

WATER Works!

Provided as a public service for our customers

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District is planning for mandated conversion to surface water

As we have discussed previously in our newsletters, the mission of the Fort Bend County Subsidence District is to “control land subsidence and manage groundwater resources through regulation, conservation, and coordination with suppliers of alternative water sources to assure an adequate quantity and quality of water for the future.” While a number of approaches have been implemented to accomplish this mission, one of the most important of these is the development and implementation of regulatory and management plans intended to reduce the current level of dependence upon groundwater supplies to meet government mandates by established deadlines.

Currently, total water use in the Fort Bend County Subsidence District is comprised of 60% groundwater and 40% surface water. The proposed Subsidence District Groundwater Reduction Program (GRP) will mandate that well owners pumping 10 million gallons or more *per year* **reduce their reliance on groundwater by 30% by 2013, with further reductions to 60% by 2025.** Entities pumping less than 10 million gallons per year, such as small water well and agricultural users, are *exempt* from the regulatory mandate noted above.

Although Fort Bend County had experienced only small amounts of subsidence prior to the 1980’s, several characteristics of the area raise concern about the potential for increasing subsidence in the future:

- ◆ Rapid growth
- ◆ Water supply dependent almost entirely on groundwater
- ◆ Proximity to significant water-level declines in Harris County.

In addition to the moderate, but noticeable, amounts of subsidence, the heavy dependence of groundwater has resulted in declining water levels in wells in the aquifers. Groundwater levels in wells drawing from the Chicot and Evangeline Aquifers in the eastern part of the Fort Bend County

Continued on page 2

Conversion to Surface Water... Continued from page 1

Subsidence District have declined more than 150 feet from 1943 to 1977. These declines have resulted in increased operational costs to well users.

The staff at Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 is working with a number of professionals to ensure compliance with the mandate within the parameters defined. One of the methods under review is the potential for effluent reuse. Reuse of effluent resources, when and where appropriate, strongly supports the goals of the Subsidence District with regard to the reduction of groundwater usage. Most importantly, reuse of effluent supplies, in place of groundwater, preserves precious supplies of water for future generations, increasing the probability that when our children and grandchildren need drinking water, it is there.

We will keep you informed about our progress and about other details relating to how we will comply with the "conversion" mandate. In the meantime, the District will continue to provide a reliable supply of quality drinking water to our customers. ■

What do you know about SUBSIDENCE?

◆ **What is land subsidence?** Land subsidence is the loss of elevation of the land surface caused by the withdrawal of fluid.

◆ **What harm is there in subsidence?** As the ground sinks, large bowl shaped depressions form in the terrain. These depressions may begin with a subsidence of only a few inches but may be several miles across in size leaving changes that are not noticeable to the eye. However, the depression changes the existing water runoff pattern to a degree that excess water pools rather than running off. The greater the subsidence, the more likely the area will see increased flooding.

◆ **How can subsidence be stopped?** Moving towards the use of surface water from rivers, lakes, streams, and reservoirs and depending less on groundwater has proved an effective way to limit or stop land subsidence.

New Plant is up and Running...

We here at Fort Bend County MUD #25 are proud to announce that our new Sewage Treatment Plant is up and running. It was officially brought online during the winter of 2006, and is just one more example of how we keep our operations at peak performance in order to meet the District's growing needs.

A sewage treatment plant captures sewage and actively treats it using an aerobic biological process. Over a period of time, the sewage is neutralized to a very high standard of cleanliness... clean enough for the effluent -- an outflowing of water from a natural body of water, or from a man-made structure -- to be discharged into a nearby watercourse, subject to the necessary permissions.



SOME STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT PROTECTING A PRECIOUS NATURAL RESOURCE...

Consider this scenario -- It's early on a lovely spring morning...the birds are chirping...insects are buzzing...and households are beginning to stir. Folks are turning on their coffee makers, stepping into their morning showers, or perhaps starting a load of laundry or the dishwasher full of dinner dishes from the night before.

Then, suddenly, the stream of water in the shower slows to a trickle and appliances choke and sputter without their customary water supply. The culprit? Up and down hundreds of streets, sprinkler system controls all spring into action at the same time... sending thousands and thousands of gallons of water airborne to fall on lawns and gardens that don't even need it.

