

Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

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Prairielands GCD Board of Directors Approves Increase to 2025 Water Use Fees



In a public meeting held on July 15, 2024, the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District (“GCD”) Board of Directors voted to approve an increase in the 2025 water use fees for non-agricultural groundwater permits. Currently, the District charges 22 cents per thousand gallons of water for non-agricultural purposes. The fee adjustment raises the cost by \$0.005 per thousand gallons, bringing the total fee to \$0.225 per thousand gallons.

The decision to increase the fee follows a thorough review of projected revenues, inflation trends, and upcoming projects. The Board of Directors emphasized that the fee increase is not only a necessary adjustment for maintaining current operations but also a proactive measure to enhance the District’s capacity to address emerging challenges related to water demands and conservation. Since 2009, the water use fee has only seen one increase, despite

rising inflation. As part of its efforts to keep pace with these changes and maintain sufficient funding for ongoing and future water resource management projects, the Board determined this adjustment necessary.

For agricultural groundwater use, the production fee remains unchanged at \$1.00 per acre-foot annually, as provided under District Rule 2.1(a). Additionally, the 50% export surcharge will continue to apply to groundwater transported outside the District, in accordance with District Rule 7.2.

Residents and stakeholders with questions or seeking more information are encouraged to contact the District office at 817-556-2299. The Prairielands GCD values the collaboration and involvement of the community in its shared commitment to protecting and ensuring the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources.

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Prairielands GCD Water Education Program Collaboration with Tinker

In recent years, Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District (“District”) has partnered with Tinker, LLC to enhance outreach for its Water Education Program. This initiative is completely free for schools that choose to participate, providing an engaging and locally focused curriculum designed specifically for fifth-grade students. The program aims to educate young learners about water conservation within the District boundaries and promote responsible water usage.

Tinker has tailored lessons that cater to fifth graders in Hill, Ellis, Johnson, and Somervell counties. Through various communication methods, Tinker reached out to fifth-grade teachers to introduce the program and gather enrollment commitments. Once enrolled, teachers, students, and parents gained access to Tinker’s online platform, where the curriculum was integrated seamlessly into the existing classroom structure.

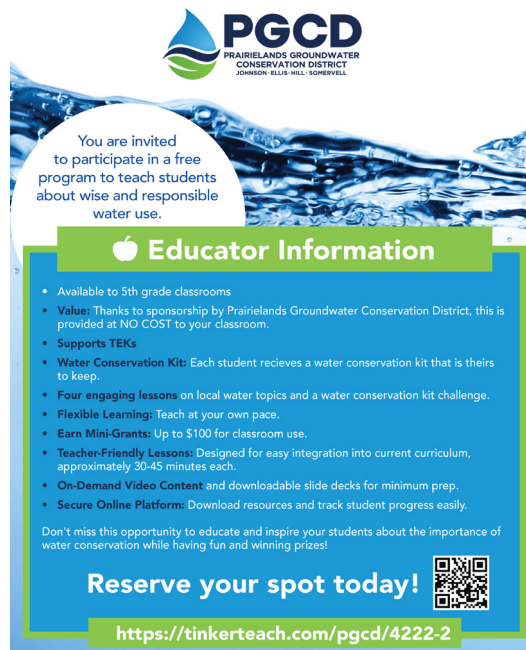
The curriculum is aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (“TEKS”) and includes interactive digital content, hands-on activities, and resources such as video streaming and online assessments. Each participating student received a Water Conservation Kit, which contained water-saving devices that they could use at home. In the final lesson, students practiced using these devices,

providing their families with immediate tools to conserve water.

Homeschool educators stand to gain significantly from this program, as it offers a structured, comprehensive curriculum that aligns with state educational standards while also being adaptable to individual teaching styles. The resources and hands-on activities included in the program can enrich the learning experience, making complex concepts about water conservation accessible and engaging for students. Additionally, the support provided by Tinker’s online platform allows homeschool families to integrate valuable lessons into their own learning environments seamlessly.

Throughout the program, students completed surveys and assessments to measure the curriculum’s impact. At the conclusion of the unit, families made a pledge to continue water conservation efforts. In the 2023-2024 school year, Tinker’s curriculum reached 1,027 students—a remarkable 97.14% increase from the previous year and just 111 students shy of the total from the prior two years combined. This growth is a testament to the dedication of both District staff and Tinker, as well as increased funding for outreach.

