

Plum Creek Conservation District

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1, 2026

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SITE 17 DAM REPAIR

Were you affected by Hurricane Harvey? Unfortunately during this hurricane, the dam at Site 17 suffered major wave action erosion to the upstream face of the dam. This dam is located in northern Caldwell County, off Schuelke Road. PCCD applied for grant assistance and received funds from the Texas State Soil Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB). The District was able to hire an engineering firm to design and manage this Repair Project. The repair project kicked off in December 2025. The estimated cost for this repair project is \$615,219.83.

The project consists of installation of geotextile fabric, riprap rock along the dam's face (also referred to as the water's edge), and major repairs to the concrete riser structure. This project is slated to be completed



Scraping Topsoil at the Site 17 Dam Repair Project.

in only three short months. We would like to thank the following partners for providing funding and engineering design for this project: TSSWCB and M & E Consultants.

SITE 15 & 31 FENCE REPAIR PROJECTS

Operations and Maintenance are never ending on our dam structures. This year we selected Sites 15 and 31 for fence repair and replacement projects. The Site 15 dam is located just north of Lockhart in Caldwell County and Site 31 is located in Caldwell County southeast of the community of McMahan. The Site 31 fence repair project replaced an existing 1,000 +/- feet of five strand barbed wire fencing and allowed for a new easement access gate to be installed. The estimated cost for this fence project was \$8760.00. Site access

Site 31 Fence Project.



is one of PCCD's top priorities so that necessary inspections and repairs can be done. The Site 15 fence replacement project consisted of replacing 3,000 +/- feet with five strand barbed wire fencing. This easement area fence will help with rotational cattle grazing, which is needed to maintain the consistent stand of grass. The estimated cost for this fence project is \$21,510.00. We



Site 15 Fence Project

would like to thank the Texas State and Soil Water Conservation Board for providing funding for both O & M projects.

SITE 28 DAM REHABILITATION UPDATE



Construction at the Site 28 Dam.

The Site 28 Rehabilitation Project began in July 2024. Site 28 and is located in Caldwell County near the Community of McMahan, which is directly southeast of Lockhart. The estimated cost for this rehabilitation project is over \$12 million dollars. As of December 2025, the contractor had completed all the required dirt moving and dam

construction work on the site. The contractor is currently working on the easement area barbed wire fencing and revegetation. Due to weather conditions during the project, the lake dried up completely and this was the water source that had been used during the rehabilitation project and would have been used to complete the revegetation project. We are hoping for a wet spring to allow for grass growth and further planting.

DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

Developers, developers, developers...Some of the development plans that will be built near, around or within the easements of PCCD's dams include projects varying from large housing developments to RV parks. PCCD's 28 flood control structures were built to help mitigate flooding in both Hays and Caldwell County during the 1960-1970s when thankfully the Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resource Conservation Service) realized that major flooding was an issue and that it would become a much larger issue in the future if the dams were not constructed. We look forward to working with these developers to create safe construction projects. The District is always looking for opportunities to prevent these easement areas from becoming overdeveloped. We work closely with land developers to make sure that these dams are not adversely affected by the new developments. If you are planning a development within one of PCCD's easements, please go to the PCCD website at www.pccd.org to review the District's Easement Use Policy and Rules.

EAP and GIS

What is an EAP? An EAP (Emergency Action Plan) is a written document that outlines procedures for employees and organizations to follow in the event of a natural disaster. The EAP helps PCCD coordinate a response in the event of a natural disaster such as an extreme rain event created by a hurricane. The plan includes an itemized list of emergency contacts, maps and coordinated steps.

What is GIS? GIS stands for Graphic Information Systems, which is a computer-based geographic system used to link locations and descriptions to a digital map. The District uses software to create maps of the locations of water wells and maps of the dams. These maps are used in the above-described EAPs.

ABANDONED WELLS

Hundreds of thousands of water wells have been drilled in Texas. Water wells are abandoned when they stop working or are no longer needed for their intended purpose. Once a well becomes abandoned, they can pose a serious risk to groundwater quality. If an abandoned water well is open to more than one aquifer, either through deteriorated casing or an unsealed annulus, water from a different portion of the aquifer and surface contamination can flow into the well and into the other section of the aquifer. If the groundwater quality in the aquifer under higher pressure is poor, it can have detrimental effects on the other portion of the aquifer and any wells completed in it. Uncapped abandoned water wells, especially if they are large diameter wells, present a danger to humans and livestock. There have been several instances where small children have fallen into abandoned water wells including “Baby Jessica” in 1986. If you happen to have or know the location of an abandoned well, please contact the District so that it may be dealt with appropriately.



Abandoned Hand Dug Leona Well.

GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY

Ground Water Availability Study Now Required for County Plat Approval

The State of Texas Government passed a bill that will now a water availability study be completed for any new proposed plat. Effective January 1, 2024, municipalities and counties must require certification of groundwater availability for proposed subdivisions when the groundwater beneath the land would serve as the source of water supply. These certifications will help to ensure that proposed new subdivisions have adequate water supply available for the proposed development, particularly when groundwater is proposed as the primary water source. This new rule will help preserve the natural resources for all stakeholders in the State of Texas.

Rainwater Harvesting

Caldwell and Hays County are experiencing more frequent droughts, rapid population growth, and an increasingly stressed and limited groundwater supply. In rural areas, residents often depend on wells that are unable to recharge quickly, may have poor water quality, and can be at risk of drying up entirely. Fortunately, these counties typically receive 25 to 35 inches of rainfall per year, which can be a sufficient amount of water for a household if captured and stored effectively. Harvesting rainwater can turn into a reliable water source. As the cost of municipal water rises, collecting free rainwater can save thousands of dollars over time. The cost of drilling a new or deeper well when supplies run low can also be avoided.

