

Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

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Prairielands GCD Board of Directors Set Water Use Fee Rates for 2021

In a public meeting on October 19, 2020, the Prairielands GCD Board of Directors voted to keep 2021 water use fees set at \$0.20 per 1,000 gallons of groundwater pumped for any non-exempt well required to pay water use fees under the District Rules. The Board also determined it necessary and appropriate to keep the production fee of \$0.00 per acre-foot used annually for agricultural purposes, which is based on the exemption provided for agricultural use in District Rule 2.1(a). In addition to the water use fee rate, the 50% export surcharge will still be in effect for any groundwater produced within the District that is transported for use outside of the District.

The District would also like to provide a reminder that beginning January 1, 2021, the fee payment structure for water use fees for non-exempt wells will allow an option to prepay annually or submit quarterly or monthly payment of fees for groundwater production based on the annual groundwater production authorization in the permit. January 1, 2021 will also mark the beginning of the requirement for monthly submission of water production reports, meter readings, and meter logs for non-exempt wells.

Beginning January 1, 2022, in order to encourage groundwater conservation, eligible permittees have the opportunity to receive a refund for payment of unused water use fees from the previous calendar year of up to twenty (20) percent of the amount of groundwater authorized by permit to be produced. Permittees are eligible for the refund if the actual amount of a well owner's annual groundwater production during the previous calendar year was up to 20 percent or less than the amount authorized in the permit. The amount of any refund due to a permittee will be determined by the District each calendar year after receipt of the Water Production Report due by January 15th.

If you have any questions or would like some additional assistance, please contact the District office at 817-556-2299.

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Prairielands GCD Honors the Life and Service of Director Dennis Erinakes

Prairielands GCD recently mourned the unexpected passing of Director Dennis C. Erinakes July 29, 2020. Dennis was born in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, on June 6, 1940, and achieved academic success as a young adult, receiving a bachelor's degree from Brown University and a master's degree from the University of Maine. Dennis's experience as an engineering geologist made him well-suited to serve as 1st Vice President of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District's Board of Directors from its inception in 2009 until his untimely passing.

Dennis was actively involved in establishing numerous science-based systems at the District, including groundwater data collection, monitoring, and the development of the groundwater availability model for the Northern Trinity Woodbine Groundwater Availability Model. The District benefited from Dennis's leadership and expertise in his role as Chair of the Board of Director's Committee on Desired Future Conditions, which helped establish planning goals for our aquifers to ensure that future generations of Texans will continue to have adequate groundwater supplies. He also served on the Budget and Finance Committee and Conservation and Public Awareness Committee. Dennis's unique contributions were instrumental in moving the District from its infancy to a first-class operation that is widely regarded as one of the leading groundwater conservation districts in Texas.

The Board of Directors honored the memory of Dennis Erinakes and his outstanding service and extraordinary contributions to the field of groundwater science and management in the State of Texas on October 19, 2020 during the District's open house event. The Board presented a resolution to the family of Dennis Erinakes with sincere sympathy and appreciation, and a duplicate copy will be held in the records of the District as a permanent record of his achievements and contributions to the conservation and proper management of groundwater in Texas.



Dennis' sons David (left) and Mike Erinakes (right center) and Mike's wife Angie receiving a memorial plaque in honor of Dennis from PGCD Board President Charles Beseda.

Meet the New Staff at PGCD

You might notice some new faces around the office! Here are two new employees that help with the daily operations of the District, which help the District's mission of conserving, protecting and enhancing groundwater resources.



Kaylin Garcia | Office Assistant

Kaylin is from Cleburne, TX, and recently graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor's in Philosophy and Political Science. She likes to spend her free time with her friends and family and hiking with her dogs. She enjoys working at PGCD because there is more work that goes into groundwater conservation than most people realize, and it is rewarding to educate people about ways they can conserve and protect groundwater.

