

GROUNDWATER HI - LITES

August 2023

SPECIAL EDITION

Quivira NWR Update

UPCOMING DATES

District Office Closed
September 4

District Board Meeting
September 14

GMD # 5 WEATHER STATIONS

01 GREENSBURG	(620) 723-2193
02 LEWIS	(620) 324-5866
03 ROZEL	(620) 527-4531
04 CULLISON	(620) 895-6505
05 MACKSVILLE	(620) 348-2238
06 RADIUM	(620) 285-2796
07 GREAT BEND	(620) 793-5798
08 STERLING	(620) 278-2632
09 CAIRO	(620) 672-3359
10 STAFFORD	(620) 234-5667
11 HUDSON	(620) 458-3021
12 TROUSDALE	(620) 995-3219

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Schlessiger, Barton County
Tom Taylor, Director at Large
Darrell Wood, Edwards County
John Janssen, Kiowa County
Kerry Froetschner, Pawnee County
Fred Grunder, Pratt County
Gary Hornbaker, Reno County
Craig Zwick, Rice County
Marlyn Spare, Stafford County

DISTRICT STAFF

Orrin Feril, Manager
John Hildebrand, Conservation Specialist
Vanessa Marks, Administrative Assistant

Phone: 620-234-5352

Fax: 620-234-5718

<https://gmd5.org>

Twitter: @bigbendgmd5

Facebook: @bigbendgmd5

Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5

In February 2023, a request to secure water for calendar year 2023 was submitted to KDA-DWR regarding Quivira NWR. In response, the District sent a letter to USFWS reaffirming the District's commitment to work with the USFWS and outlined the significant good faith efforts by the District and partners in working toward addressing the claimed impairment. Furthermore in the letter, the District requested USFWS withdraw the request to secure water for 2023 while working through the Watershed Plan process with NRCS as a measure of good faith. To date, this request to secure water remains in place.

The Chief Engineer, Earl Lewis, indicated KDA-DWR was going to update the 2016 impairment investigation with recent hydrologic data and modeling. Recently, KDA-DWR met with several stakeholder groups in Salina. In this meeting, Chief Engineer Lewis and staff discussed the need to administer water starting in 2024. Preliminary data was presented and a rough outline of the proposed administration was discussed. To be clear, no clear details were provided at this meeting. Within a week following the meeting, KDA-DWR provided a "Supplement to Technical Report on a Claim of Water Right Impairment, dated, July 2016." The District is updating our webpage with information as it is available. <https://gmd5.org/quivira-nwr>

What do we know?

- KDA-DWR is "committed" to administering water rights in the Rattlesnake Creek region effective January 1, 2024.
- The regions targeted are the same as previously discussed in 2019 (see figure on back page). These zones are based on modeling completed in 2018 by KDA-DWR.
- The allocations being considered would be based on historic water use. The zone with 40% or greater response (Zone D) is anticipated to see a 40% reduction from historic water use. The zone with 10% or greater response (Zone A) is anticipated to see a 20% reduction from historic water use.
- The proposed administration would be applicable to all types of beneficial use for water rights junior to Quivira NWR.
- The proposed administration is based on a preliminary update to the District's hydrologic model. This update brings in hydrologic data from 2008-2020.
- The ability to withdraw water from existing CKWBA savings accounts would not be permitted within the proposed administration zones.

What don't we know?

- The proposed administration is based on historic water use. The water use years are unknown. Additionally, it is unknown if this historic use is regionalized or individual water use.
- It is unknown if the proposed allocations are single-year or multi-year.
- It is unknown how existing Multi-Year Flex Accounts would be handled in this region.
- It is unknown how water allocations could be transferred or bundled together.

What is the District doing?

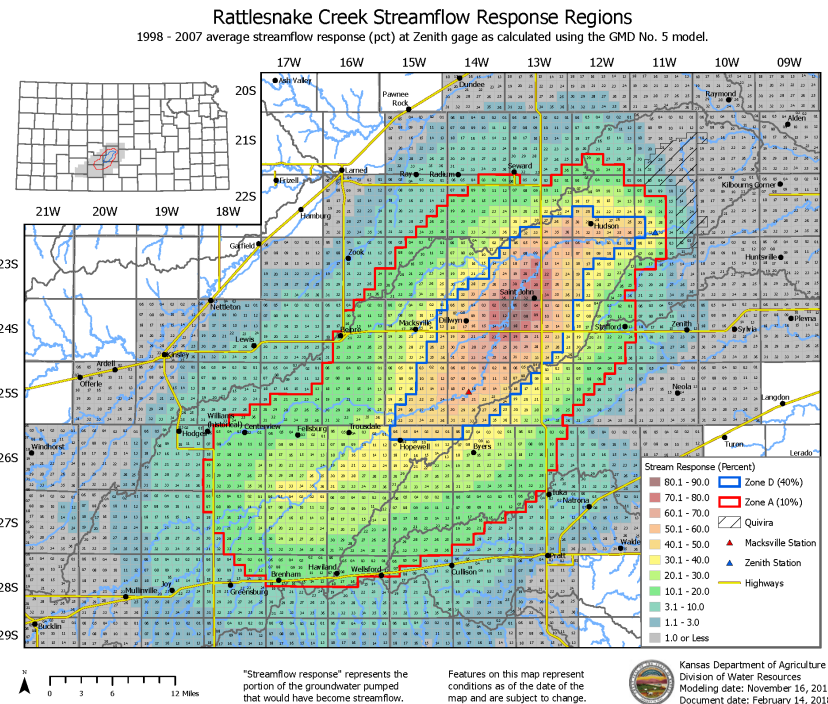
- The District is staying engaged with the appropriate agencies. KDA-DWR to determine answers to the unknowns on the front page. USFWS to continue pursuing the withdrawal of the request to secure water. State and federal congressional

delegation to maintain those relationships. Local stakeholder groups to address questions and raise awareness of the proposed administration so there are minimal surprises.

- The District has requested the full set of data KDA–DWR is using to support the proposed administration. The District’s expert hydrologist will be reviewing this data. The District’s hydrologist is the original author of the hydrologic model.
- The District’s legal counsel is staying apprised of all developments in the matter, including but not limited to, the pending lawsuit in Kansas District Court. The District has already petitioned for intervention into that court case.
- The District is continuing efforts to finalize the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan-EIS. This plan is a thorough evaluation of all proposed alternatives to address the alleged impairment at Quivira NWR. The Watershed Plan-EIS is supported by the Kansas Congressional delegation, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, Kansas Water Office, The Nature Conservancy, and Kansas Farm Bureau. The plan includes funding and implementation mechanisms for large-scale projects in the region and is in the midst of state and federal agency review before entering another round of public review and comment.

What can you do?

- Stay informed! Rumors and misguided efforts will only cause more anxiety and confusion in the region.
- Talk with your congressional delegation. The District will do its best to keep the delegation informed but cannot convey how this could impact each individual.
- Talk with your neighbors. This proposed administration does not discern between irrigation and other types of use. **The general public need to be informed about the issues and how it may impact them.**



**Do we have your correct mailing address?
Let us know at 125 S. Main St., Stafford, Kansas 67578 or call 620-234-5352.**