Looking ahead, the District aims to expand its outreach efforts through both Tinker and the Water Education Trailer, with an increased emphasis on homeschooling communities. If you are a homeschool educator interested in this free curriculum and believe your students could benefit, we encourage you to reach out to the District office at 817-556-2299. Join us in fostering a generation of water-conscious leaders!



PGCD
PRAIRIELANDS GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
JOHNSON-ELLIS-HILL-SOMERVELL


You are invited to participate in a free program to teach students about wise and responsible water use.

Educator Information

- Available to 5th grade classrooms
- **Value:** Thanks to sponsorship by Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District, this is provided at NO COST to your classroom.
- **Supports TEKS**
- **Water Conservation Kit:** Each student receives a water conservation kit that is theirs to keep.
- **Four engaging lessons** on local water topics and a water conservation kit challenge.
- **Flexible Learning:** Teach at your own pace.
- **Earn Mini-Grants:** Up to \$100 for classroom use.
- **Teacher-Friendly Lessons:** Designed for easy integration into current curriculum, approximately 30-45 minutes each.
- **On-Demand Video Content:** and downloadable slide decks for minimum prep.
- **Secure Online Platform:** Download resources and track student progress easily.

Don't miss this opportunity to educate and inspire your students about the importance of water conservation while having fun and winning prizes!

Reserve your spot today!

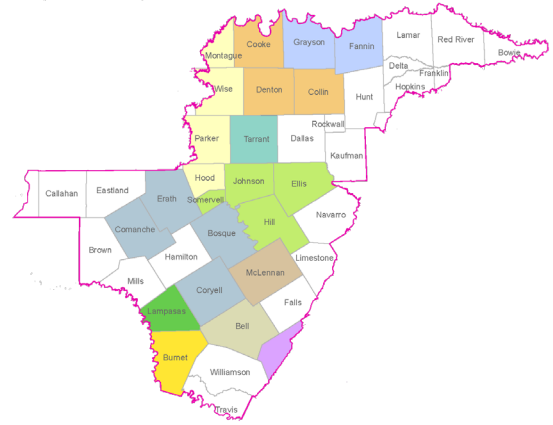


<https://tinkerteach.com/pgcd/4222-2>

School Year	Schools Participated	Teachers Participated	Students Participated
2021 - 2022	7	7	617
2022 - 2023	10	10	521
2023 - 2024	12	15	1,027
Total	29	32	2,165

Groundwater Management Area 8 Updates

Groundwater Management Areas (“GMA”) are areas created to assist Groundwater Conservation Districts in future planning for groundwater. With Texas facing ongoing challenges from drought and increasing demand for water, GMAs enable local stakeholders to collaboratively develop and implement effective strategies for groundwater conservation and management. GMAs were created “in order to provide for the conservation, preservation, protection, recharging, and prevention of waste of the groundwater, and of groundwater reservoirs or their subdivisions, and to control subsidence caused by withdrawal of water from those groundwater reservoirs or their subdivisions, consistent with the objectives of Section 59, Article XVI, Texas Constitution.” Prairielands GCD is located within GMA 8 and works with 10 other GCDs to manage the Trinity and Woodbine aquifers.



<http://www.gma8.org/>

Northern Trinity Groundwater Availability Model

At the beginning of 2023, GMA 8 began an update to the Northern Trinity Groundwater Availability Model (“NTGAM”), with a focus on improving run times and overall efficiency. INTERA, the technical consulting firm overseeing the project, has made significant strides in enhancing the model’s structure, refining calibration scripts, and incorporating recharge information.

The NTGAM is a vital resource management tool for the Northern Trinity region, offering a comprehensive view of groundwater availability. Its updates are essential for ensuring the sustainable management of water resources, especially in a region where agriculture, industry, and residential stakeholders rely heavily on groundwater. The model enables more informed decision-making, aiding in the equitable distribution and long-term conservation of groundwater. By supporting the development of policies and regulations, the NTGAM helps prevent overuse and promotes responsible water management practices. The technical team is on track to complete the model’s updates and calibration by the end of October. Upon completion, test runs and reviews will be carried out for the remainder of the year.

Desired Future Conditions Planning to Begin

Desired future conditions (DFCs) are defined in Title 31, Part 10, §356.10(6) of the Texas Administrative Code as the desired, measurable state of groundwater resources—such as water levels, spring flows, or volumes—within a management area at specific future points in time. These conditions are determined by participating groundwater conservation districts within a groundwater management area through the joint planning process. The planning horizon includes the current planning period for developing regional water plans as outlined in Texas Water Code §16.053, or in perpetuity as defined by the participating groundwater conservation districts.

