

GMD1 Monthly Newsletter

Lane, Scott, Wichita, Greeley, Wallace Counties

Introduction: The Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1 is starting a monthly email newsletter, to provide current information on initiatives, programs, and Kansas water policy and news affecting GMD1. You are receiving this email, as you are currently on the District's email address list. *(Collaborative updates from NRCS, local Conservation Districts and other agencies will be included in future mailings)*

General Updates:

GMD1 Held the 51st Annual Meeting on February 28th in Scott City – If you were not able to attend the meeting and would like a copy of the materials/handouts and presentations, please contact the District office at 620-872-5563 and a packet of information can be sent to you electronically or by standard mail.

Annual County Outreach – The 2024 County Outreach Meetings took place March 4th through March 8th, in Scott City, Leoti and Sharon Springs. If you missed the meetings keep an eye out for next year's dates! These annual outreach events include lunch and an opportunity to have in-depth discussions with Brownie Wilson from the Kansas Geological Survey with data specific to each County. This year also featured Jack Polifka from Northwest Technical College in Goodland discussing some of the popular technologies they are working with and trialing.

GMD1 Management Program (approved) – The GMD1 Management Program was revised and approved by the Board of Directors in November of 2023 and was approved by Kansas Chief Engineer Earl Lewis in January of 2024. Kansas GMD's are required to have these programs updated regularly and they serve as a driving plan for the ongoing initiatives, policies, and responsibilities of the District. To access the full approved Management Program please select the following link. <https://www.gmd1.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2023-GMD1-Management-Program-Final.pdf>

A paper copy of the full Management Program is available upon request.

Legislative Updates

House Bill 2634: The “flexibility bill.” During the Four County LEMA process and the Wichita County LEMA process, the District received several requests to allow for the base annual authorized quantity of a water right to be exceeded in any given year as long as the 5-year LEMA quantity was not

exceeded. At the time, legally the District was not permitted to provide this flexibility and those needing that flexibility had to do so by applying for a Multi-Year Flex Account. Therefore, GMD1 and GMD4 (in Colby, KS) proposed a bill to the House Water Committee in January 2024 to allow future flexibilities in LEMA programs. The Bill passed successfully through the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Kelly on April 15th, 2024. *(Please note that this flexibility does not currently apply to the current Four County LEMA or Wichita County LEMA, but may be included in future LEMA plans)*

House Bill 2279: This bill passed in 2023 and provides additional requirements for all five GMD's across Kansas. GMD's were required to undergo a Post Legislative Audit in 2023, and are required to present annual reports to the House Committee on Water and *(upon request)* the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. GMD's are also required to delineate High Priority Areas by July 2024 and to implement Action Plans by July 2025. GMD1 has already identified High Priority Areas and has established Action Plans in the form of LEMA's and Water Conservation Areas, and therefore has already fulfilled this initial first requirement of the Bill. However, a formal report will still be prepared and submitted to the House Committee on Water prior to the July 2024 deadline.

Strategic Planning for the Future of Water in Kansas: In January Governor Laura Kelly charged the Kansas Water Authority to work with stakeholders to engage in a strategic planning process for the State Water Plan fund. This process will develop measurable goals for the state water dollars and ensure that state programs and initiatives are meeting those objectives. The plan will be presented to the legislature in 2025. The first informational webinar was held on April 3rd and the recording can be accessed by selecting the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFtfBfm-8R0&t=34s>. Representatives from the Kansas Water Office and Burns and McDonnell have indicated that there will be many opportunities over the next few months for stakeholder input and discussion.

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