

DWR/GMD 4 METERING PROGRAM TO BEGIN

An initial Division of Water Resources (DWR) metering order can be expected for all wells in GMD 4. If your well was previously required to meter, the order will recognize that order and its specific meter installation specifications as long as the meter remains operational. The new orders will contain a metering schedule over the next 4 years based on the quarter section location of the well - with one exception. Beginning in 2006 all wells located in the NW quarter of any GMD 4 section will be required to meter per state specifications before pumping in 2006, or, by December 31, 2006 - whichever date comes first. The rest of the schedule will be: NE quarter wells in 2007; SE quarter wells in 2008 and SW quarter wells in 2009.

The one exception will be all wells whose authorized legal descriptions do not contain a specific quarter section designation. Examples include wells described in Lots, or, near center of a half section, etc. These wells will be required to meter in 2006 regardless of where they are located - unless a specific quarter section legal can be identified for DWR. GMD 4 in most cases can translate these legals into 1/4 sections, and, can identify them to DWR, but these well owners will need to ask us to do this.

For well's metered prior to receipt of order: If a well's already metered when the order arrives, either by earlier order or voluntarily, and it meets the meter and installation specs in effect when it was installed, it will be accepted by the new order until it fails or needs repair - at which time it must be replaced or repaired to the current specs. If a well's already metered voluntarily since the current meter specs were adopted (September 22, 2000) and does not meet these specs, the order will require that it be brought up to the current specs - unless: 1) it tests accurate via a state approved, one-time only, calibration test; and 2) has a measuring chamber and straightening vanes; and 3) there is no other location to install it properly without requiring re-construction work on the well, pump or pipe. In these cases GMD 4 will be providing confirmation accuracy tests. **If you're planning to pre-install a meter hoping it will subsequently pass an accuracy test, you're advised to call the GMD or DWR to discuss your case before you act - if there's not enough room to install a meter correctly, there may not be enough room to get a good confirmation test.** Finally, if you cannot meet the installation specs for a new meter to be installed after receipt of the order, it can also be accepted under the same 3 conditions stated above.

If you're not going to pump in the year your meter is required, a metering extension may be granted by DWR, but you'll need to request one. A new order will be generated for these cases. If you're not going to pump for 5 years or more, it's suggested you consider enrolling the water right into the state's water rights conservation program (WRCP), or perhaps EQIP.

Both GMD 4 and DWR will be doing the field verification work, subsequent monitoring and meter calibration tests, and a new data base is also being designed for the data. Questions? Give us a call.

GROUNDWATER APPROPRIATED BY COUNTY, BY USE TYPE

	Domestic	Industrial	Irrigation	Municipal	Recreation	Stockwater	Other	Total
Cheyenne 482 / 619	0	51	110,468	831	25	474	0	111,849
Decatur 234 / 292	58	226	23,918	1,037	2	513	0	25,754
Gove 305 / 429	4	227	50,530	655	0	1,184	0	52,600
Graham 195 / 265	4	536	29,408	1,804	9	107	0	31,868
Logan 110 / 147	0	38	19,452	960	15	75	0	20,539
Rawlins 239 / 273	0	0	41,685	685	169	104	0	42,643
Sheridan 738 / 776	5	91	161,654	1,043	28	844	0	163,666
Sherman 819 / 927	18	487	262,991	2,509	0	283	0	266,289
Thomas 791 / 867	6	1,025	208,610	2,276	16	826	0	212,760
Wallace 458 / 546	0	0	160,238	720	10	204	0	161,172

The above data is current as of October 30, 2005 and has been rounded to the nearest acrefoot. Numbers under the County names are the number of unique water rights authorized (first number) and the number of unique wells authorized (second number) within that County. These are full County totals - not all of these wells and water rights are in GMD 4. (Data comes from the WIMAS page on the KGS website and will vary slightly from GMD 4 data based on differences in tracking water rights.)

