

Prairielands eLine

Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District
www.prairielandsgcd.org

Groundwater Conservation Districts Have a Long History of Collaboration

During the 85th Texas legislative session, a number of omnibus groundwater bills were introduced in both the House and Senate. Although none of these wide-ranging bills made it into law, their very existence resulted in much positive discussion between legislators, groundwater management professionals, and leaders in the groundwater arena.

One such bill, Senate Bill 1392, written and filed by Senator Charles Perry (R) - Lubbock, proposed what he felt were much needed changes to Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code. Included in the bill was the requirement that the nearly 100 groundwater conservation districts across the state base any rules or decisions governing groundwater production solely on 'best available science' ignoring local water use considerations. The bill also required GCDs over a "common reservoir" to adopt "common rules" to lessen the impact on landowners whose properties straddle jurisdictional boundaries - something that groundwater management area groups have already been studying for some time.

Early cooperative efforts

Groundwater districts have been in existence in Texas since the early 50s with the creation of the first district, the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District, in 1951. Others followed, and not only in this state; groundwater management districts appeared in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. These groundwater management districts all had a common reservoir - the Ogallala or High Plains aquifer. In the early 1970s, districts across these states came together to form the Groundwater Management Districts Association to provide a forum to meet, discuss, and share information for the benefit of all.

In addition, districts in the state of Texas formed an association closer to home. The Texas Groundwater Conservation Districts Association (now known as the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts) was established on May 12, 1988. Its express purpose included the "exchange of information between member districts and associate members concerning rules, procedures, programs, prac-



GMA-8 members work for consistency and compromise.

tices, and other duties involved in the operation of a groundwater conservation district."

Some of the latest collaborations

General managers in GMA-9 which encompasses all or parts of nine Central Texas counties including Travis County west to Kerr County and oversees groundwater management for the Edwards (Balcones Fault Zone), Edwards-Trinity (Plateau), Trinity, Ellenburger-San Saba, Hickory, and Marble Falls aquifers met this past summer specifically to discuss the differences and similarities in their various district rules. The goal of the managers was to identify areas where the development of common rules was feasible with the understanding that differences would have to be maintained when circumstances within dis-

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Special points of interest:

- Collaboration among groundwater districts continues into the future.
- The Water Education Trailer is available for school and community presentations.
- Properly capping unused water wells protects our groundwater now and for the future.

Now Scheduling Water Education Trailer School Programs



Don't get left out!

Now is the time to schedule the Prairielands Water Education Trailer (the WET) for a class visit for either the fall or spring semester.

Presentations about local aquifers, groundwater, and water conservation topics are tailored to the needs of the particular instructor, class, and age group, and are FREE.

At this time, the WET has numerous dates available for a classroom or a school-wide presentation and demonstration.

To schedule the WET at your school, contact Karen Siddall, Prairielands' Public Relations & Education Administrator, at (817) 556-2299 or karen-siddall@prairielandsgcd.org.



A young visitor to the water education trailer asks Karen Siddall, education administrator, about water wells and the Woodbine aquifer.

Prairiels at the Fall Burleson Family Camp Out

Burleson families were both entertained and informed at the Fall Burleson Family Camp Out held on Saturday, September 23, 2017, at Russell Farm.

Prairiels GCD and members of the Rio Brazos Master Naturalists, Keep Burleson Beautiful, and the Lone Star Dutch Oven Society were there to talk to campers about various environmental topics.



The WET was set up in the center of camp among the trees along with Keep Burleson Beautiful and the Master Naturalists.

Prairiels staff had the "WET" (water education trailer) on site and conducted tours throughout the afternoon for campers, their families, and anyone visiting the Farm.

Staff presentations focused on groundwater, the importance of water conservation, and water pollution prevention, and addressed questions regarding the district, water wells, and local aquifers.



Prairiels To Participate in Pioneer Days

The Prairielands staff and the Water Education Trailer or "The WET" will participate once again at the Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum Pioneer Days this year.

The all day event for teachers and students is scheduled for Friday, November 17, 2017.

During last year's event, staff talked to teachers and

students about aquifers and groundwater from schools all over the district as well as from other counties.

The free event continues through the weekend for the public and features presentations and demonstrations of crafts and activities from Johnson County's past as well as food and craft vendors.



Busses lined the entry to Pioneer Days in 2016.

Make It A Year of Learning New Habits

School is back in session and while our little darlings are mentally geared up for getting back into the school morning routine, why not have them develop a new habit to conserve water and save some of your hard-earned money on the water bill?

