

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2003



**Tulula Bog Mitigation Site  
Graham County  
Project No. 6.939004T  
TIP No. A-9WM**



Prepared By:  
Office of Natural Environment & Roadside Environmental Unit  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
December 2003

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	2
1.2 PURPOSE .....	2
1.3 PROJECT HISTORY .....	2
1.4 DEBIT LEDGER .....	4
<b>2.0 HYDROLOGY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 SUCCESS CRITERIA.....	4
2.2 HYDROLOGIC DESCRIPTION .....	5
2.3 RESULTS OF HYDROLOGIC MONITORING .....	5
2.3.1 Site Data .....	5
2.3.2 Climatic Data.....	10
2.4 CONCLUSIONS .....	10
<b>3.0 VEGETATION: TULULA BOG MITIGATION SITE</b> .....	<b>12</b>
3.1 SUCCESS CRITERIA.....	12
3.2 DESCRIPTION OF SPECIES .....	12
3.3 RESULTS OF VEGETATION MONITORING .....	12
3.4 CONCLUSIONS .....	13
<b>4.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>13</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.	Tulula Bog Debit Ledger .....	4
Table 2.	Hydrologic Monitoring Results .....	7
Table 3.	Vegetation Monitoring Statistics.....	12

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1.	Site Location Map .....	3
Figure 2.	Monitoring Gauge Location Map.....	6
Figure 3 .	Monitoring Gauge Hydrologic Results.....	9
Figure 4.	Tulula Bog 30-70 Graph.....	11

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A - GAUGE DATA GRAPHS

APPENDIX B - SITE PHOTOS & PLANTING PLAN

## **SUMMARY**

The following report summarizes the monitoring activities that have occurred in the past year at the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site. The site was originally constructed in 2002. The Phase I portion of the site was planted in April 2002, while Phase II was planted in March 2003. The 2003-year represents the first complete year of hydrologic and vegetation monitoring following site construction. The site must demonstrate both hydrologic and vegetation success for a minimum of five years or until the site is deemed successful. It is currently being monitored with thirty groundwater gauges and three vegetation-monitoring plots.

The daily rainfall data depicted on the monitoring gauge graphs was recorded from a local weather station located in Andrews, NC. Historical rainfall data used for the 30<sup>th</sup>-70<sup>th</sup> percentile analysis was provided by the Andrews weather station. The NC State Climate Office maintains and provided all of the rainfall data for the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site.

During the 2003 monitoring year, twenty-eight of the thirty-groundwater gauges were downloaded. There is no hydrologic data for gauges D4 and E4. The first year of hydrologic data revealed that eighteen of the twenty-eight groundwater gauges met the success criteria for saturation (within 12" of the surface for 5% of the growing season). Conversely, ten gauges recorded saturation for less than 5% of the growing season. NCDOT will investigate these ten gauges to ascertain whether the gauges are representative of conditions in each respective area.

Vegetation data for the first year of monitoring revealed an average density of 562 trees per acre for the 19.4 acres that were planted. This average is well above the minimum success criteria of 320 trees per acre.

The University of North Carolina at Asheville is performing the stream restoration monitoring, as a part of a grant received from the Department. Upon receipt of this information, the Department will provide appropriate documentation to the resource agencies via the NCDOT website.

NCDOT will continue to monitor the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site for hydrology and vegetation.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Tulula Bog Mitigation Site is a 222-acre tract located in Graham County, NC. The site was developed as a wetland and stream mitigation project designed to assist in replacing highway-related impacts in the mountain region. The mitigation site contains 101 acres of wetland restoration, 121 acres of upland buffer protection, 9,640 feet of stream restoration and 1,400 feet of stream enhancement. It is located off of Highway 129 between Topton and Robbinsville (Figure 1).

### 1.2 PURPOSE

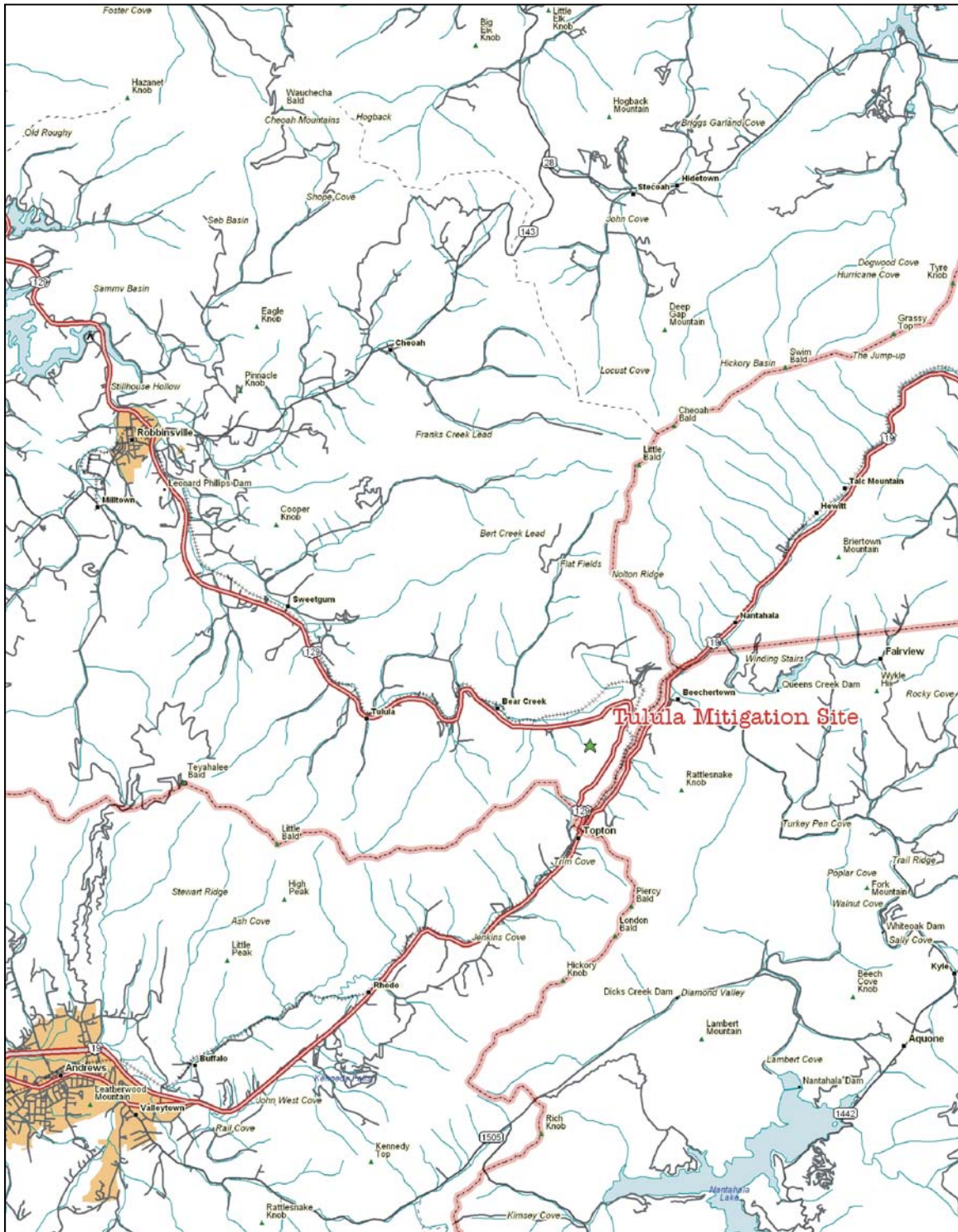
In order to demonstrate successful mitigation, hydrologic and vegetative monitoring must be conducted for a minimum of five consecutive years or until the site is deemed successful. Success criteria are based on federal guidelines for wetland mitigation. These guidelines stipulate criteria for both hydrologic conditions and vegetation survival. The following report details the results of hydrologic and vegetative monitoring during the 2003-growing season at the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site.

Activities in 2003 reflect the first year of monitoring following the restoration efforts. Included in this report are analyses of both hydrologic and vegetative monitoring results, as well as local climate conditions throughout the growing season, and site photographs.

### 1.3 PROJECT HISTORY: TULULA BOG

July 2000	Monitoring Gauges Installed
April 2002	Phase I Planted
March 2003	Phase II Planted
March - November 2003	Hydrologic Monitoring (1 yr.)
September 2003	Vegetation Monitoring (1 yr.)

Figure 1. Site Location Map



## 1.4 DEBIT LEDGER

**Table 1.** Tulula Bog Debit Ledger

Tulula Bog	Mit. Plan			TIP DEBIT	TIP DEBIT	TIP DEBIT	TIP DEBIT	TIP DEBIT
Habitat	Acres At Start:	Acres Remaining	Total Debited	R-2102	A-9DA	A-9DB/DC	A-10BB/C/D	A-9DD
Wetland Functional Restor.	101	47.84	47.4	2.36	0.56	3	30	17.24
Upland Buffer/Protection	121	121	100.00					
Stream Restoration (Linear Feet)	9,640	3,112	32.3			3,248		3,280
TOTAL	222	168.84	76.1					

## 2.0 HYDROLOGY

### 2.1 SUCCESS CRITERIA

In accordance with federal guidelines for wetland mitigation, the success criteria for hydrology state that the area must be inundated or saturated (within 12" of the surface) by surface or groundwater for at least a consecutive 5% of the growing season during a normal precipitation year. Areas inundated or saturated between 5%-12.5% of the growing season can be classified as wetlands depending upon factors such as the presence of wetland vegetation and hydric soils. Areas inundated for less than 5% of the growing season are always classified as non-wetlands.

Stream gauge data will be utilized to substantiate the frequency of the bankfull discharge. The target frequency of the bankfull discharge is a one to two year return interval under normal climatic conditions. Stream gauge monitoring and bankfull calculations will require average climatic conditions including an average distribution of peak storm events. The University of North Carolina at Asheville is performing the stream restoration monitoring, as a part of a grant received from the Department.

The growing season in Graham County begins March 26 and ends November 10. These dates correspond to a 50% probability that temperatures will not drop to 28°F or lower after March 26 and before November 10<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the growing season consists of 229 days; 5% of the growing season is equal to 12 days. Local climate must also represent average conditions for the area.

<sup>1</sup> Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Graham County, North Carolina.

## **2.2 HYDROLOGIC DESCRIPTION**

In July 2000, thirty groundwater-monitoring gauges were installed along eight transects perpendicular to the stream (Figure 2). The automatic monitoring gauges record daily readings of groundwater and surface water depth.

The Tulula Bog Site was designed to receive hydrologic input from rainfall and water accessing the floodplain. The hydrologic monitoring should show the reaction of the groundwater level to specific rainfall events, as well as the surface water level.

## **2.3 RESULTS OF HYDROLOGIC MONITORING**

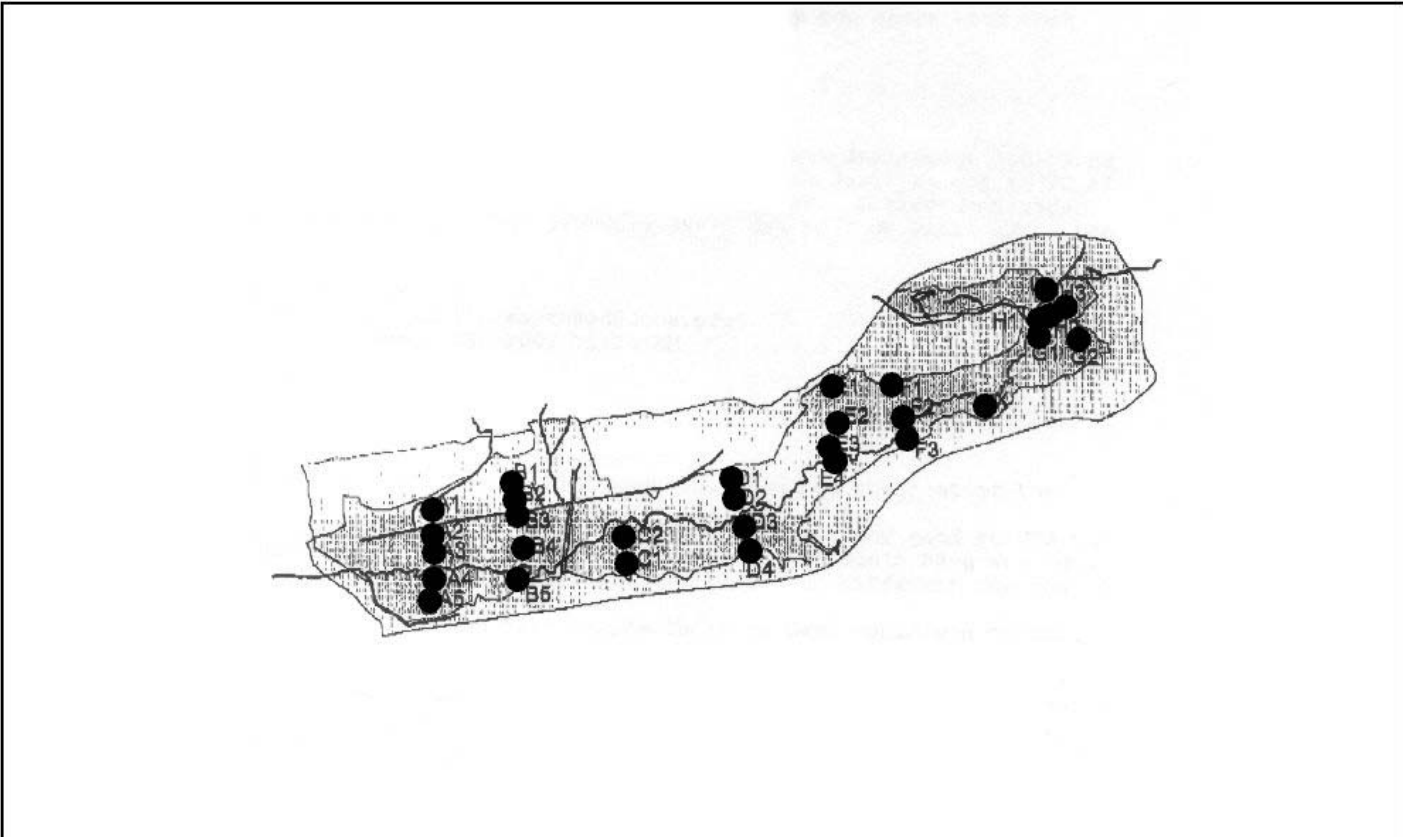
### **2.3.1 Site Data**

The maximum number of consecutive days that the groundwater was within twelve inches of the surface was determined for each well. This number was converted into a percentage of the 229-day growing season (March 16 – November 10). The results are presented in Table 2.

Appendix A contains a plot of the groundwater depth for each monitoring well. The maximum number of consecutive days is noted on each graph. The individual precipitation events are shown on the monitoring well graphs as bars.

Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of the hydrologic results. Gauges highlighted in blue indicate wetland hydrology for more than 12.5% of the growing season. Gauges highlighted in red show hydrology between 8% and 12.5% of the growing season, while those in green indicate hydrology between 5% and 8%. Gauges highlighted in black indicate no wetland hydrology (less than 5% of the growing season).





