

WATER Works!

Summer 2009



Provided as a public service for our neighbors and customers!

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**The water we
conserve today
can serve us
tomorrow.**

Why Water Conservation is Essential for Sustainable Communities

District residents want their communities to be sustainable. However, to achieve sustainability and long-term viability, the District and its residents must work together to implement successful water conservation practices. Water efficiency and conservation contributes to reduced subsidence, which aids efforts to reduce flooding, and helps improve the health of our aquifers, which will provide adequate sources of drinking water for future generations. Additionally, water efficiency results in less run off into lakes and rivers and less energy used in the provision and treatment of water, which increases the opportunity to create a sustainable environment now and for the future.

Most people don't realize the complexity of the distribution of quality drinking water and the collection and treatment of sewage and may not be aware that the District's water and wastewater facilities represent the largest electrical consumer within the District. Thus, each of us has a responsibility to use less water to ensure adequate water supplies for the future and to reduce overall energy consumption.

The District is committed to protecting ground water sources by providing conservation programs that reward consumers for using less water, which will lower monthly water bills and/or earn credits to your water bill account:

I Install Low-Flow Showerheads at No Cost to You! The District will provide two (2) low flow showerheads to all residential customers at no cost to the customer. All you have to do to obtain your showerheads is to complete the form in this newsletter and send in with your payment, drop form in a District payment box, or complete the order form located on the District's website at www.waterdistrict25.com, and click on the Low-Flow Showerhead Order Form under the header Water Conservation on the left side of the screen (allow 3-6 weeks for availability for pickup).

II Enroll in the District's Rebate Program! District customers have the opportunity to enroll in a voluntary program that offers a rebate, in the form of a credit to your water bill, designed to reward our customers for water conservation. The program is very simple:

- Contact the billing office (281-277-0129, ext.105, 112, 119, or 121) and agree to participate in the program for one year (365 day period to be calculated from the date the resident joins the program).
- The billing and collection staff will compare the resident's current water

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Conservation

Continued from page 1

usage (gallons used) to water usage for the same time in the previous year for this one-year period.

■ Every 6 months in the defined 12 month period that the customer uses less water (measured in total gallons used) compared to the water used for the same period in the previous year, the resident will receive a 10% rebate in the form of a credit to their water bill (based on current year's usage with a maximum credit of \$75.00 [seventy-five dollars] per account.) For the months in the current billing cycle when total gallons used equals or exceeds amounts used compared to the same period in the previous year, no credit will be issued.

■ The conservation rebate program ends 365 days from the date the resident joins the program. The resident must voluntarily sign up for a new one-year commitment to earn further rebates.

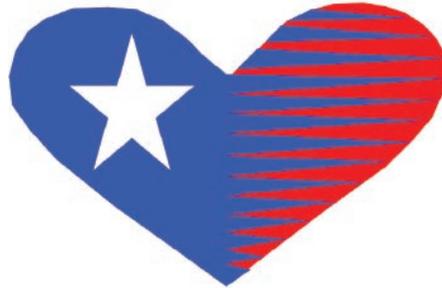
■ Call to sign up today or go to <http://www.waterdistrict25.com> and click on the Water Conservation Registration form, complete the form and click the button to email to our office (or you can print and drop in one of two payment boxes: one located outside the District's office or the other located in the Pheasant Creek Shell Station.

III Earn a One-Time Credit to Your Bill! All you have to do is (1) Install a High Efficiency Toilet (HET) or a Water Smart Irrigation system at your residence within the District, (2) make an appointment for one of the District's Inspectors to visit your residence to verify installation (will photograph as part of the verification process), and (3) provide a copy of the proof of purchase. Once all three steps are complete and the paperwork has

been submitted to the District's Billing office, you can earn a one-time maximum credit of \$50.00 (fifty dollars) on your water bill.

Don't be a Water Hog!

Partnering with the District, by taking advantage of one or more of our Water Conservation programs, helps to create sustainable communities and just makes sense...and now you can earn "cents" by taking steps to increase efficiency through reductions in over-all water usage which helps to reduce energy consumption, reduce subsidence, and ensure an adequate supply of water for future generations.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY = COMMUNITY HEARTLINES PROGRAM

The District's focus on responsible corporate governance is evident in everything we do, from adherence to strict ethical guidelines and corporate governance standards, adherence to regulatory mandates, voluntary participation in regulatory agency programs, to the provision of programs that support sustainable communities within the region where we conduct our business. Corporate governance and social responsibility starts with our mission and vision statement and culminates in responsible business policies and practices.

We believe the District's record speaks directly to the business

priorities expected by our constituents to include fiscally responsible practices and efficient operations. However, nothing says more about the District's commitment to socially responsible leadership than the activities of our **Community Heartlines Programs**, which helps to improve the quality of life for many of the residents within our District. The Community Heartlines Programs, initiated in 2008, is comprised of a three-part program that encourages resident participation in activities to make a positive difference for your neighbors.

