

# Prairielands eLine

The Newsletter of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District

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## Prepare Your Water Well for Winter

As we get deeper into winter we can expect temperatures to approach freezing in the area, well owners must take steps to protect their private water wells from winter's challenges. In Texas, above-ground well components are common, so winterizing water wells is crucial for ensuring well reliability and conserving water during the colder months.

To start, inspect your water well, pump house, and any exposed components. Insulating pipes helps prevent freezing and potential leaks. Cleaning out pump houses creates space for insulation around water lines, pressure tanks, and other components. Protecting plumbing from the well to storage tanks with insulating material is particularly important for smaller pipes close to the ground, as



they are more vulnerable to freezing.

Well houses also need attention to ensure they are properly enclosed to block out cold air. Sealing gaps and cracks helps maintain a consistent temperature, reducing the risk of freezing. The well casing and surrounding ground should be inspected for holes to prevent contamination, with dirt or concrete added to improve drainage. For

extreme cold, heat sources like heat lamps can be used cautiously to prevent freezing. Insulating well house walls and ceilings provides additional protection, and if you don't have a well house, a ventilated well cover can shield the wellhead from the elements.



Irrigation systems and outdoor spigots should also be prepared before freezing temperatures persist. Drain the irrigation system and disconnect hoses from outdoor fixtures. Adjusting irrigation schedules to shorter durations during cooler months minimizes water waste, while mulch around plants retains soil moisture and insulates roots. Turning off irrigation systems entirely during winter, when most plants go dormant, prevents unnecessary water use and assists with the longevity of well components.

Taking proactive steps to winterize your water well and irrigation systems ensures reliability and contributes to water conservation, an important responsibility in a drought-prone state like Texas. Early preparation can protect your water well and the groundwater which residents rely on.

### In This Issue:

- The Gift of Conservation: The Perfect Gift for Garden Lovers - Pg. 2
- The Importance of Plugging Abandoned Wells - Pg. 3
- Grandview FFA & Agricultural Issues - Pg. 4
- New Year, New Habits: Start 2024 with Water Conservation in Mind - Pg. 5



# The Gift of Conservation: The Perfect Gift for Garden Lovers

Do you know someone who lights up at the sight of a thriving flower bed or a bountiful vegetable patch? For garden enthusiasts, thoughtful gifts that align with their love for the earth and its resources are always a hit. This holiday season, consider gifts that not only nurture their passion but also support water conservation—a win-win for your loved one and the environment!

Help your garden-loving friend harvest rain with a stylish rain barrel. Rain barrels are an excellent way to collect and store rainwater for later use in gardens, reducing demand on municipalities and groundwater. Many modern designs blend functionality with aesthetics, making them a beautiful addition to any garden space.

A drip irrigation system is a garden game-changer. These kits deliver water directly to the plant roots, reducing evaporation and runoff while ensuring plants get the hydration they need. It's a perfect gift for someone who loves efficiency and sustainability.

For the garden lover who appreciates low-maintenance beauty, native plants are a thoughtful gift. Texas' native plants are adapted to the local climate and require minimal watering, making them both eco-friendly and drought-tolerant. Consider gifting a collection of seeds or a nursery gift card.

Gardeners understand the value of healthy soil, and a compost bin is a great tool for creating it. By recycling kitchen scraps and yard waste, compost bins reduce landfill waste while producing nutrient-rich compost for the garden. It's a gift that keeps on giving.

From soil moisture meters to water timers, there are plenty of tools that make water conservation easy and precise. These handy gadgets help gardeners avoid overwatering and ensure that every drop counts.

Books about sustainable gardening, water-wise landscaping, or Texas' unique ecosystems make thoughtful and educational gifts. Pair a book with a membership to a local gardening or conservation organization for an added touch.

Consider gifting a workshop, tour, or class focused on sustainable gardening practices. Many botanical gardens and conservation districts offer programs tailored to water-efficient gardening, native plants, or rainwater harvesting.

This holiday season, let your gift reflect your appreciation for water and the gardener in your life. By choosing thoughtful, conservation-minded presents, you're not just brightening someone's day—you're contributing to conservation efforts ensuring water lasts for future needs.



# The Importance of Plugging Abandoned Wells

Abandoned water wells are more than just relics of the past, they pose significant risks to our groundwater resources, the environment, and public safety. In Texas, where groundwater is a crucial resource for agriculture, public water supply and private well owner communities, addressing the issue of abandoned wells is essential. Plugging these wells is a straightforward yet impactful step toward protecting our water supply.



Abandoned wells are wells that are no longer in use, whether due to changes in property ownership, the depletion of their water source, or the construction of a replacement well. These wells are often neglected, left uncovered, or improperly sealed, creating a direct path for contaminants to enter the aquifer—the source of much of Texas’ drinking water.

Wells that are abandoned can act as conduits for surface pollutants to bypass natural filtration layers and enter the aquifer directly. Chemicals, pesticides, bacteria, and other contaminants can seep through these unsealed wells, compromising the quality of the water the Texas population depends on. Open or improperly sealed wells pose physical dangers as well. Animals, and even humans, can accidentally fall into these wells, leading to injury or worse. Plugging abandoned wells eliminates these hazards, making

properties safer for everyone. Unsealed wells can lead to the loss of groundwater through evaporation or unnecessary flow. Plugging these wells ensures valuable water resources are conserved and remain available for future generations.

In Texas, property owners are responsible for the wells on their land. Failing to properly plug an abandoned well can result in legal liabilities and costly fines. Plugging wells is not only an environmentally responsible action but also a financially prudent one.