**Figure 2. Gauge Location Map**

  
Not to Scale

**Table 2. Hydrologic Monitoring Results**

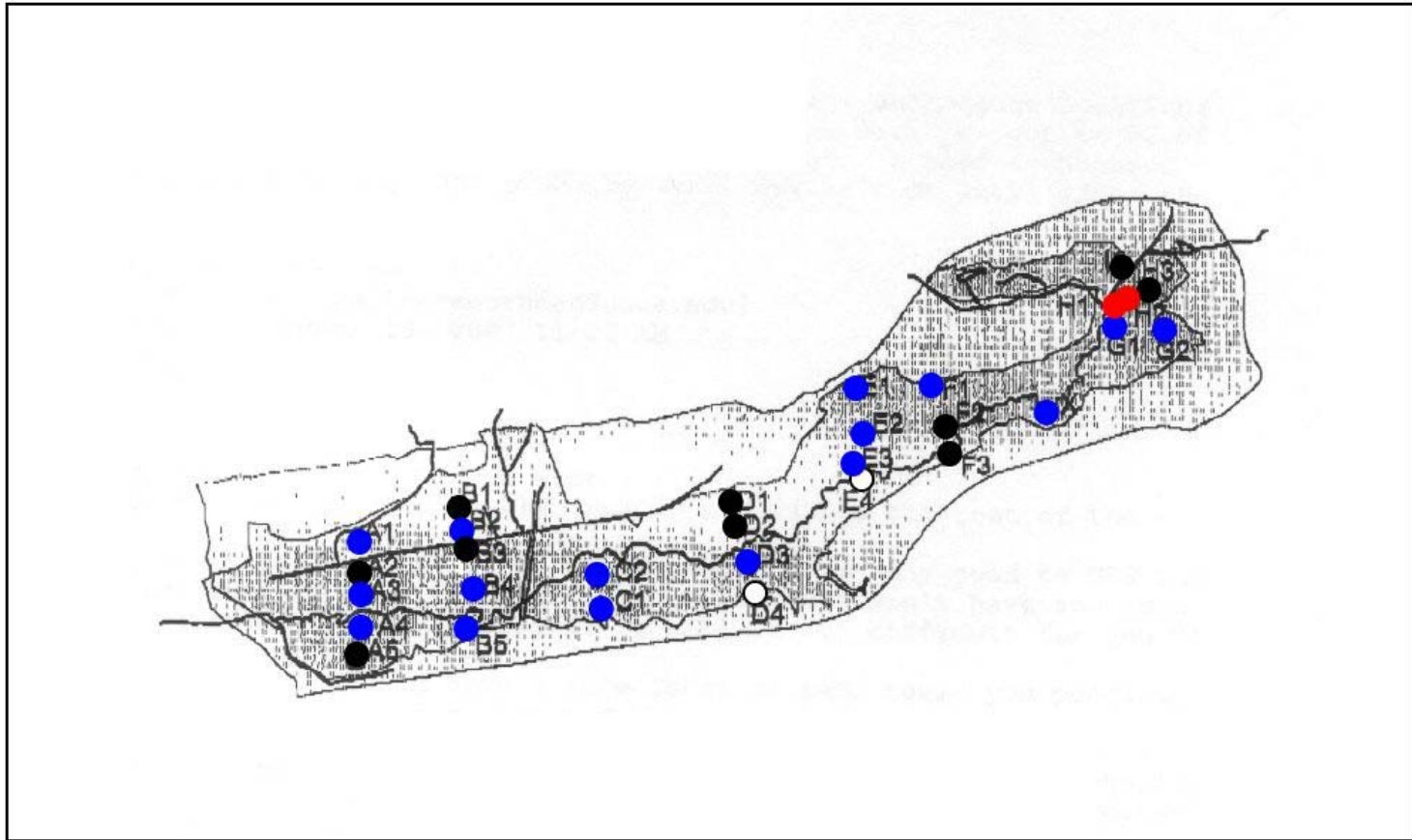
<b>Monitoring Well</b>	<b>&lt;5%</b>	<b>5-8%</b>	<b>8-12.5%</b>	<b>&gt;12.5%</b>	<b>Actual %</b>	<b>Success Dates</b>
<b>A1AA</b> S3173D1+				×	27.5	March 26-May 27 June 4-June 21 Oct 27-Nov 10
<b>A2A</b> S31F924	×				0	
<b>A3A</b> S31F776+				×	26.2	June 2-June 17 July 9-Sept 6
<b>A4A</b> S342C87+				×	76.0	March 26-Sept 15
<b>A5A</b> S3167A6	×				0.9	
<b>B1A</b> S3166AA	×				1.3	
<b>B2A</b> S317654+				×	21.8	March 26-May 14 July 1-July 28
<b>B3A</b> S342D51	×				0	
<b>B4A</b> S31F901+				×	58.1	April 24-June 24 July 1-Nov 10
<b>B5A</b> S31F89A+				×	29.3	March 26-May 31 July 30-Sept 18
<b>C1A</b> S494291+				×	100	March 26-Nov 10
<b>C2A</b> S317659+				×	59.8	March 26-Aug 9
<b>D1A</b> S3166FD	×				0.9	
<b>D2A</b> S31F81A	×				1.7	
<b>D3A</b> S31671B+				×	29.3	March 26-May 31 Sept 24-Oct 22
<b>E1A</b> S31F7D3+				×	54.6	March 26-July 28
<b>E2A</b> S342CE0+				×	41.9	March 26-June 29 Sept 23-Nov 9
<b>E3A</b> S31FAA0+				×	60.7	March 26-Aug 11
<b>F1A</b> S31F764+				×	22.3	March 26-May 15
<b>F2A</b> S31F813	×				1.3	

Monitoring Well	<5%	5-8%	8-12.5%	>12.5%	Actual %	Success Dates
<b>F3AA</b> S4CFD03	×				3.9	
<b>G1A</b> S31F9A1+				×	40.2	March 26-June 25
<b>G2A</b> S3169EF+				×	38.9	March 26-June 22
<b>H1AA</b> S494262+			×		10.9	April 5-April 29 May 1-May 20
<b>H2A</b> S31F93E			×		9.2	April 22-May 12
<b>H3AA</b> S31F877	×				3.9	
<b>I1A</b> S3166B4	×				0	
<b>X1A</b> S316723+				×	39.3	March 26-June 23

+ Gauge met the success criterion during an average rainfall month (February, April, June, and July).

Specific Gauge Problems:

- Gauge A3A experienced malfunctions and was not downloaded from January 1-May 14.
- Gauge F1A experienced malfunctions and was not downloaded from July 3-November 18.



**Figure 3. 2003 Hydrologic Monitoring Gauge Results**



- Hydrology Results
- < 5%
  - 5 - 8%
  - 8 - 12.5%
  - > 12.5%
  - ⊕ Rain Gauge
  - Surface Gauge
  - Not Applicable

North arrow pointing up, labeled 'N'. Below it, the text 'Not to Scale'.

### **2.3.2 Climatic Data**

Figure 4 is a comparison of monthly rainfall for the period of November 2002 through August 2003 to historical precipitation (collected between 1972 and 2003) for Andrews, North Carolina. There was no rain data provided by the State Climate Office for the months of September-November 2003. This comparison gives an indication of how 2003 relates to historical data in terms of climate conditions. The NC State Climate Office provided all local rainfall information.

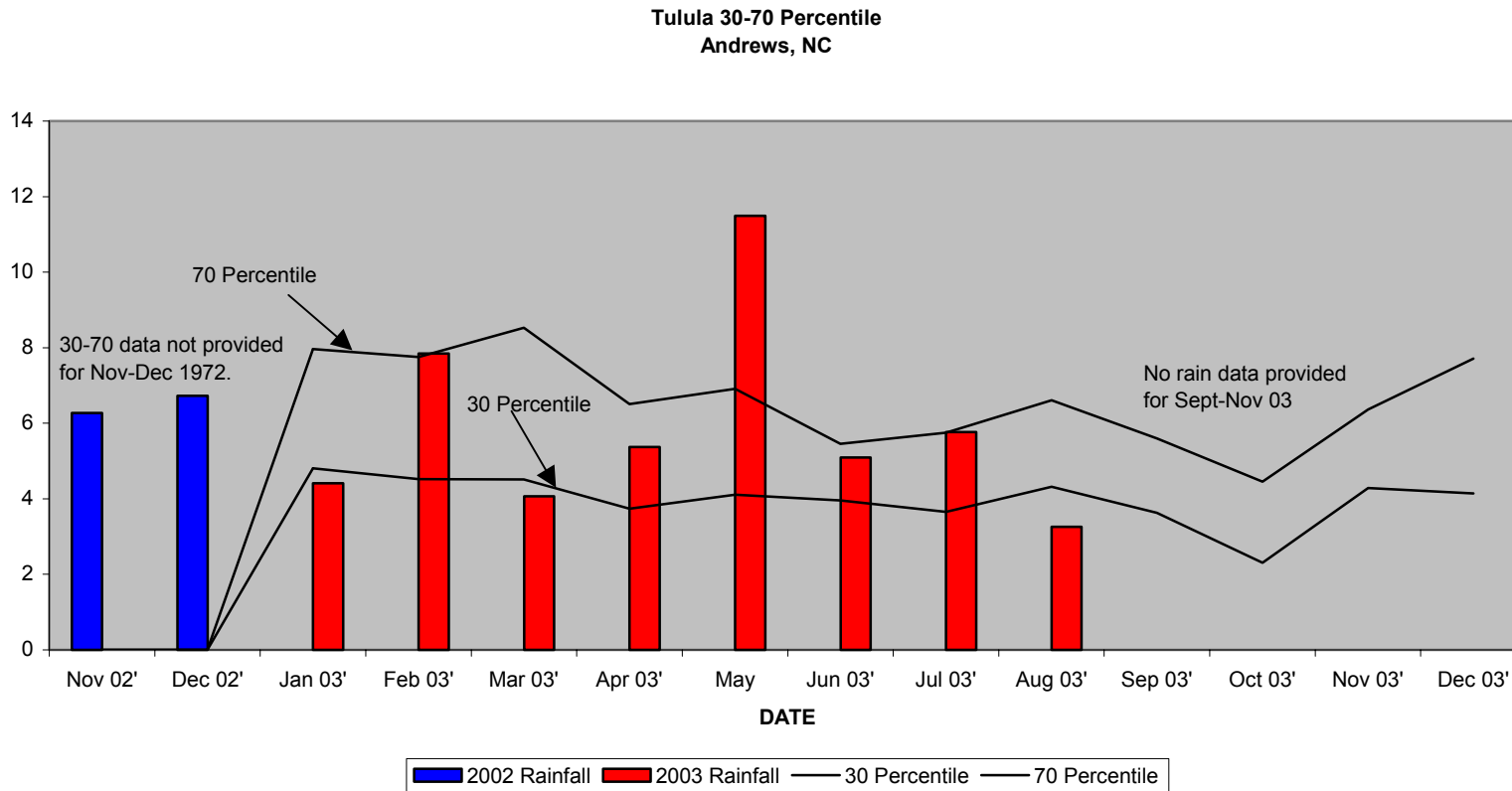
For the 2003-year, the month of May experienced above average rainfall. The months of January, March, and August recorded below average rainfall for the site. February, April, June, and July experienced average rainfall. Overall, 2003 experienced an average rainfall year.

### **2.4 CONCLUSIONS**

The 2003-year represents the first full growing season that hydrologic data has been examined. During the 2003 monitoring year, twenty-eight of the thirty-groundwater gauges were downloaded. There is no hydrologic data for gauges D4 and E4. The first year of hydrologic data revealed that eighteen of the twenty-eight groundwater gauges met the success criteria for saturation (within 12" of the surface for 5% of the growing season). Conversely, ten gauges recorded saturation for less than 5% of the growing season. NCDOT will investigate these ten gauges to ascertain whether the gauges are representative of conditions in each respective area.

NCDOT will continue to monitor the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site for hydrology.

**Figure 4. Tulula Bog 30-70 Graph**



### 3.0 VEGETATION: TULULA BOG MITIGATION SITE (YEAR 1 MONITORING)

#### 3.1 SUCCESS CRITERIA

Success criteria state that there must be a minimum of 320 trees per acre surviving for three consecutive years. A minimum of 290 trees per acre must be living at year four and a minimum of 260 trees per acre living at year five.

#### 3.2 DESCRIPTION OF SPECIES

The following species were planted in the restoration area: Approximately 19.4 acres

*Nyssa sylvatica* var. *sylvatica*, Blackgum

*Quercus rubra*, Northern Red Oak

*Quercus alba*, White Oak

*Liriodendron tulipifera*, Tulip Poplar

#### 3.3 RESULTS OF VEGETATION MONITORING

Table 3. Vegetation Monitoring Statistics

Plot #	Blackgum	Northern Red Oak	White Oak	Tulip Poplar		Total (1 year)	Total (at planting)	Density (Trees/Acre)
1		14	17			31	34	620
2			10	19		29	36	548
3	1	7	5	16		29	38	519
<b>AVERAGE DENSITY</b>								<b>562</b>

**Site Notes:** Other species noted: *Panicum* sp., goldenrod, woolgrass, alder, Queen-Anne's-lace, mimosa, briars, and various grasses.

### **3.4 CONCLUSIONS**

Approximately 19.4 acres of the site were planted. There were three vegetation-monitoring plots established throughout the planting areas. The 2003 vegetation monitoring of the site revealed an average density of 562 trees per acre. This average is well above the minimum success criteria of 320 trees per acre.

NCDOT will continue vegetation monitoring on the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site.

### **4.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

During the 2003 monitoring year, twenty-eight of the thirty-groundwater gauges were downloaded. There is no hydrologic data for gauges D4 and E4. The first year of hydrologic data revealed that eighteen of the twenty-eight groundwater gauges met the success criteria for saturation (within 12" of the surface for 5% of the growing season). Conversely, ten gauges recorded saturation for less than 5% of the growing season. NCDOT will investigate these ten gauges to ascertain whether the gauges are representative of conditions in each respective area.

Vegetation data for the first year of monitoring revealed an average density of 562 trees per acre for the 19.4 acres that were planted. This average is well above the minimum success criteria of 320 trees per acre.

The University of North Carolina at Asheville is performing the stream restoration monitoring, as a part of a grant received from the Department. A portion of this grant is to survey and analyze the geomorphological characteristics of the stream restoration sections of the project. Upon receipt of this information, the Department will provide appropriate documentation to the resource agencies via the Department's website.

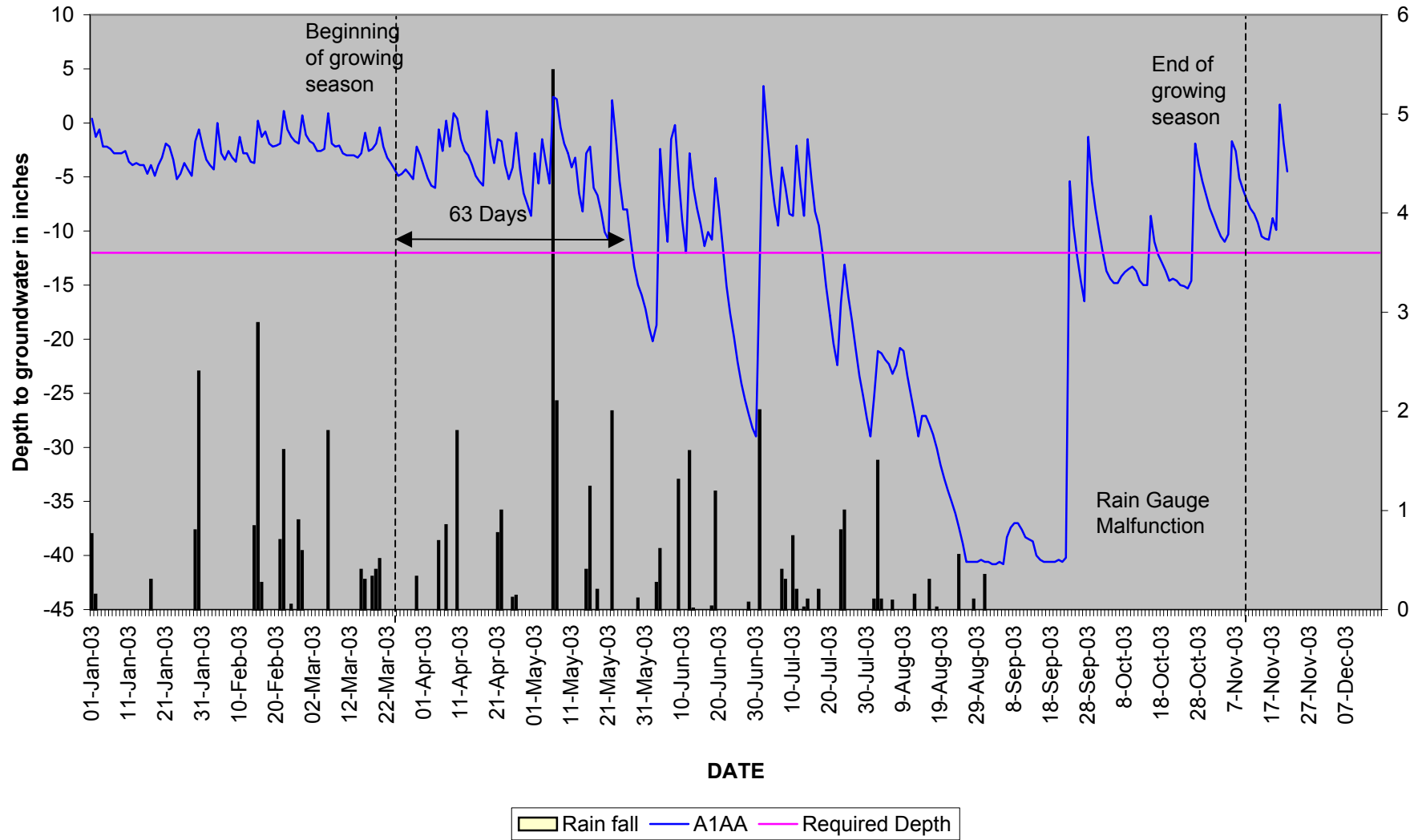
NCDOT will continue to monitor the Tulula Bog Mitigation Site for hydrology and vegetation.