The program includes:

(1) Quarterly community blood drives (held in the District's conference center to make sure the process is close and convenient); (2) Bi-annual food drives (Spring and Fall); and (3) A voluntary contribution program, in partnership with the East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, that enables residents to add voluntary contributions to water bill payments to help neighbors who need financial assistance to pay their water bills (residents must designate how much they wish to contribute and add that amount to the total paid).

The contributions collected are forwarded to the East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, where an account is maintained for residents in our District who need temporary assistance. All three programs continue to be well received and supported by the community. Socially responsible leadership and corporate governance may be a popular buzzword for the media. However, for the Board of Directors and employees of FBCM25, socially responsible behavior is a part of our every day responsibilities. ■



Are you an Accidental POLLUTER?

So, what can we do?

Perhaps the most important thing we can do is to learn as much as we can about the impacts of stormwater runoff pollution and the protection of our sourcewaters.

As with other forms of manmade pollution, there are things we can do to minimize polluted runoff. Most of these are common sense practices, and just require breaking some bad habits -- like hosing debris and grass clippings into the storm sewer -- that are now prohibited.

A few tips...

- Don't over-fertilize your yard and never apply pesticides if a heavy rain is forecast...the chemicals will just run off into the stormdrain.

On household lawns and gardens, homeowners can try natural alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Composting, use of native plants and Xeriscaping in landscaped areas can reduce or even eliminate the need for chemicals. Natural predators like frogs, dragonflies, and bats can help take care of pesky insects. If chemicals are needed around the home, they should be stored properly to prevent leaks and access by children. Most cities have designated sites for the proper disposal of used chemicals.



As the old saying goes, "We all live downstream." Streams and creeks feed into rivers, lakes and the ocean. We learned that in grade school. What we may not remember, however, is that, in the majority of cases, stormwater does not receive any treatment before it enters our waterways. Everyone drinks water, so we are all affected when this finite natural resource is polluted. And when water treatment costs rise, the price of drinking water goes up.



Most people are unaware of how they impact water quality, and are seriously surprised to learn that folks going about their daily lives are *the number one source* of stormwater pollutants. Some of the biggest contributors to this problem are routine residential activities such as lawn mowing and fertilizing, car washing and maintenance, and the application of pesticides and herbicides on lawns and landscaped areas. These activities all add contaminants to storm runoff and can end up in our drinking water supply.



- Pick up after your pets and dispose of pet waste in the garbage. Americans own approximately 75 million dogs and an estimated 40 percent of pet owners don't clean up their dogs' 'deposits' -- at home or when out for a walk. Those piles don't just disappear; rain washes unscooped poop into storm sewers contaminating the water with such nasties as E. coli, fecal coliform bacteria, salmonella, and giardia.



- Keep lawn and household chemicals tightly sealed and stored safely, and dispose of them at household hazardous waste collection sites.

- Be aware that dumping trash, pollutants and debris into the storm drain is illegal and is a violation of the Clean Water Act

To learn more about this growing threat to our drinking water and what we can do to help, visit:

www.cleanwaterways.org.

Top 10

for your yard

water-saving tips

1
DON'T WATER TOO MUCH!



3
ZONE IRRIGATION TO MATCH WATER NEEDS!

5
WATER DEEPLY, WATER LESS!



6
DON'T CUT THE GRASS TOO SHORT!



8
USE RAIN SENSOR OR CONTROLLER!



9
APPLY FERTILIZER SPARINGLY!



Facts about potential water savings -- Residential Lawn and Garden Irrigation

During the spring and summer months, approximately 80 percent of the water we use is for irrigation...and about 50 percent of that water is WASTED! The days of cheap and plentiful water supplies are behind us...and it is time that we all learn to use this precious natural resource more efficiently.



Use only as much water on your lawn as you absolutely need to. Studies show that the average homeowner uses more than four times the actual amount of water needed to keep a lawn healthy and looking great.

When watering, thoroughly wet soils to a depth of about 6 inches. One inch of water will accomplish a 6-inch moisture level in the soil, but this will vary according to soil mineral type. Shallow watering encourages shallow roots that dry out fast. Also wait as long as possible between watering cycles to allow the root zone to dry out...which encourages deeper roots and better drought tolerance.



Water your lawn and garden in the very early morning or after sunset. If you water in the middle of the day, evaporation prevents about 14 percent of the water from ever reaching the plants' roots. Early or late watering can save the resident as much as 87 gallons a week...that's 4,524 gallons a year. For you trivia buffs, that's equal to nine times the annual rainfall in Seattle.



Reduce the irrigation cycle by 1-3 minutes, or eliminate one irrigation cycle per week. Your potential savings can add up to 15-25 gallons per minute, or up to 250 gallons per cycle.

