

Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

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Prairielands GCD Revives Rainwater Harvesting Workshop

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District (“GCD”) is thrilled to announce the revival of its rainwater harvesting workshop, an educational initiative designed to empower local residents with the knowledge and tools needed to harness the benefits of rainwater. This year, the District will be hosting two workshops, providing participants with the opportunity to assemble their very own 55-gallon rain barrel to take home.

The upcoming Rainwater Harvesting 101 workshops, scheduled for April 13, 2024, and May 4, 2024, offer a unique chance for community members to dive into the basics and benefits of rainwater harvesting. Participants will engage with District staff in an informative presentation that covers fundamental components of a rainwater harvesting system, explores the benefits and uses of rainwater, and educates on strategic barrel placement to maximize water capture. Additionally, the workshop will highlight advanced techniques, such as creating rain gardens and implementing efficient irrigation systems.

The workshop’s stand out feature is the hands on opportunity for participants to construct their very own rain barrel during the event. This practical session ensures that attendees leave not only with

theoretical knowledge but also with a tangible rainwater harvesting system ready for implementation at home.

The timing of the workshop is strategic, allowing participants to implement their newly acquired rainwater harvesting systems just in time for the spring and early summer rain showers. The workshop will be an engaging and enlightening experience for participants of all backgrounds and expertise levels. Whether you’re a seasoned gardener looking to enhance your sustainability efforts or a novice enthusiast eager to explore new avenues of conservation, the Rainwater Harvesting 101 workshop offers something for everyone.

As the spring season approaches and rain showers loom on the horizon, now is the perfect time to embrace the potential of rainwater harvesting and embark on a path towards a more water-conscious future. To register for the workshop and embark on your journey towards water stewardship, visit the Prairielands GCD website at www.prairielandsgcd.org/education/rainwater-harvesting/. The workshop, including the barrel, is available for just \$25.00. Spaces are limited, so secure your spot today and join us in make every drop count.

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Springtime Water Conservation: Implementing Smart Practices for Every Home

As the chill of winter recedes and the warmth of spring emerges, many homeowners turn their attention to outdoor activities, gardening, and revitalizing their landscapes. However, amidst the excitement of spring, it's crucial not to overlook the importance of water conservation. Spring is a critical time to implement effective water-saving practices that can help conserve this precious resource while maintaining a lush and vibrant outdoor environment. Here are some great water conservation practices to implement during spring:

Install a Rain Barrel System: One of the simplest and most effective ways to conserve water during spring is by installing a rain barrel system. Rain barrels collect rainwater runoff from your roof, which can then be used to water your garden, landscape, or even wash outdoor surfaces. By capturing rainwater, you can reduce your reliance on municipal water sources and lower your water bill.

Embrace Drought-Tolerant Plants: Consider replacing thirsty plants with drought-tolerant varieties in your garden and landscape. Native plants and species adapted to your region's climate require less water to thrive and can withstand periods of drought more effectively. By choosing drought-tolerant plants, you can create a beautiful and sustainable landscape while conserving water.

Implement Efficient Irrigation Techniques: Upgrade your irrigation system to incorporate water-efficient technologies such as drip irrigation or soaker hoses. These systems deliver water directly to the base of plants, minimizing evaporation and runoff. Additionally, consider investing in a smart irrigation controller that adjusts watering schedules based on weather conditions and soil moisture levels, ensuring optimal water

usage.

Mulch Your Garden Beds: Applying a layer of mulch to your garden beds helps retain moisture in the soil, reducing the need for frequent watering. Mulch acts as a barrier, preventing evaporation and keeping the soil cool during hot spring days. Organic mulches such as wood chips, straw, or compost also improve soil health and suppress weed growth, further conserving water and reducing maintenance requirements.

Practice Water-Wise Lawn Care: Maintaining a lush green lawn doesn't have to come at the expense of excessive water usage. Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting to promote deeper root growth, which enhances drought resistance. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to return nutrients to the soil and improve moisture retention. Consider reducing the size of your lawn by incorporating native grasses, ground covers, or alternative landscape features that require less water.

Time Your Watering Wisely: To minimize water loss through evaporation, water your plants and lawn during the early morning or late evening when temperatures are cooler and winds are calmer. Avoid watering during the heat of the day, as much of the water may evaporate before it reaches plant roots. Additionally, be mindful of local watering restrictions and guidelines to ensure responsible water usage.

Spring offers a prime opportunity to implement water conservation practices that benefit both the environment and your household budget. By incorporating these simple yet effective strategies into your springtime routine, you can conserve water, promote sustainability, and create a thriving outdoor landscape for years to come. Remember, every drop counts in the journey towards a more water-conscious future.



