

Prairielands eLine

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District
www.prairielandsgcd.org

84th Texas Legislature: Groundwater Action

Spring 2015 ushered in the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, and the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District led the witness lists on several proposed bills.

The District worked alongside the Texas Water Conservation Association prior to the start of the session to develop much needed groundwater protection amendments to current state law.

Following this groundwork, the District's General Manager, Jim Conkwright, testified before

the Texas House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee on these bills and others that would have affected groundwater management, conservation, and enhancement throughout the state.

By the close of the session, five of the seven bills on which Prairielands had provided testimony were signed into law by the governor.

Local management of groundwater issues continued to be favored by state lawmakers.

For more information

about these bills and others the District supported, opposed, or assisted in crafting, visit the District's website, and read the more in-depth legislative discussion in the "Mid-Year Report" in the Management Plan area.



Jim Conkwright testifies
before the House Natural
Resources Committee

Summer 2015

Volume 1, Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- Live groundwater level data online.
- Water-saving plant sales & fairs coming to area Home Depots.
- Public education trailer ready to schedule visits.
- Three new district water conservation brochures are here!

Joint Planning & Technical Studies

On March 25, Groundwater Management Area 8 (GMA-8) reviewed "Statements of Qualifications" from four firms to perform groundwater modeling and selected INTERA, Inc. as the

most qualified consulting firm for this project. Discussion continued to finalize the specific work tasks the consultant will perform to provide the information necessary for GMA-8 Groundwater

Conservation Districts to establish Desired Future Conditions or "DFCs" for their respective districts. More information can be found on the GMA-8 website at www.gma8.org.

Water Day at Whitney Elementary School

Staff brought water conservation fun to Whitney Elementary School on May 6. Kindergarten, first and second grade students learned how they could conserve water around their homes at two different learning stations during their physical education class period.

Students discovered that even young children can help to conserve water. Although parents are the ones that can make

changes to the home such as purchasing water-conserving appliances and fixtures, kids can do simple things such as turning off the tap while brushing their teeth that can reduce the amount of water wasted at home.

“Out of all the water conservation tips we talk about, turning off the water while they brush



Shawn Davis reviews new concepts with enthusiastic Whitney students.

their teeth is probably the one main behavior change children their age can do, on their own, to save water,” said Karen Siddall, the district public relations and education administrator. Students were given a new toothbrush to take home as a reminder to put some of what they learned into practice.

Texas SmartScape™ Plant Sale & Fair Scheduled for Fall

Prairielands GCD, the cities of Burleson and Cleburne, and participating area Home Depots have partnered to offer consumers great savings on select varieties of low-water-use plants that thrive in the Texas heat. Attend one of the upcoming fall plant sales and fairs (see insert for dates, times, & locations) and get a great deal on select

native and adapted plants. Shoppers will also have the opportunity to talk with master gardeners; other plant experts; irrigation specialists; water conservationists, city, district, and

Sept 12: Home Depot — Cleburne, 212 W. Katherine P. Raines, 8 a.m. — noon

Oct 17: Home Depot — Burleson, 300 NW John Jones, 8 a.m. — noon

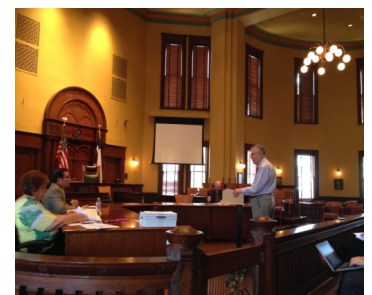
Home Depot staff to get ideas and tips for landscaping in North Texas. Water conservation DIY demonstrations are planned during the events as well as a couple of fun activities just for kids.

Additional information regarding this regional initiative is available online at www.txsmartscape.com.

District Loan Repayments Completed

When Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District was created in 2009, the four district counties—Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell—provided loans to fund the overhead money needed to begin operations. At the district’s first board meeting of 2015, the Board of Directors was able to unanimously approved the early pay-off of these

loans. Repayment checks were delivered to each county’s County Judge by the General Manager during the first quarter of the year along with a copy of the most recent Quarterly Report. He was also given the opportunity to give a brief summary presentation on the District’s activities at a meeting of each county’s Commissioners’ Court.