Is it possible that we'd ever really have to choose between a nice hot morning shower and watering the lawn? Absolutely. If we don't take steps to rein in our community's voracious early morning appetite for water, that choice might come up as early as this summer! Fortunately, there are some relatively simple actions we can take to get our peak water usage under control. All we need is your help.

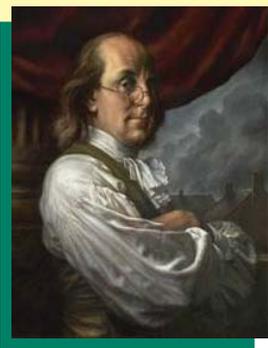
Let's start with the easiest and most effective options.

1. Don't over-water your lawn and plants. Native grasses only need water if there is no rain for prolonged periods. In most weather conditions, it is only necessary to water twice a week. More than that "spoils" your lawn by creating a shallow root system that is always "thirsty."

2. Set your irrigation system to complete the water cycle by 4 a.m. to avoid the early morning peak demand for water.

3. Get in the habit NOW of watering only on odd or even days... Even house numbers, water on Sundays and Thursdays, and odd numbers water on Saturdays and Wednesdays. That doesn't mean you have to water on each of your odd or even days...but stick to your schedule when you do. For established lawns, there is no reason not to follow this schedule. If everyone complied, this one action could immediately cut our early morning peak demand enough to ensure adequate water through the summer.

4. Purchase and install a rain sensor for your irrigation system. This is guaranteed to save both water and money. And, you'll minimize the chance that your sprinklers come on while it is raining - which annoys anyone who appreciates this finite natural resource and hates to see it wasted.



Remember what old Ben Franklin said...

"You never miss the water 'til the well runs dry."

Our wells aren't dry yet...but let's not test Ben's theory.

The water we conserve today can serve us tomorrow!



The simple answer to how much is enough is that you should water when plants need water. Of course many variables can affect this. Different plants have different water needs. Soils have different water-holding capacities. Sprinkler systems differ. Some plants have a protective layer of mulch. As the temperature rises and the day lengthens, transpiration (water loss from the leaves) and evaporation from the soil increases. So the lawn watering schedule you might use in June will differ from how you water later in the summer.

Watering infrequently and deeply is the key to forcing grass and plants to grow deep roots so they can access water for a longer period of time and thrive through the long, hot summer. Residents who water every other day are overwatering. Air is forced out of soil that is continually saturated. Since roots need air, overwatering tends to promote very shallow roots.

As a general rule, proper watering means applying 1 inch of water per week. How long you run your sprinkler system depends on how much water the system applies. To figure out how long to run your system or sprinkler, place small empty 1 inch deep cat food or tuna cans (at least 3) over the area the sprinkler covers.

Water the length of time you think is correct. Each can should have the same amount of water,

Watering your Texas lawn...how do you know how much is enough?

about 1 inch. If the cans contain less than 1 inch of water, you need to water longer. If the cans have an uneven amount of water, the distribution of water needs adjustment.

According to the Texas Water Development Board's Lawn Watering Guide, apply enough water to wet the soil to a depth of 4-6 inches. Use a soil probe (available at most garden centers) to help determine exactly how deep the water penetrates.

Use a sprinkler that emits large drops of water that remain close to the ground, not one that sprays a fine mist into the air. Water during the early morning or evening hours since evaporation losses will be up to 60 percent higher during the day. Do not water on windy days, and set the sprinkler so that that lawn is watered, not sidewalks and driveways. Add a rain sensor for your sprinkler system.



Remember not to cut the grass too short. Longer blades of grass will reduce evaporation and root stress since shaded soil will not

dry out as quickly. Be sure to control any insects that attack your lawn quickly and completely.

A reasonable amount of fertilizing is necessary to develop the root system and to help keep the lawn healthy. Too much fertilizer, however, will lead to excessive growth, which will then require more watering. Many experts recommend leaving the grass clippings on the lawn, which will minimize the need for additional fertilizer.

