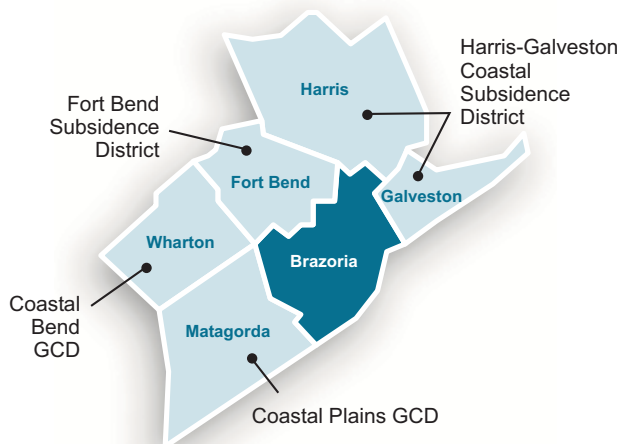


# A New Approach to Managing Groundwater

Groundwater is one of Brazoria County's most precious resources. As the county's population grows, there will be increasing pressure on this valuable resource. It is important to maintain both the quantity and quality of groundwater that is available to residential, agricultural, municipal, and industrial water users.

## Why a Groundwater Conservation District?

A groundwater conservation district is a district created by Texas law for the conservation, preservation, protection, recharging, and prevention of waste of groundwater, and for the control of subsidence. To implement this broad charge, each district must prepare a groundwater management plan that describes its groundwater management goals for the next 10 years.



*The counties surrounding Brazoria County already have established groundwater conservation districts to manage the quality and quantity of their groundwater resources.*

Maintaining the quality and availability of groundwater for current users and future generations is the mission of the Brazoria County Groundwater Conservation District (BCGCD). Without a groundwater conservation district in place to protect groundwater, an individual or organization could pump water without regard to its impact on other users, including transporting unrestricted amounts of groundwater to locations outside Brazoria County.

The BCGCD, directed by a five-member board to be elected by the voters of Brazoria County, is proactively addressing groundwater issues by working with groundwater users to manage and plan for groundwater use. In this way, the BCGCD is working to ensure that municipal, industrial, agricultural, and residential users all are treated fairly and equitably. A proactive approach to managing groundwater issues is more cost effective than waiting to solve problems in the future.

Because it represents the entire county, the BCGCD can address the big picture of groundwater use in Brazoria County, thus creating an opportunity for local municipalities and others to coordinate analyses and solutions. In this way, local interests will be considered without the burden of each having to fund its own analysis of the situation. Strategies would be implemented in a manner that is fair to other groundwater users.

## The BCGCD's Authority

According to Texas statute, the BCGCD is a governmental agency created to benefit the public. The BCGCD is allowed to charge a small fee to certain groundwater users—only industry and others who

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obtain groundwater from public water systems (e.g., municipalities). For the average residential user, this will likely amount to less than the cost of buying one small bottled water at the grocery store every two months.

The BCGCD **may not tax or collect any kind of fee or require a meter on private water wells** used for agricultural or personal use in Brazoria County. However, it may impose additional fees on groundwater exported from the county.

Furthermore, the BCGCD is **not** allowed to:

- Impose a property tax,
- Exercise the right of eminent domain,
- Acquire land,
- Issue or sell bonds, or
- Purchase, sell, transport, or distribute surface water or groundwater.

The BCGCD is made up of five members who represent the voters of Brazoria County. The temporary board of directors consists of Dennis Davenport (presiding officer) and four members appointed by the Brazoria County Commissioners Court—Raymond Felder, John Pyburn, Mike O’Day, and Leo Mikeska.

The BCGCD must be confirmed by county voters in an election that will take place in November 2005. During this same election, five initial directors will be selected—one director from the entire county and one director from each county commissioner’s precinct. Following this initial election, directors will be chosen for staggered terms during November elections.

### The BCGCD at Work

In carrying out its mission, the BCGCD provides several services. It conducts research and collects information on groundwater availability, quality, and use in Brazoria County, and develops approaches for addressing identified issues before they become problems. The BCGCD also conducts public outreach activities to inform county residents about research findings, meetings, and generally to keep them up to date on its BCGCD activities.

The BCGCD addresses issues specifically in the following areas:

- The most efficient use of the groundwater resources of Brazoria County;
- Control and prevention of subsidence in the county;
- Control and prevention of waste of groundwater;
- Use of groundwater and surface water over the next 50 years;
- Natural resource issues that affect the use and availability of groundwater;
- Drought conditions; and
- Groundwater conservation.

### For More Information

For more information about the BCGCD and its work, go to the district’s web site at <http://www.bcgroundwater.org>

