

ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED

*Tuesday, Feb 17, 2026
7:00 pm*

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

**Election of Directors
Agency Reports
Annual Reports**

UPCOMING DATES

**Public Hearing
February 17 @ 3:00 pm**

**District Board Meeting
February 17 @ 3:30 pm**

**WUR Deadline
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
Kent Moore, Director at Large
Darrell Wood, Edwards County
Tom Taylor, 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 2026

Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5

Watershed Plan - Environmental Impact Statement

In 2020, with the support of the Kansas Congressional delegation, Kansas Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, environmental non-profits and commodity organizations, the District secured USDA-NRCS funding to develop a Watershed Protection and Flood Control Act project.

The project purpose is to support sustainable agricultural water use and meaningfully address the needs of Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. The USDA-NRCS provides 100% funding to develop the required Watershed Plan and National Environmental Policy Act document, 100% design and 75% federal construction cost share.

Following thorough public and agency input, the plan has been updated and finalized by USDA-NRCS. The finalized document and associated appendices have been published to the federal register on January 23, 2026 (https://bit.ly/FEIS_Note). At the conclusion of the 30-day period, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued by USDA-NRCS.

The next phase of the project (design and implementation) can commence immediately following the ROD publication. The District has secured federal funding with USDA-NRCS to begin this next phase immediately in 2026.

District Management Program - Public Hearing

Pursuant to K.S.A. 82a-1029 the board of directors of the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 hereby gives notice of a public hearing on its state-approved Revised Management Program to be held February 17, 2026, beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the Stafford County Annex building, 210 E. Third Ave, St John, Kansas. A copy of the proposed plan is available for inspection in the office of the groundwater management district and on the web at: www.gmd5.org. Per KSA 82a-1029, any person desiring to be heard in this matter must file with the GMD 5 board at the district office a written statement of his or her intent to appear and a summary of the testimony he or she intends to present, in duplicate, at least 5-days in advance of the hearing date. The hearing will be conducted on the date and time prescribed above and the hearing record will not be continued or left open. If any person wishes to be heard in this matter that cannot attend the hearing, they must file a copy of their testimony with the GMD 5 board at the district office, in duplicate, at least 5 days in advance of the hearing date. (https://bit.ly/GMD5_Public_Comment).

Annual Report

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. The 2025 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 Report

The time has come to file your water use report for the 2025 water use year. Filing the annual water use report online (www.kswateruserreport.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>

**Big Bend Groundwater
Management District No. 5
125 S Main St
Stafford, KS 67578-1429**

Annual Meeting Scheduled

This year's annual meeting will be held on February 17, 2026 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.

Agenda items include the election of directors from Barton, Edwards and Pawnee counties; a review of the 2025 financial statement; the 2027 proposed budget; and updates on the various projects and programs of the District. Information presented at this year's annual meeting will mark the next phase of outreach for developing action plans to address the areas of concern identified under K.S.A. 82a-1044. As stated previously, the public input is essential to the development of these plans.

The Central Kansas Water Bank Association (CKWBA) will also hold its annual meeting, which will include the election of two board positions, one of which represents public entities, as well as activity updates from the past year. Several changes have occurred within the CKWBA in recent years, and those who have not followed the organization recently are strongly encouraged to attend to receive 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 2025 must do so by April 1, 2026. 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:

- metered values
- enrollment in CRP with an inactive status
- verified claims showing that the well has not been installed.

Verified claims can be submitted via the website:

<https://arcg.is/1qbi9W>

Please contact our office if you have questions.

Do we have your correct mailing address?

Let us know at 125 S. Main St., Stafford, Kansas 67578 or call 620-234-5352.