Karol Bowers | Permitting Assistant

Though growing up in Garland, TX, Karol had the opportunity to live in several states, including Florida, New Jersey, North Carolina and Colorado during her career. However, to be close to family, she settled in Rio Vista with a breathtaking view of the Brazos River. Karol enjoys spending time and sharing a good glass of wine with family and friends, as well as hiking with her dog, Sally. She expressed she has truly enjoyed becoming a part of the team at PGCD and looks forward to assisting those with their well registrations and PGCD's water conservation efforts.





Don't "Fall" Into Bad Habits: How to Conserve Water This Time of Year

Winter Weather Preparations

Winter weather usually brings icy winds and dipping temperatures which could potentially cause damage to your home by freezing pipes and leaving you without flowing water. Then when things warm back up you may find your precious water leaking out through breaks. Luckily, there are a few simple precautions you can take now to help you avoid the expense of frozen pipes during a sudden cold snap.



Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets. Be ready to protect those outside faucets from a deep freeze with insulation. Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas such as the garage, crawlspace, and attic ahead of time. Check with your local home improvement store for which materials to use to insulate your pipes.

Turn off and drain irrigation systems and backflow devices. Wrap backflow devices with insulating material. As you put away your irrigation equipment, take some time to look it over for any damage or wear. This will prevent water waste when you get it back out in the spring!

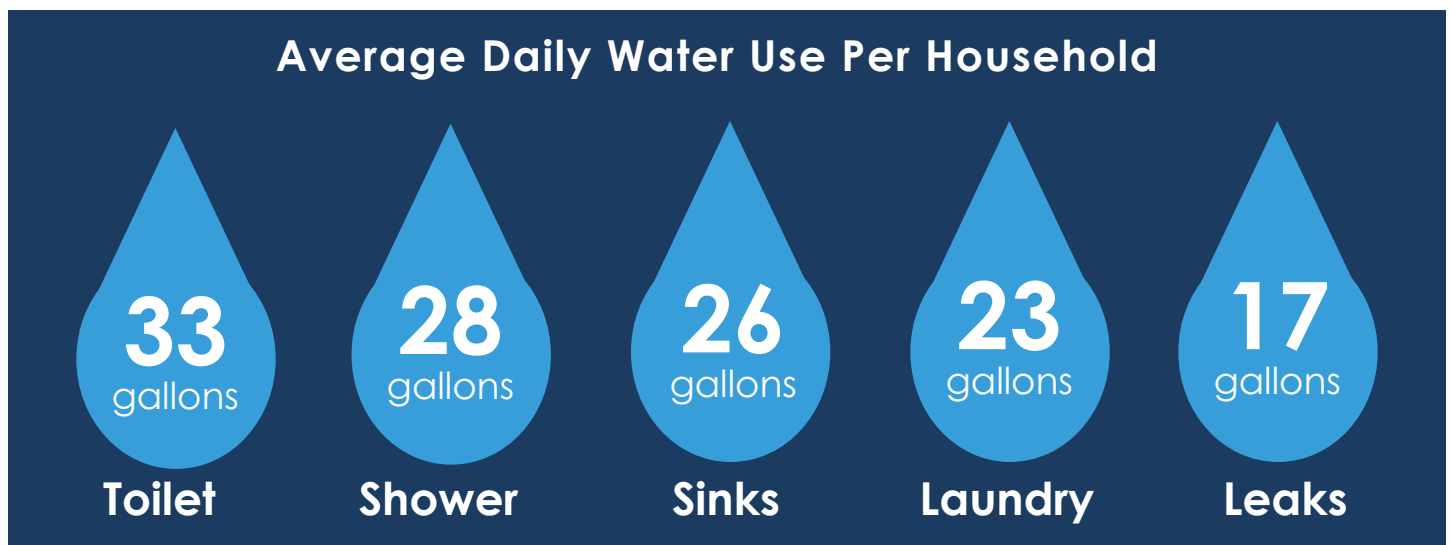


When the temperature takes a nosedive, keep a steady drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter. This keeps water moving and making it less likely to freeze. Use a bowl or pitcher to catch the drips of water and use to fill pet's water bowls, water indoor plants, or to wash dishes or fruits and veggies

More family, more friends at home

Although the recent rains have helped with reducing the need for outdoor watering, now is the time to start planning for the upcoming demand on indoor water use. The holidays are fast approaching, and with them comes more family, more friends, more cooking, more cleaning, and more water.