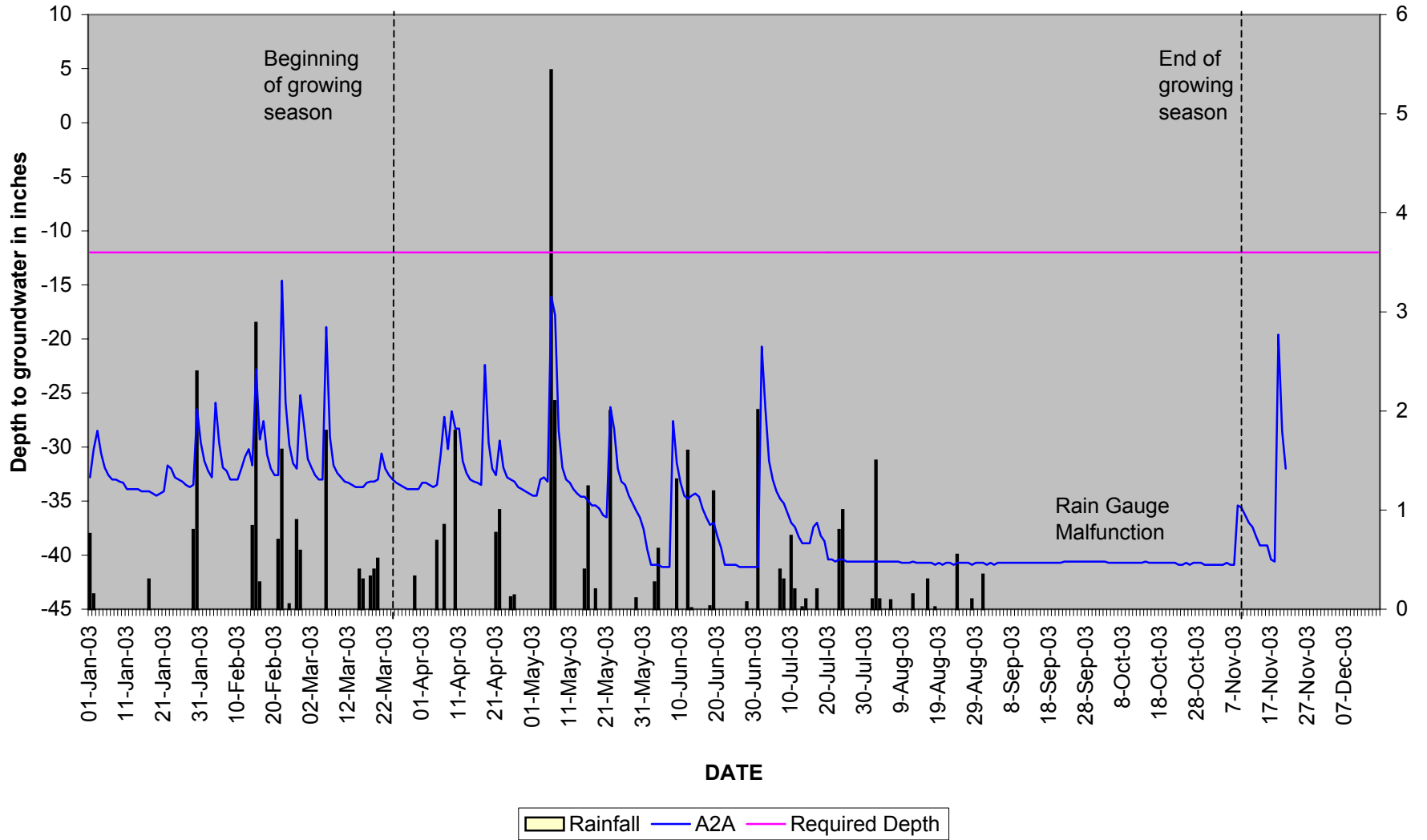
**APPENDIX A**

**GAUGE DATA GRAPHS**

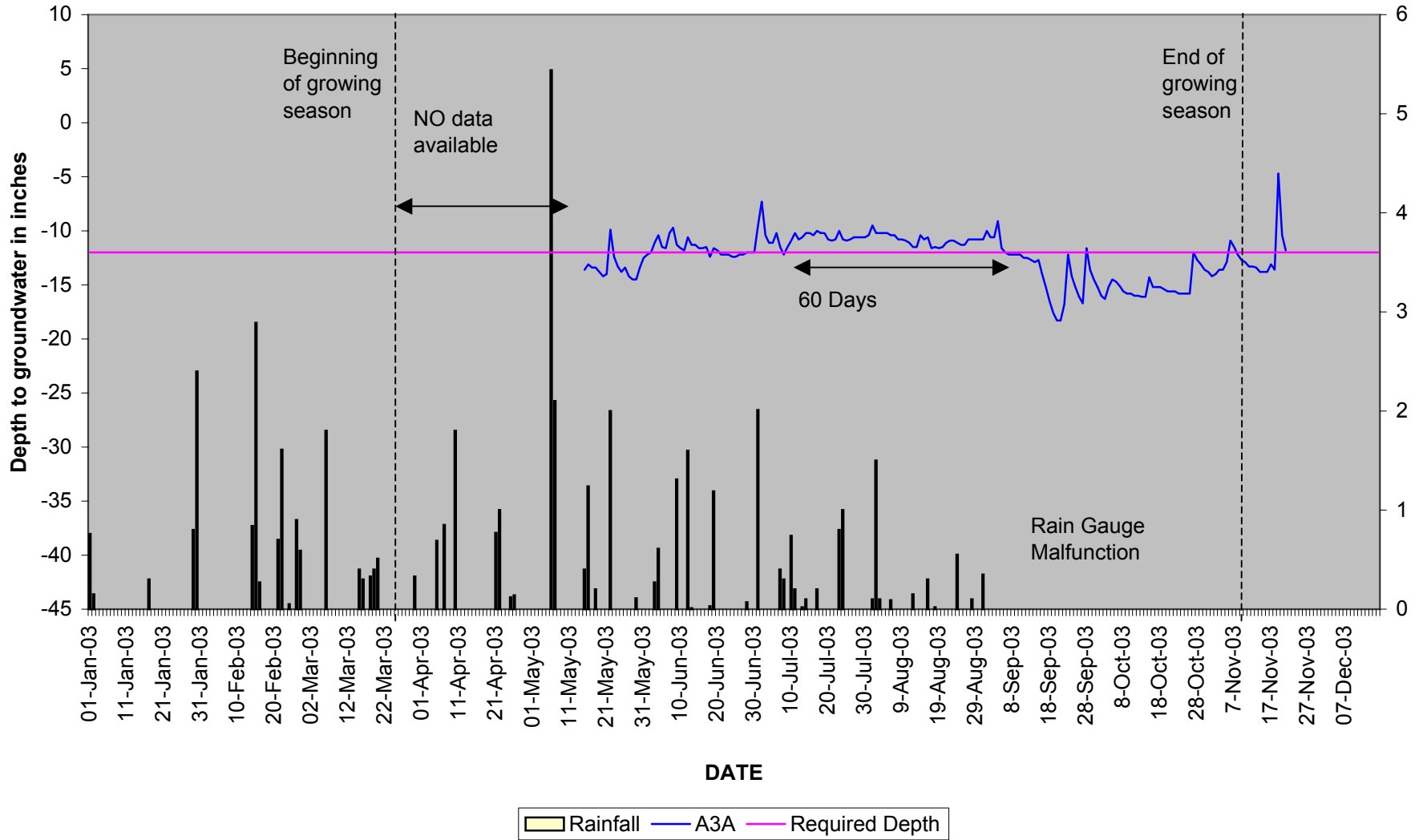
# A1AA Tulula Bog



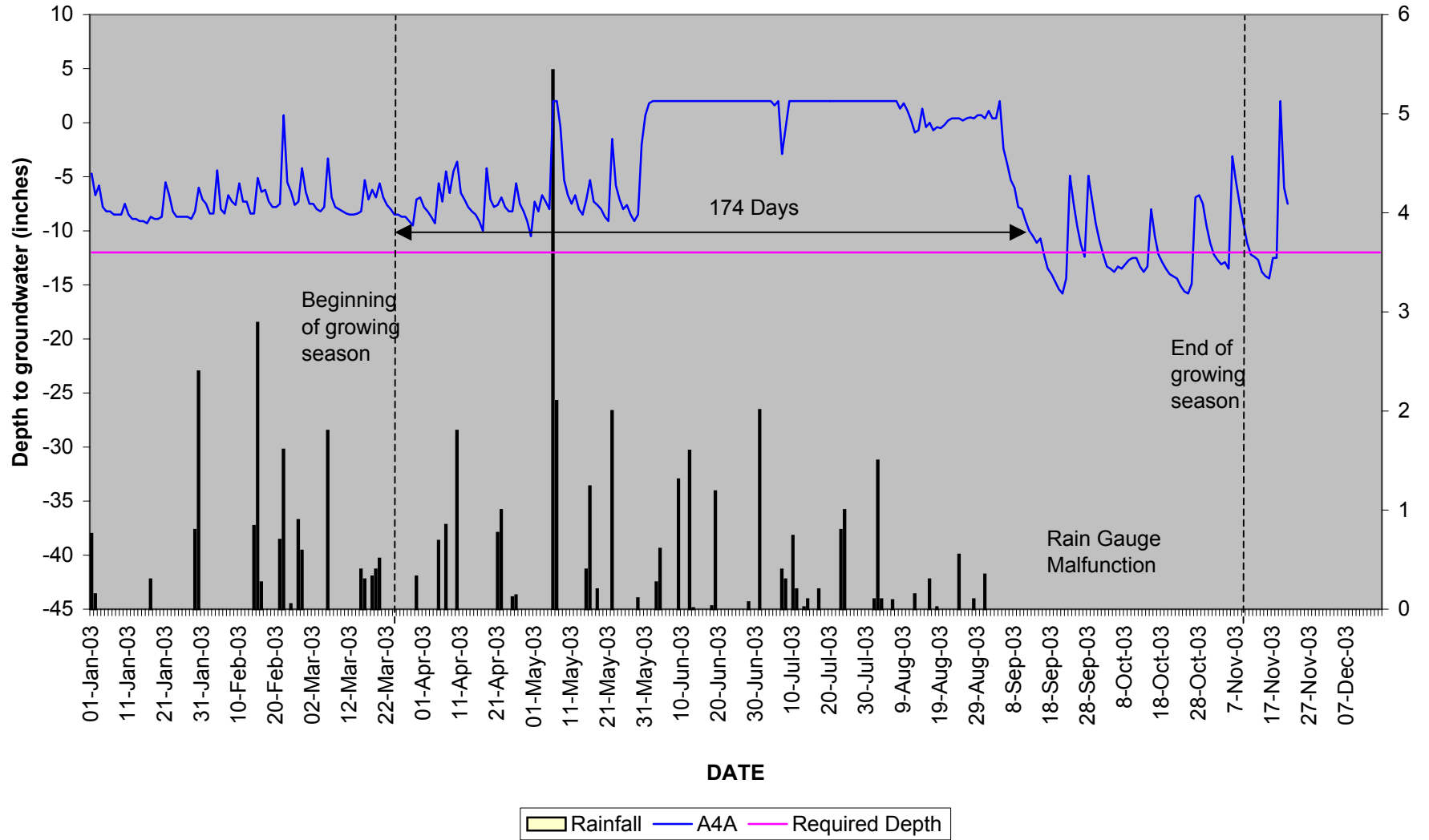
# A2A Tulula Bog



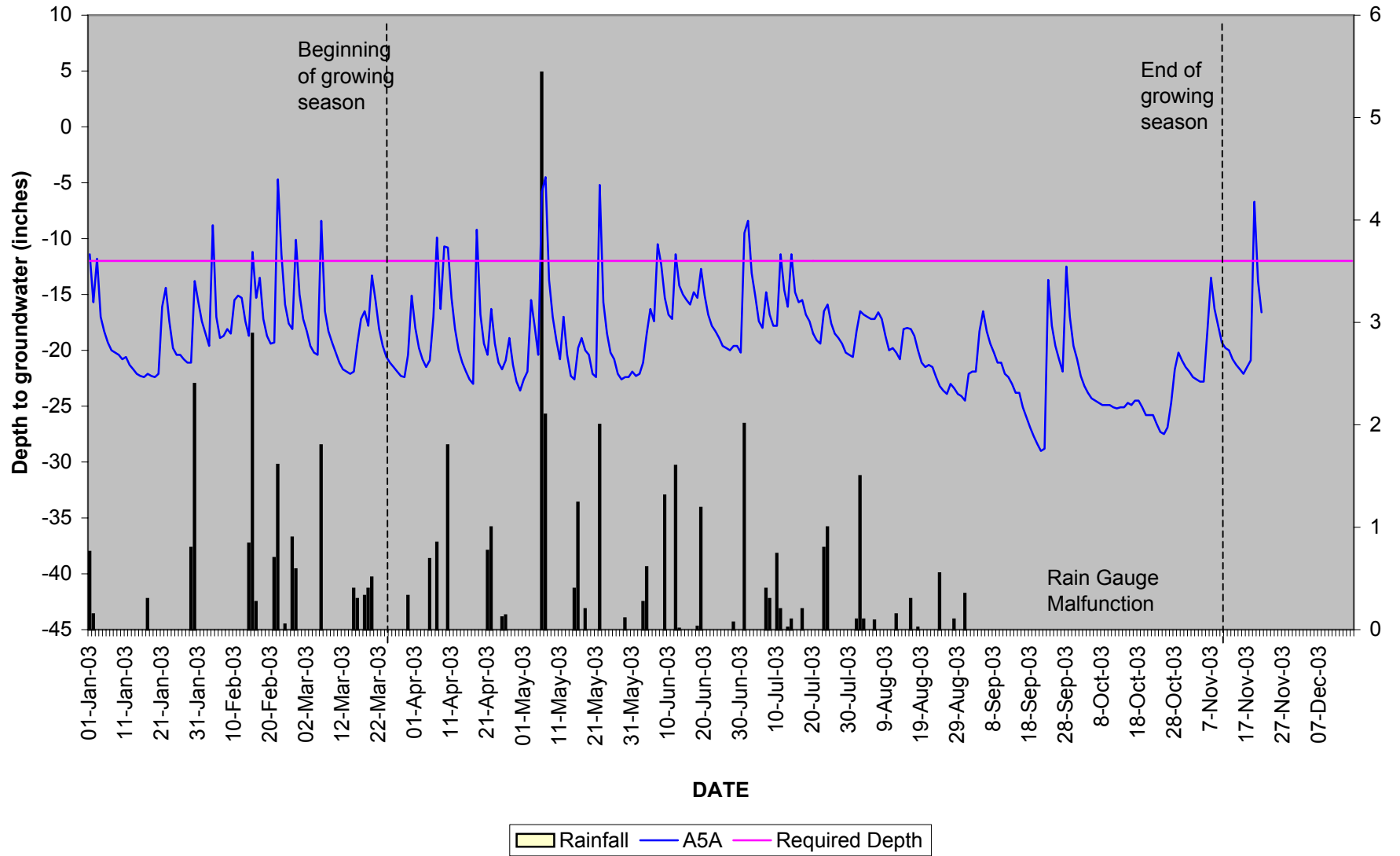
### A3A Tulula Bog



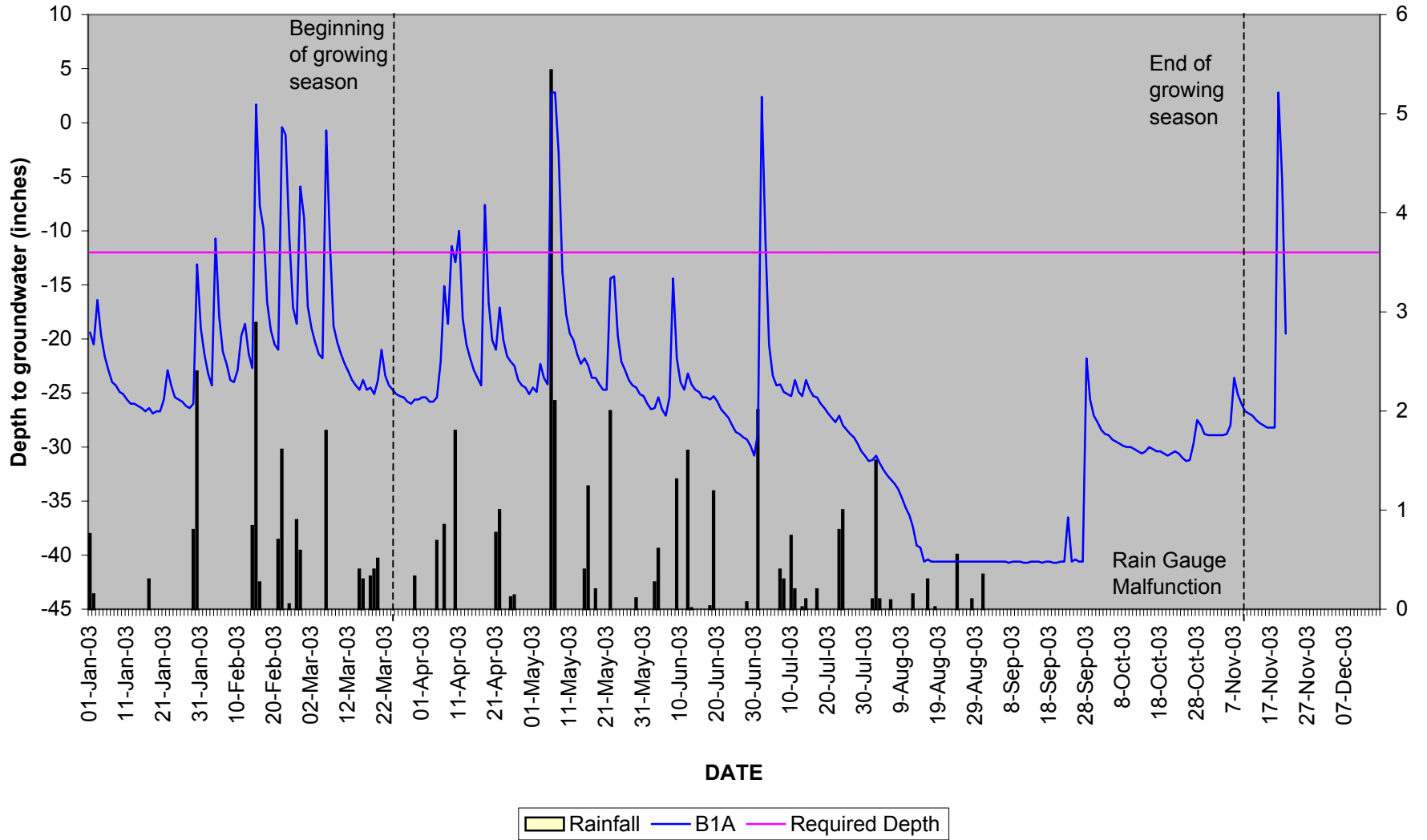
# A4A Tulula Bog



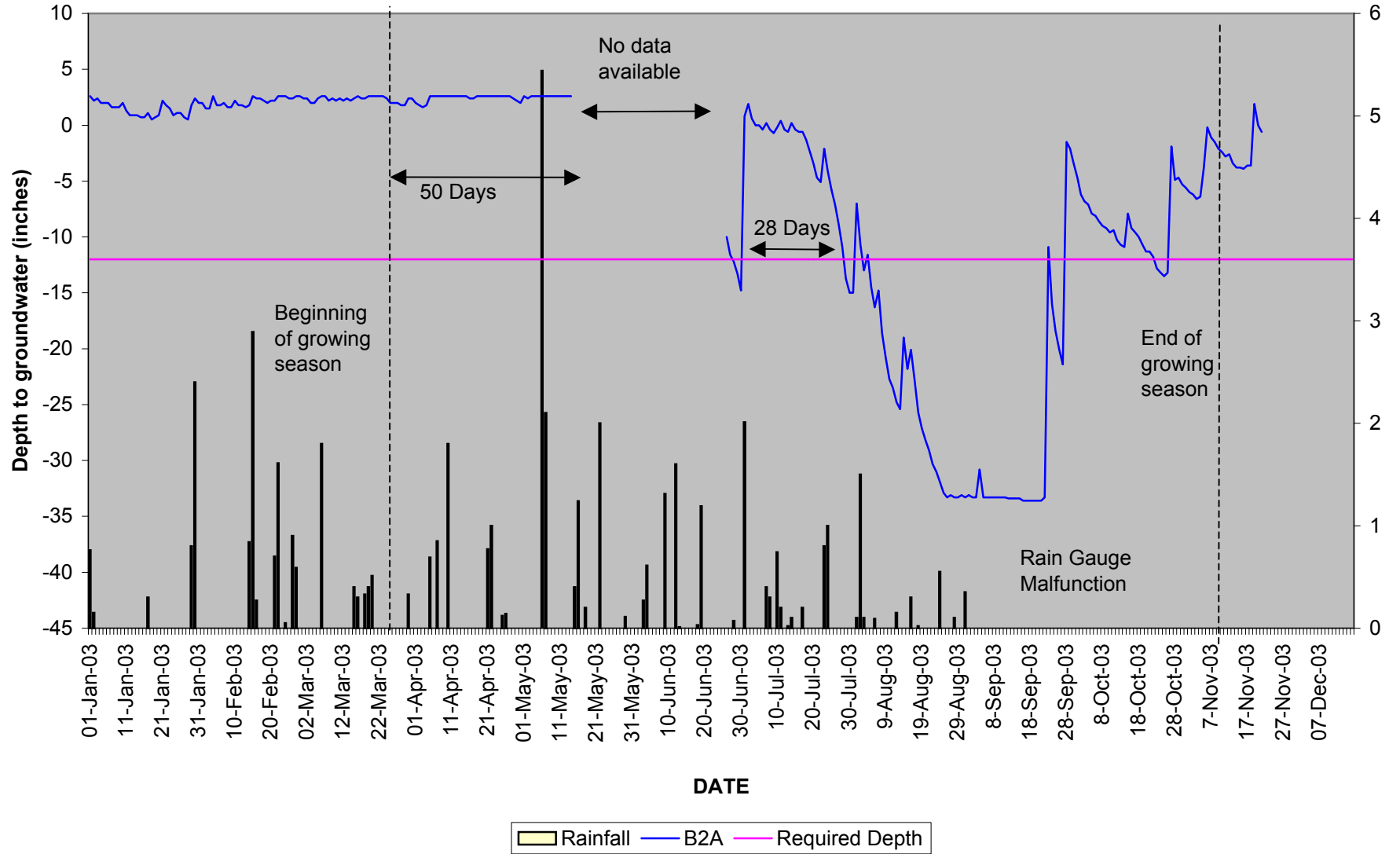
