

Prairielands eLine

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District
www.prairielandsgcd.org

Board Approves Minimum Tract Size Rule



Subdivision in Johnson County with multiple wells on smaller than two-acre lots.

On May 15, 2017, the Prairielands Board of Directors held a public hearing to receive comments from the public regarding the minimum size that a piece of property must be to obtain a well registration prior to drilling a new well.

Kicking off the hearing, Mr. James Beach, P.G., with the hydro-geologic firm of LBG-Guyton Associates, presented the results of their studies of the aquifers in our area and the long-term conditions that property owners can anticipate based on several well density and tract size scenarios.

Computer modeling predicts that declines in the water table with a continued minimum tract size of one acre

could result in a 65% failure rate of many existing wells in the area over the following five-year period.

However, if the tract sizes were increased to a minimum of two acres for a new well installation, that production loss could be reduced to a 20% rate.

A two-acre minimum tract size rule was adopted and became effective immediately, but a process was also put in place to consider variances for tracts that were platted prior to May 15, or those that were substantially along in their platting process.

District rules and bylaws can be viewed online at www.prairielandsgcd.org under "Rules and Bylaws" or

in the office at 205 S. Caddo St., Cleburne, TX, 76031. Online, the tract size rule can be found under "Temporary Rules As Amended May 15, 2017."

If you have questions or need additional information, call the district office at (817) 556-2299.



Johnson County subdivision with numerous new homes—all with a residential well screened at the same level in the same aquifer.

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Special points of interest:

- Minimum tract size for new well registrations set at 2 acres.
- July Board meeting moved to July 31.
- The water education trailer and district staff have been actively engaging community groups and schools.
- There are few changes to state law regarding groundwater after this past legislative session.

Glen Rose Elementary School Gets WET!

Staff from Prairielands GCD and Texas AgriLife brought water education fun to Glen Rose Elementary School's kindergarten and 2nd graders this past school year.

Students learned about groundwater, aquifers, and how they could conserve water around their homes as they toured the Prairielands Water Education Trailer or the "WET." Students discovered that even young children can conserve water.

Although parents are the ones that can make physical 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 which 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 their teeth is probably the main behavior change children their age can make 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.

After viewing the "WET" exhibits, the students learned about streams, stream flow, and land erosion from the Texas AgriLife–Somervell county agents and their Stream Trailer.



Glen Rose Elementary School 2nd graders line up for pictures in front of the "WET."

Change of Date: Next Board Meeting!

Due to scheduling conflicts and concerns about obtaining a quorum of members, the PGCD Board of Directors moved their regular monthly board meeting from the 3rd to the last Monday of the month for July of this year. The new meeting date is July 31.

The location and time for the work session and board meeting will remain the same. Meetings are held in the

Conference Room of the Liberty Hotel, 205 S. Caddo St., Cleburne, TX, 76031, and begin at 8:30 a.m. with the board meeting following immediately afterward.

**The July Board meeting has
been changed to
July 31!**

The August meeting scheduled for Monday, August 21, 2017, is a return to the board's regular schedule.

The meeting agenda is available three days prior to the meeting and can be viewed online on the district's website www.prairielandsgcd.org.

For more information, call the district office at (817) 556-2299.

Governor Abbott Calls for Special Session

After the close of the regular session of the 85th Legislature, Governor Greg Abbott called for a special session to complete unfinished legislative business to convene on Tuesday, July 18, 2017.

As of this writing, the House Natural Resources Committee (HNRC) Chairman Lyle Larson has filed seven water bills which are the same as, or similar to, bills we saw during the regular session. These bills either died or were vetoed in the earlier session and all have now been referred to HNRC by

House Speaker Joe Straus. Another bill, filed by Representative Trent Ashby, related to extension of export permits consistent with extensions of operating permits has been referred to HNRC, also. This bill is refiled from regular session.

Bills filed thus far address issuance of permits by political subdivisions; groundwater management; brackish groundwater; and aquifer storage and recovery.

As this issue of the *Prairielands eLine* is being sent out, the HNRC is holding a hearing at the Capitol to hear testimony and consider the eight bills filed.



New Field Technician On Board

Prairielands GCD would like to announce the addition of one new staff member bringing the current district staff to full strength.

Michael Heath will serve as the district's field technician and will be responsible for the monitor well program, water well inspections, and district investigations.

Mr. Heath comes to the district from the City of Cleburne Water Utility Department where he served as a water treatment plant operator for approximately 2 years. Mr. Heath has addi-

tional experience in this field with the Benbrook Water Authority.

Mr. Heath has Class "C" Groundwater Treatment Operator and Class "B" Surface Water Treatment Operator Licenses from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and joined the current staff of four in the Cleburne office on June 19, 2017.

In addition to the new field technician, district staff includes Jim Conkwright, general manager; Rosetta Douthitt, office administra-

tor; Stephanie Rexrode, records administrator; and Karen Siddall, public relations and education administrator.



General Manager Presents to Young Professionals of Cleburne



Jim Conkwright fields question during the June Young Professionals of Cleburne lunch.

Wednesday, June 21, saw the Prairielands Water Education Trailer and staff at the Cleburne Conven-

tion Center for the Young Professionals of Cleburne monthly lunch-time meeting.

General Manager Jim Conkwright discussed the origins, purpose, and progress of the district and then fielded numerous questions regarding the board's recent approval of the minimum tract size rule.

After the presentation, the members were invited to tour the Water

Education Trailer and view demonstrations of the various exhibits.

The Young Professionals of Cleburne are a subgroup of the Cleburne Chamber of Commerce and consist of members under the age of 40.

Presentations by Prairielands staff or visits from the Water Education Trailer are free and can be arranged by calling (817) 556-2299.

Monitor Well Program Expanding

Installation of water well monitor equipment in locations throughout the Prairielands district continued with the addition of two more Ellis 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 GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

ELLIS HILL JOHNSON SOMERVILLE

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

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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.

85th Texas Legislature: Groundwater Action

Spring 2017 ushered in the 85th 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 Alliance of Groundwater Districts and the Texas Water Conservation Association prior to the start of the session to develop much needed groundwater protection amendments to current state law.

After laying this groundwork, the PGCD 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 regular session, groundwater bills signed into law by the governor included the following.

- HB 2215 relating 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. This new law became effective on 6/9/17.

- SB 1009 relating to the administrative completeness requirements for permit and permit amendment applications for groundwater conservation districts. This new law will go into effect on 9/1/17.

- SB 864 relating to the procedure for obtaining a right to use state water if the applicant proposes an

alternative source of water that is not state water. This new law became effective 6/9/17.

- SB 1511 relating to the state and regional water planning process and the funding of projects included in the state water plan. This new law will go into effect on 9/1/17.

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, contact the Prairielands district office at (817) 556-2299.