

Summary of Western Kansas GMD #1
Kyle Spencer, District Manager
To The
House Water Committee
Wednesday, March 17, 2021

The Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1 was formed on May 1, 1973 and lies in west-central Kansas including portions of five counties. The GMD Board of Directors is comprised of one elected member from each of these five counties, Greeley, Lane, Scott, Wallace and Wichita. There are approximately 1.17 million acres included in the District, of which roughly 420,000 acres are authorized for irrigation. Of these authorized acres only 44 percent are currently irrigated. The total budget for the GMD is approximately \$430,000 per year, with a \$0.05/acre assessment on land, and a \$0.60/acre-foot water assessment.

Due to declining water levels, the current average annual water use District wide is roughly 25% of the approximately 670,000 acre feet authorized annually for irrigation. The District is currently managing and supporting various programs to enhance water management as well as conservation to extend the usable life of the aquifer. GMD1 is typically considered to be blessed with the *least* amount of water (saturated thickness), and yet is the most over-appropriated District in the state.

The Wichita County LEMA was designated by order of the Chief Engineer in February, 2021. An overview of the LEMA proposal is attached. It is worth noting that a District-wide LEMA was attempted in 2014, but only three of the five counties approved the plan. In 2018 a Wichita County planning process began that ultimately resulted in the current Wichita County LEMA.

Additional Projects Currently Underway:

- Irrigation Technology Cost Share Program
 - o Includes moisture probes; pivot monitors, bubblers, weather stations, field mapping, mobile drip irrigation, subsurface drip irrigation and other technologies
- PLAYA restoration – Groundwater Recharge and Sustainability Project (GRASP)/NRCS-RCPP partner (Wichita/Greeley Counties)
- Additional LEMA planning – Board currently reviewing data and plans for other areas of the District.
- Water Conservation Areas: Six in Total
 - o Wichita County WCA – 26 enrollees
 - o LEAD WCA – Wichita/ Scott Counties
 - o Smith Ranch – Greeley/Wallace
 - o Ray Smith – Greeley/ Wallace
 - o Compton – Lane
 - o Compton – Scott