

# GROUNDWATER HI - LITES

DECEMBER 2009

## Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5

Ph: 620-234-5352 Fax: 620-234-5718

[www.gmd5.org](http://www.gmd5.org)

### Division of Water Resources continues their overpumping program

DWR is currently looking at a compiled list of water users who exceeded their authorized quantities during 2008, especially those who have over-pumped by more than 6% in any 3 or more years out of the last 5. They will also be revisiting past over-pumpers, performing random field checks and addressing water rights that have been reporting only hours and rates. A focus will be made in the Mid Arkansas River, Rattlesnake and Pawnee-Buckner Basins, but water users exceeding their authorized quantities outside of these basins will still be addressed. Some of the issues with over-pumping will be reconciled by obtaining accurate water use numbers. It sure pays to know your authorized quantity and to carefully review your water use report before submitting it to DWR.

The annual water use reports will be coming out shortly after the new year. Be sure to get them filled out accurately and don't forget the deadline of March 31.

### GMD # 5 WEATHER STATIONS

- 1 GREENSBURG (620) 723-2193
- 2 LEWIS (620) 324-5866
- 3 ROZEL (620) 527-4531
- 4 CULLISON (620) 895-6505
- 5 MACKSVILLE (620) 348-2238
- 6 RADIUM (620) 285-2796
- 7 GREAT BEND (620) 793-5798
- 8 STERLING (620) 278-2632
- 9 CAIRO (620) 672-3359
- 10 STAFFORD (620) 234-5667

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### DISTRICT STAFF

- Sharon Falk, Manager
- Orrin Feril, Data Mgr/GIS
- Juan Uribe, Conservation Specialist
- Jenny Kisner, Office Manager

Visit our web site:  
[www.gmd5.org](http://www.gmd5.org)

### GMD MODEL NEARING COMPLETION

The hydrologic model being compiled by Balleau Groundwater, Inc. is nearing completion. A final report will be generated and will be made available to the members of the District in early spring. If possible, it will be finalized for reporting at the annual meeting slated for February 18, 2010. Watch for more to come on this program.

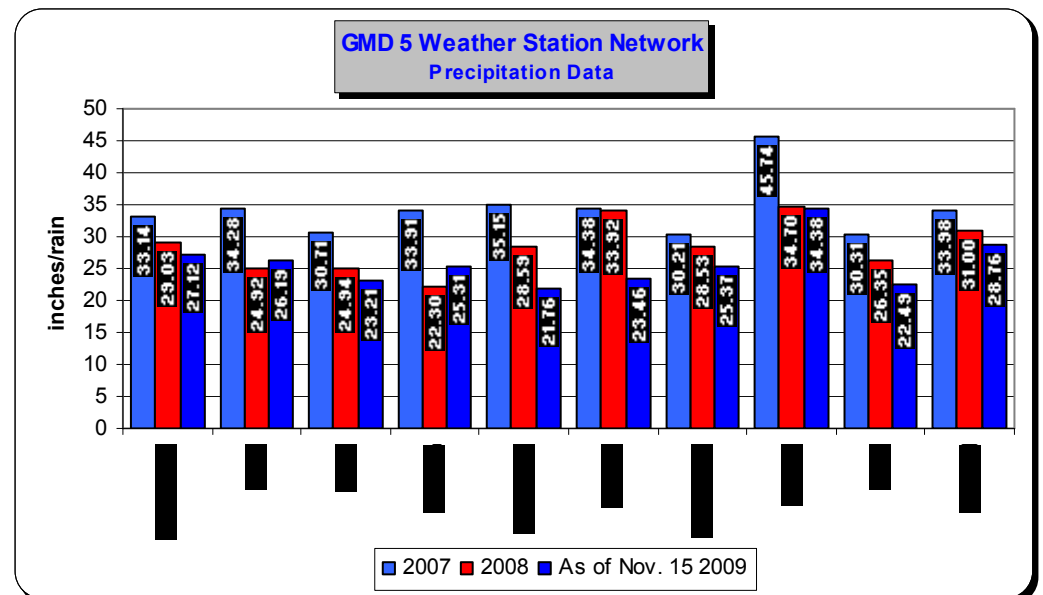
### CENTRAL KANSAS WATER BANK

The deadline to deposit water and to start a safe deposit account in the water bank is quickly approaching on December 31st. Any qualifying water right owner within the Central Kansas Water Bank Association's boundary has the opportunity to enroll their water right in the water bank. If you are interested in how the water bank works, drop by the district office to discuss options available for you. This program offers unique flexibility to water users in our area. You can also visit the website for the Water Bank to explore how you can utilize your water allocations more effectively. The website for the Water Bank is [www.gmd5.org/Water\\_Bank](http://www.gmd5.org/Water_Bank).