- 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. Multiply that by how many house guests you have and see just how fast it could add up!
- Adhere to using one glass for water per person per day. Each person reusing their own glass cuts down on the number to wash.
- 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.
- 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. Rather than running many small loads of laundry, save them to run larger, fuller loads instead. When you need to run a small load for some reason, take advantage of the washer's "small load" option/setting, which will use less water because it is washing fewer items.

Small adjustments such as these will reduce your daily water consumption during the holidays, 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.

Groundwater Conservation Districts Embrace Long History of Collaboration

Early Cooperative Efforts

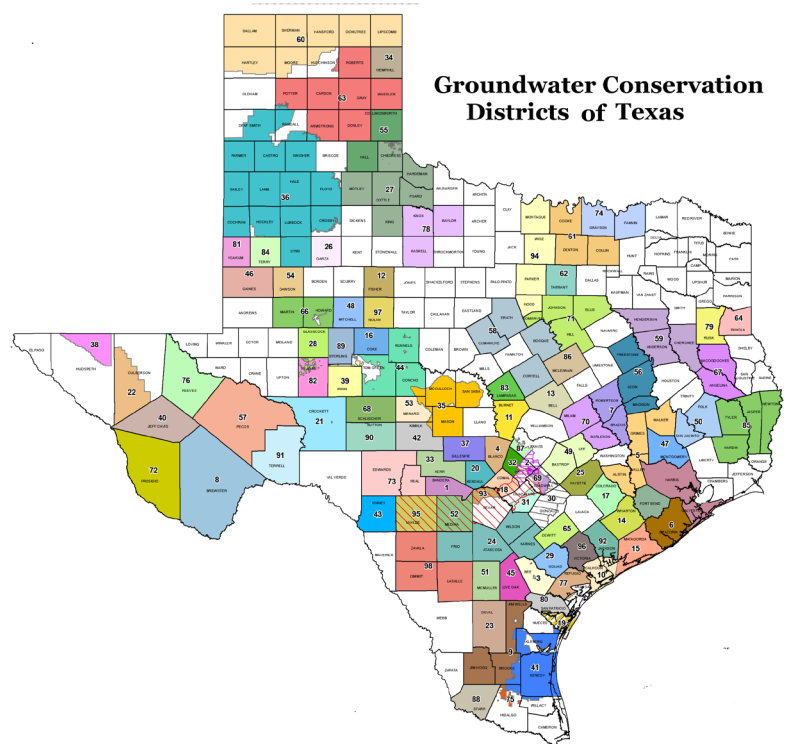
Groundwater districts came into existence with the creation of the first district, the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District, in 1951. Others followed, and not only in this state; groundwater management districts appeared in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. These groundwater management districts all had a common reservoir – the Ogallala or High Plains aquifer. In the early 1970s, districts across these states came together to form the Groundwater Management Districts Association to provide a forum to meet, discuss, and share information for the benefit of all.

In addition, districts in the state of Texas formed an association closer to home. The Texas Groundwater Conservation Districts Association (now known as the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts) was established on May 12, 1988. Its express purpose included the “exchange of information between member districts and associate members concerning rules, procedures, programs, practices, and other duties involved in the operation of a groundwater conservation district.”

As groundwater managers met, the goal was to identify areas where the development of common rules was feasible with the understanding that differences would have to be maintained when circumstances within districts required them. Since the beginning of groundwater regulation, legislation, and lawmaking, the state’s preferred method of groundwater management has been that it be performed locally by groundwater conservation districts, thereby maintaining local control. This type of dialogue and interaction is not unprecedented among groundwater conservation districts. There has always been a sharing of information, ideas, and resources around the state through individual cooperation between districts to participation in statewide groundwater and water conservation organizations.

