

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

DISTRICT WIDE LEMA

The NW KS GMD 4 Board has started talks with the Division of Water Resources about a District Wide LEMA. They currently have a framework in place and are working on the details.

The plan is based on average annual declines by township. Irrigators within a township with no decline will be capped at the 80% Net Irrigation Requirements (NIR) for corn in their county as set in the Kansas Irrigation Guide. Irrigators with less than 1% decline will be capped to the 50% NIR and irrigators with greater than 1% decline will be capped at 20% of the 80% NIR. Those water rights already authorized below the LEMA quantity will remain at their authorized water right quantity.

Flexibility within the plan is also being discussed. The possibility of a five year allocation, not to exceed your authorized annual water right quantity and possible carry-over quantity to the next five years is on the table. Reductions in other uses of water than irrigation have yet to be discussed.

The water table declines to be reviewed every five years to determine if changes in quantity need to be made by township.

A map is available at www.gmd4.org that shows more detail on what townships would be triggered and the maximum quantity any one irrigation water right within that township could pump. Public meetings will be held once details to the LEMA have been decided. Public meetings will be coming in late March and early April. If you have any questions or comments please contact our office.

CLOSING THE DISTRICT

On April 4, 2016 at 10:00 am, a public hearing on closing the district to new appropriations will take place via teleconference. The teleconference will take place at the GMD 4 District Office and is open to the public.

ANNUAL WELL MEASUREMENTS

Every year in January KGS and DWR measure water levels in wells across the state. The average level fell 0.58 feet in GMD 4 last year, which is about average for annual declines across the district since 1996.

On the other side, several of the wells measured in SD 6 LEMA have risen. The 2015 growing season gifted lots of precipitation for the area as well. It's a good indication that more precipitation and less pumping can put water back into the aquifer.

Additional analysis will be done and all measurements are provisional, but you can view the data at <http://www.kgs.ku.edu/Magellan/WaterLevels/index.html>.

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Upper Republican Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) has had two meetings to move forward with the goals outlined for this region. GMD 4 does has a spot on the committee and is actively working with others members for action on the goals. With GMD 4 focusing on the District Wide LEMA and water conservation, more attention would be given to other goals like improving technology and best management practices.

FIELD NOTES

Dan Simmering

Once again, just a little reminder regarding your meters. In the event of the Division of Water Resources conducting a random compliance inspection on your well and finding the meter not working while you are pumping, they can make the assumption that you have pumped your full annual quantity. You could be turned off for the rest of the season.

If 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 GMD4, 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.

If your meter has been sealed or chained to the pipe by the Division of Water Resources, you need permission from them prior to removing it. You can obtain permission by calling the Stockton Field Office.

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;
- 6) All you need to know about GMD 4 (24/7) = www.gmd4.org.

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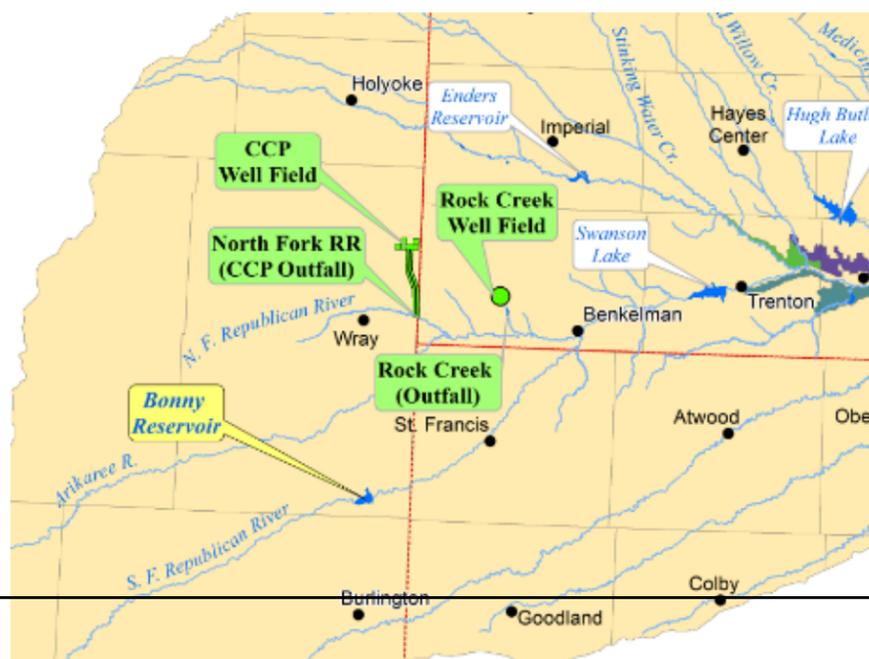
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REPUBLICAN RIVER COLORADO AUGMENTATION PIPELINE

