

# Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

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## Prairielands GCD Announces New Rainwater Harvesting Grant Program

Water conservation is a critical issue for communities facing increasing demands on water resources, and the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District ("District") is taking action to support sustainable solutions. The District is excited to announce the launch of its new Rainwater Harvesting Grant Program, a funding initiative aimed at supporting public projects that demonstrate the benefits of rainwater harvesting. This initiative is separate from the rebate program introduced last year and focuses on funding installations in public spaces to encourage education and awareness about water conservation practices.

Rainwater harvesting is a proven conservation method that reduces dependence on groundwater, minimizes stormwater runoff, and provides an alternative water source for landscaping, irrigation, and other non-potable uses. By funding projects in public spaces, the District hopes to showcase real-world applications of rainwater harvesting, making it easier for communities to understand its benefits and implement similar practices in their own homes and institutions.

The proposed system could be as simple as installing a single cistern like the one pictured below or a more intricate system that involves a couple of tanks. The District would love to discuss ideas and concepts that community members have for installing rainwater harvesting systems.

To ensure that funded projects have a meaningful impact, the District will evaluate applications based on several

factors, including the project's ability to reduce reliance on groundwater resources, the intended use of the harvested rainwater, the level of public access and visibility of the project site, and the applicant's commitment to public education through signage and informational displays. Priority will be given to projects that enhance visibility, provide significant educational value, and encourage the adoption of rainwater harvesting practices throughout the community.

The District invites public institutions, municipalities, non-profits, and other eligible entities inquire about grant funding to help drive water conservation efforts through impactful and educational installations. By supporting these projects, the District aims to foster a culture of responsible water use and increase public awareness of the importance of rainwater harvesting. For more details on eligibility criteria and the application process, interested parties are encouraged to contact the District office. Together, we can make a lasting impact on water conservation efforts in our community!



### In This Issue:

- How to Create a Rain Garden — and Why It's Worth It - Pg. 2
- Reminder: Meter Accuracy Verification of Permitted Wells - Pg. 4
- Brush Control Impacts on Water Management - Pg. 5
- Upcoming Events and Meetings - Pg. 6

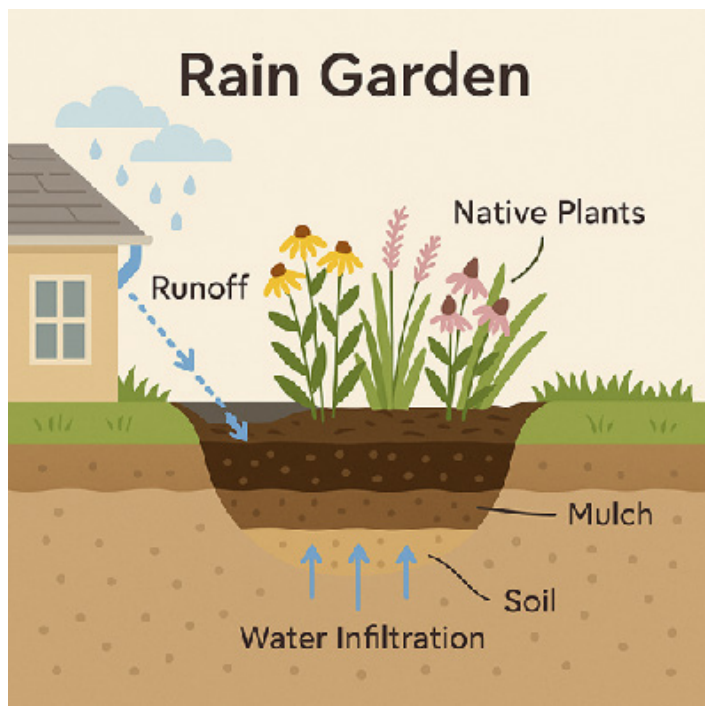


# How to Create a Rain Garden — and Why It's Worth It

If you're looking for a smart and beautiful way to improve your landscape while helping protect our local water resources, a rain garden is a great place to start. Whether you're in Ellis, Johnson, Hill, or Somervell County, installing a rain garden is a practical step you can take to conserve water, reduce runoff, and support native wildlife—right in your own backyard.

## What Is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a shallow, landscaped depression designed to capture and absorb rainwater from roofs, driveways, and sidewalks. Instead of letting that water run off into streets and storm drains—carrying pollutants along the way—it collects and slowly filters into the ground. In our part of Texas, where clay soils, flash flooding, and drought are all common, rain gardens can make a big difference.