Groundwater Management Area 8 last adopted DFCs in 2021 and is now preparing to set the next round of conditions. In early September, GMA 8 selected INTERA as the technical consulting firm to lead the DFC process. INTERA will collaborate with GMA 8 throughout 2025, with the aim of proposing new DFCs in 2026 for official adoption in January 2027.

Prairiels GCD Recognized as Signature Sponsor of Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors

In August, Prairiels GCD proudly received the Signature Sponsor plaque from the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program. The District is honored to support this youth leadership initiative, which nurtures passion and understanding of natural resource management in Texas.

Established in 2017, the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program offers high school students the chance to expand their knowledge and leadership skills in areas such as water science, technology, engineering, and resource management across the state. Ambassadors gain valuable insights into water law, policy, planning, and management through interactions with state water agencies, educators, policymakers, and resource managers. They also develop an appreciation for the complexity of managing Texas' water resources and its critical role in the state's economy and environmental sustainability.



Prairiels GCD has three 4-H Water Ambassadors within the District for the 2024-2025 academic year:

- Hannah Lewis - Hill County
- Zane Ball - Johnson County
- Norah Pacheco - Ellis County

Ambassadors are required to complete a minimum of 40 service hours within a year after participating in a Leadership Academy. These hours include educating local communities, 4-H clubs, and schools about water conservation and management. While many have achieved this through virtual platforms, in-person events also remain a key component. Applications are typically open from March through May for students entering grades 9-12.

Prairiels GCD recognizes the importance of investing in the next generation of environmental leaders. By engaging youth in hands-on learning and leadership opportunities, the District hopes to inspire future stewards of Texas' water resources. This collaboration not only equips students with essential skills and knowledge but also fosters a deep sense of responsibility toward water conservation and sustainable management practices that will benefit both current and future generations. The District is committed to continuing its support for initiatives that empower young leaders to make a lasting impact on the state's natural resources.

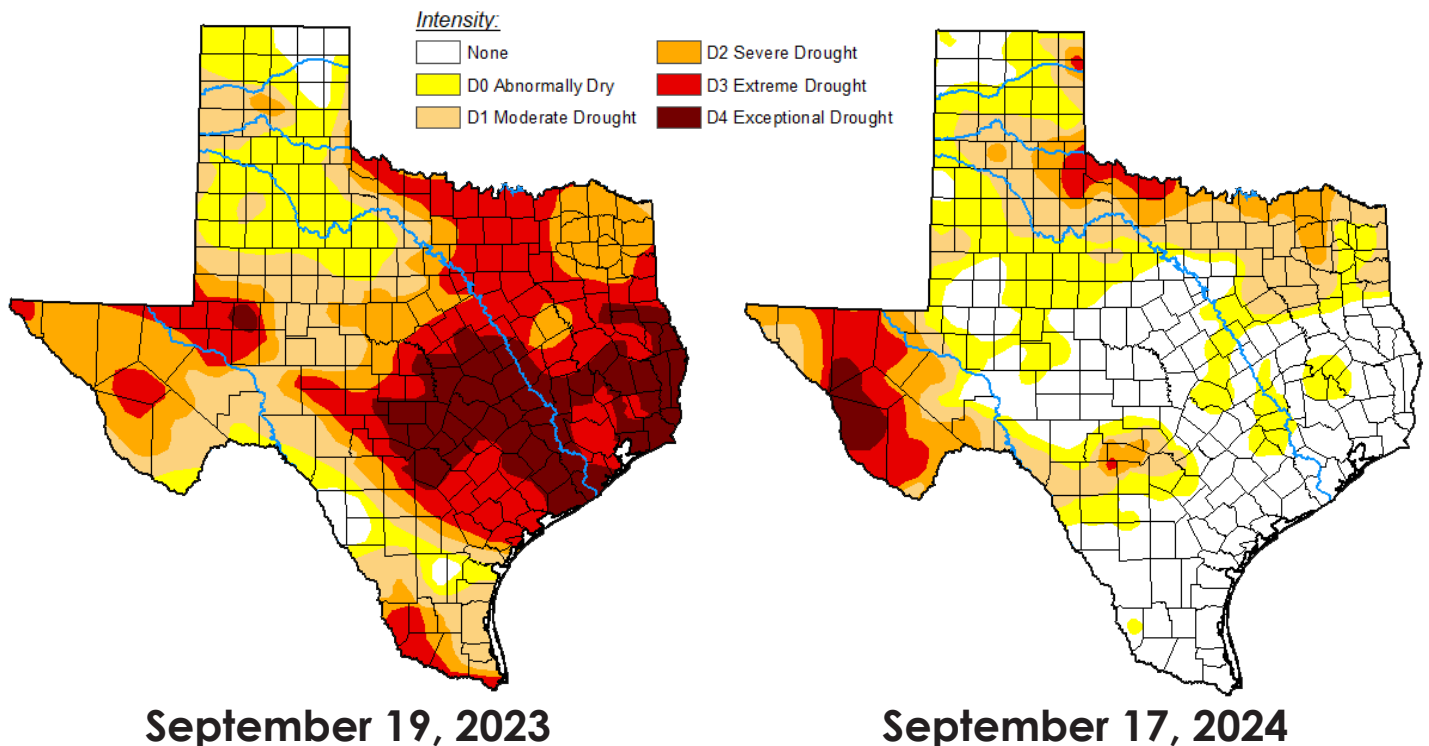
2024 Fall Drought Report: A Look at Conditions Across the District

