

IN THIS ISSUE:

Rattlesnake Creek
Working Group

Rattlesnake Creek Watershed
Plan-EIS Update

Priority Areas of Concern
Identified

Water Quality Sampling

Kansas Strategic
Implementation Planning

UPCOMING DATES

District Board Meeting
September 12

Local Consult Meeting
(Newton)
September 23

Local Consult Meeting
(Wichita)
September 30

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

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GROUNDWATER HI - LITES

September 2024

Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5

Rattlesnake Creek Working Group

In January, KDA–DWR convened several stakeholder groups to put together short term projects to provide “measurable progress” toward addressing the impairment at Quivira NWR. This group consists of local, state and federal agencies, agricultural and conservation special interest groups, and a variety of non-governmental organizations. Recently, the working group compiled an array of projects to show that the water users in this region can work together to address an issue. In response to this effort by the working group, US Fish and Wildlife issued a letter on August 19 requesting that Chief Engineer Earl Lewis not issue administrative orders in 2025 in response to their request to secure water. To be very clear, this has been a group effort and there is more work to be done in the coming years. The District is committed to being an active partner in this effort in addition to the larger projects on the horizon to meaningfully address the Quivira NWR impairment.

Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan–EIS Update

As water users in this region are aware, the District and its consultant, Olsson, have been working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to complete a Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan Environmental Impact Statement (Plan-EIS) evaluating several alternatives for meaningfully addressing the impairment at Quivira NWR. The draft Plan-EIS has been thoroughly evaluated by the National Water Management Center (NWMC) regarding the technical provisions of the proposed project. This is significant as this evaluation ensures that this project meets or exceeds NRCS’ technical requirements for the Watershed Program. The NWMC has submitted comments to be addressed by the District and Olsson in order for the process to move forward to bring a fully-evaluated, sustainable, and fully-funded plan to address the issues in the region.

Priority Areas of Concern Identified

The newly enacted K.S.A. 82a-1044 requires the five groundwater management districts to identify priority areas of concern within their respective boundaries. In June, the District identified three areas of concern regarding water quantity and one area regarding water quality.

In addition to these areas of concern, the District identified two supplemental areas under consideration. For these areas, the District either does not yet have enough data to sufficiently identify the area as a priority or considers the area to not currently require immediate action. District staff is in the process of collecting pertinent data for additional analysis and observation. This does not preclude the District from escalating such areas to priority areas of concern in the future. For details regarding each of these areas, they are published on the District’s website: <https://gmd5.org/annual-report>.

Water Quality Sampling

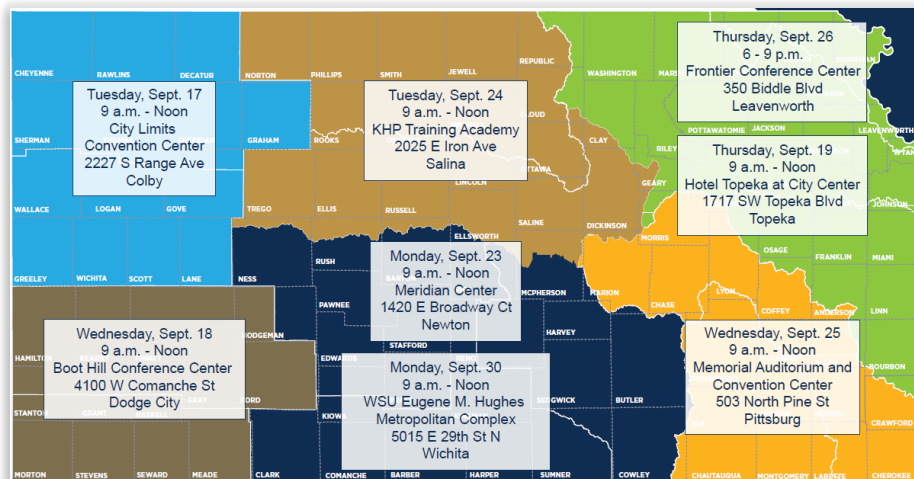
In an effort to gather more information regarding the water quality of the Great Bend Prairie aquifer, the District has been supplying sample bottles to landowners and water users throughout the District. In addition, the District has been providing the analysis of these samples for chloride and nitrate concentrations at no cost to the end user. To be clear, the District does not operate a KDHE-certified water laboratory, but does want to provide this service as a quick assessment of water quality. Drop by the office today to pick up your sample bottles and bring them back for free analysis.

Meanwhile there are two additional efforts to evaluate the water quality of the region’s aquifer as well. The Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) has established a landing page for groundwater quality research and monitoring to assist with the coordination of water quality data throughout the state. KGS’ program objective is to collect baseline chemistry data that will identify areas of the state where groundwater quality is already at risk, or failing to meet health standards, and will allow detection of future deterioration. Secondly, the program creates a public data platform that integrates groundwater quality data across agencies, links with existing KGS water databases, and enables analysis of groundwater quality and quantity. See the KGS’ page for additional information: <https://kgs.ku.edu/groundwater-quality-research-and-monitoring>.

For the past few years, the District has been in coordination with Kansas State University, Barton Community College, and Dodge City Community College with the “Kansas Groundwater Geopaths” program. This more localized program gathers critical water quality information the District needs for identifying areas of the local aquifer with impacted water quality. Secondly, this program introduces students to the geosciences specifically regarding the water quality monitoring focused on domestic wells. If you would like to learn more about this program, see here: <https://heleneavocat.wixsite.com/groundwater-geopaths>.

Kansas Strategic Implementation Planning

In January, Governor Laura Kelly issued a charge to the Kansas Water Authority to develop a “large-scale, long-term investment framework before 2025.” Over the past few months, the strategic team has held several meetings listening to the concerns and ideas from across the state. These meetings are termed “Local Consult” meetings. The first round of these meetings was held in June in six locations. The strategic team, led by their consultant Burns & McDonnell, will be holding eight more local consult meetings in mid to late September to convey what they have heard so far in the process and to continue to gather input. The image below shows when and where these meetings will be held. To RSVP for one or more of these meetings, visit: <https://www.kwo.ks.gov/news-events/surveymonkey.com/r/WaterLC2>.



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