If they are not already doing so, get the kids to turn off the water while they are brushing their teeth. If they're brushing as long as the dentist recommends, this could save more than four gallons of water every brushing session.

How is this possible?

The faucet in the bathroom typically puts out a little over two gallons for every minute it runs. The dentist wants us to brush our teeth for two minutes. If you let the

water run for the two minutes you're actually brushing, it's going straight down the drain unused and unneeded. Two gallons of water flowing for two minutes adds up to a total of four gallons (plus a little more) wasted!

Getting your toothbrush wet and then rinsing and cleaning up after brushing takes around 30 seconds of water flow or only one gallon of water. So, by turning off the tap between wetting the brush and cleaning up, you'll save that unneeded four gallons of water.

If that still seems like a lot of water to you to just brush your teeth, use a cup in the bathroom. Fill the cup and use water from that to wet the brush,

rinse, and clean up instead. You just went from one gallon down to one cup of water use!

For more water-saving tips, visit the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District website at www.prairielandsgcd.org (click "BROCHURES").



Properly Capping Your Well Protects Groundwater



Open, unprotected water wells can provide access to our groundwater to anything that can fit inside.

We often write about different ways one can conserve water by cutting back on consumption. However, another important aspect of conservation is protection of our groundwater resources.

Critical to preventing the introduction of contaminants into the aquifers and protecting our groundwater is to properly cap water wells.

Open, unprotected water wells can provide access to our groundwater to anything that can fit inside such as insects, rodents, or stormwater runoff carrying all kinds of pollutants.

According to the National Ground Water Association (NGWA), the following items should be considered to properly cap a water well.

- 1) Caps should be locked or bolted, not just tight fitting.
- 2) A well cap that is cracked or otherwise damaged should be replaced.
- 3) Well cap rubber seals must be maintained to block contamination.
- 4) With few exceptions, only water well professionals should install or remove the cap for servicing.
- 5) If removed for any reason, the well cap and well system should be dis-

infected afterward.

For more information, visit - www.WellOwner.org or the Texas Well Owners Network sponsored by Texas A&M University at twon.tamu.edu/.



Uncapped well opening hidden among rocks and foliage that allows access to groundwater aquifers.



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

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*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.*

We're on the web at
prairielandsgcd.org.

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tricts required them. Since the beginning of groundwater regulation, legislation, and lawmaking, the state's preferred method of groundwater management has been that it be performed locally, thereby maintaining local control.

In GMA-12, located north and east of GMA-9 and encompassing all or portions of 14 counties including southern Navarro County to the north and part of Fayette County to the south, the 2001 enabling legislation allowed for the creation of a Carrizo Coordinating Council. Although this council would present another layer of bureaucracy, the intention was that it would bring together the encompassed groundwater districts for long-range planning and coordinated management. Although the body was never created, the groundwater conservation districts, each of which have 6 – 7 aquifers under their jurisdiction, have also met for the express purpose of comparing operations. As a group, they identified a list of 18 – 20 significant items of similarities and differences.

This type of dialogue and interaction is not unprecedented among groundwater conservation districts. There has always been a sharing of information, ideas, and resources around the state through individual cooperation between districts to participation in statewide groundwater and water conservation organizations.

GMA-8 stands as a perfect example of groundwater conservation districts sharing resources to solve problems, develop technology, and advance the knowledge of local groundwater and aquifers. This large groundwater management area stretches from the Red River and the Oklahoma border south to Travis County, encompassing all or portions of 45 different counties, and overlays several important aquifers: the Edwards (Balcones Fault Zone), Edwards-Trinity (Plateau), Trinity, Blossom, Brazos River Alluvium, Ellenburger-San Saba, Hickory, Marble Falls, Nacatoch, and Woodbine. When an updated groundwater availability model for the northern Trinity and Woodbine

aquifers was needed, four districts in GMA-8 collaborated to fund the study, preparation of data, and the development of such for the good of the entire GMA.

Groundwater conservation districts have a successful track record of cooperation, collaboration, and compromise in getting things done. In addition to cost-sharing expensive, scientific, fact-finding projects, districts had already begun examining their individual district rules and comparing them to neighboring districts as well as those across the state in order to streamline, simplify, and safeguard groundwater processes. Some were doing this on a regional level via their groundwater management area participation, however, others had already been meeting and comparing notes even before the formation of the GMAs. Thanks to some very dedicated groundwater professionals working steadily to guide numerous activities, these processes will continue to result in advancements in the science, technology, and management of groundwater.