DOE ASSESSING ENERGY-WATER ROADMAP

A National Energy-Water Roadmap Program is being initiated in FY2005 by the Department of Energy (DOE) as identified in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. They write: *"Electricity and water are at the heart of the U.S. economy and way of life. Understanding the complex relationship between water and electricity and developing technologies to keep that relationship healthy is an important key to a sustainable and secure future for the United States."* They next write: *"An increasing population will not only need more electricity but also more food, pushing the nation's two largest water users into potential competition for limited water resources."*

The process begins with regional workshops in Kansas City, Baltimore and Salt Lake City, hosting invited persons representing: energy/power/utilities; water utilities, managers & planners; environmental/ecological interests; regulatory/policy entities; economics & economic development; other use sectors including ag, irrigation districts, mining & industrial; and special interests including tribal, state government associations.

GMD 4 has been invited to the Kansas City session and will be attending. We were told that the "nexus roadmap" being developed will work both ways - considering both water for energy AND energy for water issues. But this first session seems to be all about "water for energy". When they start talking about laws and policies that are hurdles to energy sustainability (ready access to water) maybe we should all get a little interested.

This will be a 2-3 year process with another round of workshops being planned in the next year or two to prepare the final report for DOE and Congress. The good news is the other Kansans of note involved - including David Pope (DWR), Mark Rude (GMD3) and Diane Coe (KWO). For more info, visit their website at: www.sandia.gov/energy-water/.

GMDA CONFERENCE IN SAN ANTONIO

The 33rd national Groundwater Management Districts Association (GMDA) annual conference will be **January 16-18, 2006** in San Antonio, Texas at the Drury Inn & Suites on the Riverwalk. The theme is: Groundwater Management in a Changing World. Gary Lindstrom of the Tri-Basin NRD in Nebraska is handling all the program details, so you know it will be informational as well as entertaining. More info later on the spouses' tours, regular tours and specific presentations. Mark the dates - NOW!

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NEW WATER INFO PAGE AVAILABLE

The new Water Information Management and Analysis System (WIMAS) page was opened on October 31 by the KS Department of Ag (KDA) and the Kansas Geological Survey (KGS). The URL is:

<http://hercules.kgs.ku.edu/geohydro/wimas/index.cfm>

It contains lots of public information regarding water rights in Kansas with really neat trend and analysis tools, mapping, and other amenities. Need to know how much water is appropriated in Sherman County - by use type? Four or five clicks and you got it. The graphs and downloadable data are also big plusses.

The data behind this page is being updated daily from the division of water resources (DWR). If you need water use data, either appropriated or used, and you need it current, this is site for you.



PLAYA LAKES DISPLAY

During January and February the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) will have an educational display about Playa lakes at the Prairie Museum of Art & History in Colby. Playa lakes are those shallow depressions that fill up after rains. They are now thought to play a larger ecological role in the High Plains Region than earlier realized - all the way from groundwater recharge to wetlands habitat. Probably anything you'd like to know about Playa's will be on display. For more information, contact Sue Taylor at the museum (785) 460-4590 or web up the PLJV at: www.pljv.org. You can also call the PLJV at (303) 926-0777. Their address is: PLJV, 103 East Simpson Street, Lafayette, CO, 80026. Incidentally, according to their website, this display opened at the Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City just a little while ago - on October 31.

WATER RIGHTS TRANSITION UPDATE

The concept of transitioning water rights out of use continues. The Kansas Water Congress (KWC) is currently taking on the issue of the Kansas program (formerly called ITAP) by developing bill language for introduction in the 2006 session. The specifics of the bill are still under development, but it will be completed before the 2006 session. Expect it to focus on setting aside water usage rather than irrigated acres and to include several participation options.

The Kansas ground and surface water portion of the EQIP program has been requested by the state technical committee to dedicate 90% of these annual program funds toward setting aside water use in the High Plains Aquifer for 4 years - focusing on locally identified quick response areas. No formal word yet if the program will be approved in this manner, but the final decision is due very soon.