### WATER LEVEL CHANGES AND HIGH RAINFALL

Throughout the year, the District monitors nearly 250 observation wells for changes in water level. Of these wells, 94 monitor the shallow aquifer that most water producing wells in our district use. Over one third of the water level measurement sites that monitor the aquifer report higher water levels this year than any other year in their history. The water levels reported by the 94 shallow observation wells average a recharge of over one foot since this time last year. The recent recharge is variable across the entire district. There were 12 sites that indicated a decline in the past year with an average of just over one-half foot of change.

The increase in water levels is due greatly to the above average precipitation we have seen over the past few years. With this amount of precipitation, local irrigators have not had the need to pump as much of their water rights. The recovery of water levels in recent years can also be attributed to the increased emphasis in water conservation programs. These programs offer many possibilities to local irrigators to use their water allocations efficiently. Using the weather stations to schedule irrigation applications is a good example of the conservation programs.



## **Big Bend Groundwater Management**

### **District No. 5**

125 S. Main St.  
Stafford, Kansas 67578-0007

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### **Upper Arkansas River CREP: Update by Susan Stover, Kansas Water Office**

On December 27, 2009, the Upper Arkansas River CREP, the voluntary program that provides producers an upfront payment and annual rental rate payments in return for enrollment of irrigated acres into a conservation practice and the permanent retirement of the associated water right, will have been in place for two years. To date, 10,388 acres have enrolled, retiring more than 21,000 acre feet of water appropriation, most of which had historically been used. The majority of enrollment is in Kearney, Finney and Gray Counties.

Kansas has asked USDA Farm Service Agency to re-evaluate the irrigated rental rates, particularly for the CREP eligible land in Ford, Edwards, Pawnee and Barton Counties. We believe the current annual rental payments that range from \$100 to \$125 per acre are not competitive, and should be \$25 to \$30 per acre higher. However, before FSA goes through the rate review, the state funding to continue this program needs to be secure.

The recent state budget shortfalls have meant leaner times for all agencies and services, including water conservation. However, there are good reasons to keep the axe from falling on CREP. First, the state funds are from Colorado's compact damage payment, not from Kansas taxes. Secondly, each state dollar paid to producers is matched with roughly \$15 dollars in USDA payments to producers. This is money that goes to the landowner and to the tenant if the land is leased. Unless the state money from the Colorado damage award remains in the CREP fund, there can be no additional enrollments after June 30, 2010. This federal-state CREP partnership provides a voluntary, incentive based program to ease out of the aquifer over-use.

### **EQIP Program Continues**

NRCS continues to focus on the "Quick Response Areas" for a reduction in water use by offering special funding for the set aside program. \$1.69 million was allocated in 2009 for these areas state wide but only one contract was awarded in GMD #5. That is not to say that the program has not been successful in past years. Contracts through this program in 2006 and 2007 garnished a savings in average water use of approximately 3000 acre-feet. This program is offered within two miles of the Arkansas River and Rattlesnake Creek, as well as the Pawnee Valley in Pawnee County and the Walnut Creek basin within Barton County. Signup for this program continues with a cutoff date of January 15, 2010. At \$150.00/acre, it might be worth it to contact NRCS.

### **DWR TO ELIMINATE WRCP**

The Division of Water Resources is proposing to eliminate the Water Rights Conservation Program. This was a voluntary program where the water user would make application to enter into a contract with DWR to cease water use for a period of five to ten years. This was a win-win program. Not only did the water user protect their water right, there was conservation of the water resource during the time the water was not used and at no cost. The five GMD's are working hard to retain this program. One way will be to attach a fee to the application in order to fund the program. Many water users have indicated they would gladly pay the fee to protect their water right while not being used.