

Prairielands eLine

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District
www.prairielandsgcd.org



William F. (Bill) Mullican, III, PG, Mullican & Associates, presented an overview of the extensive explanatory report that is to be sent to the Texas Water Development Board at the January 31, 2017 meeting of the GMA-8.

Draft Desired Future Conditions Adopted

On January 31, groundwater district representatives in Groundwater Management Area 8 (GMA 8) met and adopted statements of desired future conditions (DFCs) for all relevant aquifers within the boundaries of the groundwater management area as required by the Texas Water Code. The adopted DFCs were developed as part of the joint-planning process (which began in September 2013) among the 11 groundwater conservation districts (GCDs) and covers all or part of 45 counties.

Desired future conditions are defined as "the desired, quantified condition of groundwater resources

(such as water levels, spring flows, or volumes) within a management area at one or more specified future times as defined by participating GCDs within a groundwater management area as part of the joint planning process." The specified time mentioned above extends through at least the current planning period for the development of regional water plans (January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2070).

Desired future conditions have to be physically possible, individually and collectively, if different desired future conditions are stated for different geographic areas overlying an aquifer or subdivision of an aquifer.

In the case of GMA 8, there are two sets of statements, one set on an aquifer-wide scale for the Northern Trinity and Woodbine aquifers, and the other adopted for the Northern Trinity and Woodbine aquifers' outcrop and downdip areas in the counties comprising the Upper Trinity GCD (Hood, Parker, Montague, and Wise counties).

After adoption of the DFC statements, the GMA submitted them along with an extensive explanatory report to the Texas Water Development Board for consideration and review. This explanatory report can be found on the web at <http://www.gma8.org>.

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Special points of interest:

- Groundwater Management Area 8 has adopted desired future conditions for aquifers.
 - Groundwater issues continue to be of major interest in the Texas Legislature.
 - Prairielands sponsored groundwater-related seminars and presentations throughout the district.
 - Date for public hearing on proposed minimum tract size set.
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Prairilands Sponsors Master Composter Classes



Instructor Larry Wilhelm talks to residents about composting during the February Master Composter training course.

Every other year, PGCD sponsors a public training event in one of the district counties. This year, two Master Composter training courses were offered in Johnson County in Febru-

ary and March at the Winston Patrick McGregor park house in Cleburne. The courses were a combined effort among the district, the City of Cleburne, Bluebonnet RC&D, and the Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation Office. Financially supported by a grant through the North Central Texas Council of Governments, students underwent 3 sessions of hands-on training by Larry Wilhelm, an instructor from STAR (State of Texas Alliance for Recycling). Two evening sessions of composting history, theory, and science were followed on Saturday by a field trip to the City of Cleburne's transfer station. The rest of the day was spent putting training into practice.



Master Composter students check the contents of one of the new bins set up for training at Winston Patrick McGregor Park.

Update on 85th Session of the Texas Legislature

The Prairilands GCD continues to play an active role in developing and monitoring legislation that impacts groundwater resources in our four-county area. A few of the bills the district is watching this session include the following:

- HB (House Bill) 31 (filed by Representative Lyle Larson). This is an omnibus groundwater bill regarding permitting by groundwater districts.
- HB 160 (Lucio). This legislation would limit the State Auditor's review of groundwater conservation districts to financial audits and discontinue their review of groundwater district management plans.
- HB 2215 (Price). This bill relates to the adoption of desired future conditions for aquifers in groundwater management areas and the consideration of those conditions in the regional water planning process.
- HB 2377 (Larson). This bill concerns the development of brackish groundwater.
- HB 3028 (Burns). This legislation, by our own Johnson County/Bosque

County representative, is a comprehensive groundwater ownership bill that would define "fair share" as a reasonable quantification, based on the best available science, of the amount of groundwater in place beneath each tract of land overlying an aquifer, subdivision of an aquifer, or geologic formation that may be produced under applicable DFCs and the operating and hydrogeological conditions of the area, and without resulting in the confiscation by uncompensated drainage of the fair share of groundwater in place under other tracts of land.

- HB 3166 (Lucio). This bill would add a definition of "modeled sustainable groundwater pumping" to mean the maximum amount of groundwater that the executive administrator of the TWDB determines may be produced from an aquifer on an annual basis in perpetuity using the best available science; and including "modeled sustainable groundwater pumping" in the list of hydrological conditions considered by GMAs in developing DFCs.
- SB (Senate Bill) 1392 (Perry). This proposed legislation is an omnibus groundwater conservation district bill overhauling Chapter 36 of the Texas Wa-

ter Code. Along with many other changes, the bill proposes to: (1) require GCDs over a "common reservoir" to adopt common rules; (2) make numerous changes that imply that GCDs must regulate production based upon surface acreage; (3) delete language that allows GCDs to consider aquifer management considerations in rulemaking, such as considering the public interest in conserving and protecting aquifers and controlling subsidence—the only thing that can be considered is groundwater ownership rights and the district's management plan; (4) prohibit GCDs from adopting rules that protect historic users or that discriminate against exporters; (5) require "common reservoir"-wide DFCs as opposed to DFCs developed on a more localized scale to account for differences in aquifer conditions.