# A5A Tulula Bog



# B1A Tulula Bog

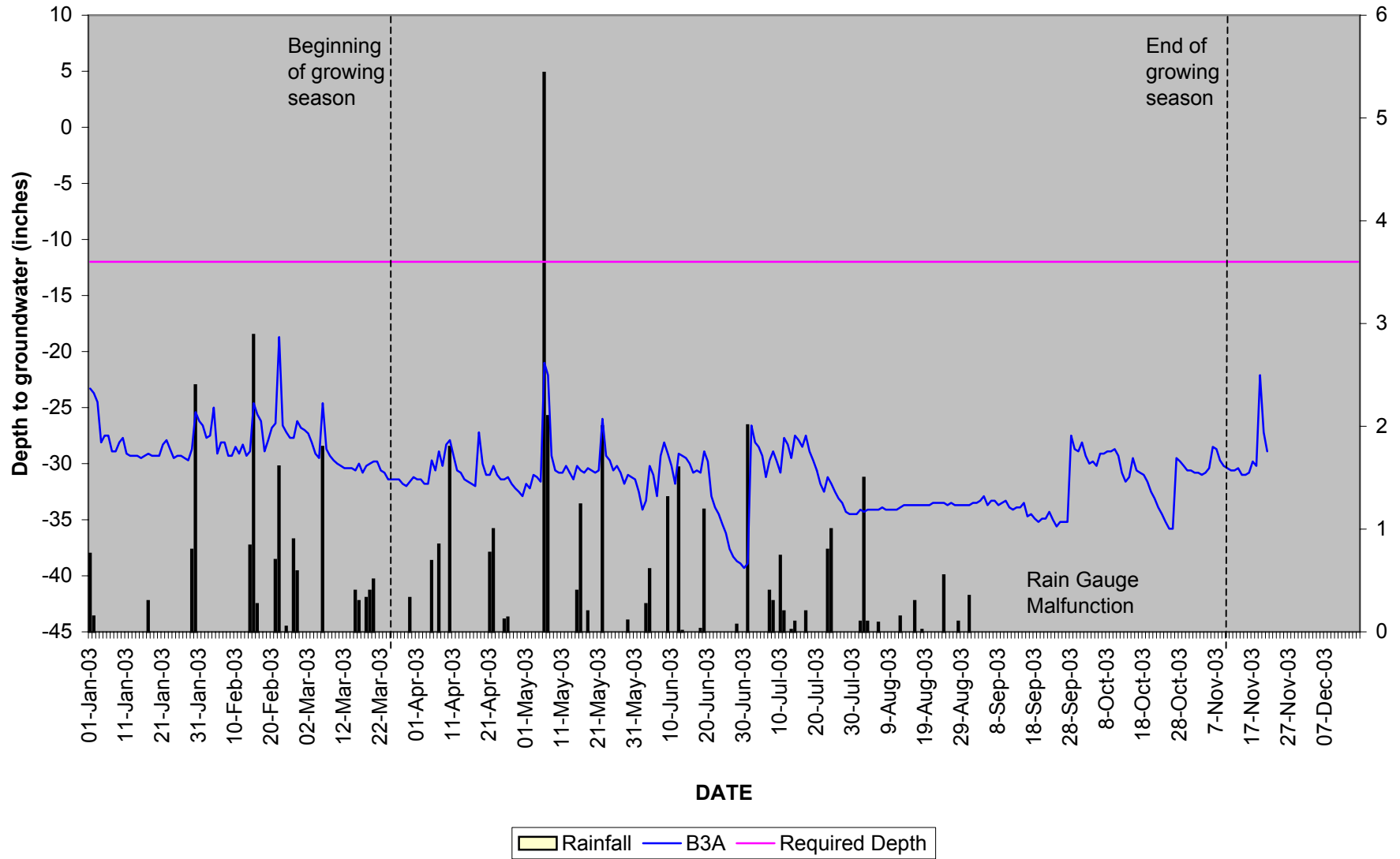


# B2A Tulula Bog

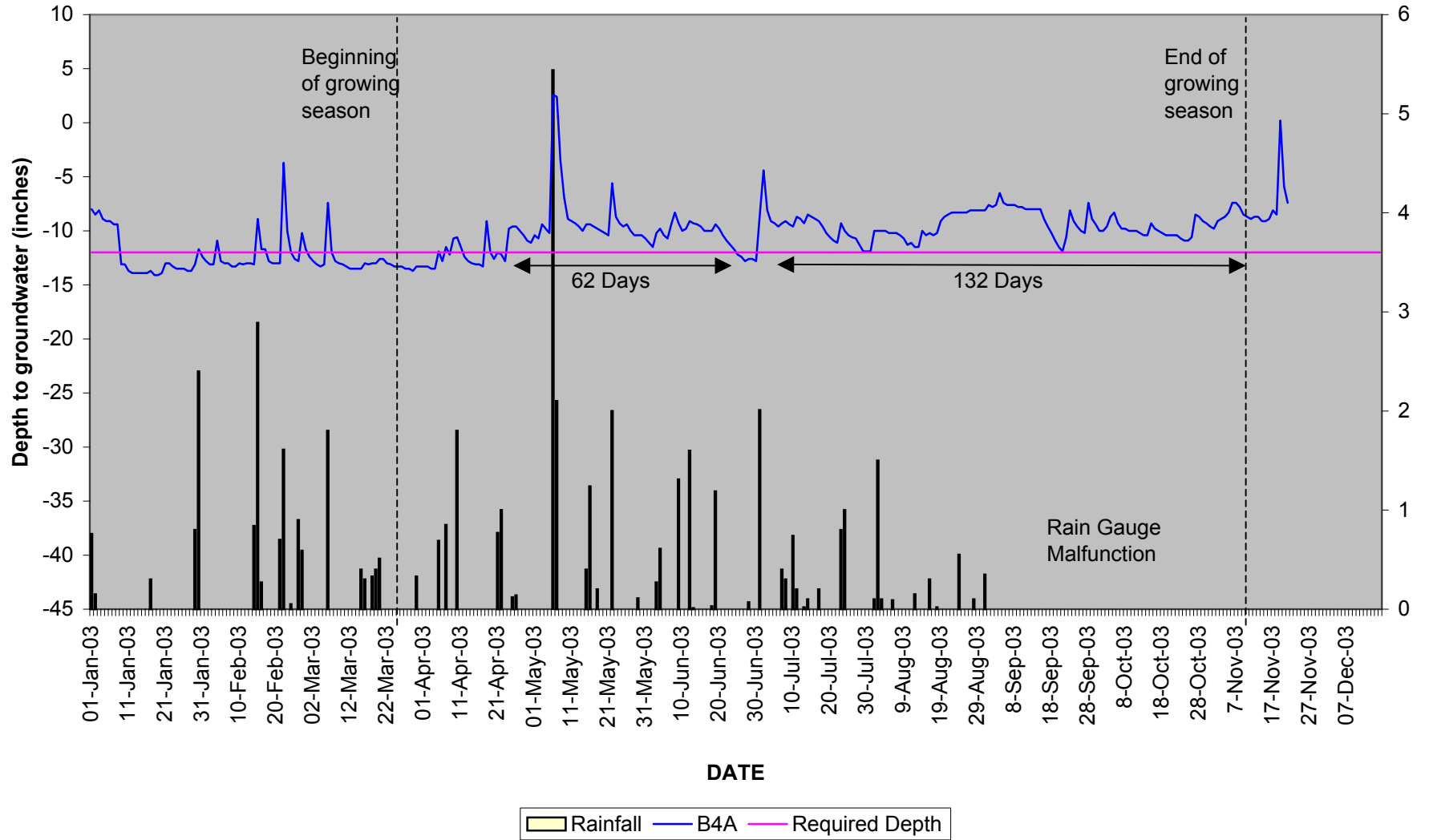




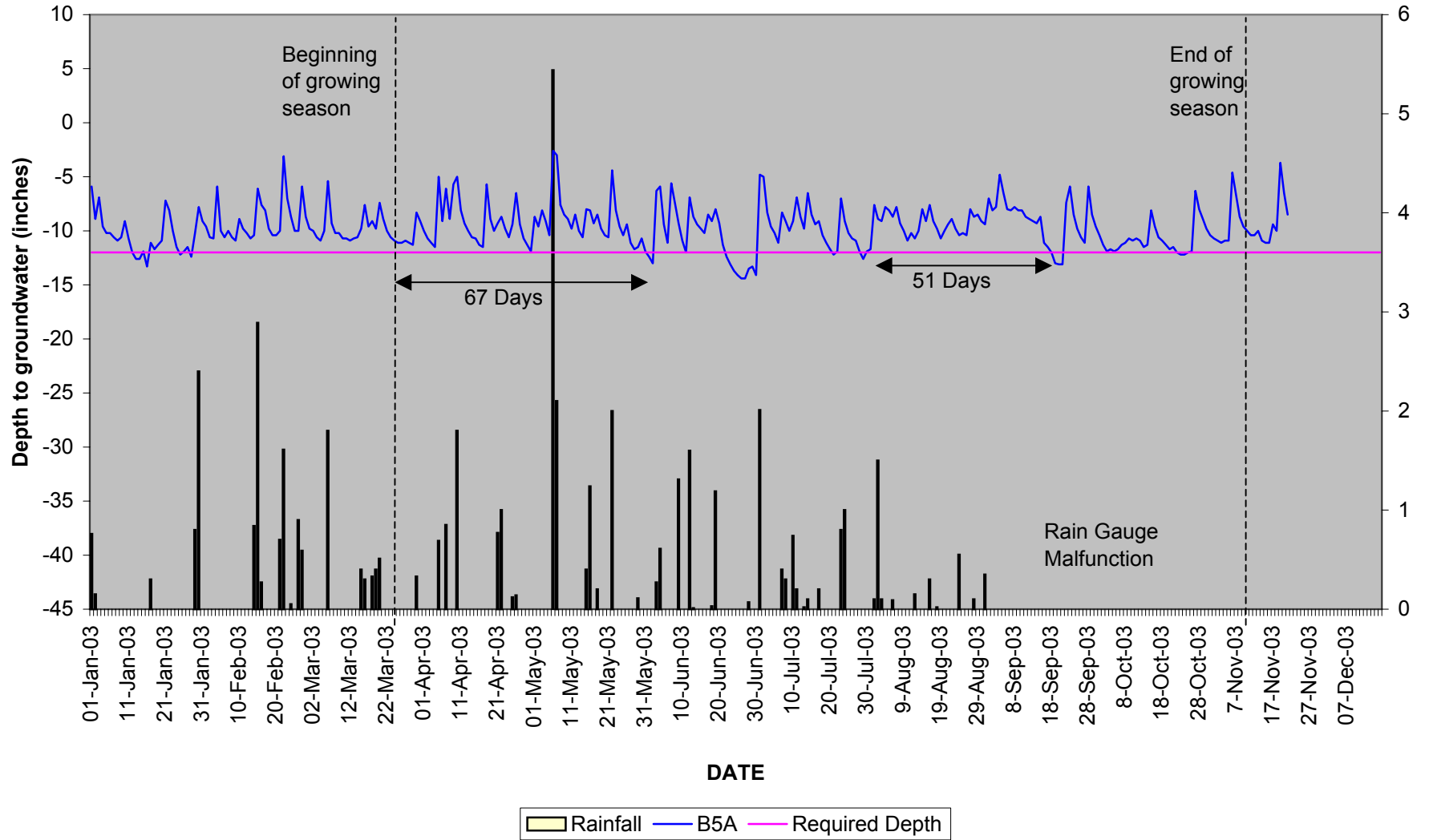
# B3A Tulula Bog



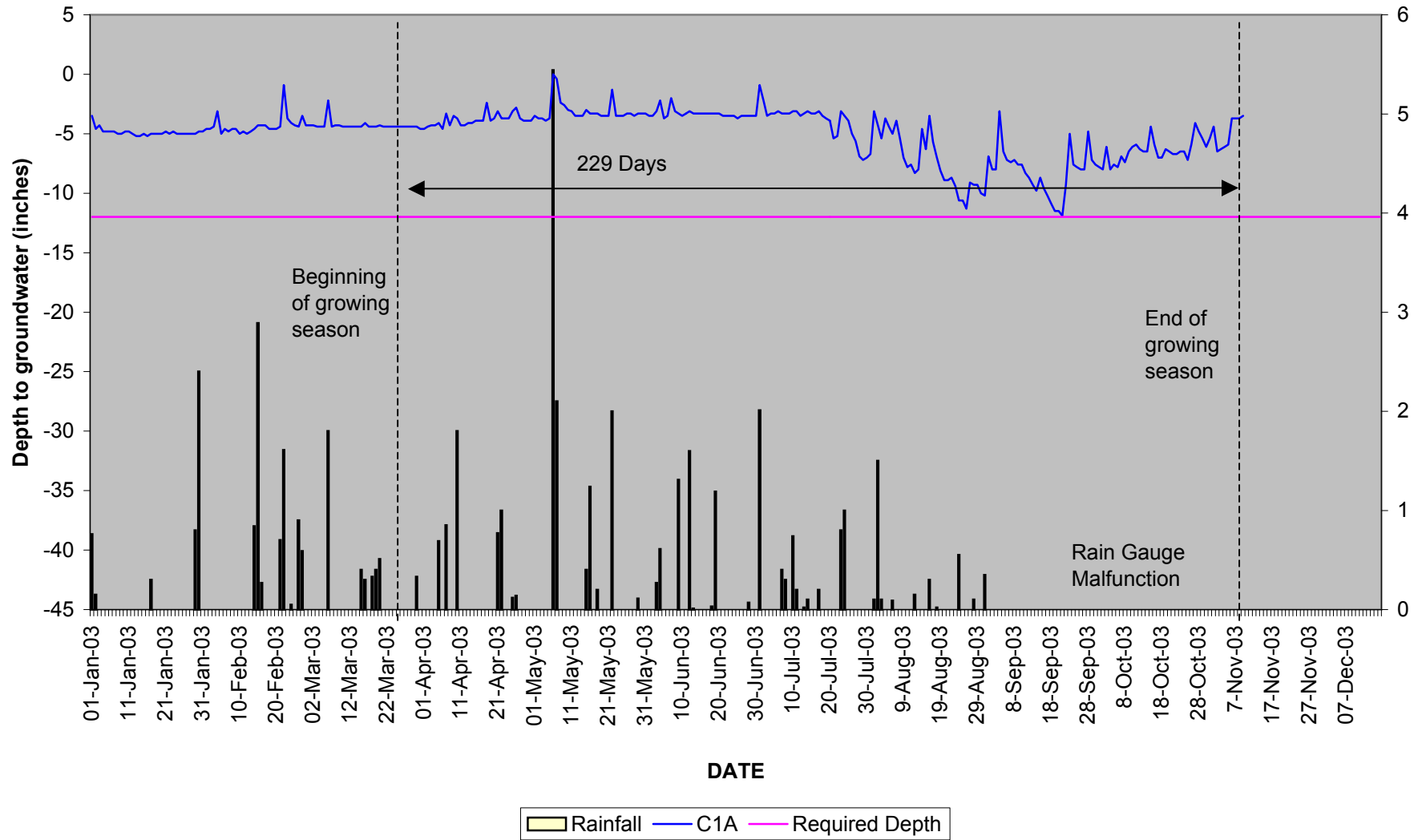
# B4A Tulula Bog



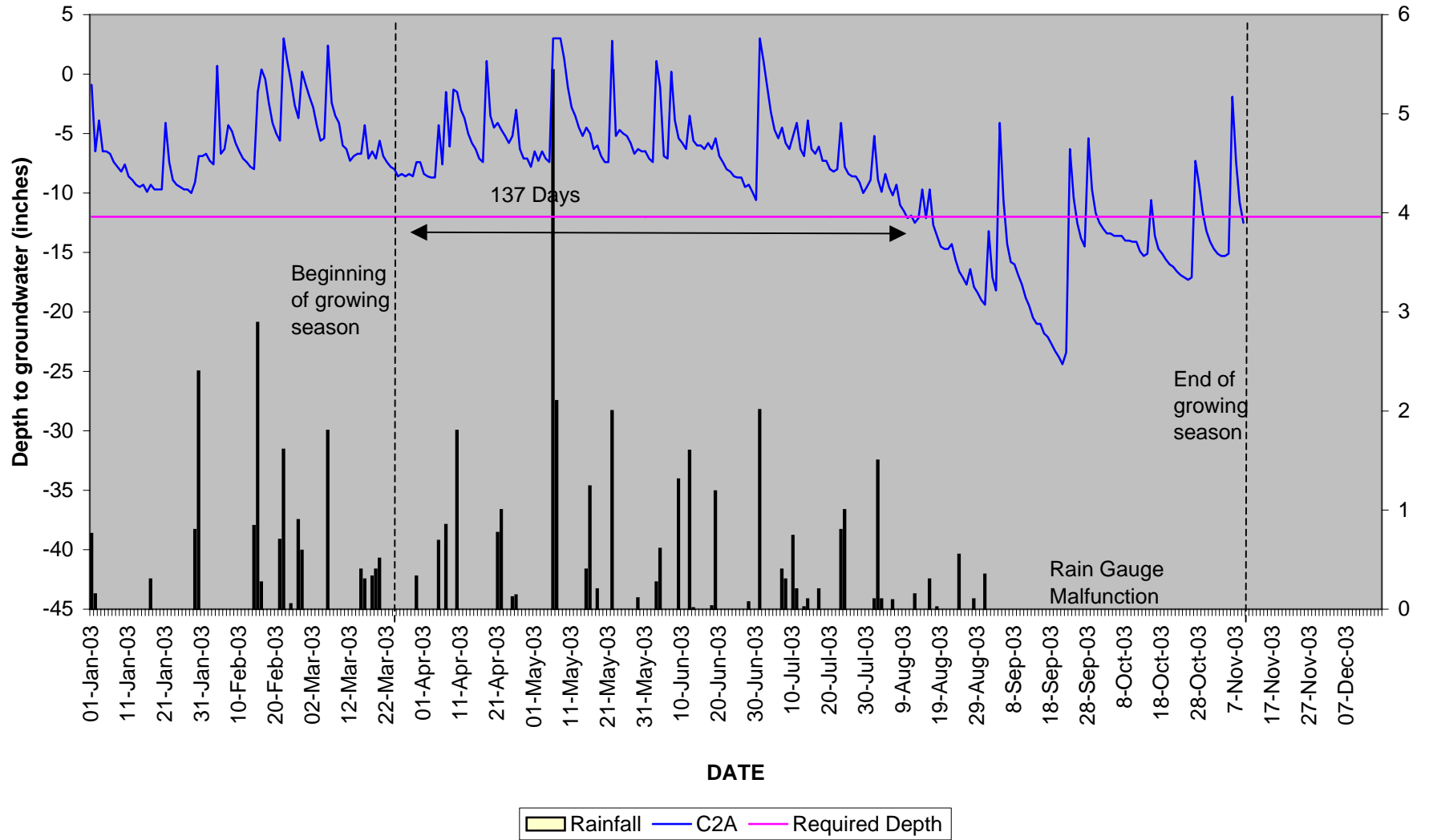
# B5A Tulula Bog



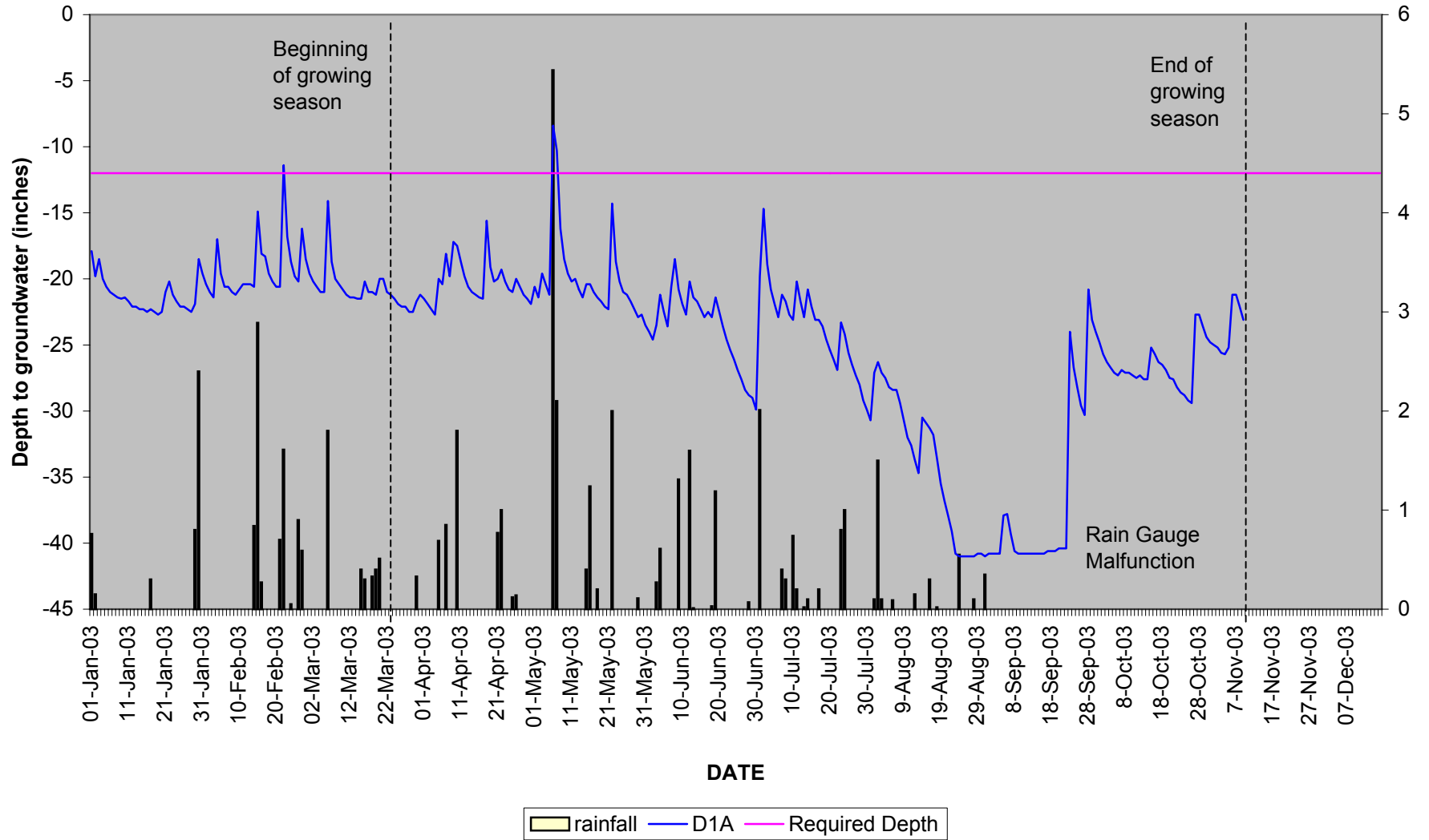
