Two rain-enhancement projects were established in the spring of 2000 in the northern High Plains of Texas. The seeding in a 5-county area using aircraft based in Laredo and Cotulla. The same year, the Edwards Aquifer Authority designed a cloud-seeding program for five counties along the Rio Grande formed the Texas Border Weather Modification Association. That organization has been seeding clouds ever since in what is now a 6.6 million-acre area from San Antonio to Beeville. Another weather modification sponsor materialized in 1998 when Midland led the way in forming a weather modification association in 1995 to sponsor cloud seeding in a 6.4 million-acre area on the Edwards Plateau. Counties' water-conservation districts served as a convenient way to finance the cost of a cloud-seeding operation through ad valorem taxes. The assessor governing board, with representation from each of the seven counties participating in the project, then made decisions on when and how to do rain enhancement. For a program lasting some 5-6 months, the cost of cloud seeding (approximately $0.08/acre) was assessed uniformly over the entire area.

In 1997, the State of Texas made its initial commitment to sponsoring rain-enhancement projects by devoting $550,000 to cost-share, with four politica subdivisions, for cloud-seeding activities using aircraft. Subsequent legislative sessions increased funding for these, and other projects, first through the Natural Resource Conservation Commission (NRCC) and then to Texas Department of Agriculture.

History of Weather Modification Programs in Texas

One of the nation's most enduring weather-modification projects is located in West Texas between the Permian Basin and the South Plains, at the hea of the Colorado River of Texas. The rain-enhancement project of the Colorado River Municipal Water District (CRMWD) was begun in 1971 to generate additional rainwater, and hence runoff, into the two reservoirs (Lake Thomas and E. V. Spence Reservoir) on the Colorado. The District employs its own weather radar and specially-equipped aircraft to conduct seeding operations each year from April to October. With its base of operation in Big Spring, the District's seeding program covers some 2.6 million acres (or about 4,000 square miles) between Lubbock and Midland. As organizations that conduct cloud-seeding activities, or contract with firms for cloud-seeding services, the CRMWD holds a weather-modification license permit from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR).

Nine other cloud-seeding projects operate elsewhere in West and South Texas during the growing season. A number of counties between San Angelo and Midland led the way in forming a weather modification association in 1996 to sponsor cloud seeding in a 6.4 million-acre area on the Edwards Plateau. Counties' water-conservation districts served as a convenient way to finance the cost of a cloud-seeding operation through ad valorem taxes. The assessor governing board, with representation from each of the seven counties participating in the project, then made decisions on when and how to do rain enhancement. For a program lasting some 5-6 months, the cost of cloud seeding (approximately $0.08/acre) was assessed uniformly over the entire area using acreage in each county as the basis for cost assessment. Initially, the West Texas Weather Modification Association (WTWMA) contracted for cloud seeding services, but eventually invested in its own aircraft, radar facilities, and personnel. The Association has been conducting its own weather-modification operation since 1998.

The WTWMA served as a prototype for the formation of other, similar groups sponsoring weather-modification operations in other parts of West and South Texas. Several counties south of San Antonio formed the South Texas Weather Modification Association in 1996, and that organization has been conducting cloud seeding ever since in what is now a 6.6 million-acre area from San Antonio to Beeville. Another weather modification sponsor materialized in 1998 when counties along the Rio Grande formed the Texas Border Weather Modification Association. That organization has been conducting cloud seeding since the summer of 1998 from a base of operation in Del Rio. Still, another group of counties farther south formed the Southwest Texas Rain-Enhancement Association in 1999. The District employs its own weather radar and specially-equipped aircraft to conduct seeding operations each year from April to October. With its base of operation in Big Spring, the District's seeding program covers some 2.6 million acres (or about 4,000 square miles) between Lubbock and Midland. As organizations that conduct cloud-seeding activities, or contract with firms for cloud-seeding services, the CRMWD holds a weather-modification license permit from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR).

Nine other cloud-seeding projects operate elsewhere in West and South Texas during the growing season. A number of counties between San Angelo and Midland led the way in forming a weather modification association in 1996 to sponsor cloud seeding in a 6.4 million-acre area on the Edwards Plateau. Counties' water-conservation districts served as a convenient way to finance the cost of a cloud-seeding operation through ad valorem taxes. The assessor governing board, with representation from each of the seven counties participating in the project, then made decisions on when and how to do rain enhancement. For a program lasting some 5-6 months, the cost of cloud seeding (approximately $0.08/acre) was assessed uniformly over the entire area using acreage in each county as the basis for cost assessment. Initially, the West Texas Weather Modification Association (WTWMA) contracted for cloud seeding services, but eventually invested in its own aircraft, radar facilities, and personnel. The Association has been conducting its own weather-modification operation since 1998.

The WTWMA served as a prototype for the formation of other, similar groups sponsoring weather-modification operations in other parts of West and South Texas. Several counties south of San Antonio formed the South Texas Weather Modification Association in 1996, and that organization has been conducting cloud seeding ever since in what is now a 6.6 million-acre area from San Antonio to Beeville. Another weather modification sponsor materialized in 1998 when counties along the Rio Grande formed the Texas Border Weather Modification Association. That organization has been conducting cloud seeding since the summer of 1998 from a base of operation in Del Rio. Still, another group of counties farther south formed the Southwest Texas Rain-Enhancement Association in 1999.
(WCTWMA), which formed and sponsored cloud seeding services, provided by a contractor, in the summer of 2002. The project, which covers 4.9 million acres of the "Big Country," has radar and aircraft based at Elmdale Airport in Abilene.

The state’s newest program is that of the Trans Pecos Weather Modification Association (TPWMA), which began seeding for the first time in the spring in a 4-county area along and west of the Pecos River. The TPWMA procured its own equipment, including two aircraft and a radar, and hired its own personnel to run its operation, which covers 5.1 million acres in the region between El Paso and Midland.