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## A sign of groundwater conservation need

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*This is one of the new 'Texas Runs on Water' billboards posted in Burnet County by the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District. The GCD has two billboards at two entrances to the county to raise water conservation awareness. Courtesy photo*

The Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District (<https://www.centraltexasgcd.org/>) has turned to public education to raise awareness of Burnet County's ongoing drought.

## Current Publications



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“The more we learn, the more we realize that people don’t seem to be aware of the [drought situation](https://www.dailytrib.com/2023/09/14/growth-and-drought-strain-water-supply/) (https://www.dailytrib.com/2023/09/14/growth-and-drought-strain-water-supply/),” GCD Board of Directors President Ryan Rowney told DailyTrib.com. “We need to work harder to get the word out.”

To do that, the district recently joined the Texas Water Foundation’s [Texas Runs on Water campaign](https://www.texasrunsonwater.org/regions/burnet-county/) (https://www.texasrunsonwater.org/regions/burnet-county/), rented two billboards for water conservation awareness along major highways, began a monthly newsletter, contributed to the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program, put up dozens of [drought awareness signs](https://www.dailytrib.com/2022/10/19/as-burnet-county-languishes-in-extreme-drought-well-use-drilling-remain-active/) (https://www.dailytrib.com/2022/10/19/as-burnet-county-languishes-in-extreme-drought-well-use-drilling-remain-active/) along Burnet County roads, and continues to donate thousands of dollars to the county’s regular household hazardous waste collections.

The GCD is tasked with managing and regulating Burnet County’s groundwater, and that now includes educating the public about the state of the supply.

“We’re not trying to be the strong arm of the government or anything like that,” Rowney said. “We just want folks to be conscious and cautious moving forward with our groundwater. Groundwater is not an endless resource.”

Burnet County is one of [six certified regions](https://www.texasrunsonwater.org/regions/) (https://www.texasrunsonwater.org/regions/) in the Texas Water Foundation’s Runs on Water program, which provides support for water conservation policy across the state. The foundation’s membership is strong, including the cities of Houston, San Antonio, and McAllen as well as the Hill Country and Panhandle regions.

“I talked with the [Hill Country Alliance](https://hillcountryalliance.org/) (https://hillcountryalliance.org/) and picked their brain a little bit because they had just joined the same (Texas Runs on Water) campaign with the Texas Water Foundation,” said GCD General Manager Mitchell Sodek. “My hope is that we raise general awareness (of groundwater conservation) and people understand the Hill Country and Burnet County are special places because of the water, but that water is finite and fragile.”

The Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District now has two Texas Runs on Water billboards posted in Burnet County: one on Texas 29 east of Bertram; the other on U.S. 281 just south of FM 1855.

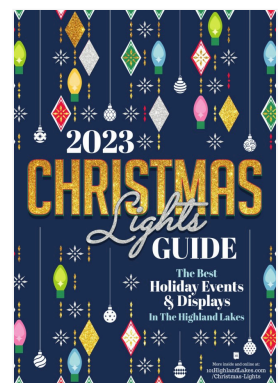
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The district also started a monthly email newsletter in May, which offers updates on its work, insights on current groundwater conditions, conservation tips, and news that impacts Burnet County groundwater users.

Sign up for the district's newsletter by scrolling down page at [centraltexasgcd.org](http://centraltexasgcd.org) (<http://centraltexasgcd.org/>) to "Newsletter Signup."

The GCD has also consistently donated to the [Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program](https://www.texas4hwaterambassadors.com/) (<https://www.texas4hwaterambassadors.com/>), which puts up to 30 high school-age youths through the 4-H2O Leadership Academy. Those students learn how water is collected, conveyed, treated, conserved, and managed in Texas.

The district also has placed 120 drought awareness signs along Burnet County roads since 2022 and contributed \$25,000 to the 2024 household hazardous waste collection event, which is scheduled for Oct. 19 (<https://www.dailytrib.com/2024/04/02/when-and-where-to-dispose-of-household-hazardous-waste-in-burnet-county/>) at the Burnet County Reuse and Recycle Center, 2411 FM 963 in Burnet. Collecting chemicals during these events prevents them from being disposed of improperly and leaking into the ground and contaminating groundwater sources.

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