

Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

Winter 2020 | Vol. 6, Iss. 1

John Curtis Appointed to Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors

In a public meeting on January 27, 2020, John Curtis of Walnut Springs, TX took his oath of office as a director on the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors. Curtis was appointed by the Somervell County Commissioners Court in a meeting on January 13, 2020.

Curtis has a distinguished background of service in Somervell County. He is an Army veteran who served in Vietnam, and had a successful career working for TXU at the Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant in Glen Rose, where he was the radiation protection manager and served on the emergency organizations at the plant. He retired in 2006, and in January 2011 began his tenure as a Somervell County commissioner for eight years. While a county commissioner, he served as the public information officer for the emergency operations center, served on the board of directors for the then county-owned hospital, and was on the board of directors for the Somervell County Central Appraisal District.

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District's Board of Directors consist of eight members, two from each county, who are appointed by the county commissioners' courts to serve unpaid, four-year terms.

Prairielands GCD Board of Directors

President – Charles Beseda

Term Expires August 31, 2023
Represents Hill County

First Vice-President – Dennis Erinakes

Term Expires August 31, 2023
Represents Johnson County

Second Vice-President – Randel Kirk

Term Expires August 31, 2021
Represents Ellis County

Secretary/Treasurer – Maurice Osborn

Term Expires August 31, 2023
Represents Ellis County

Director – Marty McPherson

Term Expires August 31, 2021
Represents Somervell County

Director – Paul Tischler

Term Expires August 31, 2021
Represents Johnson County

Director – John Curtis

Term Expires August 31, 2023
Represents Somervell County

Director – Kent Smith

Term Expires August 31, 2021
Represents Hill County

In This Issue:

**Jim Conkwright
Receives TAGD
Honorary
Membership**

PGCD Staff Spotlight

**Wild for Water: Fossil
Rim Debuts New
Well House**

**How to Read a
Water Meter and
Detect Leaks**

**Bluebonnet RC&D:
Protecting the
Environment in
North Central Texas**

**Upcoming Events
and Meetings**

**State and Local
Water News at a
Glance**

Jim Conkwright Receives TAGD Honorary Membership



Left to right: C.E. Williams (General Manager of Panhandle GCD), Jim Conkwright, and Leah Martinsson (Executive Director of TAGD)

Jim Conkwright was awarded an Honorary Membership to the the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD) at the TAGD business meeting on January 30, 2020.

James C. “Jim” Conkwright is a native Texan, born in Hereford, Texas. His family was involved in farming and ranching in the Hereford area from 1926 until 1984. He attended Texas Tech University and received his Bachelor of Science degree with a business option in 1964. 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 Mr. 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, Mr. 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 March of 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, Mr. Conkwright has served as past president of Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts, Vice-President of the Texas Water Conservation Association, Vice-Chair of the Llano Estacado Regional Water Plan, member of the Lubbock Water Advisory Commission, board member of the Amarillo Area Foundation, and board member of the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority.

Mr. Conkwright 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”. The TAGD Honorary Membership recognizes Jim Conkwright’s outstanding commitment and decades of service to groundwater management.



Prairielands GCD Staff Spotlight

Learn more about the staff who are helping conserve, protect and enhance groundwater in Johnson, Hill, Ellis and Somervell Counties.

Michael Heath **Field Operations Coordinator** *With PGCD since July 2017*

How did you get involved in the industry?

I have been involved in the water industry for eight years and counting. At first, I thought it would be just a job, but it evolved into a passionate career in providing people with safe and clean drinking water. I have a surface “B” and Groundwater “C” certification from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

What are some of the main responsibilities of your role?

As the Field Operations Coordinator, I have oversight of the District’s water level monitoring network by installing monitoring systems and hand-measuring wells. I also have to have a deep understanding of the PGCD rules and regulations in order to explain them to well owners and enforce the rules as needed. I also ensure the spacing of wells so they do not interfere with one another.

What is your favorite part about your career?

I’m very passionate about the protection and the conservation of the aquifers by preventing waste of groundwater and promoting conservation to the public so there will be good quality water for the generations to come. I enjoy being in the field measuring and installing monitor equipment to collect accurate data. I enjoy talking to and providing data to the well owners about their wells. I also enjoy working with other agencies like Texas Water Development Board and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

What are some goals you have for 2020?

My goal for 2020 is to install more monitor equipment to collect more valuable water level data. I also want to help prevent any waste of groundwater as much as possible. I am also looking forward to educating the well owners on the District’s rules, how to prevent waste, and how to conserve .

What do you like to do outside of work?

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and watching my kids play sports.