*A simplified diagram showing how a rain garden captures runoff and allows it to filter into the ground.*

## Why Rain Gardens Matter in Our Region

- **Manage Heavy Rainfall:** North-central Texas often experiences intense rainstorms. A rain garden helps manage stormwater by reducing runoff and easing the strain on drainage systems.
- **Improve Water Quality:** As rainwater passes through your garden's soil and native plants, it gets filtered naturally, keeping contaminants out of our local creeks, rivers, and groundwater supplies.
- **Protect Groundwater:** In rural areas of Hill and Johnson Counties, many households rely on groundwater. Letting rain soak in helps recharge those aquifers.
- **Beautify Your Yard with Purpose:** A rain garden doesn't just do good—it looks good too. With native Texas plants, you'll enjoy seasonal color and attract butterflies, birds, and pollinators.
- **Drought Resilience:** Many native species used in rain gardens are deep-rooted and hardy—perfect for our hot, dry summers.

## How to Create a Rain Garden in Your North-Central Texas Yard

### 1. Pick the Right Spot

Look for a low area in your yard that naturally collects water, or near a downspout from your roof. Ideally, it should be at least 10 feet from your home's foundation and not sit directly over a septic system.

### 2. Test Your Soil

Our region has heavy clay soils that can slow drainage. Dig a hole about 6 inches deep, fill it with water, and see if it drains within 24–48 hours. If it doesn't, you may need to amend the soil with compost or sand.





Visit PGCD's rain garden during one of this year's Rainwater Harvesting Workshops! Join us on April 12th, May 10th, or May 31st to learn how to make the most of rainwater.

### 3. *Plan the Size and Shape*

The garden should be large enough to hold runoff from your roof or driveway. Shapes can vary, but curved or kidney-shaped beds work well and blend nicely with existing landscaping.

### 4. *Dig and Shape the Basin*

Excavate the area 6–8 inches deep with gently sloping sides. Be sure to create an 'inlet' where water can flow in and an 'overflow' area just in case of heavy storms. (See above right picture for inlet example)

### 5. *Use Native Plants*

Native plants are best adapted to our climate, need less water once established, and support local ecosystems. Try a mix of grasses, flowering perennials, and shrubs that tolerate both wet and dry conditions. Here are some great native options for our area:

- Gulf Coast Muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) – for texture and fall color
- Texas Lantana (*Lantana urticoides*) – colorful and pollinator-friendly
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) – bright and cheerful

- Mealy Blue Sage (*Salvia farinacea*) – attracts bees and butterflies
- Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) – great for wetter spots and monarchs
- Inland Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) – shade-tolerant and hardy

### 6. *Mulch and Maintain*

Apply 2–3 inches of hardwood mulch to suppress weeds and retain moisture. During the first growing season, water regularly to help plants get established. After that, maintenance is minimal—just occasional weeding and pruning.

### **A Simple Way to Make a Big Impact**

Rain gardens are a win-win for property owners and the environment. They help protect water quality, reduce flooding, and support native wildlife—all while adding natural beauty to your yard.

Whether you live in a subdivision in Waxahachie or along the open land near Glen Rose or Itasca, your rain garden can be part of a broader effort to keep our Texas waters clean and our landscapes resilient.

# Reminder: Meter Accuracy Verification of Permitted Wells

As a reminder, all permitted and metered wells are required per Rule 8.3 to submit to the District a manufacturer's certification or other certification demonstrating that the meter meets the accuracy requirements set forth in Rule 8.1(d) within sixty (60) days of the date a meter is installed, repaired, or replaced, and/or within the previous five-year period as a condition of permit renewal. The General Manager may require any registrant, at the registrant's expense, to have the accuracy of the water meter tested by a third party qualified to perform such tests and submit a certificate of the test results to the District.

Please be aware that if the test results show the water meter's accuracy falls outside the range of 98.5% to 101.5% of the actual flow, the registrant must take appropriate action to repair or replace the meter within ninety (90) calendar days from the test date.

Whenever you replace a meter, you must enter the replacement details in the same month the meter was replaced. There are two methods on the District's database for entering a Meter Verification.

The first method is to enter the meter replacement information while submitting your meter readings. When you select "Replaced" from the Event drop-down menu, you will need to provide the last reading from the old meter, the initial reading of the new meter (usually 0),

and the end-of-month reading for the new meter. You will also need to enter the Meter Serial Number, Meter Installation Date, Meter Accuracy %, and the date of calibration. The accuracy percentage must comply with AWWA standards (Rule 8.1(b)). Additionally, you are required to upload the Calibration Certificate that accompanies the new meter. If the certificate is not included in the original packaging, contact the manufacturer or distributor for a copy. Please ensure this certificate is uploaded or submitted to the District within 60 days to avoid non-compliance with district rules.

The second option is to enter the Meter Verification directly. On the left-hand side of the database, select 'Meter Verifications' and click on '+New Meter Verification' at the top. Then, select the Well ID and provide the Meter Serial Number, Meter Installation Date, Meter Accuracy %, and the calibration date. Click 'Confirm' to generate a Meter Verification Number.

