

A twice yearly publication of the **Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4**  
1290 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Colby, KS 67701 ♦ Tel: (785) 462-3915 ♦ Fax: (785) 462-2693 ♦ Web: [www.gmd4.org](http://www.gmd4.org)

## GOAL STATEMENT

The NW KS GMD 4 Board voted to adopt a Goal Statement presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting and in the last newsletter. Since then, the Board continues discussion in moving forward with the goal at the monthly meetings. If you would like to discuss this with the Board, please notify our office or your Board representative.

## FIELD NOTES By Dan Simmering

The 2015 field work is progressing after a slow start. Much appreciated rainfall was received early this year allowing many to hold off on starting their wells. Nearly 80 percent of the wells in the Sheridan-Thomas county LEMA were checked while running. Very few issues were found there. Many of these producers are starting to monitor their meters and keep good records of meter readings. Several have said they are writing the readings down every Monday and keeping a record of engine or pivot hours. They are commended for their efforts! However, elsewhere in the district, I have found meter issues and producers who still only read their meters once a year when they fill out their water use reports. Many don't have reasonable access to their meters. Nonfunctioning meters, unreadable meters, meters missing a manufacturer's seal, or inaccurate meters are all reasons a meter could be out of compliance. When a meter is removed for repair it is required to be reported. When the repair is complete a meter repair form needs to be filed with DWR. GMD 4 will assist in filling out this form and submitting it to DWR. The amount of water pumped needs to be determined. A record of pivot hours, or engine hours, and a weekly log of meter readings greatly assists in this matter. Some wells with meters have been checked for years and the pivot panel hours have not changed. If you do not have an hour meter on your engine or the hour meter in the pivot panel is not working, you may want to address this matter. Several producers have had to contact power companies or expend a great amount of energy to come up with information to prove they have not pumped their total yearly appropriation. If they are unable to obtain this, DWR will assume the entire yearly allocation has been pumped. A copy of the repairs made to the meter must also be included with this form. Many meters are nearly ten years old. It may be a good idea to have them looked at during the off season.

If you are in the LEMA, or on any of the limited quantity programs, the meter is an even more important piece of equipment for your operation. Maintain it.

If the Division of Water Resource conducts a compliance inspection and finds it not working, while it is pumping, they can make the assumption you have pumped your full quantity for the year and you could be **turned off** for the remainder of the year.

In the event you find your meter not working properly and it needs to be taken in for service, you need to notify the Division of Water Resources or GMD 4 promptly and provide the proper form with documentation within 30 days of getting the meter repaired or replaced. The form can be found online at <http://agriculture.ks.gov/docs> or contact the Division of Water Resources by telephone to obtain the form. We can also assist you at our office.

In the event you have a meter sealed or chained to the pipe, you need permission from the Division of Water Resources prior to removing it. You can obtain permission by calling the Stockton Field Office.

## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive this mailing by e-mail instead of the paper version we'd much appreciate it to help save on costs. Please email [scain@gmd4.org](mailto:scain@gmd4.org) and state that you'd like to be added to the newsletter mailing.

## DRILLING OR REDRILLING A NEW DOMESTIC OR STOCKWATER WELL?

If yes, you need to contact the NWLEPG (Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group) for a permit. NWLEPG regulates all domestic and livestock wells. A free water quality test is provided with the application and fee. They also regulate all private waste water systems and require a permit for these as well. For more information contact Shirley or Steve at 785-462-8636

## FRIENDLY REMINDERS

- 1) **Re-drilling a non-domestic well? Make sure you have an approved change in point of diversion!**
- 2) Meters are getting more and more important - keep them up;
- 3) Remember your water right terms & conditions & honor them;
- 4) Check us out on Facebook and "Like" our page for updates;
- 5) Need a speaker on groundwater? Contact the office; and
- 6) All you need to know about GMD 4 [www.gmd4.org](http://www.gmd4.org).
- 7) Next Board Meeting – November 5, 2015
- 8) **Tampering with your meter is against the law and can result in a permanently losing the water right!! Don't do it.**

## ALL GMD BOARD MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Northwest Kansas Groundwater  
Management District No. 4  
PO Box 905  
1290 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Colby, KS 67701-0905

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## SOIL MOISTURE PROBES

Last spring, the NW KS Groundwater Conservation Foundation conducted a soil moisture probe cost-share program for producers. The Foundation provided half the cost of 29 probes throughout the District. The feedback from the applicants and producers with them installed prior to the program are very promising for economics and water conservation.

A soil moisture probe is technology installed within a field. It is installed underground and contains sensors at various depths to monitor moisture and chemical content at the root zone. This data is sent to a website for access via the internet and/or a smart phone in real time data. This allows for the producer to schedule irrigation and chemical application very efficiently.

