

Prairielands eLine

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District
www.prairielandsgcd.org



Education Trailer Hits the Road!

One of the main goals of the PGCD has always been to educate the public about groundwater and water conservation.

To accomplish this, the PGCD Board of Directors outfitted a 36-foot long utility trailer as interactive "learning stations on wheels." The first phase installation of exhibits was completed in October and officially presented to directors, staff, and guests at the October monthly board meeting.

Current exhibits in this initial floor plan include a model of our region's aquifers with working storm clouds, streams, and wells;

a large water well model displaying the various parts and operating features; water conservation in the home display that will also test students' math skills; and a video station.

Additional exhibits and displays are already in the planning and design process, and are slated for installation in 2016. When completed, the interior of the trailer will look and feel like you're walking through an underground aquifer.

The project was developed by staff in conjunction with Robert Reid Studios/Azle Models of Springtown, TX, who built and installed the various exhibits.

The trailer is available for school presentations as well as civic events, club meetings, and public festivals.

To schedule an event, contact PGCD at (817) 556-2299.



The trailer has a working aquifer model (operated above by Karen Siddall, public relations and education administrator) that demonstrates how water flows and wells work below the earth's surface.

Fall 2015

Volume 1, Issue 2

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Special points of interest:

- Public education trailer ready for school or public events.
- Next board meeting set for Dec. 14.
- Plants adapted to our climate can save money and water.
- Aquifer water level data can be accessed online.

Prairilands Supports Hill County Water Well Screening

Water well owners had the opportunity to have their water tested this past September by the laboratory at Texas A&M University in College Station. Well owners paid a \$10 fee per sample when they picked up sample bottles and instruction at the Texas AgriLife Office in Hillsboro.

The samples, when returned by the owners, were analyzed and the results delivered the following evening during a program on how to interpret the lab report.

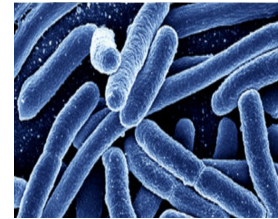
Zach Davis, Texas AgriLife extension

agent, and fellow staff members of the Texas AgriLife – Hill County Office hosted the event. Karen Siddall, Prairie-land's public relations and education coordinator, kicked off the evening's presentations with an overview of the Prairie-lands Groundwater Conservation District's history, goals, accomplishments, as well as providing a light meal for attendees.

John W. Smith, AgriLife Extension program specialist, College Station, gave an overview of the Texas Well Owners Network (a Texas A&M program), well regulations, well protection, and how to inter-

pret the results revealed in each owner's private analysis.

A total of 11 different water well samples were collected and analyzed during this event.



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

Did You Know ...?

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors holds regular monthly board meetings which are open to the public.

Meetings are normally scheduled for the 3rd Monday of the month in the Board Room of the Liberty Hotel, 205 S. Caddo St., Cleburne, TX. (Board meetings that fall on a holiday are scheduled for an alternate date.)

The Board's Work Session typically begins at 8:30 a.m. with the actual Board Meeting following immediately after. As mentioned before, both are open to the public, however, certain restricted topics may be discussed by directors only during

December 14: Board of Directors Meeting, 2 p.m., Liberty Hotel, Board Room, 205 S. Caddo St., Cleburne, TX, 76031

a closed Executive Session.

Meeting notices and agendas are publicly posted prior to the date of the meeting at the PGCD office and on the district's website at www.prairielandsgcd.org.

However, due to holiday constraints, the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting is set for Monday, December 14, 2015, at 2 p.m.

Four Directors Reappointed Until 2019

Prairilands Groundwater Conservation District is led by a dedicated, 8-member, volunteer board of directors. Each of the four counties in the district appoints two directors which are nominated and approved by each county judge and commissioners' court in their respective counties.

Directors serve staggered, four-year terms with one seat from each county expiring every two years. Every other year, before August 31st, one seat per county must be reappointed.

The following directors' terms expired and came up for reappointment in 2015. Each was reappointed by their county to remain on the board for an additional four-year term (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2019.)

Congratulations to Maurice Osborn, Board Secretary/Treasurer - Ellis County; Charles Beseda, President - Hill County, Dennis Erinakes, 1st Vice President - Johnson County, and Craig Dodson, Director - Somervell County.



PGCD Board of Directors (L to R): Maurice Osborn, Marty McPherson, Randell Kirk, Barney Pustjovsky, Craig Dodson, Charles Beseda, Paul Tischler, and Dennis Erinakes

Texas SmartScape™ Plant Sales & Fairs Held

This fall, Prairielands GCD, the cities of Burleson and Cleburne, and area Home Depots partnered together to promote Texas SmartScape™ and offer residential do-it-yourselfers great savings on low-water-use plants that thrive in our climate and soils.