Sunday, September 22, 2024, marked the arrival of fall, signaling the end of Texas' notoriously harsh summer heat. However, compared to recent years, the summer of 2024 was relatively mild, with cooler temperatures and sporadic rainfall over the last few months. As we step into the new season, it's important to assess the state of drought conditions as fall begins.

Below, you'll find a comparison of Texas drought conditions for September 2023 and September 2024. As the data shows, drought conditions have improved significantly across most of the state. In September 2023, all four counties in our District were experiencing extreme drought. This year, the most intense drought is occurring in Ellis County, which is currently classified as having moderate drought conditions. Throughout the summer, Ellis County saw fluctuations between being drought-free and experiencing abnormally dry conditions. The recent classification of moderate drought can likely be attributed to the county receiving less than half an inch of rain during August.

Johnson and Somervell Counties experienced similar drought patterns over the summer. Both counties remained largely drought-free or abnormally dry, with a brief period in late August when moderate drought conditions were reported. However, early September rainfall helped alleviate the situation, and both counties are currently drought-free, thanks to continued sporadic rain throughout the month.

Hill County has fared the best of the four counties regarding drought conditions in 2024. Out of the 38 weekly drought reports this year, only eight weeks were classified as abnormally dry, and in three of those weeks, less than 1% of the county was affected. Hill County's favorable conditions can be attributed to the 43.58 inches of rain it has received, nearly nine inches more than any other part of the District. Despite this, the county is currently experiencing one of its abnormally dry periods, but the rain earlier this week could help alleviate these conditions, as well as the more severe drought in other parts of Texas.



About Prairielands GCD

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District was created in response to a finding by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality that groundwater shortages were expected in Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell counties over the next 25 years. The TCEQ finding required local residents to create a groundwater conservation district, or else TCEQ would mandate one. Enabling legislation for the Prairielands GCD was passed in 2009.

The Mission of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District is to develop rules to provide protection to existing wells, prevent waste, promote conservation, provide a framework that will allow availability and accessibility of groundwater for future generations, protect the quality of the groundwater in the recharge zone of the aquifer, insure that the residents of Ellis, Hill, Johnson, and Somervell Counties maintain local control over their groundwater, and operate the District in a fair and equitable manner for all residents of the District.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

September

28 Water Education Trailer
Venus Night Out
204 6th St
Venus, TX 76084

21 PGCD Board Meeting
9:00 a.m.
208 Kimberly Dr
Cleburne, TX 76031

24 Stafford Elementary
Italy, TX

October

1 Water Education Trailer
Godley Night Out
Godley, TX

14 Columbus Day
PGCD Office Closed

November

18 PGCD Board Meeting
9:00 a.m.
208 Kimberly Dr
Cleburne, TX 76031

28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday
PGCD Office Closed

General Manager
Kathy Turner Jones

Board:

President
Charles Beseda
Hill County

Vice President
Paul Tischler
Johnson County

Secretary/Treasurer
Maurice Osborn
Ellis County

Director
Marty McPherson
Somervell County

Director
Kathy Tucker
Ellis County

Director
John Curtis
Somervell County

Director
Brad Daniels
Hill County

Director
Barney McClure
Johnson County

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www.prairielandsgcd.org
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