Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

Spring 2026 | Vol. 12, Iss. 2
June 8, 2026

Texas Real Estate Commission Seller's Disclosure Update

Due to the increasing number of property sales and purchases related to groundwater combined with increasingly complex water rights, the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) has adopted the requirement of a water addendum notice, officially known as "Seller's Disclosure About Groundwater and Surface Water Rights" or TREC form number 61-0. The purpose of this update is to improve transparency in Texas real estate transactions and provide buyers with important information about water-related property rights and features.

The new form requires sellers to disclose the following:

- Groundwater and surface water rights,
- Existence of water wells in use or capped, covered, plugged, or abandoned wells,
- Water well permits, registrations, or water related legal agreements associated with the property, and
- Presence of ponds, lakes, or water tanks.

This update is especially important for rural, farm, ranch, and land transactions where water access can significantly impact property values and future use.

The form may also provide buyers with additional protections, including the right to review the disclosure and potentially terminate the contract if the notice is not delivered before closing.

TREC's goal is to reduce disputes, increase consumer awareness, and encourage proper due diligence during real estate transactions. Real estate professionals should prepare for additional disclosure requirements and encourage clients to seek legal or water-rights guidance when necessary. The form will be mandatory effective July 1, 2026. Please contact the District for more information and education opportunities for our local real estate community.

In This Issue:

Production Tracking and Water Level Monitoring Matter

The mission of 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, and ensure that the residents of Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties maintain local control over their groundwater. Two of the most important tools used by the District to accomplish these goals are production tracking and water level monitoring. This critical data helps further our understanding of aquifer conditions and water demand to make informed management decisions.

Production tracking involves measuring the amount of groundwater being pumped from permitted wells through the use flow meters. Permittees are required to record meter readings from calibrated equipment and report production to the District monthly. The District also continually updates use estimates for wells exempt from permitting requirements. This information helps us evaluate pumping trends, aquifer demand, and long-term water supplies. Accurate production data is especially important during drought conditions, when groundwater demand often increases significantly.

Water level monitoring focuses on measuring changes in groundwater levels within aquifers over time. The District has developed a strategic groundwater level monitoring plan and collects data from a robust monitoring well network that utilizes a combination of acoustic data loggers, pressure transducers, and manual water level measuring equipment throughout our four counties.

The District encourages residents and well owners to participate in groundwater monitoring efforts by allowing staff access to measure water levels in their wells. Voluntary participation from landowners provides valuable local data. All measurements are conducted carefully and efficiently by trained staff, and the information collected plays an important role in protecting groundwater resources.

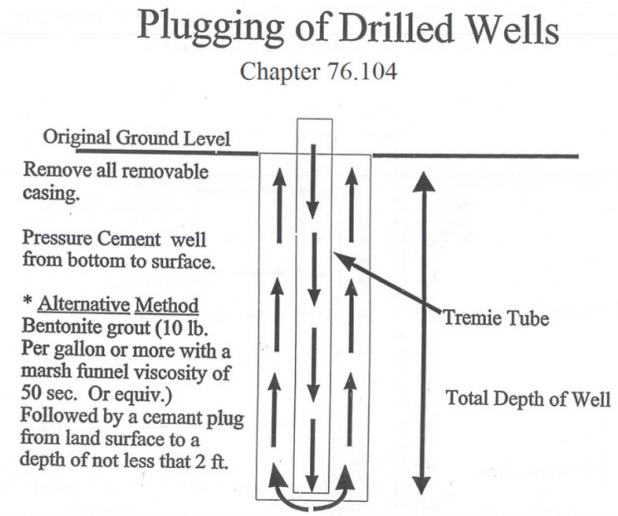
By combining production tracking with water level monitoring, the District can develop a more complete understanding of aquifer health and sustainability. This data supports science-based management decisions, helps guide permitting and conservation efforts, and improves long-term planning for future water needs. Reliable monitoring also promotes transparency and ensures groundwater resources are managed responsibly for both current users and future generations.