Use technology based irrigation equipment that can adjust watering times and shut down the system when it rains. This equipment can save up to 40 gallons of water per day!



Children Aren't Waterproof...

There is nothing quite like a refreshing dip in a swimming pool to really enjoy a hot Texas day. Swimming is an excellent form of exercise for people of all ages. Unfortunately, children under the age of five are 14 times more likely to be involved in a fatal accident in a swimming pool than in an automobile.

Hot weather is around a long time in Texas -- and recreation usually involves water activities of one kind or another, so one of the first things parents are concerned about is helping their children learn to respect the water... whether they are in it, on it, or just around it.

Basic water safety should be learned by people of all ages, because simply learning to swim is no guarantee that you will never be involved in an aquatic accident.

American Red Cross statistics indicate that 50 percent of pool accidents involving young children could be prevented by adequate fencing and barriers. Local laws and regulations call for all outdoor pools -- public and private -- to be enclosed by a fence at least four feet high, and specify that they must have self-closing, self-latching devices to keep out adventure-some youngsters.

The vast majority of people who drown **never intended to get in the water in the first place**. Most were dressed for activities *near the water*, but not *in it*. They might have been in a boat,

on a pier or dock, or playing on the deck of a swimming pool when an accident occurred. Drownings are often called "silent" accidents, because they usually happen quickly, without a cry for help.

Experts insist that no one -- of any age -- should EVER swim alone. It only takes a minute for a serious accident to occur, so parents should never take their eyes off children around the water...not even for a second.

Youngsters are naturally curious about a sparkling body of water -- anything from a giant



puddle to a mighty ocean will do -- and this attraction often stays with us for life. A sliding glass door that successfully separates a child from a backyard pool one day... can be opened by young fingers the next. Never take barriers for granted; constantly check to see that they are secure and prevent unwanted access to a pool area.

Sadly, the Consumer Product Safety Commission predicts that this summer alone, more than 300 children under the age of five will drown in home swimming pools. While thousands more will be rescued in time to prevent drowning, many will suffer serious and permanent brain damage.

Minimize the risk that you

or someone you love will be involved in an aquatic accident by following some simple, common-sense rules, and make your backyard pool safer for everyone who uses it.

- ◆ Make sure children learn how to float on their back and how to reach the side if they should ever fall into a pool. Teach them how critical it is to **YELL FOR HELP** immediately!

- ◆ Make sure your pool or spa is inaccessible to unsupervised children. Be sure there are no footholds or handholds in any fence or barrier that will allow a child to climb over.

- ◆ Doors to pool areas should be locked and protected with audible alarms and out-of-reach locks.

- ◆ Keep rescue equipment and a telephone nearby whenever the pool is in use.

- ◆ Flotation devices will not keep a child safe in the water; don't rely on them.

- ◆ Insist that all who use the pool follow some strict rules: No running; no pushing others under water; no diving except in designated areas with adult permission and supervision.

- ◆ Anyone who supervises youngsters around water should learn CPR and be able to administer it at once. Seconds count in preventing death or brain injury -- which can occur in two to six minutes after oxygen is cut off from the brain.

- ◆ Diving into the shallow end of a pool can result in a paralyzing spinal injury. Simply do not allow diving from the side of the diving board, slide or other pool equipment, or diving through an inner tube or other pool toy. ◆

What is a backflow prevention device and why do you need one?

If you have a swimming pool and/or an irrigation system for your yard, you should have a backflow prevention device -- like the one to the right -- nearby. Most people probably have no idea what the pipes and valves are for, and unless they were told during the installation of the pool or sprinklers, they wouldn't know that this equipment plays a critical role in protecting your home's potable water system from contamination.



Backflow may occur in the event of either *backsiphonage* or *backpressure*. Backsiphonage can happen when the pressure in the distribution system drops, drawing water from the consumer's plumbing back into it. Pressure drops might occur in the event of a line break, or high water demand such as fighting a fire nearby. Backpressure can cause backflow when a potable water system is connected to another system that operates at a higher pressure... such as an irrigation system.

Water distribution systems are designed to have the water flow from the water treatment plant to the consumer, but whenever a cross-connection in a plumbing system takes place (when the potable water supply is connected to a non-potable source) contamination can occur if not protected. If a plumbing system is modified, there is potential to create cross-connections.

So, what's the danger? First of all, your yard and landscaped areas are full of potentially nasty things that you don't want in your drinking water...like pesticides, fertilizers and animal waste. If your pool or irrigation systems are not properly installed and protected with these devices, your system is vulnerable to backflow. Most of the time, the pressure in the system will keep the water from flowing backwards, but as mentioned earlier, a sudden pressure drop caused by a firetruck, or if the lines are shut down to repair a broken pipe, can trigger a backflow situation in surrounding neighborhoods.