# C1A Tulula Bog



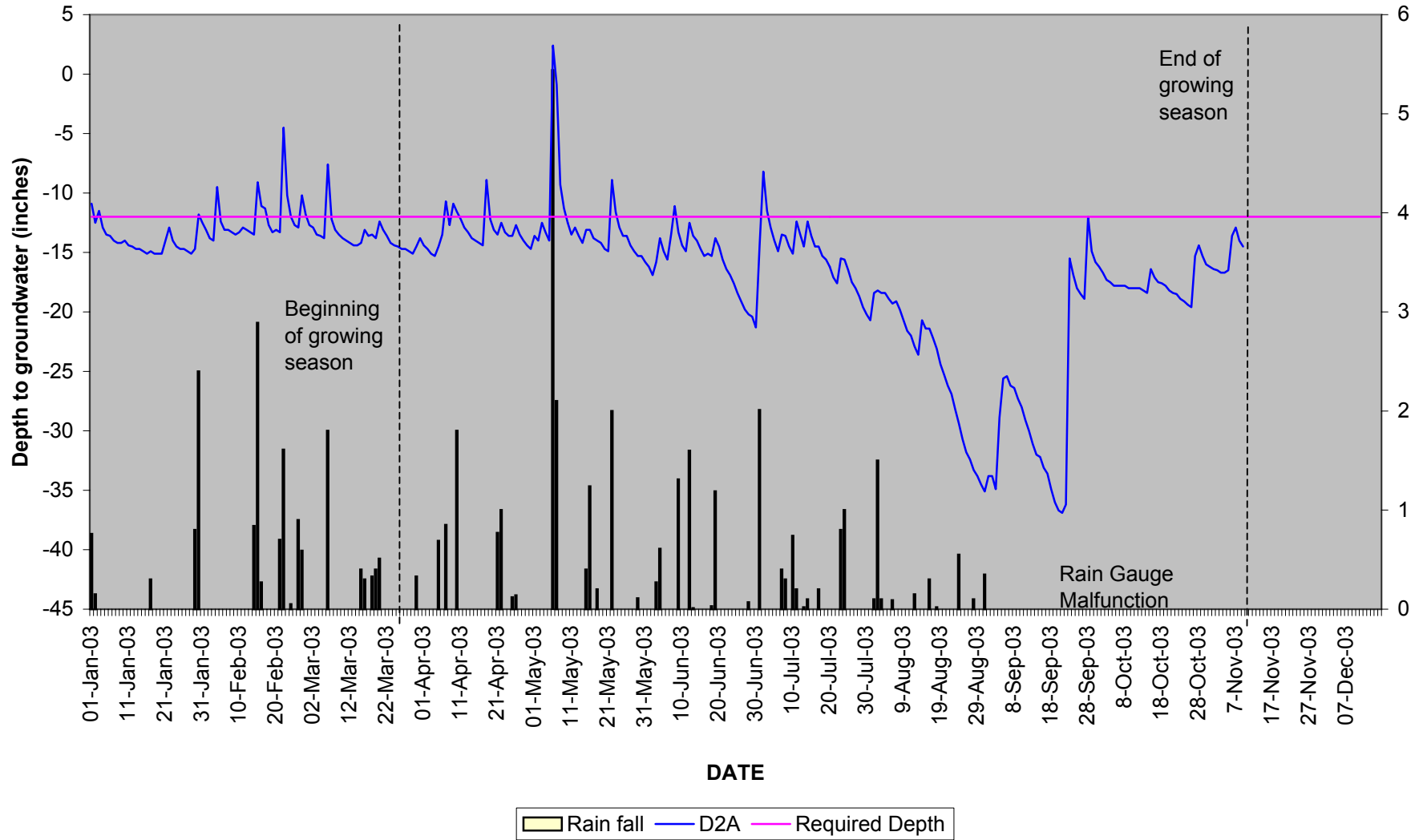
# C2A Tulula Bog



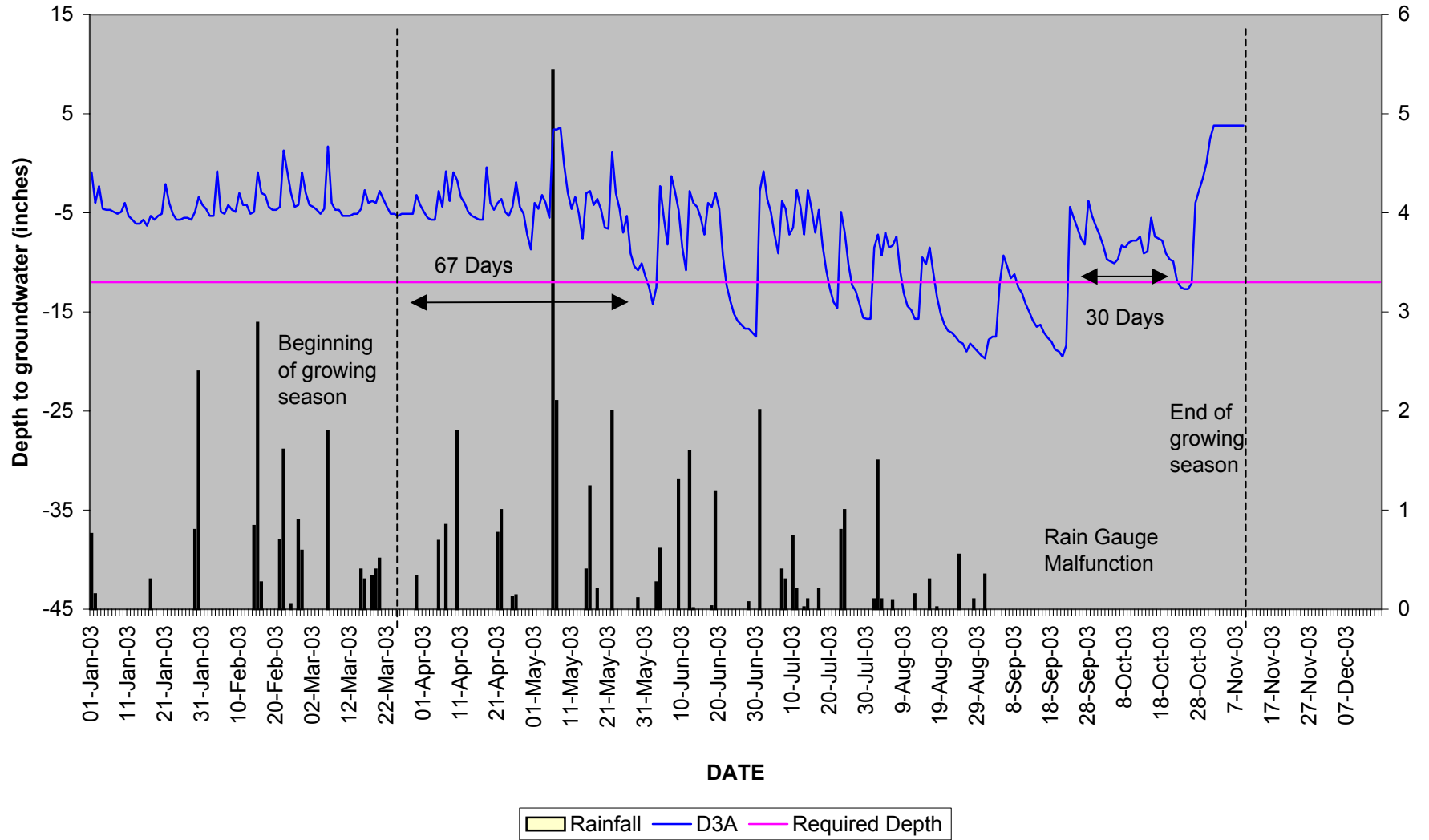
# D1A Tulula Bog



# D2A Tulula Bog

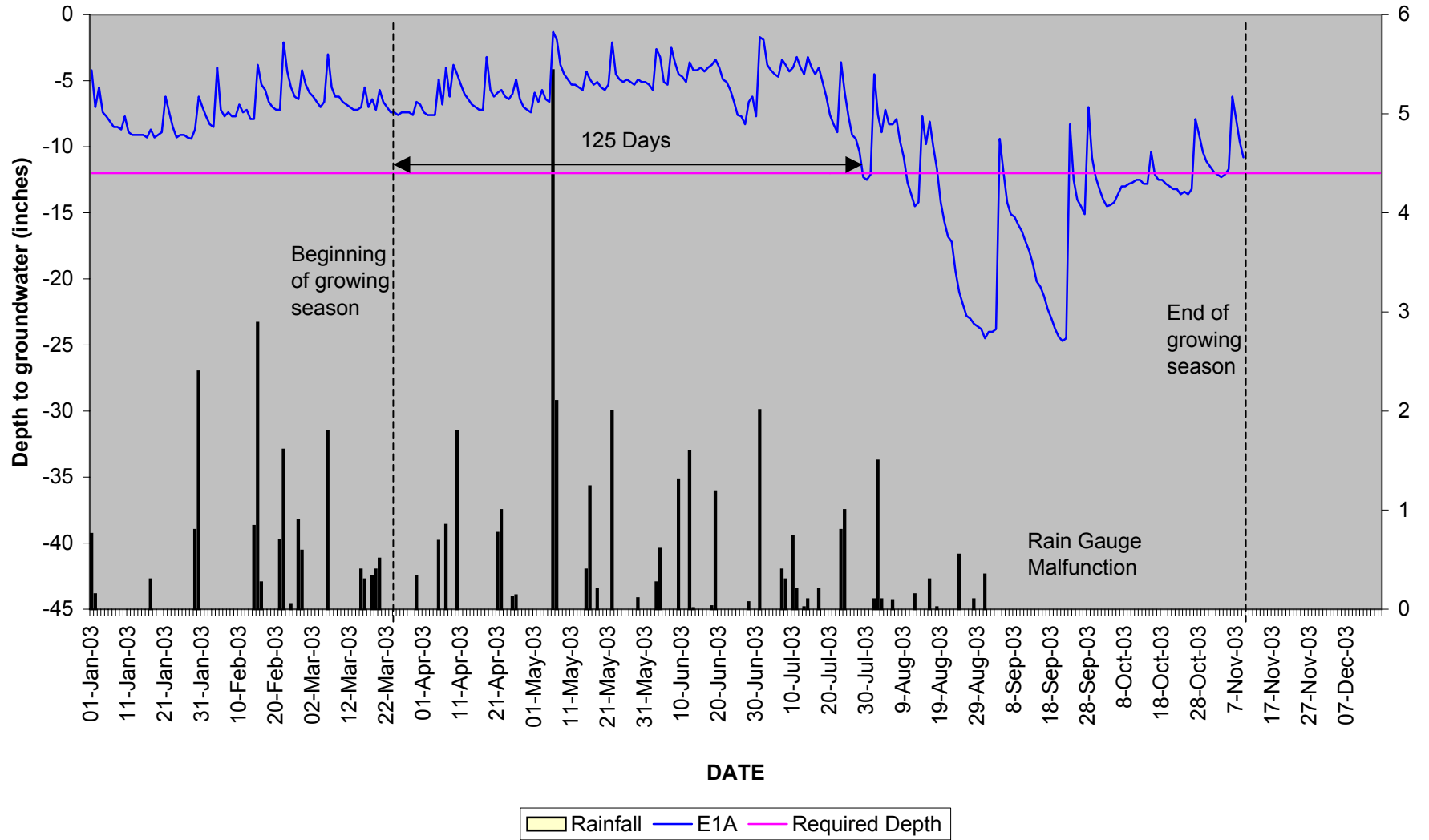


### D3A Tulula Bog

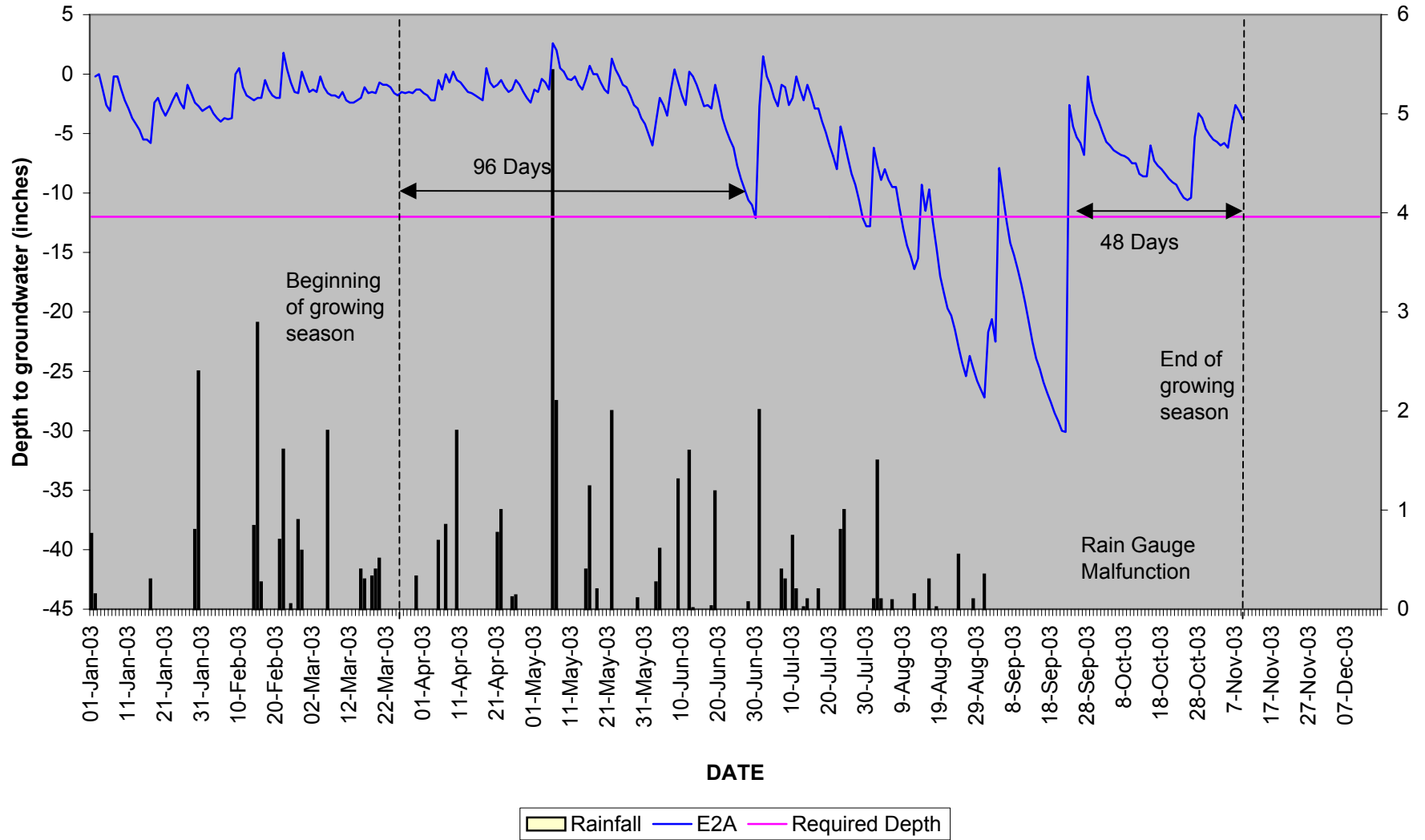




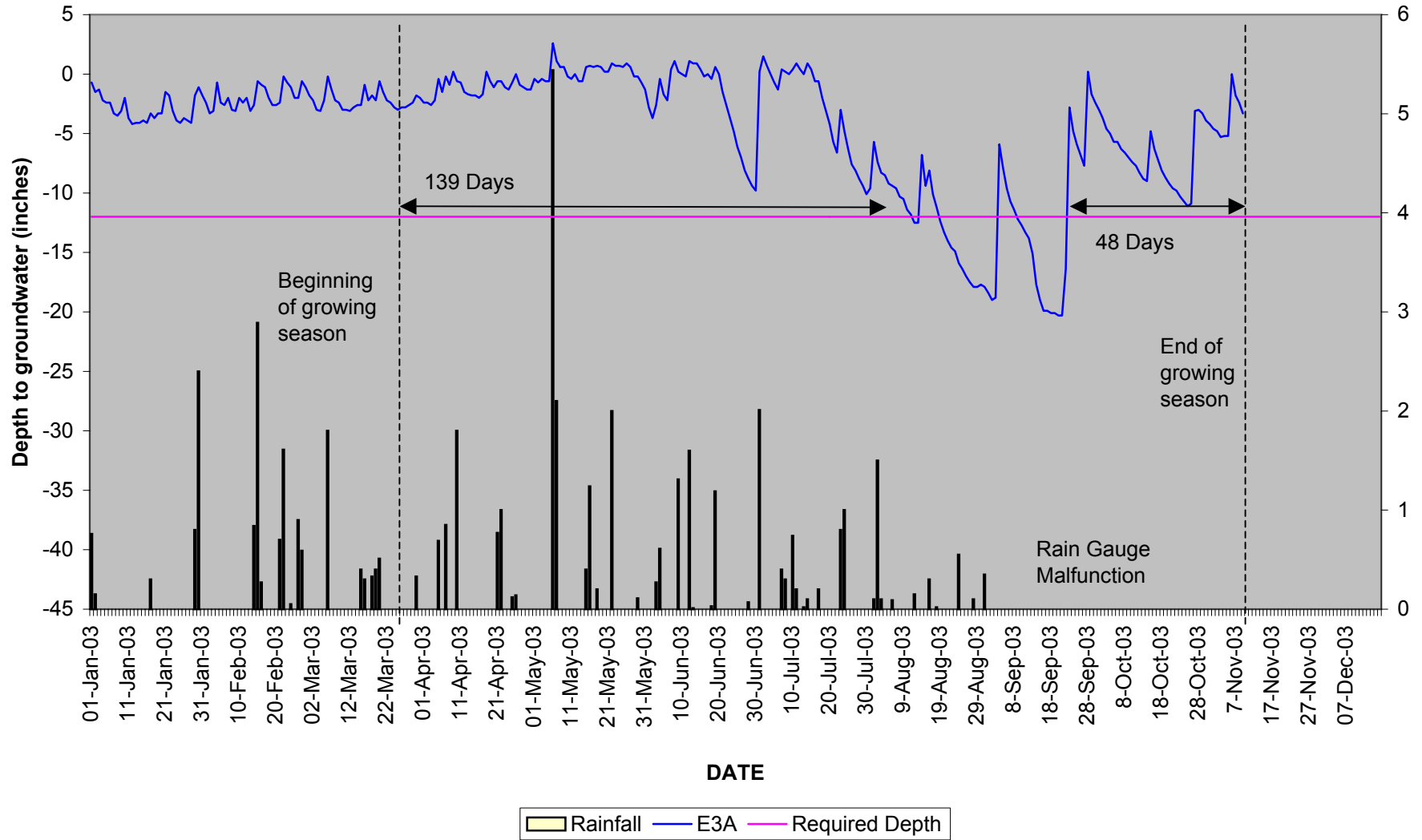