Developments Through Groundwater Management Areas

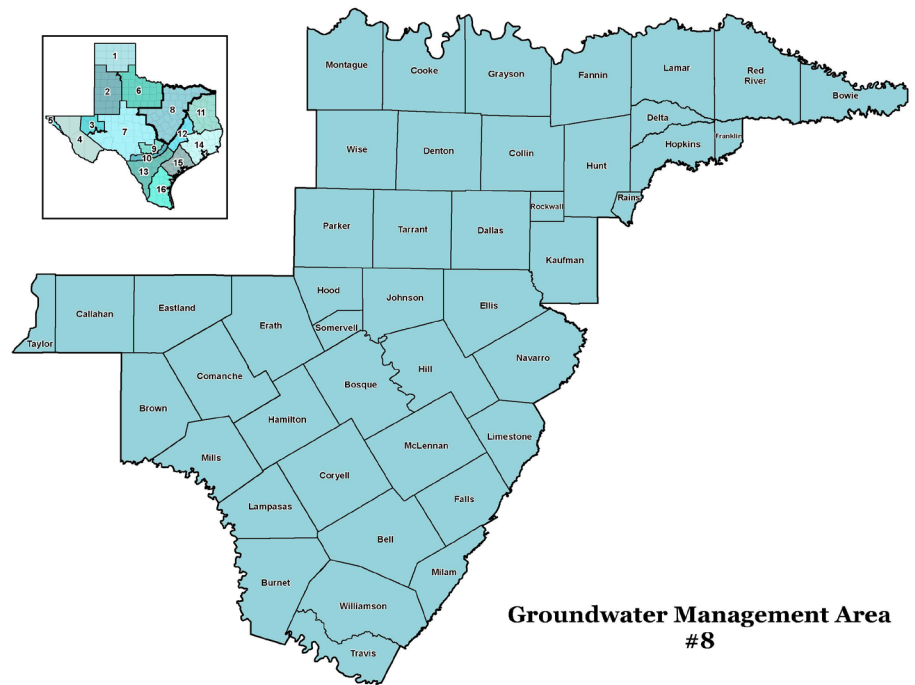
Groundwater Management Areas were created to provide for the conservation, preservation, protection, recharging, and prevention of waste of the groundwater, and to control subsidence caused by withdrawal of water from those groundwater reservoirs or their subdivisions. There are currently 16 GMAs in the state, and Prairielands GCD falls within the boundaries of Groundwater Management Area 8.



GMA 8 stands as a perfect example of groundwater conservation districts sharing resources to solve problems, develop technology, and advance the knowledge of local groundwater and aquifers. This large groundwater management area stretches from the Red River and the Oklahoma border south to Travis County, encompassing all or portions of 45 different counties, and overlays several important aquifers: the Edwards (Balcones Fault Zone), Edwards-Trinity (Plateau), Trinity, Blossom, Brazos River Alluvium, Ellenburger-San Saba, Hickory, Marble Falls, Nacatoch, and Woodbine. When an updated groundwater availability model for the Northern Trinity and Woodbine aquifers was needed, four districts in GMA 8 collaborated to fund the study, preparation of data, and the development of such for the good of the entire GMA.

Participation in joint planning via Groundwater Management Areas is the vital component to the development of Desired Future Conditions (DFCs). DFCs defined in the Texas Administrative Code as “the desired, quantified condition of groundwater resources (such as water levels, spring flows, or volumes) within a management area at one or more specified future times as defined by participating groundwater conservation districts within a groundwater management area as part of the joint planning process.”

Groundwater conservation districts have a successful track record of cooperation, collaboration, and compromise in helping conserve, protect and enhance groundwater resources. In addition to cost-sharing expensive, scientific, fact-finding projects, districts had already begun examining their individual district rules and comparing them to neighboring districts as well as those across the state in order to streamline, simplify, and safeguard groundwater processes. Thanks to some very dedicated groundwater professionals working steadily to guide numerous activities, these processes will continue to result in advancements in the science, technology, and management of groundwater.