Wild for Water: Fossil Rim Debuts New Well House

Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, TX has been open to the public for over 30 years, and each year thousands of people from all over the state visit this park for a chance to see the unique species of wildlife across the approximately 1,800 acres at the park. As interest and attendance at the park has increased, the demand on resources has reflected that growth.

On February 6, Fossil Rim held an open house event to celebrate the debut of their new public water system well house. A public water system is any system that serves water to 15 connections or an

average of 25 people per day for at least 60 days per year. This public water system provides water for the Overlook Cafe, Nature Store, Children's Animal Center, various education buildings and the Giraffe Barn. The well is 714 feet deep and pumps water from the Trinity Aquifer at 15 gallons per minute. The new storage tank has a capacity of 12,000 gallons, a major upgrade from the 1,200 gallons that were stored by the previous system. The well house facilities were also purposely constructed larger than it needed to be in order to host educational tours.



At the event, Fossil Rim Water/Wastewater Operator and Natural Resources Manager, Caitlin Pyle, acknowledged Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District and it's staff for helping protect and conserve the aquifer and for helping them conserve water by ensuring they only use the amount of water they need.

Pictured on the left are District staff members Michael Heath, Field Operations Coordinator, and Sinclair Newby, Public Relations and Education Director, with Fossil Rim staff members Vanessa Hays, Natural Resources Specialist, and Caitlin Pyle, Water/Wastewater Operator and Natural Resources Manager.



Applications for the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program Open March 15



Founded in 2017, The Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program provides high school youth an opportunity to gain advanced knowledge and develop leadership skills related to the science, technology, engineering, and management of water in Texas. Prairielands GCD has been a proud sponsor of this program since it was created and is a Sign

The role of a 4-H Water Ambassador requires youth who are dedicated, dependable and interested in water and natural resources. To be considered for selection, youth must:

- Be in high school or entering high school in 2020
- Be 14 years of age or older by August 31, 2020
- Be a current 4-H member, or be willing to join a local 4-H club

Water ambassadors commit to a minimum (40) hours of service over a 12-month period following the Leadership Academy. Service hours are earned by delivering water education at local 4-H clubs, schools, fairs, and other community events. Credit is also be earned by assisting local water utilities, groundwater conservation districts, and County Extension Agents to conduct water outreach activities. Additional credit is awarded to water ambassadors who complete continuing education opportunities and assignments administered by the 4-H2O Program Coordinator. If you know a student interested in applying for this program, please contact Sinclair Newby at sinclair@prairielandsgcd.org or calling 817-556-2299 to get more information.

National Groundwater Awareness Week: March 9 - 13, 2020

The National Ground Water Association will have the 21st annual National Groundwater Awareness Week on March 9 - 13, 2020. An annual observance established in 1999 to highlight the responsible development, management, and use of groundwater, the event is also a platform to encourage yearly water well testing and well maintenance to prevent waterborne illnesses.

This year, NGWA and its partners will be focusing their advocacy during GWAWeek to inspire the next generation of groundwater professionals. Fostering an interest in groundwater science and an understanding of its importance is making a critical investment in our planet's future. Groundwater professionals encompass many different occupations within the industry, including water well drillers, hydrogeologists, engineers, groundwater scientists, and educators.

Stay tuned to Prairielands GCD's social media and website for more details and information!

How to Read Water Meters and Detect Leaks

A water meter is a device that measures the volume of water delivered to a property. District Rules state the owner of a non-exempt well shall equip the well with a flow measurement device and operate the meter on the well to measure the flow rate and cumulative amount of groundwater withdrawn from the well. A mechanically driven, totalizing water meter is the only type of meter that may be installed on a well registered with the District unless approval for another type of meter is applied for and granted by the District. Specifications can be found in the District Rules available on the District website.

Regardless of if you own a well or not, understanding how to read your water meter at home can be a helpful way to track water usage and compare it to your water bill readings, and also help you identify if you have a leak. This article will help you understand what kind of meter you have and how to get an accurate reading in order to monitor water use and be on the lookout for leaks. Most residential water meters are located near the curb or sidewalk at the front of the property in a “box” with a plastic, metal or concrete lid covering it. To access your water meter, lift the cover and use a damp rag to wipe the face clean, if necessary. Look at your water meter to determine if you have an analog (dial) or a digital display.

