

Recharge

Your Groundwater Resource

THIS YEAR'S GROUNDWATER SUMMIT BIG SUCCESS

Groundwater experts came to the Caldwell Civic Center on August 17, 2023 to speak at the ninth annual Milam & Burleson Counties Groundwater Summit. About 300 folks attended the Summit this year.

Leah Martinsson, Executive Director of the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts, once again served as the Master of Ceremonies. Martinsson opened the event with a warm and informative address to all attendees. She then introduced The Honorable Judge Keith Schroeder who welcomed the attendees. Schroeder reminded the attendees about the importance of water for agriculture, our residences, and community water systems and how water leaving our counties is being used for economic development in surrounding counties and can't be used in our District. He wanted to make sure our citizens have some compensation for the loss of our water. He is working with Legislators, local officials and the POSGCD Board. He commended Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Stan Gerdes for their work with local water issues for rural Texas.



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Over 300 attendees at this years Groundwater Summit in Caldwell.

The first speaker, Tony Smith, an engineer with Carollo Engineers and project manager for the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group, shared information about the process of Water Planning in the State of Texas. He explained the history and process of state-wide water planning and how it changed due to the extreme drought in the 1950s followed by the drought of the 1990s. The State's Regional Water plan is there to ensure we have adequate water supplies for all Texans. He noted the process starts with the existing water supply, both groundwater and surface water, and then how strategies are used to meet demands and consider the best way to use our State's water supply. He shared how the Region G Board members take into consideration projections due to population growth, per capita usage, infrastructure as well as current uses and decide what strategies are needed on a local level to address the water needs for the next 70 years and beyond. Tony shared that our neighbor, the City of Georgetown, was the fastest growing city by the projected growth in population in just Region G from 1.9 million in 2010 to near 4.5 million in 2070 and how 5 counties along the I-35 corridor will show the most growth and will account for about half of the region's population.



Tony Smith talked about the growth Texas population and how it affects water planning.



The second panel spoke on the Vista Ridge Project and discussed the affects and impacts of the project and how property rights affect the local GCD's ability to regulate. Billy Howe, Associate Director of Farm Bureau, spoke about how the Rule of Capture affects groundwater and the Vista Ridge project. Robert Mace, Director of the Center for Water and the Environment – Texas State University, shared how the Edwards Aquifer Authority v Day case from the Texas Supreme Court opinion is a complicated decision that is used in many groundwater rules and decisions.

Charles Porter, an expert in Water Rights, discussed how groundwater is an incredibly valuable resource and how water is going to continue to be moved around the state as population centers grow around the state. He emphasized that Groundwater Districts are very important in finding the balance between landowners with water rights and the areas of the state that need the water.

Moderator John Dupnik, Texas Water Development Board, posed the question, "Can a Groundwater District say NO?" This spurred a lively conversation among the panelists. Gary Westbrook, POSGCD General Manager, answered the question this way; "Milam and Burleson Counties residences wish the GCD could say no. A GCD can say no if an applicant doesn't own enough water rights, otherwise, under Texas law a GCD can say 'not that much' or 'not that long' Gary also pointed out that because of these laws the Board of POSGCD has implemented the Groundwater Well Assistance Program (GWAP) to assist landowners whose wells have been affected by regional pumping. This was a very interesting and informative panel. We encourage you to watch the video on our website, <https://posgcd.org/groundwater-summit/>



Bobby Bazan, Executive Director of Texas Ground Water Association, explained the importance of the association which is made up of Texas well drillers and members of the Texas Water Well industry. Much of their support to their members comes in the form of education programs for water well drillers to make sure they take good care of the asset of groundwater.

During the lunch break, Board President Ward Roddam and Gary Westbrook hosted a presentation of awards to retiring Board member Steven Wise for his 9+ years of dedicated service. They also presented appreciation awards to two staff members Bobby Bazan, who has gone on to be the Executive Director of Texas Ground Water Association after 10 years of service to the District and Doug Box, Education Coordinator, who is retiring after 5+ years with the District



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This years Groundwater Summit Big Success cont.



Ward Roddam, POSGCD Board President and Gary Westbrook gave the State of the District presentation and introduced the staff and Board of POSGCD. They also highlighted all the accomplishments of each of the committees of the District, including the Building Committee that is working on the new Educational Facility for the District, and the importance of the Rules Committee and all the work they did this year to protect our aquifers and more.



The Honorable Milam County Judge Bill Whitmire welcomed attendees back to the summit after lunch. Judge Whitmire pointed out that this summit is one of the largest in recent years and thanked the attendees for their interest. He talked about how extensive POSGCD's website is and that people should take advantage of it. He encouraged residents to become more involved with their state, local and county officials. We need to all realize the importance of water as it pertains to the future of our District.