We will continue to keep our finger on the pulse of what's going on with these pieces of legislation, and work toward keeping them in line with the interests of our four counties.

The 85th session of the Texas Legislature ends on May 29, 2017.

Well Water Screening Held in Somervell County

In April, the Prairielands GCD and Texas A&M AgriLife—Somervell County co-sponsored a well water screening in Somervell County.

This year, several area residents took the opportunity to have their well water tested for common contaminants such as fecal coliform, nitrates, and salinity. Typically, well owners pick up sampling directions and supplies, and pay a fee of \$10 when they register for the event. Only samples collected using the

sampling supplies provided can be submitted. Samples are returned to the Extension Office at a pre-arranged time. Results are available approximately 24 hours later and delivered during an hour-long explanatory presentation.

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

John W. Smith, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Program Specialist from College Station, led the “Well Informed” program presentation which covered interpretation of the screening results as well as an overview of proper well siting, maintenance, and wellhead protection.

For information on future well water screenings and presentations, check the Texas Well Owners Network website at <http://twon.tamu.edu/>.

Notice of Public Hearing

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to all interested persons within Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties, Texas:

That the Board of Directors of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District (“District”) will hold a public hearing and may take action on proposed changes to the District Rules. The proposed changes establish a minimum tract size requirement of two (2) acres for all wells drilled or completed in any aquifer in the District after the effective date of the rule amendment and for all existing wells that are substantially altered after the effective date of the rule amendment; exempt from the minimum tract size requirement: a) an existing well that is substantially altered if the maximum amount of water the altered existing well can produce is 17.36 gpm or less and the well is used solely for domestic, livestock use, or poultry use and b) wells that meet the exceptions to spacing or minimum tract size requirements

under new Rule 4.5, which allows an applicant to seek an exception if their land was platted prior to the effective date of the rules amendments as a tract smaller than two (2) acres, or if the applicant was in the process of platting such a smaller tract on the effective date of the rules amendments under certain conditions; establish the process for consideration, approval, or denial of an application for an exception; categorize drilling a well in violation of minimum tract size requirements as a major violation; clarify that persons who violate the minimum tract size requirements are subject to civil penalties and may be required to plug, recomplete, or reconstruct the well in accordance with District rules.

This hearing will be held on Monday, May 15, 2017, beginning at 8:30 a.m., at the District’s offices located at 205 South Caddo Street, Cleburne, Texas.

Any person who desires to appear at the hearing and present testimony, evidence, or other information on the proposed changes to District Rules may do so in person, by counsel, or both. Testimony may be presented verbally or in written form. Limits may be placed on the amount of time that each person is allowed to testify. Any person with a disability who needs special accommodations should call 817-556-2299. The hearing posted in this notice may be recessed from day to day or continued where appropriate.

A copy of the proposed changes to District Rules: (1) may be requested by email at rosetta@prairielandsgcd.org, (2) are available at the District’s website at www.prairielandsgcd.org, and (3) may be reviewed or copied at 205 South Caddo Street, Cleburne, TX 76031. Any person who wishes to receive more detailed information on the above-listed notice should contact Jim Conkwright, General Manager, at 817-556-2299.



**PRAIRIELANDS GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
ELLIS HILL JOHNSON SOMERVELL

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

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205 S. Caddo Street
Cleburne, TX 76031

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.

Prairielands Supports National Groundwater Week



Covington High School students were interested in water wells, groundwater, aquifers, and landowner rights and responsibilities. (L to R: Karen Siddall and Covington High School seniors)

During National Groundwater Week (March 5 - 11) the Prairie-

lands' water education trailer and staff visited with students at the Kauffman Leadership Academy in Cleburne and Covington High School. The program focused on groundwater basics, water conservation, and other topics of interest to future landowners.

Groundwater is found in the spaces between particles and cracks in underground rock in formations known as aquifers. Even though it is out of sight, groundwater should not be far out of mind. In Texas, groundwater provides 62% of all freshwater used, supplies 78% of the water used by agriculture, and is a source of drinking water (from both public and private wells) for over 11 million Texans.

Programs for schools and community groups are tailored for the audience and are presented at no cost. To schedule a visit from the Water Education Trailer at your location, contact Karen Siddall, public relations & education administrator, at karensiddall@prairielandsgcd.org or call (817) 556-2299.



Public educator, Karen Siddall, talks to students at Kauffman Leadership Academy about aquifers and groundwater.