

# Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

Spring 2019 | Vol 5, Issue II

## Important Updates About Adopted Rules

The mission of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District is to develop rules to provide protection to existing wells, prevent waste, promote conservation, provide a framework that will allow availability and accessibility of groundwater for future generations, protect the quality of the groundwater in the recharge zone of the aquifer, ensure that the residents of Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties maintain local management over their groundwater, and operate the District in a fair and equitable manner for all residents of the District.

Over the past several years, Prairielands Board of Directors, staff, and consultants have researched every option, outcome, and effect that a new set of rules will encounter. In 2018 the District held a course of several stakeholders' meetings to get outside input, sent letters to non-exempt well owners to ensure the upcoming rule change, and held a Public Hearing on the proposed Permanent Rules. On December 17, 2018 the Board of Directors approved the Permanent Rules. These rules have an effective date of January 1, 2019.

If you're in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, or Somervell counties and plan to drill a well for the purpose of pumping groundwater, or if you have a well drilled prior to 2019 that is capable of pumping more than 25 gallons per minute or any well supplying public water, the District has rules that you need to comply with. Because the rules are quite lengthy, a summary was developed to give you an overview of the process and guide you through the basic steps that apply to your particular situation. This summary is not intended as an actual rule of the District or as a substitute for careful review of the rules, but rather only as a tool to help you get started and understand the basics of the District Rules. You can read this summary of the rules on the PGCD website.

For additional information regarding rule compliance, please contact Kathy Turner Jones by email at [kjones@prairielands.org](mailto:kjones@prairielands.org) or Stephanie Rexrode at [stephanie@prairielandsgcd.org](mailto:stephanie@prairielandsgcd.org). They may also be reached by calling the office at 817-556-2299.

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## Meet the New Staff Members at PGCD

You might be seeing some new faces around our office.  
Here's a chance to get to know more about them!



***Kathy Turner Jones***  
**General Manager**

Kathy joined the District on March 18 as the new General Manager. Jones comes to Prairielands GCD from a successful tenure with the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District in Conroe, TX, where she served as General Manager for 16 years. She has a bachelor's degree in business and finance from University of the Southwest and earned her Master of Science in Water Management and Hydrological Science from Texas A&M University. Kathy brings years of experience in groundwater management, regional water planning, personnel management, and organizational planning and development to the District.



***Annette Kinney***  
**Office Assistant**

Annette started at Prairielands in February. She is from Cleburne, and now she and her husband, Daniel, and daughter, Zoe, live just outside of Keene, on the Cleburne side. Her goal for her position this year is to learn the system, and be of more assistance with phone calls and answering questions. She enjoys spending time with her family, (which she is glad this job allows), as well as raising chickens, rabbits, gardening and canning.



***Sinclair Newby***  
**Public Relations and Education Administrator**

Sinclair joined the Prairielands GCD staff in February. She is from Midlothian, TX and earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural communications from Texas Tech University. She previously worked for the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation in Lubbock, TX as a communications assistant. One goal Sinclair has in her new position is to increase the online presence of the district through social and digital media to improve awareness, education, and community involvement.

# Groundwater Monitoring Program Provides Valuable Insight into Water Levels

One of the Management Objectives for Prairielands GCD is to develop a Groundwater Monitoring Program to monitor water well levels (and baseline water quality) in wells in each aquifer and subdivision thereof in the District. The District reviews the geographic and vertical distribution of existing monitoring wells in the District with historical data from the TWDB, USGS, TCEQ, and other agencies and develops a plan to partner with those agencies as appropriate to ensure continued availability of the monitoring wells and data from them to the District.

The District also plans to acquire or install new monitoring wells to fill in gaps in geographic or vertical distribution. The District then develops an annual goal of how many monitoring wells it will add each year and a priority system for their installation based upon data deficiencies and needs for the geo-database. The District takes periodic readings from the monitoring wells and inputs the data into the District's geo-database. The District utilizes the information to help implement its regulatory and permitting program and monitor water level trends and actual achievements of Desired Future Conditions (DFCs).

The primary goal of the monitor program in 2018 was to continue increasing the number of aquifers, or layers of an aquifer, represented in each county. The Field Technician accomplished this through:

- Talking with well owners in all counties regarding the monitor program and underlying geological layers of their area, seeking well data on prospective new sites.
- Added WellIntel to 5 wells into the monitor program. One in Hill County, 3 in Johnson County, and 1 in Somervell County.
- Acquired 4 wells to install monitor equipment when the pumps are removed.
- Completed the annual measurement of all 165 wells in the four-county area.
- Enhanced the ArcGIS collector app with the shape files of each county.
- Continued to work with the district's consulting hydrologist, WSP, to identify the most needed areas in the district for monitoring.

Annual evaluation of the water-level trends and the adequacy of the monitoring network to monitor aquifer conditions within the district and to monitor achievement of applicable desired future conditions. As previously discussed, the District continues to develop its monitoring program. On full implementation, District staff will take water level measurements to determine water level movements and will evaluate the trends in relation to the achievement of desired future conditions.

