



Blanco County Groundwater News

September 2024

BPGCD Board Approves Lowering of Drought Stage to Stage 3

In a significant decision, the Board of Directors of the Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District (BPGCD) has approved the lowering of the drought stage from Stage 4, the highest level of water-use curtailment, to Stage 3, effective September 19, 2024. Blanco County has been under Stage 4 restrictions since August 25, 2023. This change reflects recent improvements in groundwater levels, although challenges remain. Under the new Stage 3 restrictions, residents are required to reduce groundwater use by 20-50%, check for plumbing leaks, and limit outdoor watering to every 5 to 7 days during specific nighttime hours. The BPGCD emphasizes that while some restrictions have eased, the community must remain vigilant as we are still facing a drought situation concerning our groundwater aquifers. For more details on the restrictions and conservation measures, residents are encouraged to visit the BPGCD website.

Broader Perspective: Texas Drought in the Context of Cyclical Climate Changes

For a broader perspective on Texas drought conditions, we recommend watching the latest special edition of Water + Weather. In this video, Dr. Mark Wentzel of the Texas Water Development Board presents a "summer soliloquy," analyzing summer 2024's temperatures, drought areas, and surface water supply compared to the last 25 summers in Texas. This analysis places current drought conditions within the context of cyclical climate changes affecting our state.

View the video at [this link](#) to gain insights into the larger factors influencing our water resources and understand the importance of local conservation efforts amidst these climatic shifts.

BPGCD Board Approves Lower Tax Rate and Budget for FY2024-2025

In a move that demonstrates fiscal responsibility and sensitivity to taxpayers, the Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District (BPGCD) Board approved the ad valorem tax rate and budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025 during their meeting on September 19, 2024. The newly adopted tax rate of \$0.016671 per \$100 valuation represents a 4.7% decrease from the previous year, reflecting the Board's commitment to minimizing the financial impact on Blanco County residents while maintaining essential services. To put this into perspective, a homeowner with a property valued at \$400,000 would pay approximately \$66.68 in annual taxes to the BPGCD under this new rate. This rate aligns with the "no-new-revenue" tax rate in Texas, which is calculated to generate the same amount of property tax revenue

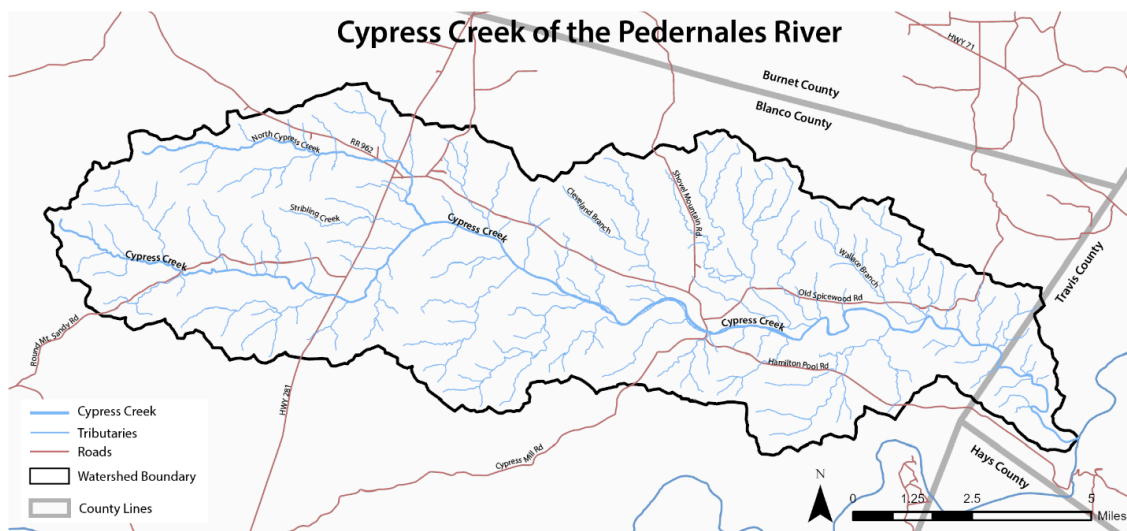
for the district as the previous year from properties taxed in both years. By adopting this rate, the BPGCD ensures that any increase in tax revenue will come solely from new properties added to the tax roll or from value increases on existing properties, rather than from raising taxes on properties that were also taxed last year.