Add a little color...



Color looks great by the front door or in the back yard where you can see it from a window or the patio, and adding a small flowerbed or a container can make a great impression. Measure the area and figure out how many square feet it is to help you determine the number of plants and how much soil amendments and mulch to purchase.

If a plant grows 2 feet wide, you need one plant every 2 feet. If the plant grows 6 inches wide, you need a plant every 6 inches.

Once plants are in the ground, cover the soil with a good layer of mulch and water it gently. The water will settle the soil and mulch. Water every day for about a week if it does not rain. 💧

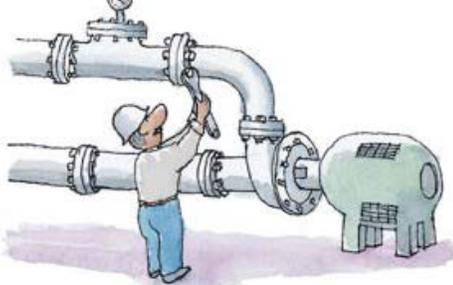
Source: Texas Cooperative Extension Service and Texas Water Development Board.



Hey Kids... Here are some answers to your questions about WATER...

Q: How important are our ground water resources?

A: Ground water, which is stored in *aquifers* below the surface of the Earth, is one of the Nation's most important natural resources. Ground water is currently the source for almost 100 percent of the water used in neighborhoods in Southeast Texas. That will change in the years ahead, however, when some of our drinking water will come from surface water resources, such as a river, lake, or reservoir.



Q: Where does our household water come from?

A: Water is piped to most area homes by a municipal utility district (MUD), or by the city in which they live. In some cases, families obtain their drinking water from their own private water well.

Q: How is water delivered to our homes?

A: Many years ago when everyone lived in rural areas, they would have to get their own water from rivers or from local wells. Today, since most people in the U.S. live in towns and cities, and communities, we rely on an organized system of pipelines, water pumping stations, and water tanks and water towers to deliver our drinking water.

Q: How much water does the average person use at home per day?

A: Estimates vary, but usage may range from about 80-100 gallons of water to as much as 220 gallons per day. The largest use of household water is in the bathroom -- to flush the toilet, and for showers and baths. That is why, in these days of water conservation, individuals are going to be asked to use less water. If we are all willing to save a little, we will all save a lot!



Q: Does a little leak in my house really waste water?

A: It's not the little leak that wastes water -- it is the little leak that keeps on leaking that wastes water. And the fact is that little leaks often get ignored-- and continue to leak again another day. So, how can a little leak turn into a big waste? Many of our toilets have a constant leak -- somewhere around 22 gallons per day. This translates into about 8,000 gallons per year of wasted water -- water that could be saved. Or what if you have a leaky water line coming into your house. If it leaks 1 gallon of water every 10 minutes that means that you are losing (and paying for)

144 gallons per day, or 52,560 gallons per year.



Q: How does our swimming pool stay so clean?

A: It is not an easy task to keep a swimming pool so clear and clean. If you just set a pan of water outdoors during the hot summer, you'll see that it ends up containing gunk very quickly. Swimming pool water is continuously pumped through a filter to trap particles, like all those bugs that fall in. To keep algae and dangerous bacteria from growing, chemicals such as chlorine are added. Chlorine is also added to your drinking water to keep those bacteria out of your stomach.

Q: How many baths could I get from a good rainstorm?

A: Let's imagine that your house sits on a one-half acre lot. And let's say you get a storm that drops 1 inch of rain -- that amounts to about 13,577 gallons of water on your yard. A big bath holds about 50 gallons of water, so if you could save that inch of water that fell you could take a daily bath for 271 days!



Source: USGS Water Science for Schools

Give **COMPOSTING** a try... and help conserve water, too!



Hey! Spring is here and homeowners are feeling the call to spruce up their yards and gardens. Unfortunately, sprinklers are beginning to work over time...in hopes of greening up those ever-thirsty St. Augustine lawns. Far too many folks don't realize that over-watering can actually damage landscapes by preventing air from reaching the roots.

How Much Water Is Enough?