The Value of a Plugged Well

Plugging wells is a critical step in protecting Texas' groundwater resources, especially for deteriorated and abandoned wells, or wells no longer in use. The importance of this process is often forgotten due to the lack of perceived value related to no longer having a well that was once considered an asset. However, it's important to understand that improperly plugged wells can create a direct path for contaminants to enter our local aquifers, acting as conduits for surface or subsurface pollutants to bypass natural filtration layers and enter the aquifer directly. Improperly plugged wells also pose a safety hazard to animals and children who could potentially fall into the well or damage equipment by running over a well that may have been unknown. In Texas, property owners are responsible for the wells on their land. Failing to properly plug a well can result in legal liabilities, costly fines, or loss of property value. Plugging wells is not only an environmentally responsible action but also a financially prudent one.

Plugging a well involves sealing it with appropriate materials to prevent contamination and protect groundwater integrity. This includes identifying the well's condition, determining the appropriate plugging method, using suitable materials such as bentonite clay or cement to seal the well securely, and reporting the plugging to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) and your local groundwater conservation district to ensure compliance with regulations. State plugging specifications require that you remove the surface completion and all removable casing. Depending on the circumstances, if the casing cannot be pulled, it is required to cut the casing off as far below ground level as possible and plug the well from the bottom to the top.

Protecting groundwater is a shared responsibility. If you are aware of an abandoned or deteriorated well in your area, report it to the District or TDLR. By addressing improperly plugged wells now, we can ensure cleaner water, safer communities, and a more sustainable future for everyone. If you have any questions about an abandoned well on your property or need more information, contact the District or a TDLR Licensed Water Well Driller/Pump Installer.



Capturing the Rain: A Historical Journey of Rainwater Harvesting

By Dillon Bybee, P.G.

For thousands of years, civilizations across the world have used rainwater harvesting techniques as a practical and sustainable way to secure water supplies. Long before modern infrastructure existed, communities developed innovative systems to capture, divert, and store rainfall for drinking water, agriculture, and other everyday use. It was a matter of life and death for pre-industrial society. As countries became more developed, sanitation issues arose with historic rainwater harvesting methods, and centralized water utilities that treat water and produce larger volumes from wells, rivers, lakes, and springs became the primary source for water needs. However, many of these rainwater harvesting techniques remain relevant today, especially in regions facing population growth, increased demand, recurring drought conditions, and stressed water supplies.

Ancient civilizations understood the importance of making the most of every rainfall event. In India, communities built deep wells and storage tanks designed to collect and preserve rainwater during dry seasons (known as stepwells and kunds). The Roman Empire constructed extensive aqueducts and cistern systems, utilizing storage and gravity to supply water to cities and farms. In the Middle East, the ancient city of Petra developed sophisticated channels and reservoirs capable of capturing scarce desert rainfall and storing it for future use. During the Middle Ages, cisterns were often constructed in European castles, especially where wells could not be dug deep enough.

In many older homes and settlements, cisterns were even built beneath or inside homes to provide residents with a dependable water source. Rainwater collected from rooftops was directed through piping into underground or enclosed cisterns, where it could be stored for household use during dry periods. These systems were especially common in areas where groundwater was limited or difficult to access and served as an important source of water for cooking, cleaning, and other domestic needs.

Closer to home, rainwater harvesting continues to play an important role in water conservation throughout Texas. Notable local examples include the use of residential rainwater harvesting systems. Throughout the District, landowners and homeowners utilize rooftop collection systems that direct rainfall into above-ground storage tanks or cisterns for livestock watering, irrigation, landscaping, and other non-potable uses. These systems help reduce demand for groundwater supplies.