Another very interesting panel discussed the formation, meaning and use of the term Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) in Groundwater. Robby Cook, former State Representative District 17, authored and worked on many of the important water Bills for the Texas Legislature. Those Bills, included how DFCs are used in the Texas Water Plan. Gary Westbrook shared how Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) use DFCs in developing Rules, which provide for the conservation and protection of our aquifers. Robert Mace talked about how the State Water Plan uses the concept of DFCs to help insure there will be water for the residents of Texas even as the population continues to grow. This is another video you should watch to help you understand the concept of DFCs. <https://posgcd.org/groundwater-summit/>



The three speakers of the next panel gave an update on the Bills from the 88th Legislative Session. Robby Cook of Riceland Consulting, the consultant for our District, gave some historical background on how GCDs, being political subdivisions of the State, were formed and how GCDs manage groundwater. Cook pointed out how there will likely be a change in water legislation with Representative Tracy King, Chairman of the Natural Resource Committee, retiring. Chairman King is known as one of the fairest advocates for Texas Water law. Also retiring is Representative Four Price, who has also done a great job for groundwater in Texas.

Leah Martinsson explained how the 92 GCDs work together to manage the Groundwater in the State. Each GCD is different because the aquifers and water needs for each GCD are different. All of the GCDs in the 16 GMAs work together as a part of the process to develop the DFCs for the State Water Plan. She also talked about how House Bill 3059 affects transport fees when water is going to be transported outside the districts. This Bill raised the limit from 17 cents to 20 cents per 1,000 gallons, with an automatic increase of 3% a year, if needed. This Bill also makes clear that GCDs can use these funds to maintain the operability of wells in the District that have been affected by water being transported.



Sarah Kinkle, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for Texas Water Conservation Association, talked about several Bills including Senate Bill 156 that did not pass. This Bill requires attorney fees to be paid by the District if it loses, but if the GCD wins in court, the attorney fees would be paid to the District. She also commented on the fact that Gary Westbrook has been very involved and served as the chair of some of TWCA's interim groundwater subcommittees.



District staff members Gregory Perry, POSGCD Water Resource Specialist and Michael Redman, POSGCD Compliance Specialist, explained how the Monitoring Well Network is necessary to get better science so that we can have good management policies. Greg talked about the GWAP program and how the District has spent over \$1,000,000 on assisting landowners with wells that have been affected by regional pumping. Michael showed the new Driller's Guidance Tool that will be of assistance for drillers and landowners in our District. This tool will help determine the depth new wells should be drilled to and where the screens should be placed.



Jaclyn Wise, Extension Associate Texas Water Resource Institute, gave some great information on the Texas A&M AgriLife programs that the District offers free for residents of Milam and Burleson Counties. She introduced several other Texas A&M AgriLife programs, including the Big Elm Creek Watershed program, the Little River Monitoring program and the Davidson Creek monitoring Project.



Every year, POSGCD offers a FREE water testing program provided to local landowners. This year, the results of the tests were given out and explained at this year's Groundwater Summit. Joel Pigg from Texas Well Owners Network gave an informative program on water quality and explained the results of the water testing program. 69 people participated in this year's water testing. Joel also gave tips on keeping your septic systems in good working condition. For more information on having your well water tested, contact our offices and sign up for our e-newsletter.



What you need to know about the Nov. 7 constitutional amendments election

BY MARÍA MÉNDEZ, YURIKO SCHUMACHER AND TEXAS TRIBUNE STAFF

Texans will decide the fate of 14 constitutional amendments approved for the ballot by state lawmakers. Here's a breakdown of each constitutional amendment and requirements to vote.



Proposition 1 – HJR 126 “The constitutional amendment protecting the right to engage in farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture, and wildlife management.”
What it means: With Texas cities continuing to grow, this amendment would raise the bar for state and local regulation of generally accepted farming and ranching practices. It would require for state and local governments to provide evidence that the regulation is needed to protect the public from danger. For example, it would prevent a city from banning farming in an area for no specific reason, but it would allow for a government to require ranchers to put up fences for their livestock, according to the Texas Farm Bureau, which supports the amendment. The amendment would not affect state or local government efforts needed to preserve or conserve natural resources, such as water, fish, wildlife and trees. Nor would it affect state actions needed to protect animal health and crop production. Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller said “municipal encroachment will no longer threaten the livelihoods” of farmers and ranchers if the amendment passes. — Jayme Lozano Carver and María Méndez