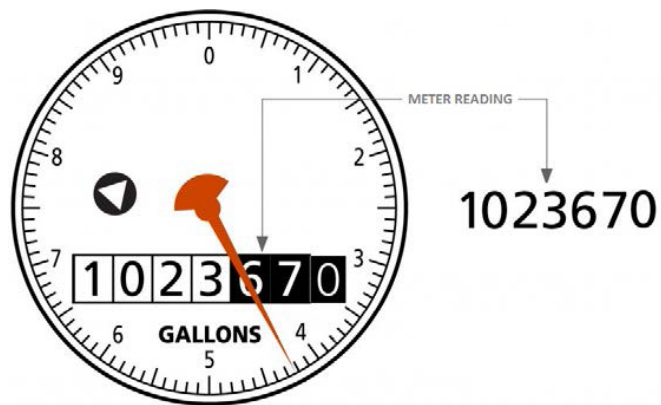
Reading an Analog Display

The large sweep hand on the dial measures water use in gallons, one gallon of water passes through the water meter as the sweep hand moves from one number to the next (e.g., 0 to 1). Most analog dials have a low-flow indicator that turns as water moves through the water meter.

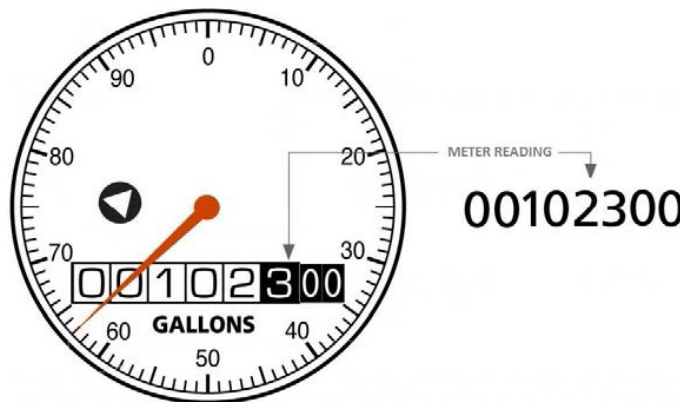
Every time the sweep hand makes a full rotation, that is 10 gallons, 100, 1,000 etc... The last number on the right is a static zero (does not change). When you record your reading to report to the District, make sure to add the stationary zero(s) as the final digit. If you are looking for a leak, you can watch the red sweep hand.

Reading a Digital Meter

If you have a digital meter, it may need light for activation so you may need to shine a flashlight on it. The display typically alternates between the meter reading and the flow rate. The meter reading equals the gallons used while the flow rate equals the number of gallons per minute flowing through the water meter. If you have questions or concerns about your digital meter, you can contact your utility provider.



Example of a 3/4" to 1" meter



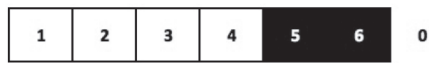
Example of a 1 1/2" meter

Meter Odometer

Reading Example

Maximum Measurement

5/8" to 1" RESIDENTIAL METERS



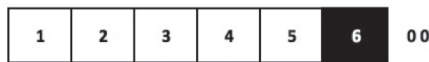
U.S. Gallons

1,234,560 gallons

9,999,990 gallons

1 ½" to 2" RESIDENTIAL METERS

1 ½" TO 3" TURBINE METERS

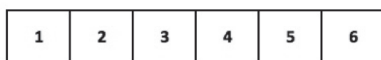


U.S. Gallons

12,345,600 gallons

99,99,900 gallons

4" to 8" TURBINE METERS



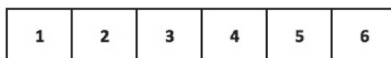
X 1000

U.S. Gallons

123,456,000 gallons

999,999,000 gallons

10" & 12" TURBINE METERS



X 10,000

U.S. Gallons

1,234,560,000 gallons

9,999,990,000 gallons

**Graphics and data from Master Meter*

Leak Detection Test

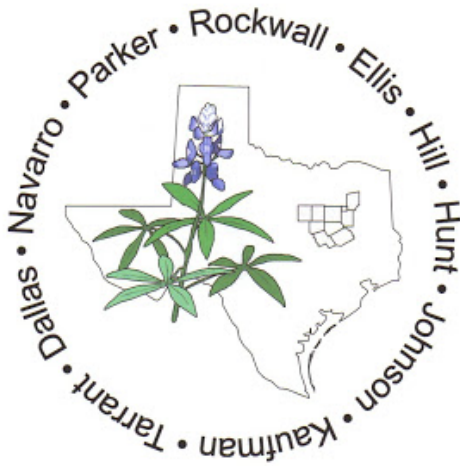
Once you know how to read your water meter, you can begin to check for the presence of continuous leaks by following the procedure below. Do not use water or operate any water-using devices in or around your home during the test.

- Read your water meter and record the numbers. Use the number indicated by the sweep arm as the final digit.
- Wait 20 minutes then read your water meter again and record the numbers.
- If the reading after 20 minutes is higher than the first reading, you have a leak.