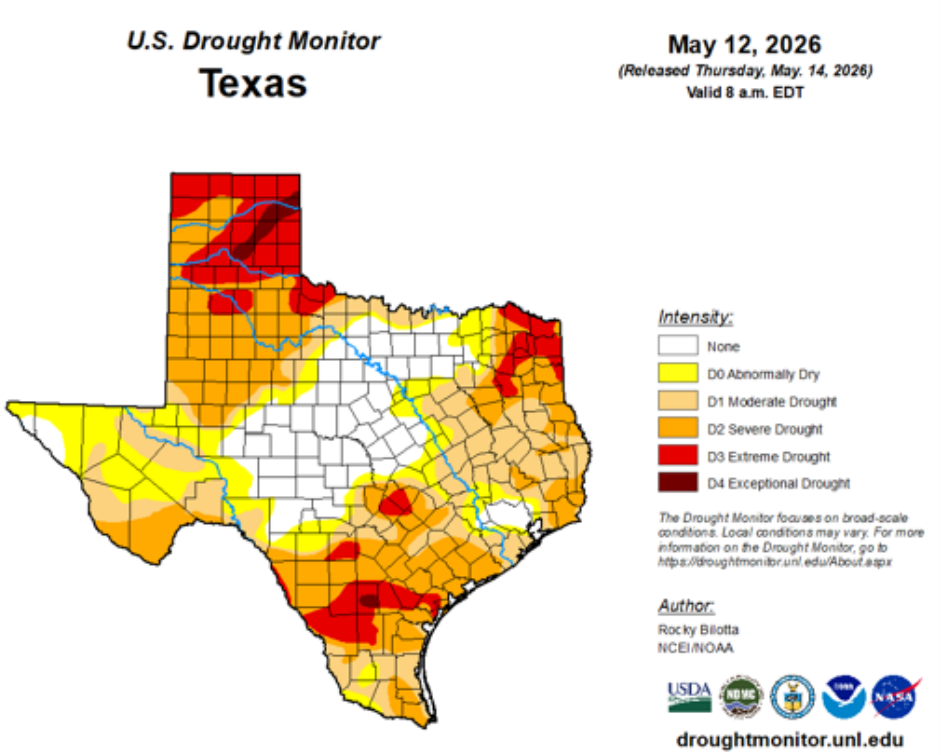
District staff recently located a historical rainwater harvesting system in Ellis County. The system included a unique interior wall gutter design and below ground catchment structure.

The history of rainwater harvesting demonstrates that effective water conservation is not a new idea. It is a proven practice that has supported civilizations for centuries. Today, these same principles remain just as important as we work together to responsibly manage and protect our most valuable natural resource: water.

2026 Summer Drought Report: A Look at Conditions Across the District (valid as of 5/14/26)

Current drought conditions and short-term weather outlooks affecting the District and the State of Texas indicate drought conditions have shown modest improvement following recent rainfall events, with approximately 82% of the state currently remaining in some level of drought, compared to approximately 97% three months ago. Drought area in the state has dropped to its lowest value in four months. The most significant improvement has occurred within the higher drought classifications, with Extreme and Exceptional Drought (D3-D4) conditions continuing to gradually decline statewide. While recent rainfall is welcome news, aquifer recharge and recovery is a slow process. Residents are encouraged to continue to use water wisely as we work together to protect our shared groundwater resources.

Within North and Central Texas, including portions of the District, drought conditions generally remain in the Abnormally Dry (D0) to Moderate Drought (D1) categories, with localized areas of more severe dryness to the east and south of District boundaries. While recent rainfall has provided some short-term relief and improved surface moisture conditions, longer-term precipitation deficits and groundwater recharge concerns persist across much of the region. Current outlooks indicate a warming and generally drier weather pattern across much of Texas, with temperatures expected to rise above seasonal averages and limited widespread precipitation anticipated for North and Central Texas, reinforcing the importance of ongoing water conservation efforts.



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

June

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

16 **Protect the Paluxy Communtiy Meeting**
Glen Rose Expo Center
Glen Rose, TX

22 **East Cleburne Community Center Summer Camp**
Water Education Trailer
Cleburne, TX

25 **Brazos G RWP Meeting**
Brazos River Authority
Waco, TX

July

3-4 **Independence Day**
PGCD Office Closed

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

21-23 **GMDA Summer Conference**
Lubbock, TX

31 **Deadline to Submit Proposed DFC Comments**
GMA 8

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