## Upcoming Events and Meetings

<b>APRIL 13</b>	<b>Johnson County Master Gardeners Plant Sale</b> Johnson County Sheriff's Posse Arena Cleburne, TX	<b>MAY 10-11</b>	<b>Texas Heritage Festival</b> Russell Farm Art Center Burleson, TX
<b>APRIL 16</b>	<b>PGCD Board Meeting</b> 9:00 a.m. Liberty Hotel Board Room Cleburne, TX	<b>MAY 20</b>	<b>PGCD Board Meeting</b> 9:00 a.m. Liberty Hotel Board Room Cleburne, TX
<b>APRIL 28</b>	<b>Prairie Wildlife &amp; Wildflower Adventure</b> Ellis Coounty Rural Heritage Farm Waxahachie, TX	<b>JUNE 17</b>	<b>PGCD Board Meeting</b> 9:00 a.m. Liberty Hotel Board Room Cleburne, TX

With warmer weather and longer days comes the joys of working in your yard and garden to make it beautiful for spring and early summer. Follow the helpful tips below to make sure you have that picture perfect outdoor area, all while conserving water. Your yard, water bill, and local water source will thank you!

### Four Ways to Save More Water This Spring



1. Keep grass mowed a little higher than usual to promote root growth and shade the ground to decrease evaporation.



3. Try to plant types of flowers, shrubs, groundcover, and bushes that require less water.



2. Prevent leaks by checking all faucets and pipes for any damage from the winter before you start watering.



4. Water your yard or plants the morning or evening rather than during the warmest part of the day.



# PGCD Retiring General Manager Recognized at TWCA Annual Convention



*Jim Conkwright (left) and Con Mims (right) receiving their honorary plaques from Dean Robbins (center), TWCA General Manager.*

It is often said that someone should strive for success in life instead of fame, and if you work hard, dedicate yourself to what you are passionate about, and genuinely work to leave the world a better place then the recognition will follow. This can certainly be said for Prairielands GCD's retiring General Manager, Jim Conkwright.

During the Texas Water Conservation Association's 75th Annual Convention in Bastrop, he was surprised with the distinguished honor of having the convention dedicated in his name. After 31 years in groundwater management, there is no doubt that Jim has left a legacy worthy of this level of recognition.

He was elected to the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 board of directors in January 1979, and served 14 years representing portions of Armstrong, Deaf Smith, Potter, and Randall Counties. In June of 2001 High Plains Underground Water Conservation District sought and hired Conkwright as their General Manager, and he served in that capacity until June of 2013. While at High Plains UWCD, he directed all aspects of the District spanning 16 counties and 7 million acres, and implemented the District's first management plan.

In May of 2014, Conkwright was hired as interim General Manager of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District, and on August 1st of the same year became the District's General Manager, serving in that role until his retirement in April 2019. While at Prairielands GCD, he worked with legal counsel, hydrologists, and the District's Rules and Bylaws Committee to develop permanent rules for the District. In addition, he served as alternate voting delegate for GMA-8 Joint Planning Group.

As an active participant in groundwater affairs, Conkwright has served as past president of Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts and Vice-President of the Texas Water Conservation Association. He has been distinguished as a major contributor to Texas groundwater policy for many years, providing testimony before legislative committees on proposed bills affecting groundwater, and earning recognition from the Texas Senate and Texas House of Representatives "for remarkable leadership abilities and superior knowledge of groundwater issues and policy".

We want to congratulate Jim on this well-deserved recognition and wish him well in his upcoming retirement. Even though he will be leaving Prairielands GCD at the end of April, his legacy will continue on through his years of service, excellence in leadership, and his contributions to the groundwater conservation industry in Texas.

## *Learn a Little More About Us*

### **Why was the Prairielands GCD created?**

The Prairielands GCD was created in response to a finding by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality that groundwater shortages were expected in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell counties over the next 25 years. The TCEQ finding required local residents to create a groundwater conservation district, or else TCEQ would mandate one. Enabling legislation for the Prairielands GCD was passed in 2009.

### **How does the District manage groundwater?**

The Prairielands GCD seeks to balance the needs of all groundwater users with the requirements of a sustainable aquifer. The District operates in a fair and equitable manner through a management plan and rules. They are designed to prevent waste, collect data, plan for future resources, and educate people about water conservation and aquifer protection.

### **How does the District protect my property value?**

The District protects property values by preserving the quantity and quality of groundwater for future generations. Through a system of well spacing rules, minimum tract size requirements, and the District's Desired Future Conditions, the competition between wells is reduced.

### **How are District rules made and who is the District accountable to?**

The Board of Directors adopted temporary rules on November 15, 2010, at a public meeting. Permanent rules were developed through an open and transparent process including public comments, formal hearings, and board approval. Permanent rules were effective January 1, 2019. The District is accountable to its constituents, county and state elected officials, and regulatory agencies.

## **Be Sure to Connect with Us on Social Media!**



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@prairielandsgcd



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Prairielands Groundwater  
Conservation District



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@GCDPrairielands



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**PRAIRIELANDS GROUNDWATER  
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