Maintaining proper soil moisture is critical. After being dormant during winter months, its time to initiate an appropriate care schedule that is key to an attractive and healthy lawn. Appropriate fertilization will help produce a dense turf that resists weeds. **Be sure to keep fertilizer off of paved areas and always water it in to avoid pollution of waterways.** Don't fertilize if rain is imminent, and don't over-fertilize. That causes the leaves to grow much faster than the roots. The grass will then require more water and more frequent mowing and attract more pests.

Consider A Composting Program...

Composting is one of the most productive things you can do for your yard and garden. Take advantage of all the last remaining leaves and pine straw and "cook up" a batch of mulch that will give your flower beds and landscape areas a real boost. It isn't difficult and the payoff can be spectacular.

Not only is it great for your plants and landscaping, but composting also helps with one of the nation's most critical environmental problems. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that

grass clippings, leaves, and tree or shrub prunings account for almost 20 percent of "household trash" and perhaps as much as 50 percent in Summer and Fall months. Landfill sites are rapidly filling up, and yard debris is a significant part of the problem.

In addition to helping with the landfill crisis, composting offers another, very practical benefit. When rich compost mulch is used in flower beds and landscape areas, it holds in the moisture and **cuts down on the amount of water needed to keep the plants healthy.** Compost also breaks up clay soils, serving as a safeguard against erosion. And it adds structure and moisture to sandy soils, which can allow landscaping of otherwise undesirable planting areas.

Composting is a science... involving a complex "food chain" of bacteria, fungi, worms, beetles, mites and lots of other beneficial organisms that "eat up" organic materials and produce humus. Bacteria carry the heavy load in composting, especially in "hot" compost when they populate quickly. All these "bugs" need is a mass of organic materials that contain a balanced diet of nutrients -- carbon and nitrogen -- along with adequate moisture and oxygen. Mix plenty of "green" materials (food scraps, grass clippings, and manure) with high carbon "brown" materials (dry pine straw, hay, dead leaves, wood chips or shavings, broken up twigs) and you're on the way. A downloadable online publication of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality -- "A Green Guide to Lawn Care" -- provides a wealth of information on composting (see the Useful Links box for the URL).

Compost improves soil aeration, which enables vital oxygen to boost soil productivity. Finally, virtually all plants grown in compost-enriched soils are healthier and are better prepared to fight off assaults from insects and diseases. So, with all these benefits and with the cost of water going up, composting can save both water and money!



Useful Links...

www.waterwisetexas.org
<http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu>
[http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/
comm_exec/forms_pubs/
pubs/gi/gi-028.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-028.html)

Be careful about what you throw away... Greasy food scraps can come back to haunt you!



For a lot of families, the kitchen just seems to be the favorite place to gather.. especially when tempting aromas beckon and there are lots of tasty tidbits to sample. When the scrumptious meals are over, however, everything from breakfast scraps to the more bulky “feast” leftovers get scraped into the disposal in the kitchen sink. It is not quite so appetizing to think of all those shredded greasy food scraps sliding down the drain where, once they begin to accumulate in the pipes, some serious blockage can occur.

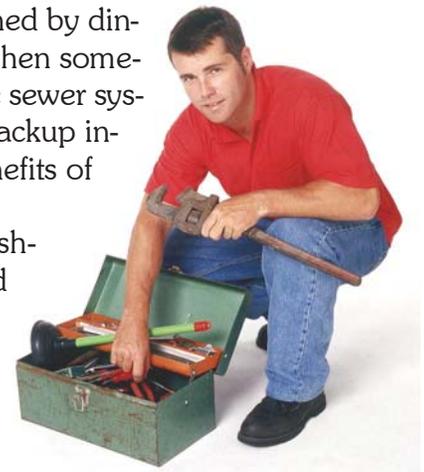
Some foods and cooking ingredients are potentially more troublesome than others. Discarded substances like cooking oil, bacon grease, mayonnaise, poultry skin, and pasta can stagnate in underground plumbing lines and get even messier when joined by dinner roll scraps, gravy and mashed potatoes. Then some time later, when the meal is long forgotten, the sewer system becomes blocked sufficiently to cause a backup inside the house and the plumber reaps the benefits of

costly remedies and repairs.

