volume, however, may not take place immediately. During the first 3 years after the establishment of conservation practices on area Y, for example, little effect from the improved agronomic practices was expected, since in the 3-year rotation prescribed for this area legime crops had been raised only one year and it was 1946 before legimes had been grown on all areas. It is significant to note that during 1947, 1948, and 1949 the amount of runoff in certain runoff periods was appreciably less from the area with conservation practices. On most soils the growing of suitable legimes, twing to their more extensive root systems, will undoubtedly result in an increase in the water-absorbing capacity of the soil.

The record of runoff for principal storms on the experimental watersheds will be useful in the hydrologic design of farm ponds, terraces, and other conservation structures. The daily runoffs greater than 0.25 inch from the various watersheds in this area are presented

therefore, without detailed analysis, in table 7.

in inches greater than 0.25"

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	5.30			11141	1	4	iii
2.0139	1.8463	2.0828	2 2050	2 1700	1 (96)(1	1,5120	1,0531
1 2301	71.	1, 2954	1 2995	1 1240	1 3070	1.3100	1, (499)
1 6344	• 1 (70).	1.7751	1 5251	1 515	1 2436	1 1950	1.7095
	1111	2018)	int 1	2723		1	,3016
1572	(IV.es	\$145	1726	1565	7913	3133	4082
. 71994	3 1 614	6,587	1692.3	7287	. n(#/3	6760	6576
1 6150	1, 7057	1 AS25	1 (64)	1.7145	1 3610	1.2954	, tr257
1, 5	2.7	**	4	1		42.5	. 5824
1 4201	1. (94.2)	1. 4382	1 1239	1 1510	1 3525	1.4162	1.2960
1 2567	1.502	9.68	1 5562	1, 2142	1.0331	1.4.662	1.0732
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II.	AAD4	1.	1	(-1	480	3,37	65
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3551	òi	66	(i)	ર્શેન	3519	. 4043	. 3614
(1)	δŤ	(i) ·	- iii	Ò	. 7846	. 6784	(1)

