

Prairielands eLine

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District
www.prairielandsgcd.org

Now Scheduling Water Education Trailer School Programs



Even the youngest visitors to the Prairielands Water Education Trailer, like these students from Glen Rose Elementary School Kindergarten, can learn about our watery environment.

Don't get left out!

Now is the time to schedule the Prairielands Water Education Trailer (the "WET") for a classroom visit in either the fall or spring semesters.

Presentations with exhibit demonstrations of our local aquifers,

groundwater, and water conservation topics are tailored to the needs of the teacher, class, age group, and are FREE.

Presentations support TEKS standards and provide lesson enrichment.

At this time, the WET

still has dates available for classroom or school-wide presentations and demonstrations.

To schedule the WET at your school, contact Prairielands GCD at (817) 556-2299 or email karensiddall@prairielandsgcd.org.

Fall 2018

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Inside this issue:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| New Rules and Impact on Home Wells | 2 |
| Family Farm Fun Day in Ellis County | 2 |
| Pioneer Day Event at Russell Farm | 2 |
| Prevent Monster Water Bills | 3 |
| New Well Spacing and Permitting Rules | 3 |
| Fall Tree and Shrub Planting | 4 |

Special points of interest:

- The Water Education Trailer is available for school and community presentations.
- New well spacing and permitting rules being finalized.
- Fall is the perfect time to introduce new native or adapted shrubs and trees into your home landscape.

Impact of New District Rules on Household Well Owners

The majority of wells within the District are small household wells. If that is your situation, you will not be subject to some of the rules of the District.

Household wells, regardless of size or capacity, are exempt from registration and permitting by the District if the well existed (or drilling was started on the well prior to April 1, 2011); and the well is used solely for domestic use, livestock use, poultry use, or agricultural use.

You may voluntarily register your well with the District to assist in protecting it from encroachment from new wells.

Household wells drilled on or after April 1, 2011, are considered new wells and must be registered with the District. Remember, effective May 15, 2017, new household wells must comply with the District's 2-acre minimum tract size. With the approval of the District's new rules, new wells must comply with well spacing requirements, too.

No household well, whether new or existing, is required to pay water fees, meter the well, submit water production reports, or obtain a permit from the District to operate the well.

However, those planning to install a new well must obtain registration approval before drilling commences.



Prairilands at the Fall Farm Fun Day in Ellis County

Families were both entertained and informed at the Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm Fall Farm Fun Day held on Sunday, September 30, 2018, near Waxahachie.

Prairilands GCD staff had the "WET" (water education trailer) on site and conducted tours throughout the afternoon for families visiting the farm.

The day's presentations focused on local aquifers, groundwater, water wells, the importance of water conservation,



Families visiting the WET learned simple ways to save water in and around their own "farmstead."

and addressed questions regarding the district.

Volunteers from the Indian Trails Master Naturalists, Ellis County Museum, and Waxahachie Chautauqua were stationed throughout the grounds surrounding the 1913 farmhouse and demonstrated various crafts from the past. Visitors were also encouraged to try their hand.

For more information about the farm, see <https://ruralheritagefarm.org/>.

Prairilands at Russell Farm for Pioneer Day



The Prairilands staff and the District's Water Education Trailer will be featured at the upcoming Pioneer Day at Russell Farm in Burleson.

The school-day-long event for teachers and students is scheduled for Friday, November 2, 2018, and in addition to the "WET," will have demonstrations of early pioneer crafts, chuckwagon cooking, and antique tractors.

Staff will be present to talk to teachers and students about aquifers, groundwater, water wells, water conservation, and rainwater harvesting, and to schedule classroom visits for the Water Education Trailer.

Russell Farm is a unique and historic facility that features several buildings dating back to the earliest days of what would become the Burleson community.



Don't Let Your Water Bill Become a Monster!

Although the recent rains have taken the outdoor watering burden off your back, there could be a monster lurking right around the corner. The holidays are fast approaching, and with them comes more family, more friends, more cooking, more cleaning, more indoor water use. To keep from creating a monster of a water bill, put a few simple water conservation practices in place now and tame that beast before it can say "BOO!"

More family, more friends at home

Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save around two gallons per minute. If you brush for a full two minutes as dentists recommend, that's a water savings of almost four gallons every time you brush.

Adhere to using one glass for water per person per day. Each person reusing their glass cuts down on the number to wash.

For cold drinks, keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap.

When running a bath, plug the tub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up. However, a

short shower uses less water than a full bath.

More cooking, more cleaning

Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.

Wash fruit and vegetables in a pan of water rather than running water from the tap.

Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons of water every time you would have used it.

Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.