While most homeowners may not be aware that commercial establishments and restaurants are required to install “grease traps” or interceptors and have them cleaned regularly, there are no such requirements for private homes. It is up to the homeowner to make sure that their pipes aren’t clogged up with discarded food.

According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), most sewer backups occur between the house and the main sewer lines. This means that it is the resident’s responsibility to correct the problem. In even more complicated situations, grease blockages in the main lines can cause chain events --sanitary sewer overflows lead to pollution of nearby lakes and streams which create potential health threats for people and wildlife.

Disposal of cooking grease into storm drains has the potential to cause more havoc. The storm drains lead directly to streams and creeks, so *discarded grease can also pollute the nearest water source*. Remember, any substance poured onto the ground can end up in groundwater. Take the time to dispose of greasy substances properly...recycle as much as possible and pour cooking oils, lards, and grease into closeable containers for disposal. Or consider mixing with dry kitty litter until the oil is absorbed and then place in a zipped top bag for disposal.



Here are some additional tips for the disposal of grease and leftovers from TCEQ...

- Place grease and used cooking oils in covered collection containers. Let them solidify on the counter or in the refrigerator before placing them in the garbage.
- Scrape food scraps into trash cans or garbage bags; minimize the use of the disposal. Non-meat and dairy food items may be placed in a compost pile.
- Remove oil or grease from dishes, pans and griddles by using a rubber spatula or paper towel to absorb it instead of rinsing it down the sink.
- Prewash greasy dishes and pans with cold water -- not hot -- before going into the dishwasher.
- Do NOT pour cooking oil and grease down the drain...ever.
- Overall, be careful what you scrape into the disposal. Once the walls of the pipes begin to clog up, all kinds of discarded scraps can exacerbate the problem.
- Don’t run hot water over dishes, pans, fryers or griddles to wash oil and grease down the drain. 💧



From the Tap...

Online Payments Are NOT Electronic Transfers!

Confused about online bill payments and electronic transfers? Online bill payment services are not electronic transfers in the true sense. Although the funds may be withdrawn from your account electronically, the bill paying service then drafts a check and puts the check in the regular postal mail service.

In other words, the day your personal account is debited is **not the date the payment is received** by the District office. Since the online payment service actually drafts a check and mails it through the normal United States Postal Service, delivery is subject to the same potential for delivery problems as are incurred with regular mail delivery.

If you select this type of payment service, be sure to allow **seven to ten days prior to the due date of the bill** for actual mail service processing and delivery to insure that your payment arrives on time.

PLEASE USE WATER WISELY!

Attention Seniors!

The Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 voted to give our resident senior citizens a break! Senior citizens can receive a discount on annual MUD taxes. For more complete information or to find out if you qualify, please contact Tommy Lee at Assessments of the Southwest, at 281-482-0216.



We're Here to Help!

Our District Operations staff is here to serve you! Do you have a problem with your water bill? Do you have a bill that seems too high and need help to track the problem? Missing a payment? Do you have a leak, or think you have a leak, and need assistance? We are here to help!

Billing Problems:

Talk to Tracey, Cathryn, Dezeray or Leonela at 281-277-0129 ext. 105, 109, or 112.

Leaks, Inspections, Problems associated with Excavations:

Talk to one of our operators at 281-277-0129, ext. 113, 111, or 106.

We also have a number of methods in place to allow quick and easy access anytime...

1. E-MAIL -- Our staff can be reached through the Internet! Residents may contact us at our E-Mail addresses listed on our website www.waterdistrict25.com in the "Contact Us" area.

2. REGULAR MAIL --

Mail comments to Post Office Box:
Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25
P.O. Box 2847
Sugar Land, Texas
77487-2847

3. BY PHONE --

Phone: 281-277-0129
Fax: 281-277-0028

4. MONTHLY MEETINGS --

Come to a District meeting! Your Board of Directors holds a public meeting the second Friday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at our office, located at:

18230 Old Richmond Road
Sugar Land, Texas 77478



Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25
P.O. Box 2847
Sugar Land, Texas 77487-2847

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