At the local level, our groundwater conservation foundation has so far been unsuccessful in securing outside grants to support the developing state and federal program efforts. Perhaps it's because these other efforts have not yet materialized. We are continuing to provide some GMD funding to the cause, however.

Finally, no word from Senator Brownback on any independent federal support effort he has been expressing interest in. He may be looking toward the new Farm Bill as the tool of choice.

With luck, all these efforts will come about and support each other.

The Water Table

Sponsored by the NW Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, 1175 S. Range, Colby, KS 67701-0905. Office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except the noon hour) - closed during State holidays.

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ADDRESS CORRECTIONS ARE APPRECIATED

GMD4 PROPOSES NEW APPROACH TO EXEMPTED SMALL USE WATER RIGHTS

As a completely new approach to dealing with the issue of new, small use (exempted) water rights in over-appropriated areas, the GMD 4 board is proposing a new regulation that would eliminate the exemption altogether, BUT, would allow new appropriations of not more than 15 acrefeet when an appropriate reduction in an existing water right(s) (considering abandonment and consumptive use issues) is made within 2 miles. Also, these new water rights will not be allowed to be overlapped with existing or future water rights.

This is a significant change over the current policy which essentially allows a nearly automatic exemption for any new, small use application, for whatever use, so long as there are not more than 15 other acrefeet of exempted water rights within 1 mile.

The proposed regulation is currently under review by the Kansas department of agriculture, division of water resources, who must adopt the regulation as their own for our GMD. This reg is in the final stages of drafting and may be put into the new regulation process soon.

For more information at this time, contact the GMD 4 office. The division of water resources may also be contacted for information should the reg become effective.

E-FILING WATER USE REPORTS

The Division of Water Resources is still expecting to run a pilot e-filing program for the 2005 water use reports. The initial effort will involve only municipal and irrigation water rights, but will eventually be expanded to all reports. On each report card there will be a pin number and user ID for use in entering the system via the internet (from any computer) to make your report. For those without computers, GMD 4 is expected to assist in filing reports if you want to file electronically rather than via mail. And with the new WIMAS web page coming on line at the KGS, you should be able to check the receipt of your report the following day - finally forestalling those frightful fines for failing to file.

Pumping the Tailwater

Editorial Comment by Wayne Bossert, GMD 4 Manager

LOOKING BACK

I recently ran across a presentation made in 1991 to a conservation forum in which I made some predictions regarding obstacles in Kansas to enhanced conservation.

One of these predictions was: **"We're going to find that the federal farm program that strongly fuels the need to grow water-intensive corn, rather than less thirsty crops, will not be successfully influenced...And in response, the state will fail to expend the effort or the resources to implement any kind of companion "Kansas Farm Program" that might also shift corn irrigation to less thirsty crops..."**

GMD 4 just last month testified in front of US Ag Secretry Johanns on this very issue as the new 2007 Farm Bill is being considered. We testified: **"What we would like the Farm Bill to recognize is that in areas of this country where either a public planning process or a court decree has required reductions in consumptive water use, that the farm program can assist our producers and irrigators in using less water."** As Yogi once said: "It's déjà vu all over again."

And where are we with a state program? Not yet, but, we may be getting closer as the Kansas Water Congress is expected to re-introduce a water transition assistance program bill very soon. Whether or not the Legislature passes it, or, funds it remains to be seen. I'm not holding my breath.

Incidentally, we also predicted in 1991 that the division of water resources would successfully work with the GMD's to restrict acreage additions to existing water rights; that KGS would assume a significant lead role in water data and mapping; and that the state water plan could support water conservation better if it: reversed its position on regulated water use efficiency (to an incentive-based approach); changed its flawed water rights buy-back statute; and eliminated its flawed cost-share program for abandoned well remediation. All these things happened. Now - the 2007 Farm Bill. Again, I'm not holding my breath.