Producers using this in the field have had up to a 20% water savings and increased their yields by up to 30 bushels per acre. This has also reduced pumping and chemical costs as water is only being applied when the roots need it. The probe pays for itself, makes the producer more money AND water savings to extend the life of the Ogallala for future generations.

The process for installation is quite simple. A water specialist will come to your field and EC (Electric Conductivity) map your field to accurately map your soil types. They will then chose the best spot to place the probe based on this data. The probe is installed and all you have to do is operate based on the data collected and recommendations of the water specialist.

Contact our office or a water specialist for more information. More cost-share programs and field days may be to come if the interest is there.

## REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Kansas Water Authority approved the goals and new committee members for the new Regional Advisory Committees. Last winter, and spring, area stakeholders held several meetings to establish these goals for 14 basins within Kansas. GMD 4 is included in the Upper Republican Regional Planning Area and will be actively involved on the committee.

### Goals for the Upper Republican Regional Planning Area:

1. *Develop and adopt a water conservation management plan that provides maximum flexibility while reducing overall actual use, in concert with GMD 4, to extend the aquifer life and economic well-being by January 1, 2017. Utilize a time-phased implementation approach, not less than 2 years or greater than 5 years, to phase in conservation measures to lessen economic impacts and allow user transition. Conservation Plan shall address all types of use while considering flexibility tools and overall actual reduction.*

2. *Enhance current efforts on education of all water users for all age groups on sources of supply, quantity of supply, best management practices, etc. to help stakeholders conserve and extend.*

3. *Republican River Compact administration should be encouraged to maintain compliance in the South Fork Republican River.*

4. *Increase utilization and adoption of water conservation technology and practices by 10% by 2020. Actively seek annual funding to ensure successful achievement of goal.*

5. *Encourage the state to coordinate with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA), as well as our Congressional delegation and neighboring states, to develop common sense tools for crop insurance that encourage water conservation and have such tools and policies available by 2016.*

Location, dates and times of RAC meetings have yet to be announced, but should begin this fall. Contact our office, check the website and/or our Facebook page for updates.

## VENDORS WANTED FOR ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual GMD 4 Meeting is scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Hoxie, Kansas. We are inviting vendors to display their product(s) and/or services that relate to water and irrigation efficiency at this meeting. Please contact our office for questions or to put your name on the list as a vendor by December 1, 2015.

## KANSAS AQUEDUCT

Some of you may have been reading in the papers or seeing information on the Kansas Aqueduct. This is a proposed project to transport water via a canal system to southwest Kansas from the Missouri River. The Army Corps of Engineers recently updated a 1982 study that concluded it would take \$18 billion to build and finance and another \$400 million a year to operate. The need for the water in the area is great, but many do not think it is worth the extreme cost. Others believe it is the key to Kansas economics and agriculture. A Kansas Aqueduct Coalition has been formed. I encourage you to visit their website at [www.kansasaqueductcoalition.com](http://www.kansasaqueductcoalition.com) for more information.

## CLOSING THE DISTRICT

A moratorium on **new appropriations expires February 3, 2016**. Regulation language has since been approved by the Board. The Division of Water Resources will be moving forward with a hearing soon. The new regulation would close the district to new applications to appropriate water for beneficial use within the Ogallala with the exception of domestic, term and temporary applications. This does not include changes to your existing water rights in point of diversion, change in place of use, or use made of water.

### The Water Table

Sponsored by the NW Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, 1290 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Colby, KS 67701-0905. Office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except the noon hour) - closed for State holidays.

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**STAFF:** Ray Luhman - Manager; Shannon Cain - Assistant Manager; Dan Simmering - Field Technician; Rita Wade - Secretary/Receptionist; Jeff Mason - Attorney.

## Pumping the Tailwater

### How Do We Prolong the Life of the Ogallala?

**by Ray Luhman**

I think we've moved past the question of "Should we do something to prolong the life of the aquifer?" and onto the more serious question of "How do we prolong the life of the aquifer?". This progression involves some very serious consideration of alternatives, and involves not only hydrologic issues, but also sociological, economic, and political issues as well.

Our Board continues to explore options that are both equitable and understandable. This is not as easy as it may sound. It seems that fine-tuning possible management policies to insure ever smaller management areas necessitates an ever increasing volume of data. Explaining the use of this increased volume of data to those unfamiliar with the process can quickly become very difficult. Conversely, application of a "one size fits all" philosophy comes with a whole list of its own drawbacks. After going over the data many times, and considering several different alternatives, I believe a "middle ground" is achievable.

I think that the Board is getting closer to coming up with a reasonable compromise. I think the Board should be commended for their continued work towards developing a program that combines both fairness and understandability. Public input can be valuable to this process, and I encourage the landowners and water users of GMD 4 to stay involved. You can do this by contacting your Board members or GMD 4 staff. This is an open process, and we'll be more than glad to give information and/or updates at any time.

Stay informed. Remember, just because it's said in the coffee shop doesn't necessarily mean it's true.