The pumping of the Ogallala in Colorado and delivering it to Swanson Reservoir to comply with the Republican River has created recent debate within the district. The issues surrounding Colorado's augmentation project are complicated and can be confusing. David Barfield, Chief Engineer, gave the following facts about the issue:

- The states entered into the Republican River Compact in 1943. It is federal law and state law in Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska and allocates 100% of the surface water supply of the basin.
- In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that groundwater depletions to streamflow are required to be accounted for as use in the Compact accounting.
- The groundwater pumping which supports Colorado's 500,000+ irrigated acres is depleting surface flows in the Republican River Basin and as a result, Colorado has, for several years, been using more than its allocation.
- To comply, Colorado must either drastically cut groundwater irrigation or augment streamflow, or some combination of the two. Colorado has retired about 24,000 irrigated acres through permanent CREP buyouts. Colorado has further chosen to retire another 10,000 groundwater-irrigated acres and instead use that water in its augmentation project. So, instead of retiring several 100,000's of groundwater-irrigated acres to keep its use within its lawful allocation, Colorado has chosen to retire about 35,000 irrigated acres and pump water into the North Fork Republican River.
- The augmentation water is run during the winter and delivered to Swanson Reservoir. There, it is used by Nebraska surface water irrigators that have been shorted by groundwater depletions to streamflow caused by Colorado pumping.
- Kansas still gets its share of water via augmentation deliveries by Nebraska to Harlan County Lake.
- Kansas's main concern with the Colorado augmentation project is that it offsets Colorado's South Fork Republican River overuse on the North Folk Republican River. We feel that Colorado should repair the damage it has done to South Fork flows and restore the water resource to the Kansas users that are entitled to it.
- The states are in discussion about this concern.
- KDA-DWR is also concerned about the use of augmentation and its long-term effects on groundwater resources. We are committed to working with local water users and our neighboring states to find common-sense solutions that protect our intertwined economies and keep our communities strong.

There have been many rumors about the issue and I encourage you to call our office or the Division of Water Resources if you want to learn more on the actual facts or have questions. Below is a map of the Colorado Augmentation Pipeline.



OTHER HAPPENINGS

- We have been in great need for a new roof and am excited to announce the new roof was completed in December! We are looking forward to expanding the board room next.
- Four Soil Moisture Probe Workshops were conducted in January. Data was presented on the research, the various types available and cost-share programs available. Most were very well attended. We would like to do more workshops. If you have anything you would like to learn more about, please contact the office.
- NRCS has a RCPP Grant available for soil moisture probes! You must have a minimum 540 gpm well and other criteria to qualify. Please contact your local NRCS to apply or ask questions.
- Our 41st Annual Meeting was February 10th in Hoxie. It was very well attended and we thank everyone for coming out. In case you missed it, we had a trade show that involved several vendors of soil moisture probes, Dragon-Lines, Valley, and others. The Chief Engineer, Assistant KDA Secretary, and Director of the KWO were also in attendance.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

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

Pumping the Tailwater

By Ray Luhman

As we move forward with the idea of a district-wide LEMA a few things have come up. First, it is important to understand that the idea is far from the finished product, and we will be seeking public involvement soon. There are most likely ideas we have not considered, or other ways to reach a goal that we have not articulated. Your input can be very valuable in this process. Your ideas may not make the final version, but I think the Board is interested in hearing from you.

Secondly, and maybe more important, is that you understand exactly what the proposal entails. I know that many have not seen the initial map, and are making decisions or forming opinions based on partial or faulty information. I truly do encourage anyone to contact the GMD office or a GMD Board member to find out exactly where we're at, what we're doing, and how that may or may not impact you.

Although the Board will make the final decision I believe that the best product will be a combination of ideas. Please stay informed and plan to be a part of the process.

The Water Table

Sponsored by the NW Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, 1290 West 4th 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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