Plugging a well involves sealing it with appropriate materials to prevent contamination and protect groundwater integrity. This includes identifying the well’s condition and determining the appropriate plugging method, removing debris and obstructions from the well, using suitable materials such as bentonite clay or cement to seal the well securely, and reporting the plugging to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) and your local groundwater district to ensure compliance with regulations.

Protecting groundwater is a shared responsibility. If you are aware of an abandoned well in your area, report it to your local groundwater conservation district. Many districts offer resources and guidance to help landowners plug abandoned wells.

Plugging abandoned wells is a critical step in protecting Texas’ groundwater resources. By addressing abandoned wells now, we can prevent costly and time-consuming remediation efforts that may arise from widespread contamination in the future. Addressing this issue, we can ensure cleaner water, safer communities, and a more sustainable future for everyone. If you have any questions about an abandoned well on your property or need more information, contact Prairielands GCD at (817) 556-2299.

# New Year, New Habits: Start 2025 with Water Conservation in Mind

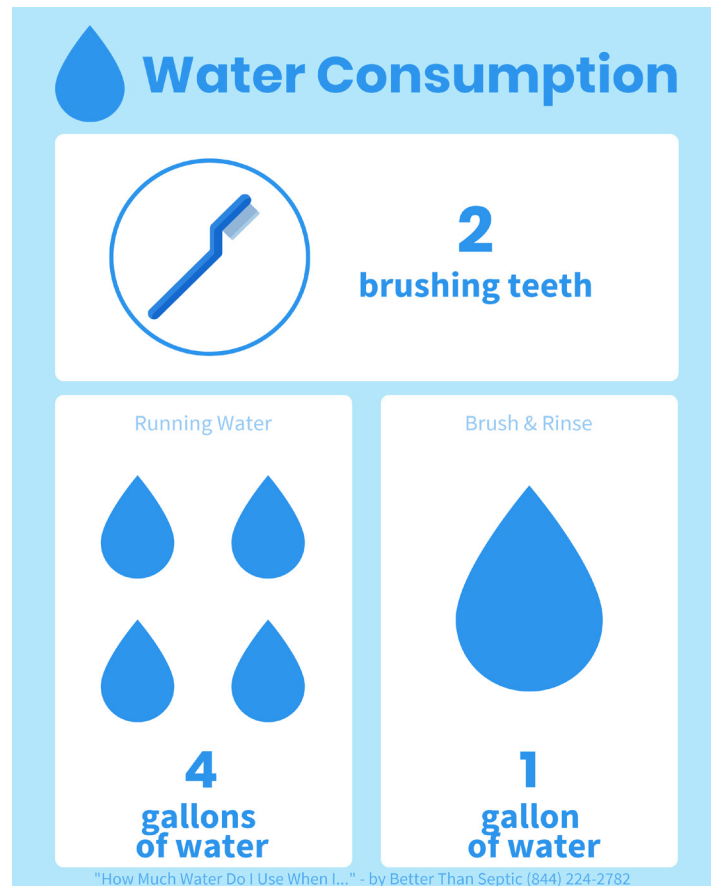
As the holiday decorations come down and the calendar turns to a new year, it's the perfect time to set meaningful resolutions. This year, why not make water conservation a part of your goals? Groundwater is an important resource relied on by much of our Texas residents. By adopting a few simple habits, you can play a significant role in protecting our groundwater resource for future generations.

A dripping faucet or a leaking toilet might seem like a small issue, but even minor leaks can waste thousands of gallons of water each year. Make it a priority to check your home for leaks this January and repair them promptly. It's an easy way to save water and reduce your water bill.

Upgrade to water-efficient faucets, showerheads, and toilets. Many of these fixtures are designed to reduce water usage without sacrificing performance. Look for products labeled with the EPA's WaterSense certification for the best options.



Winter is the perfect time to evaluate your outdoor water usage. Consider installing a rain sensor for your irrigation system or switching to native plants that thrive in Texas' climate with minimal watering. If you're already using efficient landscaping practices, think about sharing your water efficiency with friends and neighbors to help them reduce their water bill as well.



Simple habits like turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or using a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways can add up to big savings over time. Challenge yourself and your family to find creative ways to reduce water use in your daily routines.

Learn more about the local aquifer and how it supports our community. Share your knowledge with others to build awareness. Check out workshops, events, or resources offered by your the District to stay informed.

By integrating these habits into your routine, you're not just saving water—you're contributing to securing water for future needs. Let's make 2025 the year of water conservation.

## Grandview FFA and Agricultural Issues



FFA students are shaping the future of agriculture, serving as the backbone of many states and communities. As stewards of groundwater, we are proud to support these young agricultural leaders as they develop their skills and tackle critical issues from a young age.

Recently, we had the privilege of hosting Grandview FFA's Ag Issues Team for a practice session in preparation for their Leadership Development Event (LDE) competition. The team took on the challenging topic of biosolids and their impact on the local community. With poise and expertise, the students presented both sides of the issue, showcasing their dedication to understanding and addressing real-world agricultural concerns.

We are thrilled to see that the Grandview FFA Ag Issues Team advanced to the state competition! Their hard work and commitment to agricultural leadership are truly commendable. Congratulations to Grandview FFA—your community and industry are proud of you!



## 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

## December

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

**23-25 Christmas Holiday**  
PGCD Office Closed

## January

**1 New Year's Day**  
PGCD Office Closed

**15-16 TAGD Winter Meeting**  
Pflugerville, TX

## February

**17 President's Day**  
PGCD Office Closed

## March

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

**Prairielands GCD 2025 Board Meeting Dates are TBD**



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  
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