

**ANNUAL MEETING  
SCHEDULED**

*Thursday, Feb 15, 2024  
7:00 pm*

**Stafford County Annex  
210 E. Third Ave  
St John, KS**

**Election of Directors  
Agency Reports  
Annual Report**

**UPCOMING  
DATES**

**District Board Meeting  
February 15**

**KDA–DWR Water Use  
Report Deadline  
March 1**

**CKWBA Water Use  
Deadline Report  
March 1**

**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
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, Conservation Specialist

Phone: 620-234-5352

Fax: 620-234-5718

<https://gmd5.org>

Twitter: @bigbendgmd5

Facebook: @bigbendgmd5

# GROUNDWATER HI - LITES

**January 2024**

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

### **Watershed Plan—Environmental Impact Statement**

The District has been working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its consultant, Olsson, to complete a Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan Environmental Impact Statement (Plan-EIS). The Plan-EIS is evaluating a variety of alternatives for a dual purpose; to provide long-term agricultural water management and to meaningfully address the impairment of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) senior water right for Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The draft Plan-EIS document has recently been submitted to NRCS for technical and administrative review. This is the final step before being presented to the public for review and comment. The District is excited to bring this fully-evaluated, sustainable, and fully-funded plan to address the issues in the region in 2024. The District and coordinating agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, KDA–DWR, and KDHE) have provided meaningful review and input into this process. When the draft Plan-EIS document is available, the District will publish it to its website for public review and comment. Olsson, with assistance from the District, will hold a public meeting to present the details of the Plan-EIS and will accept direct comments back from stakeholders. This is all part of the process and it does take time to do it properly. The District shares in the frustration in the amount of time this project has taken. However, the hundreds of meetings and thousands of hours put into the project will be a significant benefit to the region. Patience in this process is appreciated and we look forward to discussing this Plan-EIS in detail soon. Anyone wishing to provide additional comments is welcome to do so here: <https://gmd5.org/watershed-plan>

### **Annual Report Published**

The newly established K.S.A. 82a-1043 requires additional reporting of financial statements and activities of the five groundwater management districts. The annual report has been completed by the District and published to our website (<https://gmd5.org/annual-report>) in accordance with the statute. The District is currently working on identifying areas of concern as well. These could include both water quantity and/or water quality areas. The areas of concern and related action plans will be incorporated into an update to the District's overall management program and annual report. Over the next few months, the District will be putting together outreach meetings to discuss these potential areas of concern and possible actions that could be taken to address them. The District does want and need the public's input in this process. Your voice matters and is meaningful.

### **Water Use Reports Due**

The time has come to file your water use report for the 2023 water use year. Filing the annual water use report online ([www.kswaterusereport.org](http://www.kswaterusereport.org)) is quick, free, and user-friendly. To utilize the online system, reference the PIN and PERSON ID found on the water use report form mailed to you by KDA–DWR earlier this month. If you would like assistance with filing this report, drop by our office. All District staff are trained in using this system and we can assist you.

If you are a participant in the Central Kansas Water Bank Association, you are

required to submit a copy of your completed water use report by the same deadline (March 1). The CKWBA does not receive a copy of your report automatically from KDA–DWR. <https://ckwba.org/water-use-reports>

## Annual Meeting Scheduled

This year’s annual meeting will be held on February 15, 2024 at the Stafford County Annex located at 210 E. Third Ave in St John (just east of the Courthouse). The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. There will also be an election of directors (Kiowa County, Pawnee County, At-Large), a review of the 2023 financial statement, 2025 proposed budget and updates on the various projects and programs of the District. The information presented this year at the annual meeting is the first step in the implementation of the new K.S.A. 82a-1044 to identify priority areas of concern and to develop action plans. The District is requesting public input into the development of these plans. The Central Kansas Water Bank Association will be updating those in attendance of their activities for the past year as well.

### NOMINATING PETITION

We, the undersigned three eligible voters within the Big Bend Groundwater Management District # 5 hereby nominate \_\_\_\_\_ as candidate for Board Position representing \_\_\_\_\_ County or At-Large.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Important terms and conditions of the elected position shall be:

- a. 3-year term running 3 consecutive annual meeting dates.
- b. representation shall be for all eligible voters within the county.

I understand the above stated conditions of the board position for which I am being nominated and I accept said nomination.

Candidate’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Petitions must be received in the District office no later than 1:00 PM on the day before the annual meeting in order to be placed on the ballot.**

### Verified Claims

Anyone wishing to verify to the District a lesser amount of water used in 2023 must do so by April 1, 2024. Annual assessments are based on the authorized water appropriation of a water right unless otherwise verified. The District will accept the following as verified claims: a) metered values, b) enrollment in CRP with an inactive status, or c) verified claims showing that the well has not been installed. Verified claim forms can be obtained on our web page or at the District office. Please contact our office if you have questions.