

The Water Table

DISTRICT-WIDE LEMA UPDATE

A proposed District-Wide LEMA was sent to the Division of Water Resources in June 2017. After their review, a hearing was held on August 23rd in Colby to determine boundaries, public interest, and need for provisions. If the decision from that hearing determines those are satisfactory, a second hearing will be scheduled to address the specific corrective controls outlined in the proposed LEMA. The Division of Water Resources will mail all water right holders, and water use correspondents notice of that hearing. GMD 4 will mail everyone that receives our

newsletter a postcard with information about the hearing. You are encouraged to provide testimony either in support, or not, at that hearing. Written testimony can also be received by the Division of Water Resources.

To view the proposed map and to see what your preliminary allocation would be please go to www.gmd4.org.

SD-6 LEMA RENEWED

A public meeting was held last winter to determine if the SD-6 LEMA should be continued. After hearing from stakeholders within the area, the SD-6 Advisory Committee made the recommendation to the GMD 4 Board of Directors to continue with the SD-6 LEMA and allow for up to five-inch carry-over if that remained in an irrigator's current SD-6 LEMA account. The board of directors voted in favor of submitting the proposal to the Division of Water Resources. Two hearings were held on May 31st, 2017 and an order was issued on August 24th to continue the SD-6 LEMA with the carry-over beginning in January 2018 for another five years.



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Late Water Use Report Fees Going Up!!!

Are you one that waits until March 1st to turn in your water use report? If so, we encourage you to change your practices as late water use report fees went up. If you file your report between March 1st and June 1st, you will be fined \$250 per water right number. If you file after June 1st, you will be fined \$1000 per water right number and could even be shut off until

the water use report is filed. Water use report cards are usually mailed the first couple of weeks in January. I encourage you to fill it out online, mail it in, or come to the GMD 4 office for assistance as soon as you receive it to avoid these hefty fines



“We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.”
~ Thomas Fuller

Dan's Field Notes

You may have noticed us out in the field more frequently this year. We have been doing random compliance inspections in efforts to make sure your diversion works are in compliance with state regulations and to notify you if we see anything that is not in compliance. Please flag us down if you have questions or need assistance with anything while we are there.

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 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.

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



Soil Moisture Probe Program

The Northwest Kansas Groundwater Conservation Foundation has sponsored a cost-share program for soil moisture probes the last three years. The soil moisture probes allow an irrigator to see below the surface at the moisture and other needs the root depth of the crops with the assistance of technology. The producers that are using these are saving on average 20% of their water usage. Several producers have saved more than that in this wet year as they can see where the precipitation is still where it needs to be although the surface may be dry. In previous years they said they would have been pumping.

We anticipate another program this year and have hopes to expand it with help from grants. One vendor, maybe more to come, is offering discounts to those within GMD 4 boundaries. If you are interested in soil moisture probes, want to learn more, or already know how great they are and want to benefit from the cost-share program, contact the GMD 4 office.

NW Tech Precision Agriculture Program

We are excited to support a new program at NW Tech College in Goodland. They are going into their second year with a rapidly growing program aimed at precision agriculture and technology. With GMD 4, the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Conservation Foundation, Kansas Water Office, and many other sponsors, there has been enormous growth not only in the enrollment for the college but with local producers as well. As these students are installing, troubleshooting, and repairing technology in producers fields, they are also teaching the producers how to utilize it for greatest agriculture potential. As we all know the escalating costs of technology, they could not have done it without local, state, and community support. It's a win-win for everyone involved as the program is not only educating students for a rapidly growing job market nationwide, it is also educating producers how to utilize the technology for water saving practices at little or no cost to them.



NW Tech Precision Agriculture students installing technology for producers.
Photo courtesy of NW Tech Precision Agriculture

Water Conservation Areas

We have one Water Conservation Area (WCA) in the district with several potentials! We are excited to hear of local areas taking control of their conservation efforts. If you would like more flexibility in how your water rights can be managed, or even a group of local producers to have more flexibility in water management, please contact Steven Walters at the Stockton Field Office.



Pumping the Tailwater Ray Luhman

What Is Sustainability ?

Sustainability has been in the news lately. I think that there are a lot of different definitions for this term, but here are some facts from the GMD 4 perspective.

In GMD 4 average recharge is assumed to be between 127,000 and 160,000 acre-feet annually. There is some evidence that this figure could even be a little higher. To achieve sustainability pumping would have to be held to these levels. For the period 2009 through 2015 actual pumping for irrigation averaged 396,000 acre-feet with a low of 287,000 acre-feet and a high of 520,000 acre-feet.

Sustainability would require an average pumping reduction of around 60% to completely stabilize the aquifer district-wide. Further complicating this is the fact that the aquifer is so variable that very large reductions would need to take place in some areas and little or no reductions would be needed in others.

I do think that some level of required reductions can have the effect of reducing declines and prolonging the usable life of the aquifer, but I don't believe that true sustainability is achievable at this time. However, efforts to slow down the decline rate give us the opportunity to learn how to do things differently, apply new technologies, and generally do more with less.

We do need to realize that sustainability will be reached at some point even if no reductions are mandated, but this will only be because the aquifer has been depleted to the point that it can no longer yield water above the recharge levels.

Questions, comments – give us a call.

NW KS GMD 4

1290 W 4th
PO Box 905
Colby, KS 67701

Address Service Requested
785-462-3915
Fax: 785-462-2693

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Find us on the Web:
www.gmd4.org



Important Dates

**Monthly Board Meetings – First Thursday of every month @ 9 am.
(Except February & December)**

November 8 & 9 – Governor’s Water Conference, Manhattan, KS

Staff and Board of Directors

- Ray Luhman – Manager rluhman@gmd4.org
 - Shannon Kenyon – Assistant Manager skenyon@gmd4.org
 - Dan Simmering – Field Technician dee@gmd4.org
 - Rita Wade – Administrative Assistant rwade@gmd4.org
- | | | |
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NW KS GMD 4
1290 W 4th
PO Box 905
Colby, KS 67701

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