Should you need step by step instruction on how to enter a meter verification, please contact your Permitting Specialist at 817-556-2299. If the Calibration Certificate is not uploaded, you will receive an automatic email reminder from the database, notifying you to upload the certificate by the specified date. Please note – this email will be sent directly from our database and will come from Halff at noreply@halff.com.

The screenshot shows the PGCD (Piedmont-Greenville Council of Governments) website interface for the 'Meter Verification' section. The left sidebar contains a 'Main Navigation' menu with options: Home, Accounts, My Meter, Meter Verifications (selected), Paid Permits, My Permits, Permit Applications, Permit Renewals, System Water Loss Audit, Make Payment, Payment History, Inquiries, and Public Map. The main content area is titled 'Meter Verification' and includes a sub-header: 'This form is used to verify meter accuracy for Rule 8.3 and to register a meter to verify meter accuracy for Rule 8.1(d)'. The form fields include: 'Well ID' (a dropdown menu), 'Meter Serial Number' (a text field), 'Meter Accuracy %' (a text field), 'Meter Installed Date' (a date picker), 'Calibration Certificate Date' (a date picker), and 'Attach a Calibration Certificate' (a file upload button). Below these fields is a 'Calibration Date' field and a 'Calibration Date' label. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Confirm'.

# Brush Control Impacts on Water Management

Effective water management and brush control are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems, preventing soil erosion, and ensuring sustainable water resources. Uncontrolled brush growth depletes water supplies, increases wildfire risks, and disrupts the balance of natural habitats. Strategic brush control measures help conserve water and enhance land productivity.

Groundwater Conservation Districts encourage brush control because excessive brush growth significantly impacts groundwater recharge and overall water availability. Invasive vegetation absorbs large amounts of water that would otherwise seep into aquifers, reducing the amount available for agricultural, municipal, and domestic needs. By managing brush effectively, people help ensure a stable water supply, protect water quality, and promote more efficient land use practices that benefit both the environment and local communities.

Texas is currently facing a severe water crisis due to population growth and increasing water demands. With many regions experiencing record-low groundwater levels, brush control is more critical than ever. Invasive brush consumes large volumes of water that could otherwise support aquifers, rivers, and reservoirs. By reducing unnecessary vegetation, landowners can maximize water retention, improve groundwater recharge, and enhance the overall resilience of Texas' water supply in the face of ongoing challenges.

Several techniques can be used to manage brush effectively while promoting sustainable water usage. Mechanical methods such as mowing, mulching, bulldozing, and root plowing reduce brush density and improve soil health. Chemical control through selective herbicide application targets unwanted brush species without harming desirable vegetation when applied responsibly. Prescribed burning helps reduce dense brush, recycle nutrients, and promote the growth of native grasses that require less water. Biological control methods like grazing management with livestock and reintroducing native plant species also naturally suppress brush growth and conserve water.

Brush control benefits water conservation by enhancing groundwater recharge, improving surface water flow, and reducing soil erosion. Reducing brush allows more rainwater to infiltrate the soil and replenish underground water supplies. Proper brush management stabilizes soil, preventing sediment runoff that can clog waterways and degrade water quality.

Sustainable practices should be considered to ensure effective brush control and water conservation. Conducting environmental assessments before implementing brush control minimizes negative impacts. Integrating multiple control methods ensures long-term effectiveness. Monitoring treated areas helps ensure successful regrowth of beneficial vegetation and prevents re-invasion.

By combining effective brush control techniques with sustainable water management practices, landowners and conservationists can enhance water availability and improve land productivity. Implementing these strategies ensures a balanced and resilient ecosystem for future generations.

For more information of the Effects of Brush Management on Water Resources please visit <https://tsswcb.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/effects-of-brush-management-on-water-resources.pdf>





## 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

### April

- 12 Rainwater Harvesting Workshop**  
208 Kimberly Dr.  
Cleburne, TX
- 16 Keller Williams Presentation**  
Realtor Workshop
- 18 Good Friday**  
PGCD Office Closed
- 21 PGCD Board Meeting**  
9:00 a.m.  
208 Kimberly Dr  
Cleburne, TX 76031

### May

- 10 Rainwater Harvesting Workshop**  
208 Kimberly Dr.  
Cleburne, TX
- 19 PGCD Board Meeting**  
9:00 a.m.  
208 Kimberly Dr  
Cleburne, TX 76031
- 26 Memorial Day**  
PGCD Office Closed
- 31 Rainwater Harvesting Workshop**  
208 Kimberly Dr.  
Cleburne, TX

General Manager  
Kathy Turner Jones

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Charles Beseda  
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Vice President  
Paul Tischler  
Johnson County

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Maurice Osborn  
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www.prairielandsgcd.org  
817-556-2299  
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