Rainwater harvesting systems can be used for many things such as household use, lawn and garden irrigation, and even livestock water supply. Lawn and garden rainwater systems can be set up for as little as \$800. Household rainwater systems cost a little more, ranging from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for a household of 2 to 3 people; however, when compared to the cost of paying water supply companies or drilling a deeper well for more water, a rainwater system is definitely worth the cost.

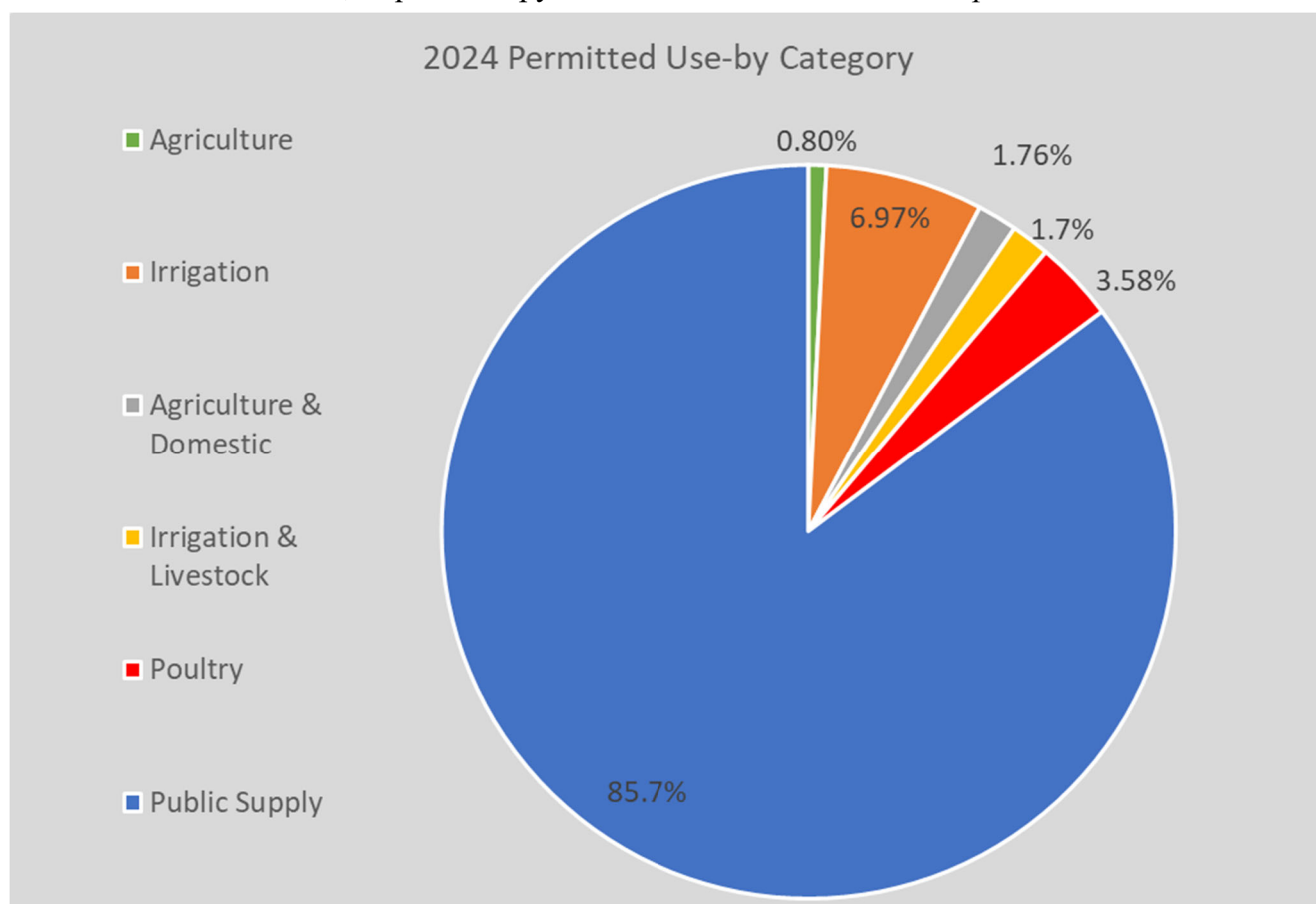
In addition to the personal benefits of a rainwater system, having this system in place automatically promotes water conservation, which has become a very important issue throughout the state of Texas.



Rainwater Harvesting System

2024 PCCD GROUNDWATER USE

PCCD permittees reported using 1,758.4419 acre-feet of groundwater in 2024. This is 10.067% of the total permitted 17,466.67 acre-feet. (Several non-public supply permittees failed to report usage.) The pie graph below compares water usage by category for 2024. For more information, request a copy of PCCD's *2024 Water Use Report*.



WATER LEVELS

The table below shows water levels for 7 wells measured between January 1, 2025, and November 21, 2025, along with the corresponding lowest recorded water levels. If you are interested in finding out the water level in your well and how it compares to other wells in the area, contact us to schedule a time to measure your well. Complete water level data can be found on our website at www.pccd.org

Well	2024 Levels	2025 Levels	Lowest Recorded Level
Kosarek	-50.85	-51.7	- 51.7
Steinhardt	-21.34	-22.8	- 22.8
Lipscomb	-96.11	-97.1	-97.1
Lockhart #8	-107.5	-107.21	- 108.0
McCormick #2	-67.125	-68.13	- 71.0
McCormick #1	-70.53	-71.53	- 71.8
Collier	-70.6	-60.86	- 70.6

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The Plum Creek Conservation District's Newsletter is available via email. If you or someone you know would like to receive our Newsletter via email rather than US Mail, please contact our office at (512) 398-2383.

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