The Kids' Clinic in Burleson featured a planting activity for younger shoppers.

Cleburne held the first event on September 12 with guest speakers on water conservation topics and rain-water harvesting scheduled throughout the four-hour event. The Burleson store hosted their event on October 17 with plant vendors on hand to talk about their products.

Shoppers had the opportunity to talk with master gardeners; irrigation specialists; city, district, and Home Depot staff to get ideas and tips for landscaping in North Central Texas. There were free hot dogs, drinks, and activities for kids with each Home



Johnson County resident, Daniel Ripley of Ewe Got It Farm, demonstrated how to build a rain barrel during the Cleburne event.

Depot holding a Kids' Clinic, face painters, and temporary tattoo applicators.

For information on future Texas SmartScape™ events, go online to www.txsmartscape.com.

Monitor Wells Collect Daily Aquifer Water Levels

As discussed in the premiere edition of this newsletter, the District is currently installing equipment in water wells in the four-county area to collect and record daily water level information about the aquifers beneath our feet.

This issue we will describe one such monitor well located in Hill County. Starting at 535 feet above sea level, the total depth of the well extends 1,102 feet below land surface and accesses water in the Hensell Sand member of the Travis Peak Formation in the Trinity aquifer.

Data collection from the site began in November 2014, so we are approaching having a year's worth of data. Over the year, the water level has varied approximately 6 feet up and down, reporting



Monitor equipment is protected by weather-resistant containers and fencing.

measurements from 308 to 314 feet below land surface. Water levels are affected by the amount of water removed from and recharged into the aquifer. Currently, this site is reporting a water level of approximately 312 feet below land surface.

Water level measurements at this location are taken and transmitted to a satellite every 3 hours. Anyone that can access the internet can also access the collected information at www.waterdatafortexas.org.

Prairielands Participates in Bluebonnet RC&D

The Bluebonnet RC&D is the local resource conservation and development district that covers three of the four counties located in the Prairielands Groundwater District. Bluebonnet's mission is to work with local, state and federal agencies to provide technical and financial assistance to the people of rural communities in the 10-county area of Dallas, Ellis, Hill, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Parker, Rockwall, and Tarrant. It focuses on projects related to economic and community

development, water quality and quantity, information and education, recreation and tourism, waste and waste utilization and natural resource conservation.

Prairielands has been a member of the Bluebonnet RC&D for over four years providing knowledge and expertise while volunteering time, serving on the Board of Directors, and representing the interests of the residents of our counties. In 2015, Bluebonnet RC&D

was able to award three of four \$250 grants to non-profit groups in the Prairielands district: the Hill County Master Gardeners for native plant demonstration planters at the Hillsboro Public Library, Keep Burleson Beautiful for a Texas SmartScape™ garden, and Cleburne's McGregor Park for a native plant demonstration area for children.

For more information on the Bluebonnet RC&D, go to their website at www.bluebonnetrcd.org.

Prairielands GCD

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205 S. Caddo Street
Cleburne, TX 76031
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**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.

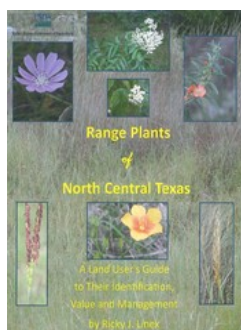
Range Plants of North Central Texas: A Land User's Guide to Their Identification, Value, and Management – Ricky J. Linex

Published in 2014, this useful and attractive spiral-bound, soft-cover guide to what's growing wild out there in the pasture, the local park, or even on the side of the road is a wonderful addition to any land-owner's library.

This easy-to-use volume is useful to not only the experienced land owner/manager but would be invaluable to those new to the area, perhaps coming from a more urban environment.

The book features 324 different plants found in our area, with full-color pictures, and detailed descriptions to help make a more accurate and reliable identification. How-

ever, the real value and what makes this particular guide unique is the included section on each plant's value to the landowner (for livestock or wildlife) as well as management advice.



Range Plants of North Central Texas: A Land User's Guide to Their Identification, Value & Management—Ricky J. Linex

Readers can discover new-to-them native plants that would do well in home landscapes for wild areas, butterfly gardens, or to attract hummingbirds without spending additional money on watering.

Author Ricky J. Linex is a graduate of Texas Tech University, and has spent his 30+ year career as a wildlife biologist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Priced at \$20, the guide is available through the Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation District, 105-C Poindexter Ave., in Cleburne, (817) 645-7711 x. 3 and through various online sources (just Google: Range Plants of North Central Texas).