Prairielands GCD Rainwater Harvesting Rebate Program

Prairielands GCD is committed to advocating for rainwater harvesting. Previously, we've organized workshops aimed at educating District residents about its advantages. Today, we are excited to elevate our commitment by introducing our Rainwater Harvesting Rebate program. This initiative goes beyond education, actively encouraging the responsible utilization of rainwater harvesting as a sustainable water conservation measure.

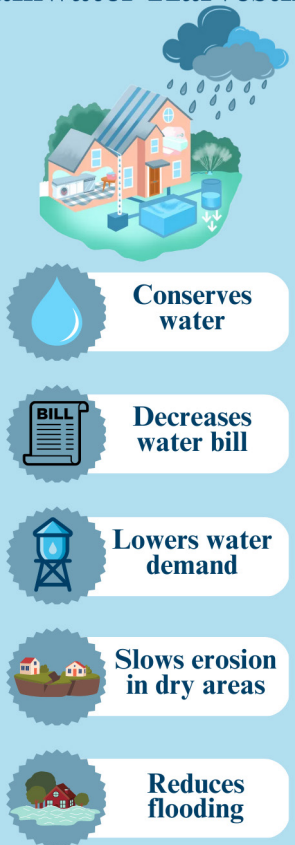
Residents or landowners within the District counties are eligible to apply for rebates. Each household is entitled to one rebate application per calendar year, with a maximum rebate of \$500. Rebate amounts are determined by the total storage capacity of your rainwater harvesting system. For every gallon of storage, you'll receive \$1. This includes expenses related to tank purchase and installation components.

To ensure fairness and effectiveness, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Applications must be complete and subject to verification.
- PGCD reserves the right to inspect installed systems.
- Original receipts for tanks and components are required for processing.
- Remember, collected rainwater is for non-potable uses only.
- Install tanks on a level base for safe and efficient operation.
- Application along with all necessary documents have been fully completed and submitted to the District prior to December 1, 2024.

Join us in our mission to conserve water and promote sustainable practices in our communities. Together, we can make a significant impact on our environment and future generations. For more information simply reach out to Kaylin Garcia at kgarcia@prairielandsgcd.org.

Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting



- Conserves water
- Decreases water bill
- Lowers water demand
- Slows erosion in dry areas
- Reduces flooding



4-H Water Ambassadors

Norah Pacheco (Ellis Co.), Emma Pool (Johnson Co.), Hannah Lewis (Hill Co.), and Madison Snow (Ellis Co.) presented to the District's Board of Directors about their experience as Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors. Thank you to the ambassadors for being the future of water!



TEXAS WATER NEWSROOM

WATER NEWS ON DEMAND

Ask an expert: Direct and indirect potable reuse provides much-needed water supply

Texas has long relied on river basins and underground aquifers for its water supply. However, reclaimed wastewater for reuse is gaining traction as a vital strategy. According to the Texas Water Development Board's 2022 State Water Plan, in 2020, nearly 4 percent of Texas's total water supply came from reuse, a figure projected to rise to about 15 percent by 2070. Direct potable reuse, in particular, plays a significant role in ensuring a sustainable water future for Texas.

Erika Mancha, Director of Conservation & Innovative Water Technologies at the Texas Water Development Board, explains the concepts and benefits of direct and indirect potable reuse in Texas.

What are Direct and Indirect Potable Reuse?

Direct potable reuse treats reclaimed municipal wastewater to drinking water standards and introduces it directly into a public water system or upstream of a conventional treatment plant. Indirect potable reuse treats wastewater to drinking water standards, augmenting drinking water supplies by discharging it into a water body and retrieving it for subsequent treatment and consumption.

Why are Water Systems Adopting These Methods?

Water systems are turning to direct and indirect potable reuse to diversify drinking water supplies and address challenges like population growth, increasing demand, and drought. By adding alternative water sources, they rely less on conventional sources, enhancing resilience.

How Many Water Systems in Texas Utilize Reuse?

Texas boasts several direct and indirect potable reuse facilities. The first direct potable reuse facility in

the nation, operated by the Colorado River Municipal Water District, has been in operation since 2013. Indirect potable reuse facilities, such as those in El Paso and Wichita Falls, have been successful in augmenting local water supplies.

Ensuring Safety and Quality

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) oversees safety, reviewing and approving projects before construction and implementing rigorous water quality and monitoring standards. Advanced treatment methods and comprehensive testing ensure water quality meets regulatory standards. The TWDB funds studies and collaborates with national organizations to provide resources and ensure the safety and effectiveness of potable reuse projects.