Jim Conkwright presents before the Ellis County Commissioners’ Court.

Public Education Trailer Coming!

In June, the District contracted with Robert Reid Studios/Azle Models to develop and install educational exhibits in the District's 36-foot education trailer.

The education trailer, intended as an interactive museum-on-wheels, can be used on school campuses and during public festivals or similar events.

Visitors to the exhibits will learn how aquifers are structured, the inner workings of water wells, how

to conserve water in the home, rainwater harvesting, and a variety of other groundwater-related information.

Completion of the trailer is expected for early October, and staff is ready to begin scheduling appearances in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell counties' schools and at public events.

To schedule a trailer visit at your school or event, contact the Prairielands GCD office at (817) 556-

2299 or our Public Relations & Education Administrator, Karen Siddall, at karensiddall@prairielandsgcd.org.



One concept for the exterior graphics on the 36-foot educational trailer incorporates a variety of groundwater uses.

Well Water Screening Meeting Will Feature Prairielands GCD

The Prairielands GCD will be the featured speaker on the evening of Thursday, September 10, at the well water screening meeting in Hill County.

Area residents that would like to have their well water tested for common contaminants can only submit water samples in sampling bags and bottles provided by the AgriLife Extension office in Hill County for this event.

A \$10 per sample fee will be col-

lected when bags and bottles are picked up by participants.

Samples must be turned in on September 9, from 8:30 to 10 a.m., at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office located in the Hill County Annex, 126 S. Covington St., in Hillsboro.

Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including total coliform bacteria, *E. coli*, nitrates and high salinity.

Prairielands will make a presentation about the district and upcoming activities at the screening results meeting which will be held the following night, September 10, at 6:30 p.m., at the Extension Office.

A light meal will be provided for those participants that attend the evening results meeting.

For more information about the screening, contact the AgriLife Extension office in Hill County at (254) 582-4022.

Aquifer Data/Monitor Well Program

Installation of water well monitor equipment in locations throughout the Prairielands district continues with the most recent addition of two more Somervell County sites. These new acquisitions will greatly increase the amount of information regarding the state of our groundwater and actual aquifer levels.

Real-time results from the sites are

available online to everyone at the website — waterdatafortexas.org.

Click on the tab at the top of the page labeled "Groundwater." Well sites are listed by county and the data currently available includes: aquifer information, monitoring entity, latest transmission date, and daily high water level (feet below land surface).



Monitor equipment is solar-powered and data is transmitted via satellite uplink.

Prairielands GCD

Mailing Address:
PO Box 3128
Cleburne, TX 76033
Phone: 817-556-2299

Office Location:
205 S. Caddo Street
Cleburne, TX 76031
(Inside the Liberty Hotel)



**Prairielands Groundwater
Conservation District**

Conserving, protecting, and enhancing
groundwater resources in Ellis, Hill,
Johnson, and Somervell counties

We're on the web at
prairielandsgcd.org.



In 2008 & 2009, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality designated large areas over the Trinity Aquifer from the Red River to Central Texas as Priority Groundwater Management Areas (PGMA) due to critical groundwater declines facing the area.

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District was created in 2009 by the 81st Texas Legislature with a directive to conserve, protect and enhance the groundwater resources of Ellis, Johnson, Hill and Somervell Counties in Texas.

New Brochures and Water-Conservation Material Available

District staff recently completed three new brochures to complement the existing color, bi-fold hand-out of general district information.

"Water Conserving Landscaping – How YOU can Make Every Drop Count!"

This brochure discusses home landscaping that uses less water, fertilizer and pesticides, and requires less maintenance to look great all year round.

"Laundry Room Lessons – Saving Water, Energy, & Money in the Laundry Room"

From updating your appliances to changing to a laundry soap that is especially formulated to perform better in cold water, there are a number of things that you can do in the laundry room to save water, energy and money.

"Water-Saving Tips Even Kids Can Use!"

This colorful brochure suggests ways children can do their part to save water in and around the home. There are links to online water conservation resources for more information that kids and adults can use, and a watery

words word search game on the back.

Stop by the district office at 205 S. Caddo St., Cleburne, or call (817) 566-2299, for copies of these new educational materials.



New water conservation awareness brochures are available from the district.