

**ANNUAL MEETING  
SCHEDULED**

*Thursday, Feb 20, 2025  
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 20

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, District Manager  
John Hildebrand, Conservation Specialist  
Vanessa Marks, Conservation Specialist  
Fay Reed, Administrative Assistant

Phone: 620-234-5352

Fax: 620-234-5718

<https://gmd5.org>

Twitter: @bigbendgmd5

Facebook: @bigbendgmd5

# GROUNDWATER HI - LITES

**January 2025**

## **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 dual purposes; 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). Throughout 2024, the draft Plan-EIS has undergone rigorous technical review by NRCS' National Water Management Center. This process has assisted Olsson and the District to ensure the project meets or exceeds NRCS' technical requirements for the Watershed Program. The draft Plan-EIS document has recently been submitted to NRCS-HQ for administrative review. This submission to NRCS-HQ is the final step before being presented to the public for review and comment. The District and coordinating agencies, including but not limited to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, KDA–DWR, and KDHE, have provided meaningful reviews 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 hundreds of meetings and thousands of hours put into the project will bring this fully-evaluated, sustainable, and fully-funded plan to address the issues in the region. We look forward to discussing this Plan-EIS in detail soon. For updates and to provide comments: <https://gmd5.org/watershed-plan>

### **Annual Report Published**

Per K.S.A. 82a-1043 the five groundwater management districts submit annual reports to the legislature regarding how expenditures are being used to address water quantity/quality concerns of their respective regions. As a part of this effort, in July 2024, the District identified four areas of concern as well as two supplemental areas under consideration. These include both water quantity and water quality areas. The 2024 annual report and associated areas of concern have been published to our website (<https://gmd5.org/annual-report>) in accordance with the statute. We encourage all water users in the region to take a good look at these documents and let the District know your concerns.

### **Water Use Reports Due**

The time has come to file your water use report for the 2024 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 20, 2025 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 be an election of directors (Pratt county, Stafford county and Reno county), a review of the 2024 financial statement, 2026 proposed budget and updates on the various projects and programs of the District. The information presented this year at the annual meeting will mark the initiation of the outreach for developing action plans to address the areas of concern identified per K.S.A. 82a-1044. As stated previously, the District needs public input into the development of these plans. Meanwhile, the Central Kansas Water Bank Association (CKWBA) will be holding their annual meeting to update those in attendance of their activities for the past year as well. There have been several changes to the CKWBA over the past few years. If you have not checked out the CKWBA recently, it is strongly encouraged you attend the meeting to get a thorough update and ask questions.

### 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.

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 2024 must do so by April 1, 2025. 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.