# E1A Tulula Bog



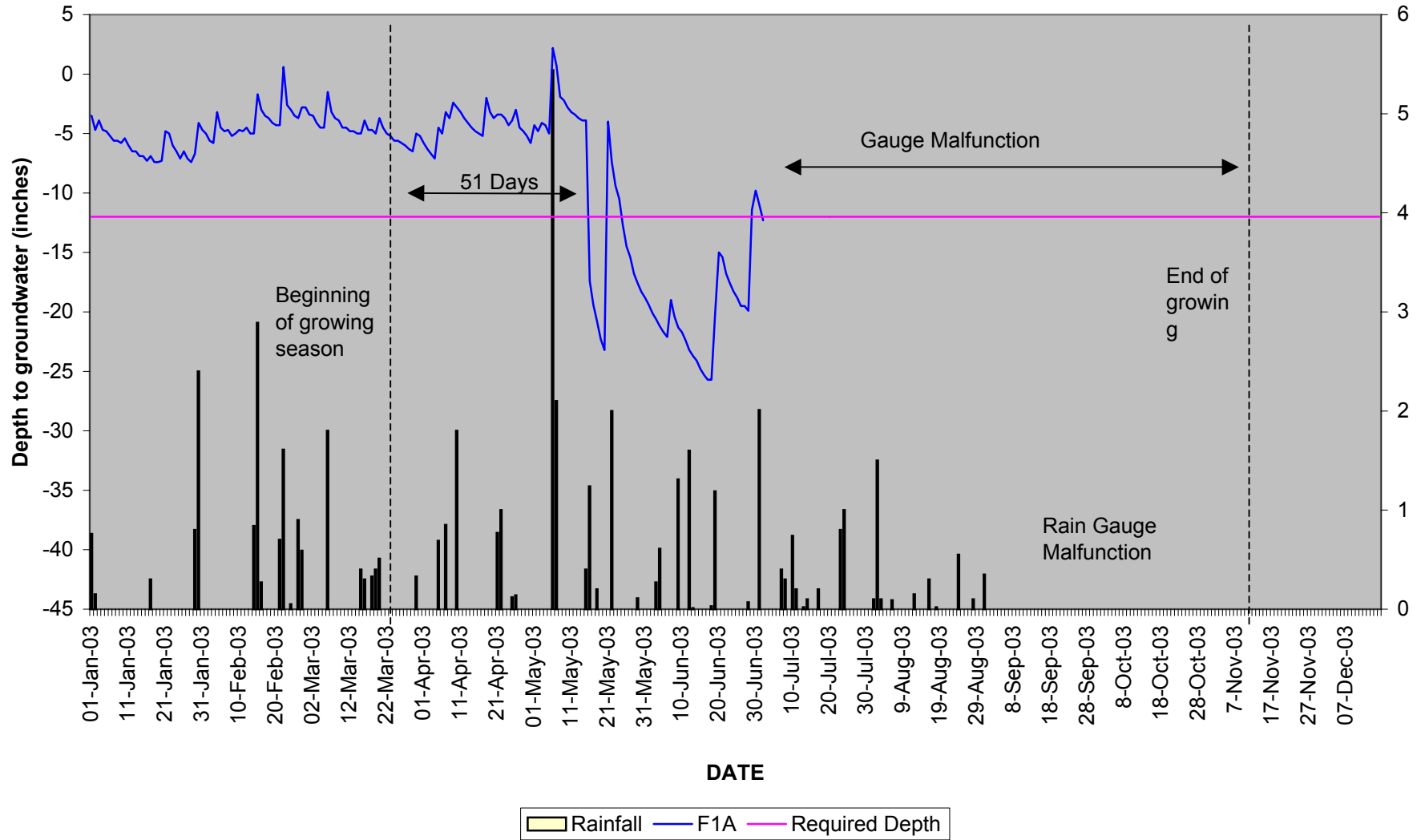
# E2A Tulula Bog



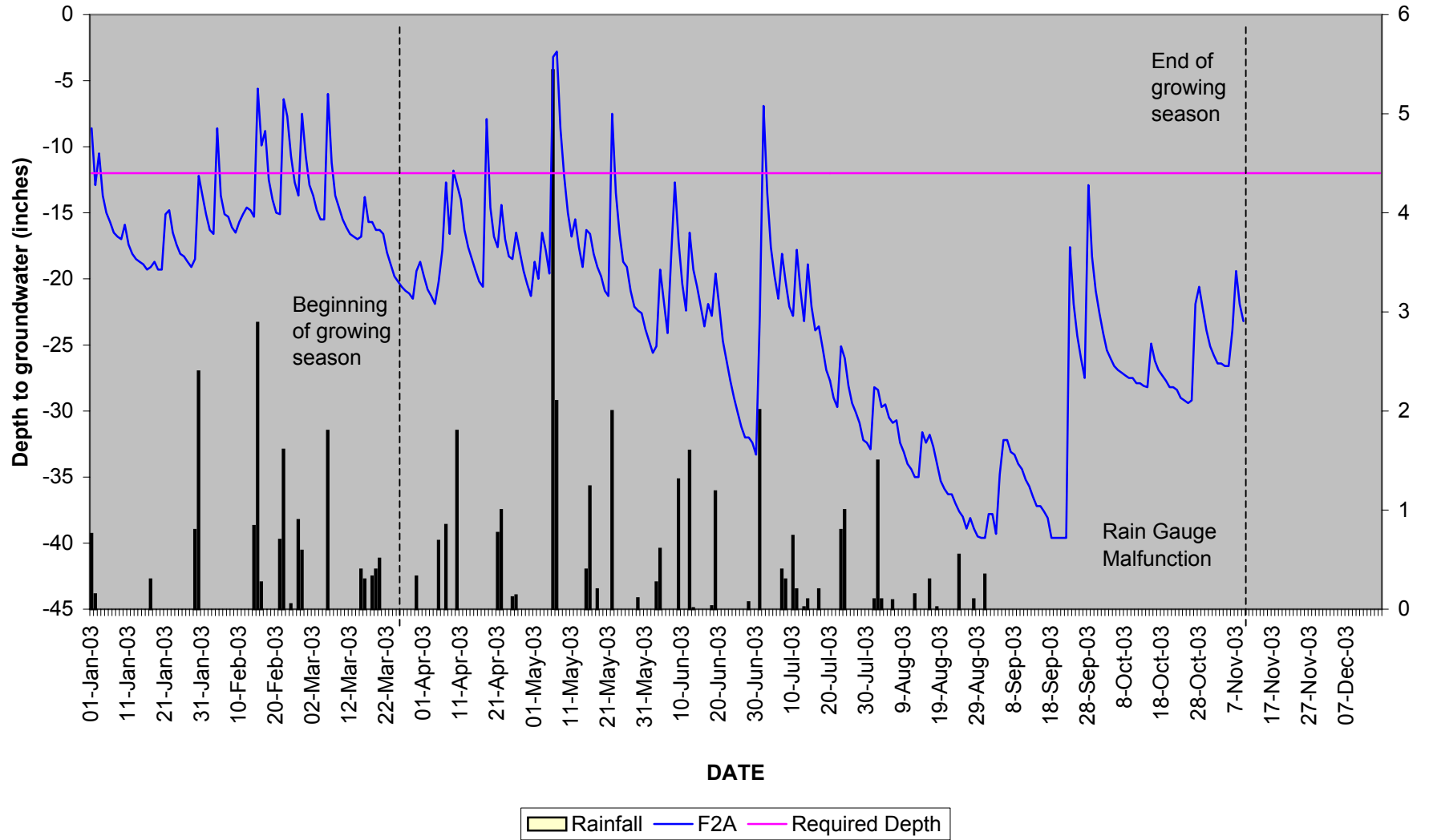
# E3A Tulula Bog



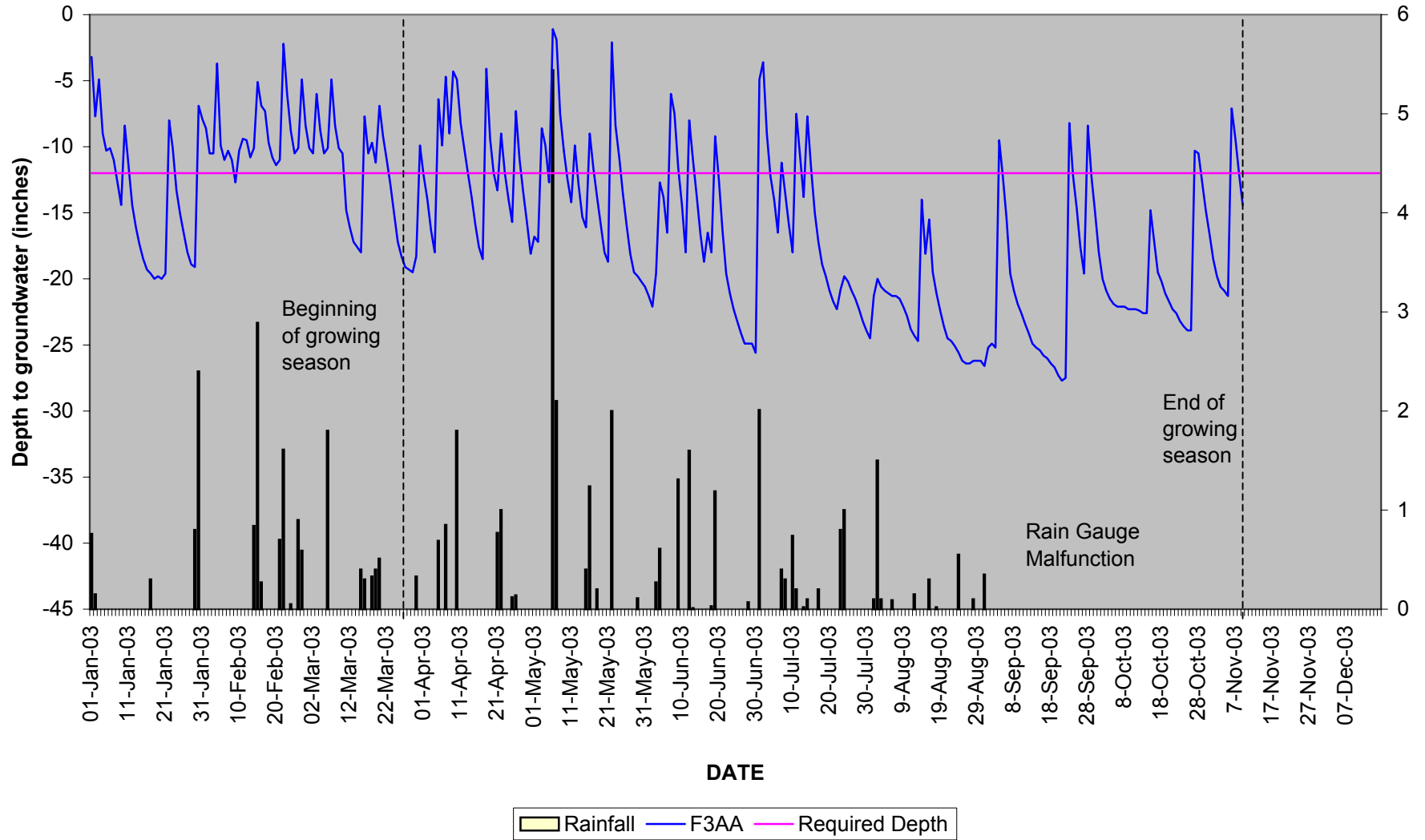
# F1A Tulula Bog



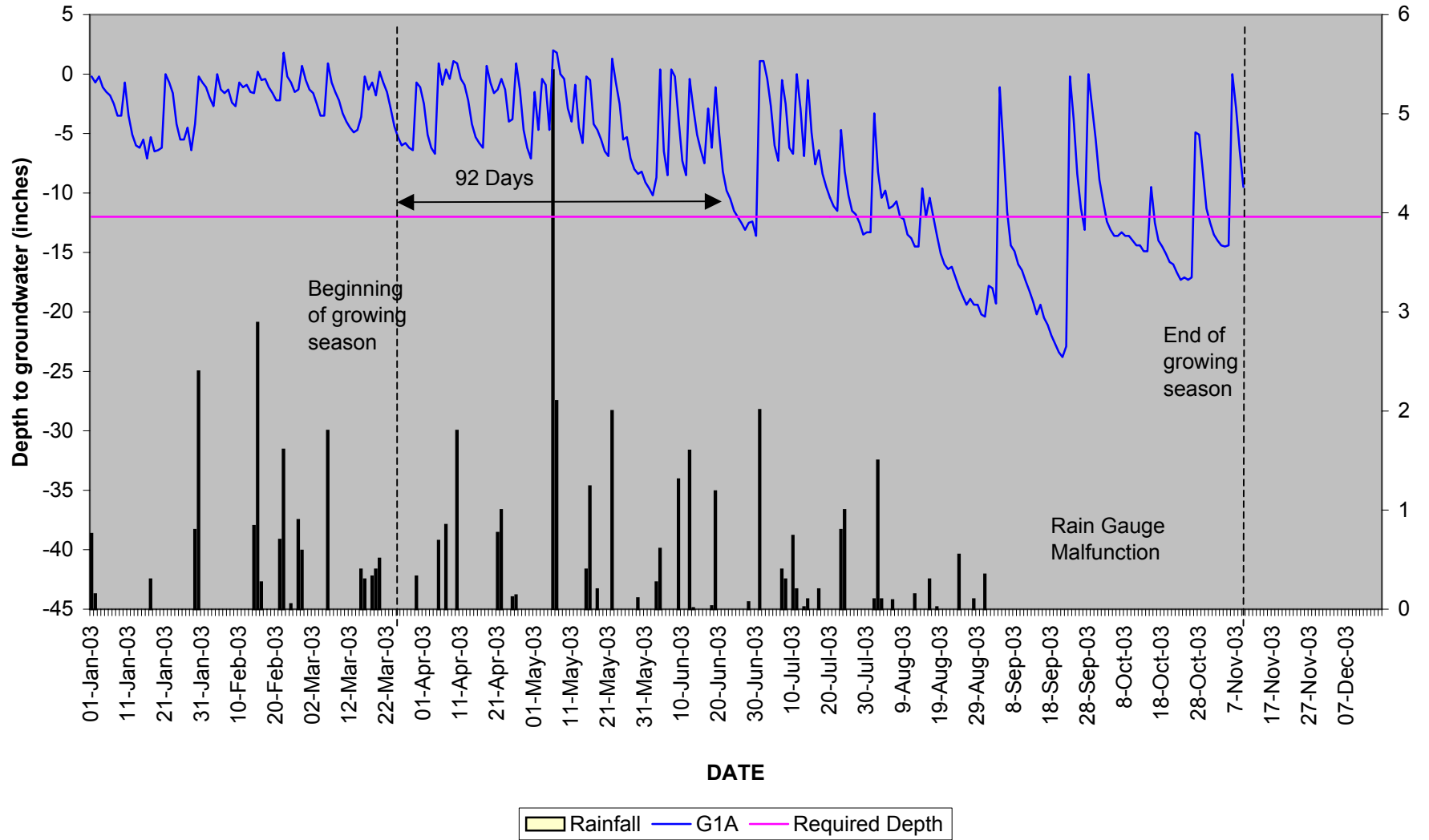
# F2A Tulula Bog



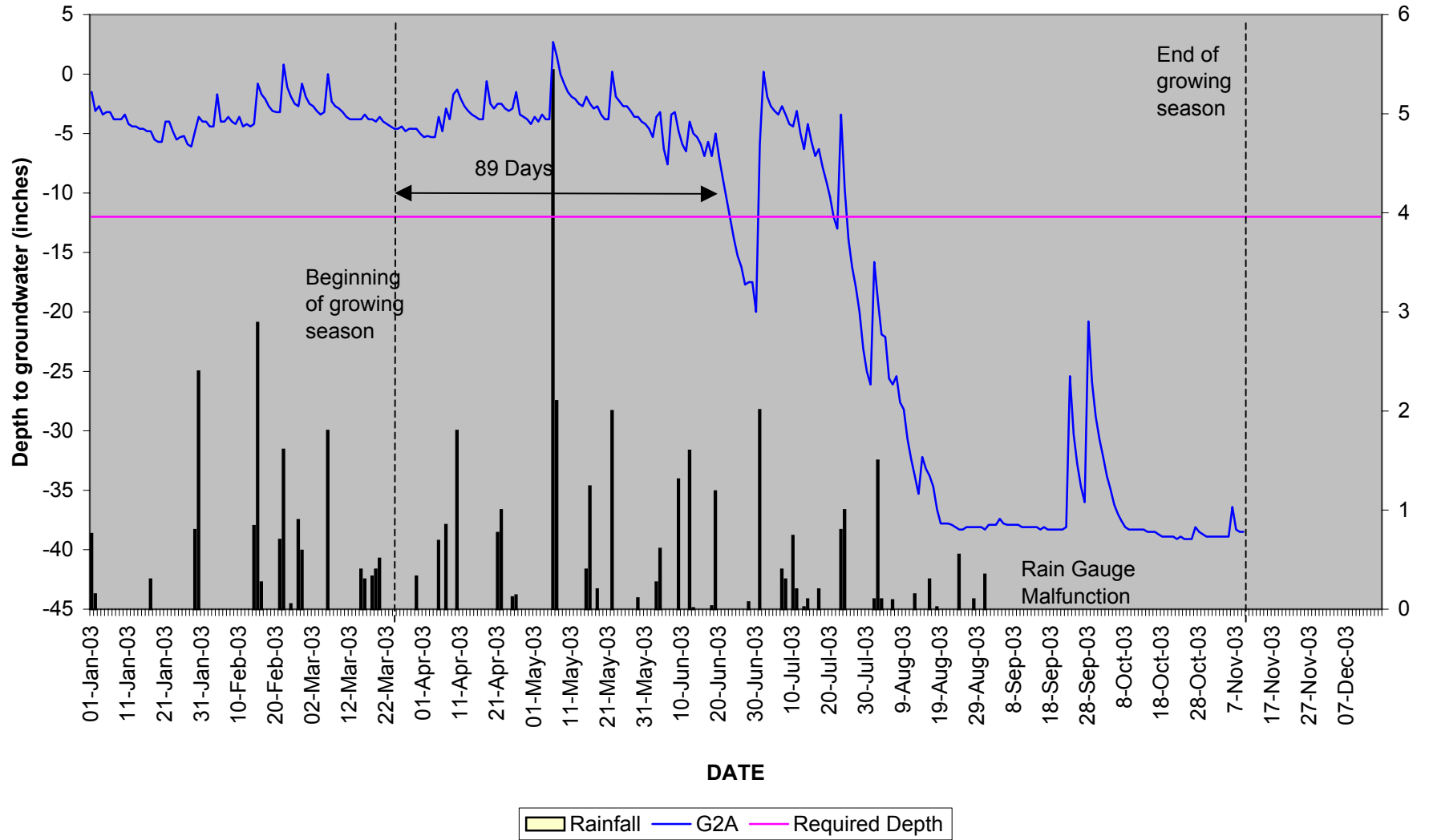
### F3AA Tulula Bog



# G1A Tulula Bog

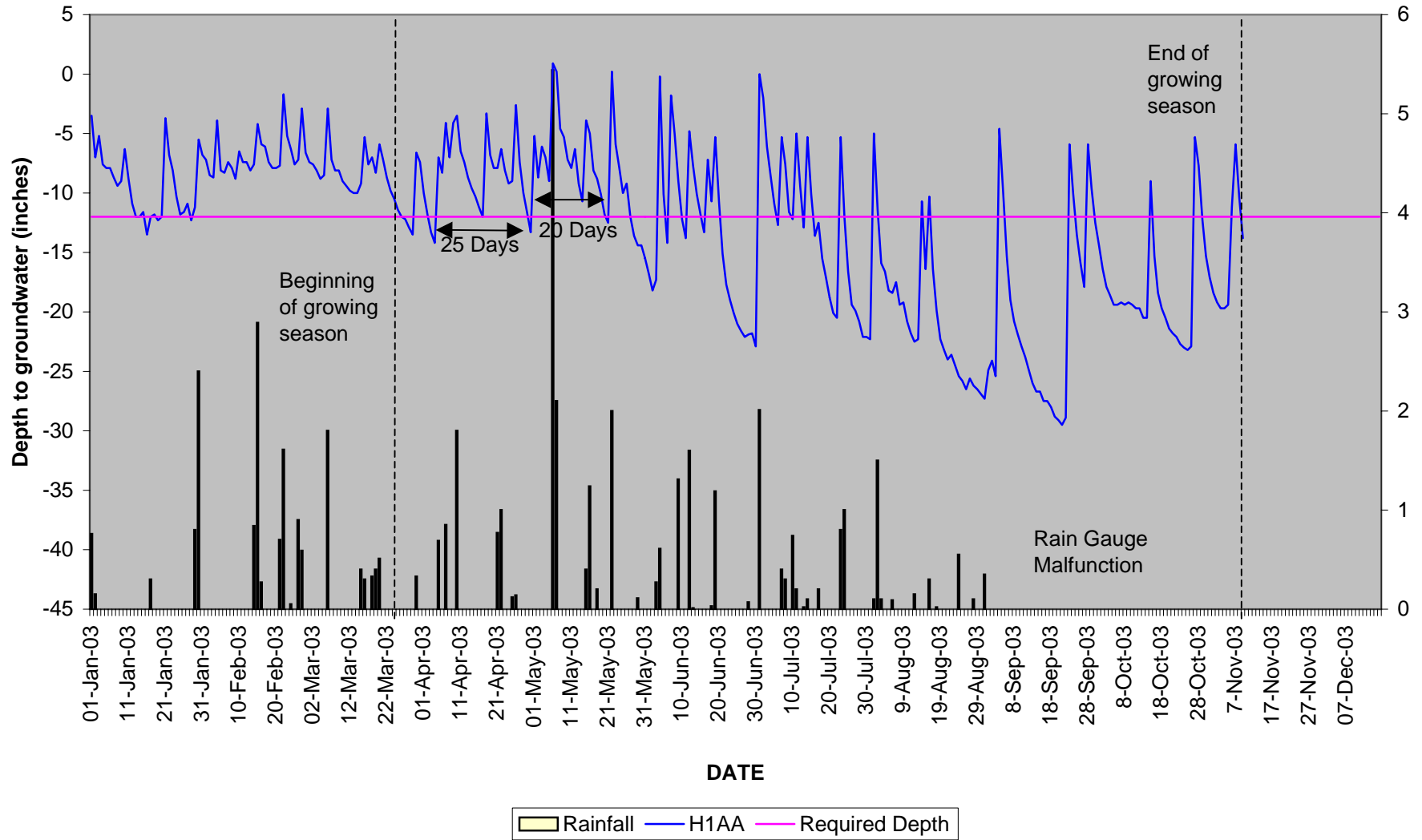