Still not convinced? Here's an experiment you can do yourself. Turn off the water valve leading to your house. Next, turn on a faucet in the kitchen or downstairs bathroom. Then go to a higher level in the house and turn on another faucet. You will hear air being sucked into the higher faucet. You just created backflow in your plumbing system. Not too difficult to do, right?

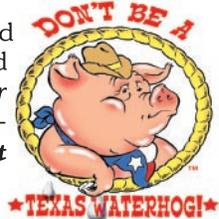
Backflow prevention devices protect all of us from the possibility of contaminants entering our drinking water system. If you have not had yours inspected for proper operation, you may wish to call a licensed irrigator to inspect it to confirm that it is working properly. Safety in our drinking water system is an important responsibility that we all share. ■



Mammas....don't let your babies grow up to be Texas Water Hogs!

According to the experts, while the population of Texas is expected to double by 2050, we will only be able to meet 70 percent of our water demands at that time. Today's youngsters will be the adults and homeowners of tomorrow who will have to make intelligent choices about preserving -- and extending -- our precious water supplies.

It is up to us to make sure that they understand the importance of developing good, water-wise habits today so that they will be prepared for their responsibilities in the future. Involve your children in doing a *household water audit* to discover how much water you use each month...then take some deliberate conserving actions and measure your success with the next month's water bill. **What a great way to demonstrate that the water we conserve today can serve us tomorrow.**



Fort Bend County Municipal
Utility District No. 25
P.O. Box 2847
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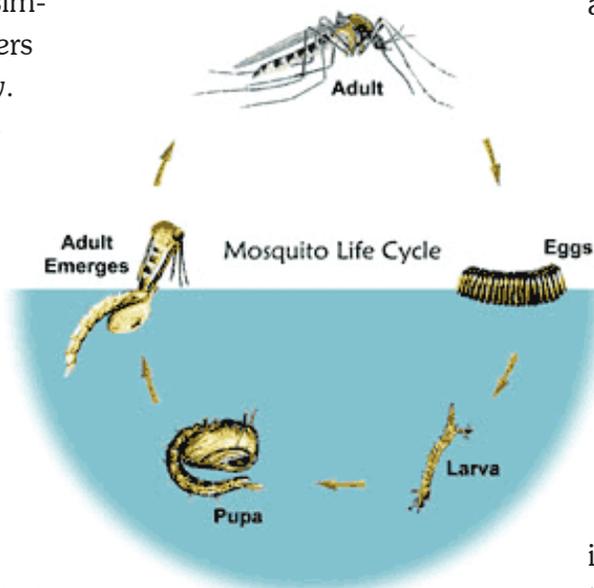
CONSERVE WATER...AND KILL A MOSQUITO!

Life is just full of unexpected rewards when you do the right thing. Some good, old fashioned common sense, for example, has helped us to “connect the dots” and offer help in solving two seasonal problems in one step. Want to know how? Read on...

During the summer, at least 50 percent of the water we use for irrigating lawns and landscaped areas is **wasted**. Some of it simply evaporates when sprinklers are on in the heat of the day. Some of it is lost when ‘oversprayed’ into the street or runs down driveways into storm sewers – which is particularly inefficient because grass doesn’t grow on concrete. But most of this wasted water is the result of **overwatering**...too much water, too often, by too many residents.

Water rates will continue to increase, so this is a great time to analyze your own water use for lawn and garden, and to implement changes that allow you to

use this precious natural resource more efficiently. If you have an irrigation system that has not been thoroughly checked for leaks and operating schedules within the last six months, contact a licensed irrigator for a system evaluation, adjustment, and any necessary repairs. Obtain and install a rain sensor or technology-based controller



to keep your system from operating in the rain or just after one.

There are a number of “penalties” for watering too much,



such as “training” your grass to grow shallow roots which demand more water and suffer sooner in periods without watering or rain, and paying much more for water used for your lawn and gardens than you need to. In addition, excess water tends to pool or puddle in low-lying areas and in yard items like plant saucers, pet bowls and birdbaths which provide excellent homes in which mosquitoes will happily breed and thrive! Not only are you paying too much and wasting water, but these annoying, biting pests attack you every time you venture into your yard. Want relief? *Conserve water and destroy the mosquito’s habitat!* Claim your bite-free reward for doing the right thing! 💧

LOW FLOW SHOWER HEADS -- ORDER FORM

Please print clearly. We will notify you, by the method you indicate below, when your shower heads are ready to pick up at the District office. Thank you.

Name _____

Address _____

FBCMUD#25 Account Number _____

Contact Phone number(s) for notification when shower heads are available for pickup:

Home _____ Mobile _____

Email Address for notification _____

Alternate contact information for notification _____



Place
Stamp
Here

**Fort Bend County Municipal
Utility District No. 25
18230 Old Richmond Road
Sugar Land, TX 77498**