For more information, visit the Texas Water Newsroom's Water Planning/Technology/Water Supply section. To read the entire article please visit https://texaswaternewsroom.org/articles/ask_an_expert_direct_and_indirect_potable_reuse_provides_much-needed_water_supply.html.



National Groundwater Awareness Week and EPA's Fix a Leak Week: Promoting Groundwater Conservation

National Groundwater Awareness Week and EPA's Fix a Leak Week stand as pivotal annual events dedicated to highlighting the significance of groundwater conservation and fostering responsible water usage. Groundwater, a precious natural resource, is essential for sustaining life, supporting ecosystems, and driving economic activities worldwide. It is the primary source of drinking water for approximately 5 million Texans, plays a crucial role in providing irrigation for agriculture and sustaining streams and rivers.

Observed annually in March, National Groundwater Awareness Week (March 10-16) serves as a platform to raise public awareness about the importance of groundwater and the need for its sustainable management. This initiative underscores the vital role that groundwater plays in our daily lives and emphasizes the necessity of conserving this finite resource for future generations.

Followed by the Environmental Protection Agency's Fix a Leak Week (March 18-24) addressing the issue of water waste caused by household leaks. According to the EPA, household leaks can waste more than 1 trillion gallons of water annually nationwide, highlighting the urgent need for action. Fix a Leak Week encourages individuals, businesses, and communities to identify and repair leaks in homes, schools, and workplaces, thereby reducing water waste and conserving precious groundwater resources.

The focus on National Groundwater Awareness Week and Fix a Leak Week highlights the interrelation between comprehending the significance of groundwater and mitigating water loss. By fixing leaks and reducing unnecessary water consumption, individuals

and communities can contribute to groundwater conservation efforts while also alleviating pressure on water treatment facilities and infrastructure.

During these dedicated weeks, there are numerous actions that individuals and communities can take to promote groundwater conservation:

- **Conduct Regular Inspections:** Perform routine inspections of plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems, and appliances to identify and address leaks promptly.
- **Adopt Water-Saving Habits:** Practice water-saving habits such as taking shorter showers, using water-efficient appliances, and watering outdoor landscapes during off-peak hours.
- **Schedule Routine Maintenance:** Implement regular maintenance schedules for plumbing systems and irrigation equipment to prevent leaks and optimize water usage efficiency.
- **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Spread awareness about the importance of groundwater conservation within your community, workplace, and social circles. Encourage others to participate in water-saving initiatives and adopt sustainable water practices.

By collectively embracing these actions, individuals and communities can make a tangible difference in preserving ground-

water resources and ensuring their availability for future generations. National Groundwater Awareness Week and Fix a Leak Week serve as timely reminders of our shared responsibility to conserve and protect this invaluable natural resource. Through proactive conservation efforts and public engagement, we can protect groundwater for the well-being of both present and future generations.

THE FACTS ON LEAKS

- 10** percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day
- A leaky faucet dripping at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than **3,000 gallons** per year
- Did you know?** Minor water leaks account for nearly **1 trillion gallons** of wasted water each year and is equal to annual household water use in nearly **11 million homes**
- A shower leaking at **10 Drips** per minute wastes more than **500 gallons** per year
- Repair** leaks by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary
- Replace old toilets with WaterSense models & save **13,000** gallons of water savings for the average family
- Homeowners can save 10 percent on their water bills
- Look for **WaterSense** Meets EPA Criteria

EPA | epa.gov/watersense

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.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

March

18 PGCD Board Meeting
9:00 a.m.
208 Kimberly Dr
Cleburne, TX 76031

15 PGCD Board Meeting
9:00 a.m.
208 Kimberly Dr
Cleburne, TX 76031

23 Ellis County Master Gardeners
2000 Civic Center Ln
Waxahachie, TX

17-19 Water Education Trailer
Hill County Water Days
Hillsboro, TX

April

13 Rainwater Harvesting Workshop
208 Kimberly Dr.
Cleburne, TX

22 Water Education Trailer
Venus Elementary Earth Day
Venus, TX

General Manager
Kathy Turner Jones

Board:

President
Charles Beseda
Hill County

Vice President
Paul Tischler
Johnson County

Secretary/Treasurer
Maurice Osborn
Ellis County

Director
Marty McPherson
Somervell County

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Kathy Tucker
Ellis County

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John Curtis
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Director
Brad Daniels
Hill County

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