

# GROUNDWATER HI-LITES

JULY 2009

## NEW LOCATION FOR WEATHER STATION #7

The weather station located near Great Bend has been relocated approximately 5 miles southwest to the SE1/4 of Section 26, Twp 19, Rng 14, Barton County. We apologize for the inconvenience this has caused to some during this transition while the station has been down. It is nice to know that these stations are being used.

The number of phone calls received indicates that these stations are important to the producers and land-owners. By the way, the phone number will remain the same.

### 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)

## *Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5*

### BOARD ADOPTS 2010 BUDGET

The Board held their annual budget hearing on July 9, 2009 with a one-million dollar budget being presented to the public. Discussion focused on the various programs and hydrologic studies where funding will be needed for 2010. After the hearing, the Board voted to adopt the budget as published and maintain the current level of assessments at \$0.05 per acre land assessment and \$0.67 per acre-foot water use charge. The assessed values will generate approximately \$610,000 with the remaining coming from carryover from prior years to fund the budget.

In addition to the regular operating budget, there are many additional programs currently being funded. The purchase of water rights is still a major incentive program used by the Board of Directors to reduce water use in fully appropriated areas. The District hopes to utilize funding for this program in combination with the State WTAP (Water Transition Assistance Program) in closed areas of the District. Currently only the Rattlesnake Creek Subbasin is targeted for WTAP funding. Other programs where funding may be used is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The CREP is utilized in the Middle Arkansas Subbasin and the EQIP is used in most all closed areas.

### AGRICULTURAL WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The District submitted a proposal to the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide payments to producers for the removal of end guns and associated irrigated acres on pivots within the Rattlesnake Creek Subbasin. This is a voluntary program where the participating producer would receive a one-time payment from USDA. The District, as a partner, would make an additional per acre incentive payment to the participant. The District will assist producers with their applications. Unlike many areas of the Ogallala/High Plains aquifer in Kansas, the Rattlesnake Creek Subbasin has the opportunity to be sustainable. With the removal of end guns and the permanent removal of irrigated acres, there will be a reduction of irrigation water pumped.

The producer will be offered two options in the program. The first will be a one time payment of \$2000/per acre removed if the producer voluntarily reduces their water right by 1½ acre-feet per acre removed from irrigation under the end gun. The second option will be the payment of \$600 per acre removed and no reduction of the water right.

The District is currently waiting to hear back from USDA on the proposal. If approved, the District will be holding special meetings throughout the Rattlesnake to promote the program.

## Big Bend Groundwater Management

### District No. 5

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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Rattlesnake Creek 8-Year Review

In the last newsletter we wrote about the 8-year review of the Rattlesnake Creek Management Program and the various strategies designed to reduce water use in that basin. The review is now completed with new recommendations being made by the Partners. There are differing opinions amongst the partners on the degree of success of the program and what actions should be taken for the next four years. GMD #5 has spent a lot of time and money to reduce water use in the basin through voluntary methods but firmly believe that a number of the projects originally established have not had enough time to come to fruition. Several of the programs did not get funded, such as the water rights purchase program, until recently. Another project in the plan was to reduce water use through conservation initiatives. Water use is down the last four years but evidently it is debatable as to whether it is due to higher than average rainfall or conservation practices. The US Fish & Wildlife Service is recommending the chief engineer begin planning for an IGUCA in 2012. The Board does not agree with this concept and believes the plan should be extended to 2016. The original plan notes the fact that success of the initial projects may not be fully recognized until then.

The groundwater model being completed by Balleau Groundwater, Inc. for the Board is still on schedule and should help resolve some of the issues facing the water users within the Rattlesnake and Mid-Ark Subbasins. It will also give the Board some insight into management programs for other basins within the District. The Partnership in the Rattlesnake has recognized the importance of the modeling efforts and understand it may give more direction to the program. Watch our web site and future newsletters for updates and scheduled meetings to explain the modeling process and outcomes. The modeling process could have a significant impact to the water users throughout the whole District.

## WTAP UPDATE

The Water Transition Assistance Program (WTAP) is being funded again for Fiscal Year 2010. However, due to budget reductions the program will only be funded at approximately \$745,000. This is considerably less than what was allotted in 2009. Water users in the Rattlesnake should be aware and watch for upcoming information for signup this fall. The District is still very interested in purchasing water rights and using this program. Anyone interested in selling their water rights should contact the District. As previously noted, incentive programs such as water right buyouts are the board's preference in reducing water use.