Proposition 6 – SJR 75 “The constitutional amendment creating the Texas water fund to assist in financing water projects in this state.”
What it means: If approved, this resolution would create a new special fund in the state treasury outside of the general revenue fund, endowed with a \$1 billion down payment. The fund would be administered by the Texas Water Development Board to support a wide range of projects including fixing Texas’ aging, deteriorating pipes, acquiring more water sources and mitigating water loss. A portion of the fund would have to be used for water infrastructure projects in rural areas as well as for water conservation strategies and water loss projects. At least 25% of the fund would be used for the New Water Supply Fund for Texas, which will support projects to increase the state’s water supply through, for example, marine desalination and treating “produced water,” which comes from the ground during the oil fracking process. The new fund would be created Jan. 1, 2024. — Pooja Salhotra

Steven Wise - Retires

After an impressive nine years of dedicated service, Steven Wise has decided to retire from his roles on the POSGCD Board of Directors. His contributions and commitment to the District have been invaluable, leaving a lasting impact on the conservation efforts in the region. During his tenure, Steven served as Board Vice President and Financial Officer. Wise occupied the seat designated under District bylaws as representing the “At Large” interests of Milam County, and was active in several Board committees, including Grant, Advisory, and Chair of the DFC Committee. On behalf of POSGCD, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Steven Wise for his unwavering dedication over the past nine years

Lee Pezel - New Director

During its monthly meeting on September 12, the Board of Directors of the Post Oak Savannah Groundwater Conservation District welcomed its newest member. Lee Pezel is a lifelong resident of Milam County and a 5th generation rancher and land owner. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 1985 with a Bachelors of Science in Agricultural Economics. Lee was employed at Alcoa for 20 years with 15 of those years in maintenance. He served for several years on the Board of Directors for Southwest Milam Water Supply. He believes water is one of our most precious resources. Lee has raised a family in Milam County and understands the importance of conserving our current resources for the future as well as supporting property rights for all.

Doug Box - Retires

After five years of dedication and hard work, our Education Coordinator, Doug Box, will be retiring from the Post Oak Savannah Groundwater Conservation District. Doug has been an invaluable member of our team, leading our education initiatives and fostering a deep understanding of water conservation, preservation and prevention of waste of groundwater among students and the community. His passion for environmental education has touched the lives of many, leaving a lasting impact on our region. From organizing engaging workshops, preparing our newsletters and website, to coordinating educational programs, he has been instrumental in spreading awareness about groundwater conservation.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS

EarthKind Landscapes • Fri. Nov 3, 2023 • topic & time TBD

Ag Irrigation Program for Farmers • Friday Nov 10, TBD

Rainwater Harvesting January 26, 2024, 1pm - 3pm POSGCD offices

EarthKind Landscapes • Fri. Mar 8, 2024 • topic & time TBD

Rainwater Harvesting 201: Irrigation • April 5, 2024 topic & time TBD

Rainwater Harvesting May 2, 202 9am - 11 am

Program updates, information, and registration links can be found by visiting: posgcd.org/rainwater

Contact Jaclyn Wise with questions, (512) 409-7028 and jwr@tamu.edu.



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Let's chat!

Phone: 512.455.9900

Email: admin@posgcd.org

Visit our website for more information:

www.posgcd.org

This issue and past issues of the Newsletter are available on our website.

upcoming events

November 3rd, 2023 topic and time TBA

Earthkind Landscapes class POSGCD office

November 10th, 2023 topic and time TBA

Ag Irrigation for Farmers

January 26th, 2024 1:00-3:00 pm

Rainwater Harvesting class POSGCD office

March 8th, 2024 topic and time TBA

Earthkind Landscapes class POSGCD office

April 5th, 2024 topic and time TBA

Rainwater Harvesting 201 class POSGCD office

May 2nd, 2024 9:00am -11:00am

Rainwater Harvesting class POSGCD office

Our Board Meetings are the

Second Tuesday of each month

Groundwater conservation districts are the state's preferred method of groundwater management through rules developed, adopted and promulgated by a district.

Texas Water Code, Sec. 36.0015



POSGCD was created to conserve and regulate the use of groundwater through monitoring of aquifer levels and production and encourage conservation rules which limit pumping, thereby extending the quantity and quality of the water available in all of the aquifers in Milam and Burleson counties. POSGCD is a member of the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (TAGD).



Ward Roddam, President

Jay Wilder, Vice President

Tommy Tietjen, Sec/Treas

Becky Goetsch

John Redington

Lee Pezel

Bob Wilson

Ed Savage

Buster Evers

Kit Worley

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Gary Westbrook, General Manager

Courtney Gentry, Administrative Assistant

Kelli Timmerman, Office Manager

Bobby Bazan, Water Resource Specialist

Michael Redman, Regulatory Compliance Specialist

Craig Andrews, Field Technician

Jeff Fisher, Field Technician

Doug Box, Education Coordinator

Are we providing information you need?

The district staff wants to know what information you would like to see in this newsletter. Please contact us at 512.455.9900 or admin@posgcd.org to let us know how we can better serve you.