Information about past and upcoming GMA 8 meetings is available on the District website. If you would like to learn more about Groundwater Management Areas and GMA 8, you can also visit the Texas Water Development Board’s website at twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/management_areas.

PRAIRIELANDS GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

November 16, 2020

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to all interested persons in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties, Texas:

That the Board of Directors (“Board”) of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District (“District”) will hold a public hearing, accept public comment, and may act to adopt amendments to the District Rules regulating water wells within the boundaries of the District, including Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties, Texas. The proposed amendments to the District Rules address a number of issues, including without limitation the following: 1) ending the early payment incentive for water use fees that was established in the District’s original Temporary Rules, as well as water use payment exemptions for certain flushing requirements required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and for emergency purposes, in favor of an annual refund on conserved water under a permit; 2) authorizing the Board to establish certain administrative fees presently set forth in the rules instead by resolution; 3) clarifying hearings procedures on applications for exceptions to well spacing and minimum tract size requirements; 4) clarifying methods for calculating well spacing requirements; 5) making minor typographical, formatting, and clarifying corrections to the transfer of well ownership rules, the definition of “maximum historic use,” and other rules; and 6) other non-substantive clarifying and conforming changes.

This hearing will be held on Monday, November 16, 2020, beginning at 9:00 a.m., at the District office located at 208 Kimberly Dr, Cleburne, Texas 76031. Any person who desires to appear at the hearing and present comment or other information on the proposed adoption of amendments to the District Rules may do so in person, by legal representative, or both. Comments may be presented verbally or in written form. Limits may be placed on the amount of time that each person is allowed to present verbal comments. Persons interested in submitting written comments on the proposed amendments may do so by sending any such comments to 208 Kimberly Dr., Cleburne, Texas 76031. The Board may act to adopt the amendments to the rules as proposed or with additional changes based upon comments and discussion at the hearing. The hearing posted in this notice may be recessed from day to day or continued where appropriate.

The public hearing is available to all persons regardless of disability. If you require special assistance to attend the hearing, please contact the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District at (817) 556-2299 at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing.

A copy of the proposed amendments to the District Rules may be requested by email at kjones@prairielandsgcd.org, is available for reviewing or downloading at www.prairielandsgcd.org, and may be reviewed, inspected, or obtained in person at the District office located at 208 Kimberly Dr, Cleburne, Texas 76031. For more information, contact the District’s General Manager, Kathy Turner Jones, at (817) 556-2299.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

November 11	Veterans Day <i>PGCD Office Closed</i>	December 21	PGCD Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. 208 Kimberly Dr Cleburne, TX 76031
November 16	PGCD Board Meeting and Public Hearing to Adopt Amendments to District Rules 9:00 a.m. 208 Kimberly Dr Cleburne, TX 76031	December 24-25	PGCD Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday
November 26-27	PGCD Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday	January 1	New Year's Day <i>PGCD Office Closed</i>

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

- **COVID-19 Pandemic Forces Groundwater Industry to be Creative, Expand Virtual Footprint** - Since the COVID-19 pandemic originated this winter, many in the groundwater industry have been forced to be creative and expand their virtual footprints to maintain business operations. [Read more.](#)
- **Water Wars at the Supreme Court** - The U.S. Supreme Court kicks off its new term next month with a unique “original jurisdiction” water dispute—the likes of which could become more common as the climate changes. [Read more.](#)
- **Increased Demands Shape Future Water Supply Planning** - The Tarrant Regional Water District will see demand for water grow by at least 54 percent within the next 50 years as the population nearly doubles in North Central Texas. As a result TRWD is looking at developing new sources of water supply such as wetlands that clean and recycle water taken from the Trinity River, and aquifer storage and recovery to store raw water for dry years. It's also looking into the possible construction of new reservoirs. [Read more.](#)
- **Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project Could Mitigate Effects of Climate Change** - City Council approves Austin Water's contract with an engineering firm to set into motion Phase 1 of an Aquifer Storage and Recovery project that would hold 60,000 acre-feet of water underground by 2040. [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.

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