Cypress Creek Research Project: Valuable Insights for BPGCD

The Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District (BPGCD) is pleased to highlight the ongoing Cypress Creek research project led by Texas State University. This comprehensive study, which began in 2022, is providing crucial data on the creek's water quality, flow patterns, and overall health. Researchers have installed state-of-the-art monitoring equipment along the creek, including water quality sondes and pressure transducers, to collect real-time data on various parameters such as dissolved oxygen, pH, and water level. The project also involves regular water sampling and analysis, as well as the use of environmental DNA (eDNA) techniques to assess biodiversity in the creek ecosystem. The final report on this significant study is expected by January 31, 2025.

This research is invaluable to our groundwater conservation efforts, as it helps us better understand the intricate relationships between surface water and groundwater in our region. The BPGCD recognizes the importance of this work and will continue to support and collaborate with Texas State University on this project. The insights gained from this study will inform our management strategies and contribute to the long-term sustainability of our water resources in Blanco County.

For more information about this project, visit www.meadowscenter.txst.edu/research/water-conservation/how-much-water-is-in-the-hill-country/cypress-creek-flow.



Source: Texas State University

Blanco County Residents Invited to Participate in Water-Themed Art Contest

We're excited to announce an incredible opportunity for the creative minds of Blanco County! From September 1 to October 15, 2024, the Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District, in partnership with the City of Johnson City and the City of Blanco, is hosting a water-themed art contest as part of the statewide Texas Runs on Water® campaign. This contest is open to all Blanco County residents, regardless of age, and offers a chance to celebrate the vital role of water in our community through art.

The grand prize winner will receive an impressive \$2,000 and have their artwork featured on posters displayed at key community locations throughout Blanco County. Additionally, a special youth prize of \$500 is available for artists under 18 years old. This contest not only provides a platform for local artists to showcase their talents but also helps raise awareness about the importance of water conservation in our region.

The Texas Runs on Water® campaign aims to address the state's growing water supply needs by sparking conversations and actions around water conservation. We encourage all residents, from seasoned artists to enthusiastic beginners, to participate and share their vision of how water shapes life in Blanco County. For more information on contest requirements and submission instructions, please visit our website or contact the BPGCD office. Let's come together to celebrate our most precious resource through art!



Senate Discussions Continue on Expanding Water Management Focus

The Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District is excited to highlight recent developments in Texas water management, as outlined by State Senator Charles Perry, chair of the Senate Committee on Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs. In a recent interim hearing, Sen. Perry emphasized the critical need to shift our focus from primarily demand-side management (conservation) to a more comprehensive approach that includes supply-side solutions. According to Sen. Perry, Texas is facing a significant water supply shortfall of 10 to 11 million acre-feet, which cannot be addressed through conservation efforts alone. This expanded focus on supply development could include initiatives such as desalination projects, new reservoirs, and infrastructure improvements like fixing leaky pipes.

For those interested in a deeper understanding of these discussions, you can watch the full interim Senate hearing here: [Texas Senate Hearing](#).

Blanco-Pedernales GCD Forms Rules Review Committee to Enhance Groundwater Management

The Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District Board approved the creation of a District Rules Review Committee at their September 19, 2024 meeting. This committee, consisting of two Board members and the General Manager, will conduct a comprehensive review of existing District rules and propose improvements. To ensure diverse perspectives, the committee will seek input from various stakeholders, including water well professionals, real estate agents, conservation groups, local government representatives, and former District officials.

The committee will provide monthly updates at Regular Board Meetings and aims to submit a final report by March 2025. This initiative demonstrates the District's commitment to maintaining effective rules, promoting transparency, and encouraging community involvement in groundwater management decisions. The formation of this committee marks an important step in enhancing the District's regulatory framework to better address Blanco County's evolving needs.

Thank You to Our Dedicated Volunteers!

The Blanco-Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District extends heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated volunteers who play a vital role in our community. Your efforts in conducting monitor well readings, reviewing new program feasibilities, and providing administrative assistance are invaluable to our mission. Each of you contributes significantly to our understanding and management of groundwater resources, helping us ensure a sustainable future for Blanco County.

If others in the community are interested in joining our team of volunteers, we warmly welcome your participation! Please reach out to us at office@blancogw.org or call the office at 830-868-9196 for more information on how you can get involved. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on water conservation and management in our region. Thank you for your commitment and support!