

# Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District  
Date: February 9, 2004  
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### Why Register?

La Grange, Texas—  
By: William P. Kohlleppel, Jr.

Recently, the Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District adopted a set of rules to assist in managing the groundwater resources of Fayette County. One of these rules was a requirement that all wells in Fayette County be registered with the district. State law requires the District to collect information about the wells in its jurisdiction. We have had a very good response to our initial announcement. Most people understand why new wells need to be registered, but some question the need to register existing wells.

What we are trying to accomplish is, in effect, to take an inventory of all the wells in the county. It is an important first step – we have to find out how many wells there are in the county, how many are still operational and at what depths, their typical usage, etc. The District needs to determine how much water is currently needed and being used by the people of Fayette County, so that we can estimate the future needs based on projected growth.

The only major study ever done on the Fayette County groundwater situation was back in 1967. The Texas Water Development Board has groundwater availability models for some of the aquifers, but those are simply estimates, and their accuracy is being challenged in many other counties. This district believes it must get accurate and current data from our aquifers in order to better manage our water.

The District would also like to have information on abandoned wells and hand-dug wells. In the future, the District plans to offer a program to assist in plugging or closing these abandoned wells, since they are a potential source of groundwater contamination.

A side benefit to registering all wells is that the District would be able to contact well owners if, for example, groundwater contamination occurs in a specific area. It also provides the District with a target group for disseminating groundwater-related educational material. If a high-volume well is proposed in a certain area, impact to existing wells will be considered. We can't consider a well if it is not known to us. So registering a well affords the well owner a certain measure of protection.

Some people don't understand the need for rules that apply to the good people of Fayette County. They ask why we didn't make rules just for the water marketers, for example, to prevent the transport of our water to Austin or San Antonio. But rules must be written so that they apply equally and fairly to everyone. It would be discriminatory to apply the rules only to one set of persons.

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**SOURCE: FAYETTE COUNTY GCD**

If a water marketer wants to transport groundwater out of the county, the District cannot prevent that. But the District can set limits on how much water may be produced and transported. The District must be able to justify those limits, however. That justification would be based on the amount of water available and the amount of water needed by Fayette County, both now and in the future. Without those figures, any production limits set by the District might not stand up to a legal challenge.

To clarify a few other misconceptions: The District will not put meters on any existing wells. A potentially high-volume water user who applies for a permit to drill a new well may be asked to put a meter on that well. The District will not charge for water usage from any well, unless that groundwater is to be transported out of the county.

If you have questions about any of the rules or would like more information, please contact the District office at (979) 968-3135 or stop by the office in the Fayette County Agricultural Building at 254 North Jefferson, Room 600, in La Grange.

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**SOURCE: FAYETTE COUNTY GCD**