Keep in mind that a dishwasher uses less water to clean a full load of dishes than doing them by hand. Energy Star™ dishwashers use between 4 and 6 gallons of water per load depending on the cycle selected. If washing dishes by hand is necessary, fill the sink and rinse the dishes when they have all been scraped and scrubbed.



When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.

Small adjustments such as these will reduce your daily water consumption, but more importantly, their daily practice can lead to them becoming long-term habits. Over time, these habits can add up to some significant savings of water and money, and instead of creating a monster your water bill will only be a ghost of its former self.

For more information about water conservation, visit the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District website at www.prairielandsgcd.org.



New Well Spacing and Permitting Rules to be Adopted

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District is finalizing permanent rules for water wells that will determine future district decisions and operations. Among the new rules are regulations setting spacing requirements for new water well installations. Existing wells are grandfathered from these rules.

Well spacing rules attempt to limit a pumping well's impact on other wells but are generally not intended to regulate the total amount of pumping from a well or manage the entire aquifer.

New wells that produce less than 17.36 gallons per minute, must be located at least 50 feet from any property line. Spacing for new wells that produce

more than that amount will be individually determined by the district using existent groundwater data previously collected from the location of the proposed well and the aquifer in which it will be drilled.

Most larger wells will also be required to obtain a permit, as required under state law.

The proposal in the rules is to grandfather the current pumping amounts for all large wells by issuing permits based upon the maximum historic pumping amount in any one year during the last 15 years.

Pumping authorizations for new large wells will be permitted based upon the number of acres of land around the well site.

A formal public hearing on the permanent rules is slated for 9 a.m., on Monday, November 26, 2018, in the Cross Timbers Room of the Cleburne Conference Center, 1501 W. Henderson, Cleburne, TX, 76033.

Once adopted, the new rules will become effective immediately.

For more information regarding these and other proposed permanent rules, please contact the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District at (817) 556-2299 or at the district offices located on the first floor of the Liberty Hotel, 205 S. Caddo St., Cleburne, TX, 76031.





Conserving, protecting, and enhancing groundwater resources in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell counties

Mailing Address:
PO Box 3128
Cleburne, TX 76033

Office Location:
205 S. Caddo Street
Cleburne, TX 76031



In 2008 & 2009, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality designated large areas over the Trinity Aquifer from the Red River to Central Texas as Priority Groundwater Management Areas (PGMA) due to critical groundwater declines facing the area.

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District was created in 2009 by the 81st Texas Legislature with a directive to conserve, protect and enhance the groundwater resources of Ellis, Johnson, Hill and Somervell Counties in Texas.

We're on the web at
prairielandsgcd.org.

Fall is Ideal for Planting Trees and Shrubs

Planting trees and shrubs that are native (or well adapted) to our area can benefit homeowners in a couple of ways. Natives have a better chance of thriving in our heat and under our on-again, off-again watering restrictions so they won't need replacing after a bout of extreme weather. Also, not having to provide supplemental watering for these natural beauties saves you time, water, and money.

According to Texas AgriLife Extension, fall is the perfect time to add a new tree or grouping of shrubs to your landscape. Planting during the fall months of September through December has distinct advantages.

Plant roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees or higher, which may occur all winter in Texas.

During the winter months, the root systems of the fall-planted specimens develop and become established. When spring arrives, this expanded root system can support

and take advantage of the full surge of spring growth.

According to Bonnie Reese, owner of Beautiful Landscapes, a landscape designer and consultant, some of the best trees for our area include Chinquapin Oak, Texas or Shumard Red Oak, Cedar Elm (but only if mistletoe is not a neighborhood problem), Burr Oak, and Live Oak. These are great large native shade trees. Lacey Oak is a small native evergreen oak and Caddo or Shantung Maples are smaller shade trees but are not native to our area. For smaller ornamental native trees, consider Vitex, Possumhaw Holly, Yaupon Holly and Carolina Buckthorn. A couple of noteworthy non-native ornamental trees are Desert Willow, Chitalpa, and Crape Myrtle.

When considering shrubs, there are just not many native shrubs that are suitable for landscapes except for Texas Sage, various yucca and agave. Non-native considerations could include many varieties of nandina,

yew, holly and abelia.

When making selections, homeowners should keep in mind the ultimate size that the tree or shrub will attain and whether that will work for the location they are being planted, water needs, and the amount of sun the location receives on a daily basis. Remember new plants should be monitored and watered deeply as needed and allowed to dry between irrigations. Always water plants before a hard freeze if we have been in drought leading up to the freeze.

The Texas SmartScape website (www.txsmartscape.com) hosted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments was designed to help local residents determine some of these factors. The site features do-it-yourself design assistance as well as a simple-to-use Search function that suggests native or adapted plants that perform well in our area under a wide variety of circumstances. You can learn more about Bonnie Reese at beautifullandscapes.net.