Locating a Leak

The quickest way to locate ongoing, hard-to-find leaks is to turn water supply valves “off” to prevent water from flowing into water supply pipes. This method allows you to isolate areas of plumbing in and around your home to discover the leak location. You can also visually inspect outdoors and indoors to identify leaks.

Bluebonnet RC&D: Protecting the Environment in North Central Texas



Prairielands GCD is a member of Bluebonnet Resource Conservation and Development, which is a rural community development non-profit organization serving Hill, Johnson, Parker, Navarro, Ellis, Rockwall, Hunt, Dallas, Kaufman, and Tarrant Counties. There are currently 13 individual RC&D councils across the state of Texas. The purpose of the RC&D program is to accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living within the designated area. Current program objectives focus on improvement of quality of life achieved through natural resources conservation and community development, which leads to sustainable communities.

This organization serves the needs of the communities within those counties by finding funding opportunities, building partnerships, and offering conservation education, hazardous waste collections, illegal dump cleanup, and water and sewer assistance. Since 1995, Bluebonnet RC&D has worked with these counties to protect the environment, build economically stronger communities, and to enhance the quality of life in North Central Texas.

Bluebonnet RC&D offers Small Community Improvement Grants for projects which benefit local communities, non-profits and schools. Eligible grant projects include, but are not limited to, those that will provide community improvement such as environmental resource conservation education, illegal dumping cleanup, gardening classes for growing food, community gardens, street signage, recreational equipment, improvement or creation of parks and community buildings.

As a member of the Texas Association of RC&D Areas, Bluebonnet RC&D receives funding to perform Supplemental Environmental Projects within its 10 county area. The SEP funds are dedicated to a specific county and/or watershed and a particular type of environmental activity. The funds are obtained from entities who received fines to resolve a legal enforcement action undertaken by the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Some of the ongoing SEP projects that Bluebonnet RC&D are currently working on are a used tire collection event in Ellis County, a household hazardous waste cleanup in Dallas County, and an electronic waste recycling event in Rockwall County. Other SEP opportunities include illegal trash dump removal, septic systems for low income households, public water supply upgrades through this program.

The Bluebonnet RC&D is led by a local community leaders through a Board of Directors with a director representing each county. The membership of Bluebonnet RC&D is made up of a variety of groups and individuals from soil and water conservation districts, economic development specialists, environmental specialists, business owners, recycling companies, and county representatives. To learn more about Bluebonnet RC&D, please visit www.bluebonnetrcd.org.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

February 26	Groundwater Management Area 8 Meeting Cleburne Conference Center	March 15	Texas 4-H Youth Water Ambassador Applications Open
March 4-6	Texas Water Conservation Association Annual Convention Fort Worth, TX	March 16	PGCD Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. Liberty Hotel Board Room Cleburne, TX
March 12	Water Education Trailer at Dinosaur Valley State Park	April 20	PGCD Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. Liberty Hotel Board Room Cleburne, TX

Be sure to visit the homepage of our website to sign-up to receive our e-blast notifications so you never miss out on the latest news, events or updates about Prairielands GCD!

Stay in the Know: State and Local Water News at a Glance

- **Texas' First New Major Man-made Lake in 30 Years is Coming to North Texas** - Bois d'Arc Lake is the first major reservoir built in the state of Texas in 30 years. Water drawn from Bois d'Arc Lake will then be treated and pumped about 60 miles to be used by communities in Collin, Rockwall, Hunt, and Kaufman counties. [Read more.](#)
- **Ellis County Drought Conditions Start to Ease** - Recent rains across North Texas have pulled Ellis County back from the precipice of major drought — and the burn bans that go with it. [Read more.](#)
- **UTA Study Examines Potential Sources of Groundwater Contamination in Private Wells** - A study led by environmental researchers at The University of Texas at Arlington suggests a disconnect between the perception of groundwater contamination and the extent to which that contamination is attributable to oil and natural gas extraction. [Read more.](#)
- **Nearly Century-old Water System Pipes in West Texas Being Replaced with Federal and State Aid** - In several counties across West Texas, millions of dollars are going towards fixing water systems. [Read more.](#)

About Prairielands GCD

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District 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.

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, insure that the residents of Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties maintain local control over their groundwater, and operate the District in a fair and equitable manner for all residents of the District.

Be Sure to Connect with Us on Social Media!



Facebook
@prairielandsgcd



YouTube
Prairielands Groundwater
Conservation District



Twitter
@GCDPrairielands



LinkedIn
Prairielands Groundwater
Conservation District



www.prairielandsgcd.org
817- 556-2299
205 S. Caddo St
Cleburne TX, 76031