# G2A Tulula Bog

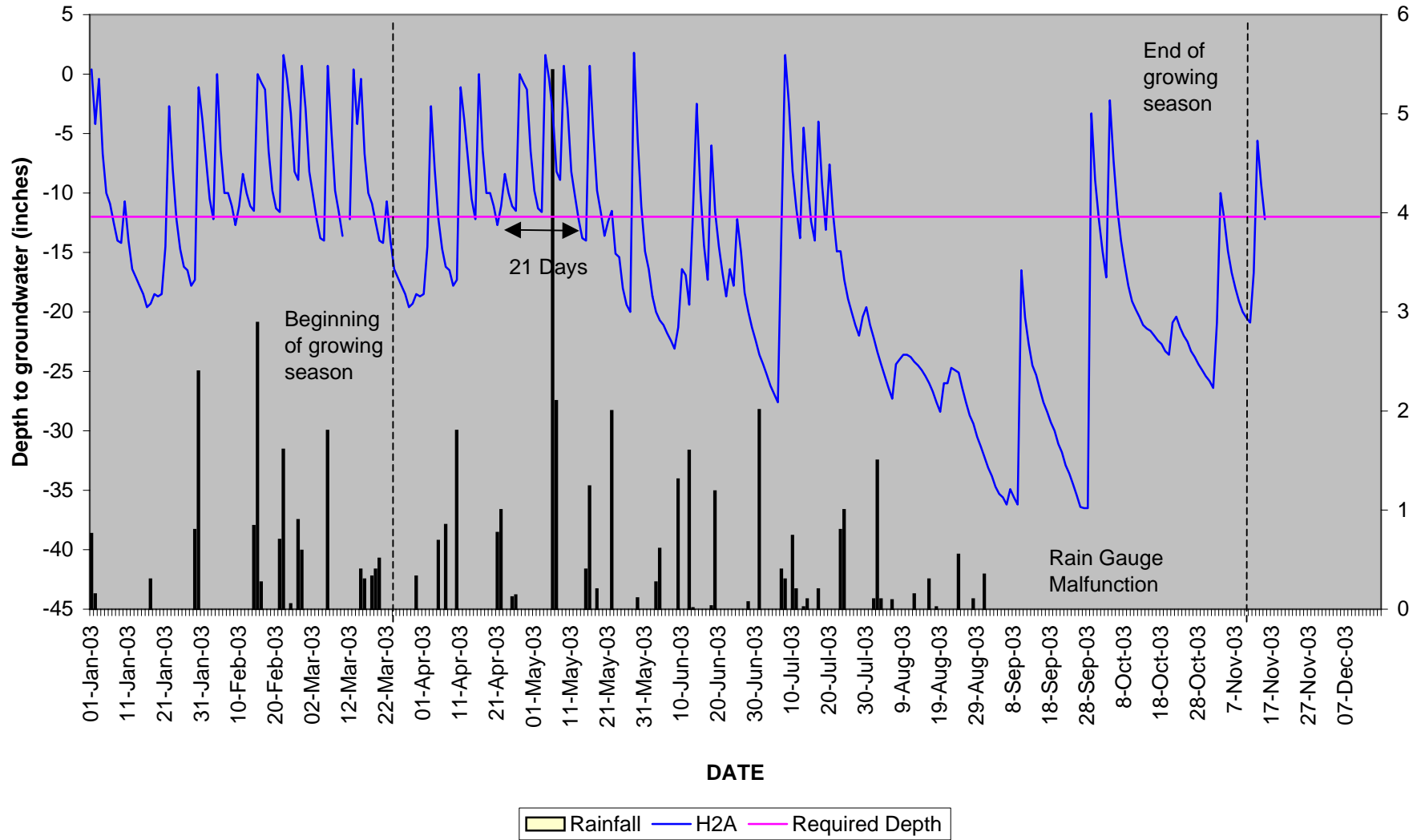




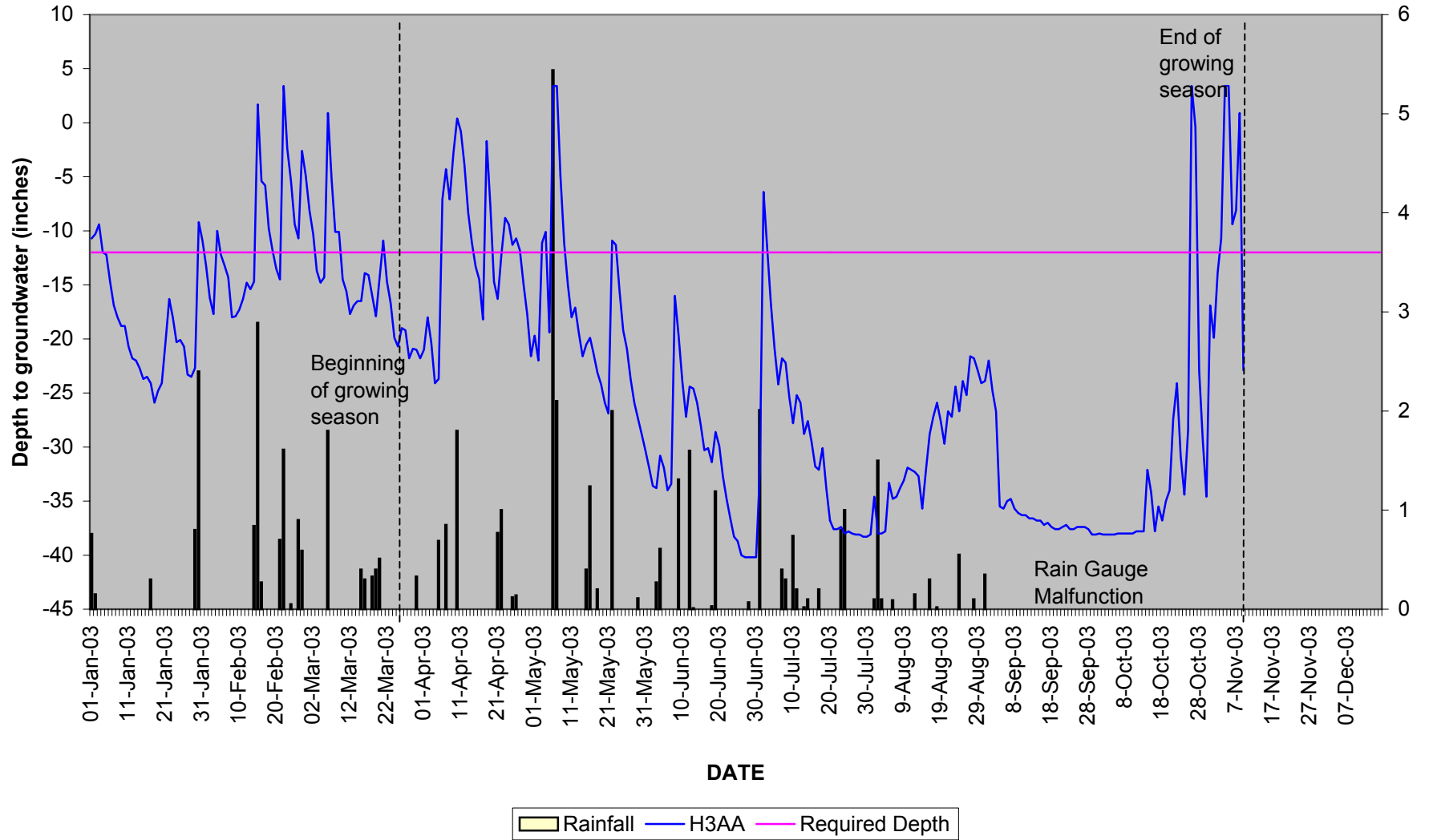
# H1AA Tulula Bog



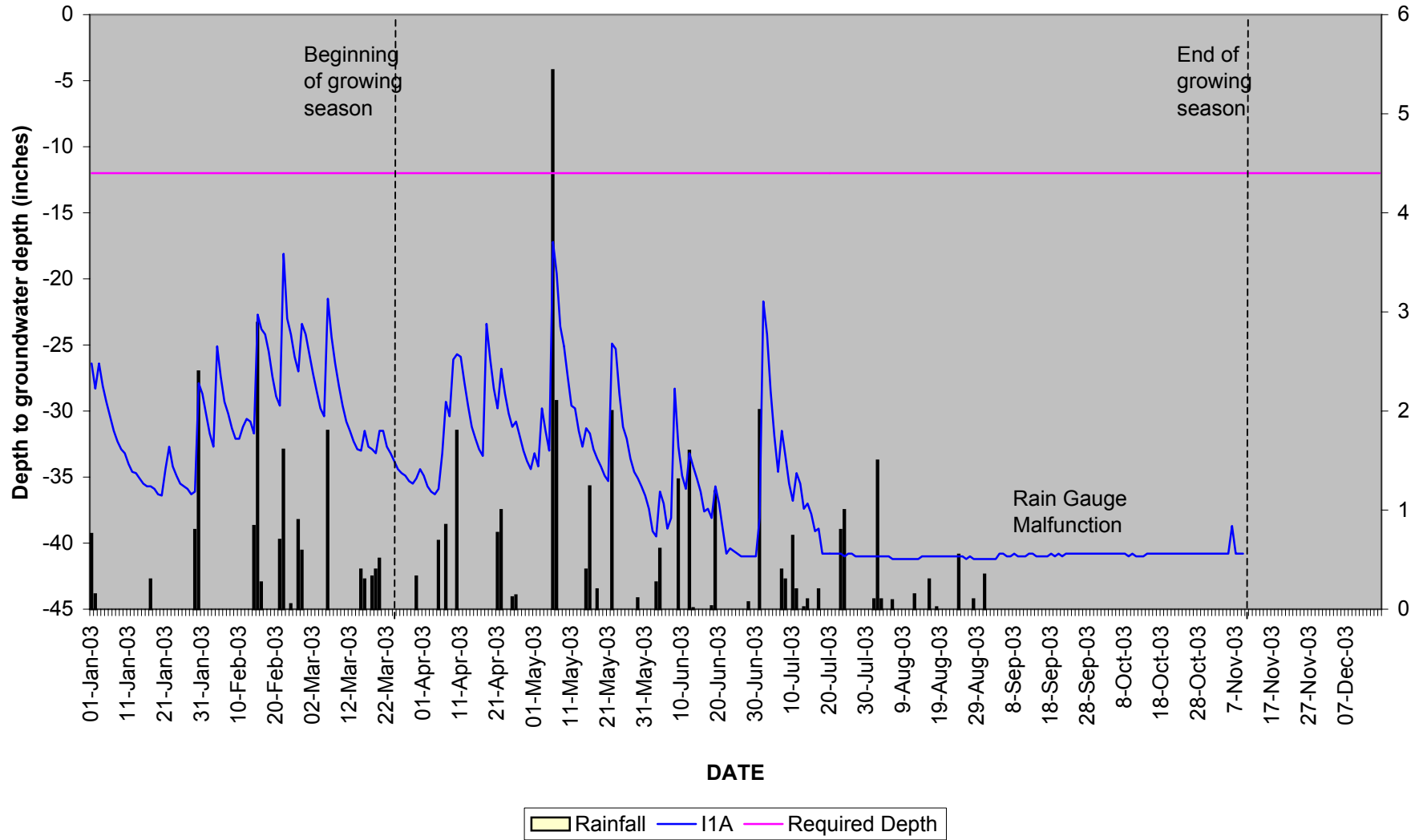
# H2A Tulula Bog



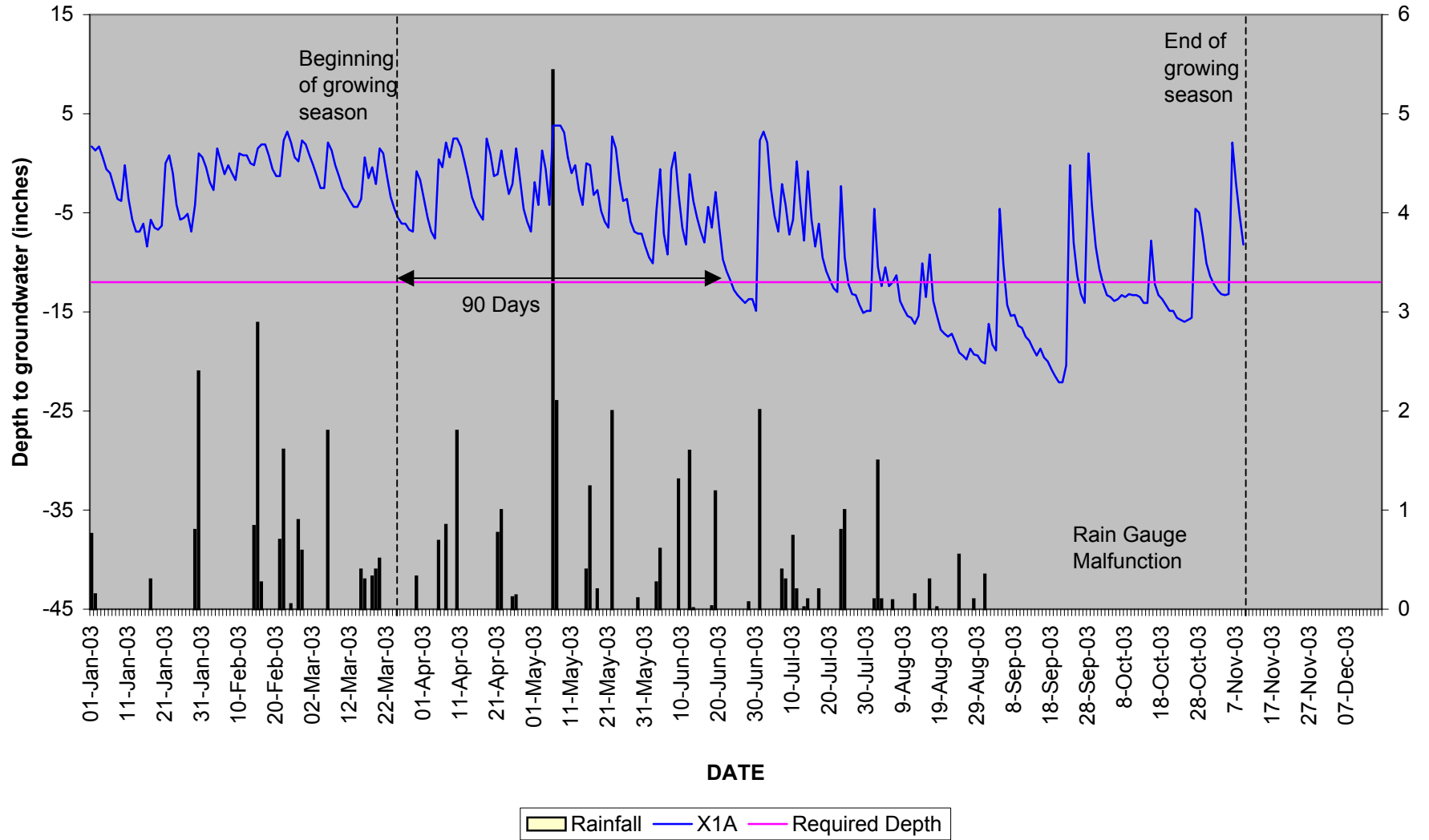
### H3AA Tulula Bog



# I1A Tulula Bog



# X1A Tulula Bog



## **APPENDIX B**

### **SITE PHOTOS & PLANTING PLAN**

# Tulula Bog



PHOTO 1



PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



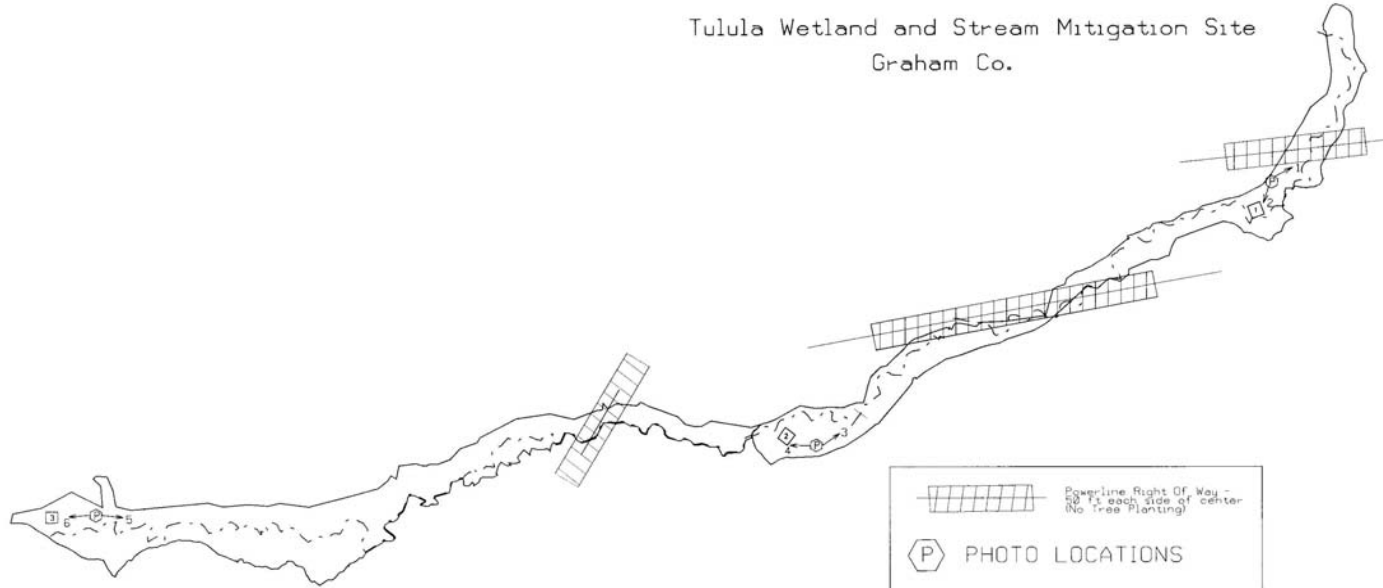
PHOTO 5

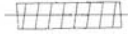



PHOTO 6




Tulula Wetland and Stream Mitigation Site  
Graham Co.



 Powerline Right Of Way -  
50 ft each side of center  
No Tree Planting

 PHOTO LOCATIONS

 PLOT LOCATIONS