Table 7.—Daily amount of runoff in

					Water				
Year	Date	SW-17	SW-12	Y=10	Y-8	Y-7	Y~6	Y-1	Y-2
912	Apr. 8	0.5128	(1)	0.3081	(1)	(1)	0.2961	0.2674	0, 2057
	Apr. 21	8201	(1)	4806	0 (700)	0 2750	1581	. 5342 4369	. 5/290 . 43195
	A DE 24	: 3 (4)14   (5)	(1) ( (L)	4118	4600	4099 (1)	(571	(!)	(H
	Apr. 25 . Mny 7	1005	(4)	2978	.3186	2630	3579	4015	3850
	May 23	5692	(1)	(Đ	3321	3133	01	(1)	2742
	(June 5	. 6229	P)	(1) (1)	, (भेरेक्स) ( <sup>1</sup> 1	3740	in i	e i	(1) (1)
	June 6	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	125	dia .	(-)		3. 1	(4)
	June S	1,6142	1 6506	1. 5107	1,5520	1 5547	1 5248	1.7180	1,7520
	June H June H	(1)	(1)	3210	- 1°1	24,52		**>************************************	2501
	June 15	1 (1807 )	1, 11726	6558 3321	8701	3949	. 7855	$\frac{3816}{69}$	. 9022 (4)
	Sept. 7 Sept. 8	3991 2 8267	7089	1 8397	$\frac{9}{2}$ 0291 $^{\circ}$	1.6730	(1) 1,7287	7020	1.805
	Raint 0	2035	7089	4525	4,7164	4158	3770	1777	.4701
	Nov. 5	1199	(I)	1.1	4 131	3355	2541	(c) (1219)	(h , 468)
	Nov 7	5756	(4)	HR01 08:25	5258 1 2414	5739 1. 1516 .	3530 7420	8897	1.0814
1943	Dec. 26 Mar. 24 May 30	( 1.7276 (0)	. 1897 (2)	10.0	1 = 1 to		(1)	(4)	(1)
12744	May 30	. 3215	- (1	28.602	. 3049	kin i	(4)	0 1	(1)
	LJune 5	1 (274)	(3)	3978	4265	.3818	3053	3018	, <u>15</u> 608 (43
1914	Jan. 1	124	(2) (2)	(+1 (+)	177	$\frac{G_2}{G_2}$	[2]	(?) (?)	1, 6352
	Feb. 25	* 621	9.24	(a)	. (	100	(2)	(4)	4620
	Feb. 26	121	1 2	f. !	1-7	. 4-9	(2)	121	5117
	Mar, 22	(4)	(4)	172	f-1	10	in in its second	(2)	1, 6121 1, 5979
	Mr. 29	! (*)	(2) (4)	ξ≟• , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	(-1 (2)	12.	(*)	(2) (2)	2, 1105
	Apr. 30 May 1	( 421 (4)	141		14:	100	(2)	(2)	6.069
	May 1 May 2	443		168			(Z)	(2)	0.03
	31,33 4	121	£-1	144	124	: #: <u>,</u>	121	(2)	(3) ((0)(3)
	May 21	141	(+2	(6) (	' {+ !*`	(*) (*)	(2) (3)	(2)	50.41
	May 25	121	( · ·	1-1		121	11,	(2)	3997
	May 27 Nov. 24		1 12	477	645	(-)	121	(1)	5 0
	4 Dec. 5	1 13	i pro	· 10	(2)	I=1	[4]	(2) p	. 3570
	Tree, 31	125	141	7-1		12.	(4) (4)	(2)	. 5202 . 8926
1944	i Jan. 18	121	6-1 8-1	$\frac{C}{C}$	(4)	(2)	12.	- 33	.3791
	Feb. 21 Mar. 2		4/1	12	11.	121	(2)	(2)	. 2522
	Mar. 3	1 (3)		100	14.	1 624	¥ 2 ·	(2)	2,3923
	Mar. 30	1 4	150	1-	. 1)	(3)	12.	(2) (2)	1, 0076
	Apr 1	121	1	F	. 445	(4) (2)	ξ2: (2:	13.	1, 1570 , 3624
	Apr. 20 Apr. 21	1 44	1.	1-	,2,	.2.	(2)	(2)	1, 1976
	June 22	1 12	45	150		(÷-	844	(2)	4.4
	1.10'5 . 14		r	6.	k	649	t2+	(2) \ (2)	10
	De: . 2	12)	161	#* #*	13	14.	{-÷ †/ :	(β) }	2,3569
1946	3 Feb. B Feb. 18	j (*)	100		1-1	( i)	£4:	. 73311	. 5101
	Mar 13	1-1		12	(2)	12:	4-1	. 3215	. 6722
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1947	Jan. 17 Jan. 19		1	, 4.11	1.43		(4)	(1)	110
	Mar. 7	/2:	1.0		161		149	414	. 2564
	Mar, 12	141		188	1-1		12.	3353	. 3521 1. 0201
	Mar. 15		144	7877 1192	(2)	4788		3300	.374
	May 15 May 20		5402	5013	671	62.5	, 3719	(5/11	. 554
1948	A Or. 12	3889	1:	: 1	142	4.5	£13		414
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	-: June 15	. 0	1)	. (4)	(1)	0	uti gi:	(1) (1)	(+)
	June 27 July 4	(5) (4) (6706)	Ð	9582	(9 , <u>5518</u>	1 3 NSAPE	3937	.8785	7521
	: July 4		11						

# inches greater than 0.25"-Continued

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0,4422 1	6, 5650	0.3168	0.4112	.4678	. 7492	. 6873	(1)
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Macomplete. No runoif greater than 0.25 meh from July 4, 1949, through Dec. 31, 4949.

U. S. TA AFRAMENT PRINTING GERME 1959

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