

PECAN GROVE MUD NEWS

SPRING 2008

A Plan to Protect Our Natural Resources

In August 2007, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) required operators of certain small municipal storm sewer systems to obtain a permit for their storm water discharges into rivers, lakes, and streams. These new requirements affect most small, publicly-owned storm sewer systems located within an urbanized area (defined by the U.S. Census as an area of higher population density near a city) and are designed for the protection of our natural resources. Pecan Grove Municipal Utility District (PGMUD), which is located in the Houston Urbanized Area and operates a storm sewer system, does fall under this definition and is therefore required to comply with the TCEQ's permitting regulations.

To simplify compliance for small municipalities such as PGMUD, the state issued, via the TCEQ, a general permit for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (called MS4s). The Board, with support from PGMUD's engineer, Jones & Carter, Inc., drafted a plan and submitted the required documents to seek coverage under the TCEQ's general permit. Conditions of the general permit require that PGMUD develop a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that includes Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs). These MCM's are:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Involvement and Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Storm Water Management for New Development and Redevelopment, and
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

The SWMP adopted by PGMUD (which will be gradually implemented over the next five years) meets the requirements of the general permit but is flexible enough for the District to choose the most effective and cost-efficient methods for the prevention of storm water pollution. To track compliance, PGMUD is also required to submit an annual report to the TCEQ detailing what has been implemented and how that compares to the previously adopted SWMP.

Residents of Pecan Grove community will have an opportunity to participate in the implementation of the Storm Water Management Plan. Activities include, but are not limited to: neighbor-



Trash pollutes our waterways

Continued on page 8

**NOTICE OF DIRECTORS ELECTION AND BOND ELECTIONS
TO ALL QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF PECAN GROVE MUNICIPAL
UTILITY DISTRICT:**

The District will hold director and bond elections on May 10, 2008, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. There will be two propositions for bonds: (1) bonds for required conversion to surface water (the waterworks system) and (2) refunding bonds to allow the District in the future to refinance higher interest rate bonds for lower interest rate bonds. The bonds are repaid from ad valorem (property) taxes. The elections will be conducted as a joint election with Fort Bend County, with the County conducting the elections. The polling places for May 10, 2008 are listed on the District's website www.pecangrovemud.com. The places for early voting by personal appearance are set by the County. The tentative schedule and locations for early voting also are listed on the District's website at www.pecangrovemud.com. Please refer to www.fortbendvotes.org for the final early voting schedule or contact the Elections Administrator of Fort Bend County.

**AVISO DE ELECCIÓN DE DIRECTORES Y ELECCIÓN DE
BONOS A TODOS LOS ELECTORES CALIFICADOS DEL
DISTRITO DE SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS MUNICIPALES
DE PECAN GROVE:**

El Distrito llevará a cabo una elección de directores y de bonos el 10 de mayo de 2008 de 7:00 a.m. a 7:00 p.m. Habrá dos proposiciones de bonos: (1) bonos necesarios para la conversión a agua de superficie (del sistema de suministro de agua) y (2) bonos de reembolso para permitirle al Distrito refinanciar en el futuro los intereses de bonos altos a intereses de bonos más bajos. Los bonos son amortizados mediante un impuesto al valor agregado (sobre propiedades). La elección se llevará a cabo en conjunto con el Condado de Fort Bend, siendo el Condado quien conduzca la elección. Los lugares de votación para el 10 de mayo de 2008 están listados en el sitio en Internet del Distrito, www.pecangrovemud.com. Los lugares de votación anticipada en persona son establecidos por el Condado. El programa tentativo de fechas, horarios y lugares de votación anticipada también están listados en el sitio en Internet del Distrito, www.pecangrovemud.com. Favor de referirse a www.fortbendvotes.org o contacte al Administrador de Elecciones del Condado de Fort Bend para el programa final de fechas, horarios y lugares votación anticipada.

Here's proof that one person CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

To anyone who has ever met Carole Baker, it is not surprising to find this quote from anthropologist and writer Margaret Meade at the bottom of her e-mail messages: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."* **Carole Baker**, known far and wide as the *Queen of Conservation*, has indeed made a difference in how we think about the water we use.

This diminutive woman from Texas plays a pivotal role in the global water debate and is as much at home at the United Nations as she is in the halls of the Texas state capital. She is armed with statistics and common sense and she seldom takes "No" for an answer.

Getting her feet wet...

Carole accepted a job with the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District in 1990 to serve as Public Information Officer. The District was already well into its mission to reduce reliance on groundwater in order to relieve demand on the area's critical aquifers and to halt ground subsidence.

During her first few weeks on the job, she met Jeff Taylor, in the Public Works Department for the City of Houston. He invited her to attend a meeting of the American Water Works Association's Ad Hoc Conservation Committee and her journey began. (Today, with the leadership and participation of people like Carole and Jeff, this Committee is now a national Division of AWWA, making tremendous strides in promoting water efficiency across the country.)

Carole's job at the Subsidence District evolved into governmental affairs, and she began devoting an increasing amount of her time first at the State level, and subsequently at the federal level. With a philosophy of 'regulate only when necessary,' Carole has been instrumental in getting people to partner in achieving the common goal of using water wisely. Her path has taken her into corporate boardrooms, state and federal regulatory agencies, and into the offices of elected officials at all levels of government.

The more consensus development she accomplished, the more she dreamed of a national clearinghouse to stand with one voice for water efficiency as well as to become a forceful advocate for the stewardship of this precious natural resource.

Shock and AWE...

In late 2006, Carole's dream was on its way to becoming a reality. Confident but never boastful, she is excited about what she and key players from across the country have been able to accomplish. Announced by the Environmental Protection Agency's administrator, Steven Johnson, the **Alliance for Water Efficiency** -- AWE -- was created in partnership with numerous national, regional, and state organizations. The Alliance received its seed funding from EPA to build a water efficiency information clearinghouse and to work on plumbing and appliance codes and standards issues.

"The primary role of the organization," Carole explained, "is to serve as an advocate for water efficiency research, evaluation,



**Carole Baker, Chair
Alliance for Water Efficiency**

and education. The members of our Charter Board of Directors represent water utilities, environmental organizations, plumbing and appliance manufacturers, the academic community, government and others."

"We all have a stake in the efficient use of our water resources. Providing safe drinking water, maintaining economic competitiveness, and protecting ecosystems are all advanced by improvements in water use efficiency. Reducing water demand is often the lowest cost option for developing new supplies and in the future, it may be the only option. But widespread water-use efficiency requires strong advocacy and hard work, the kind of effort that the Alliance for Water Efficiency will provide."

For more information about how you can participate in this important new organization, visit: www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org.



What Happens When the Water is Gone?

How vulnerable is south-east Texas to a serious water shortage? With sustained population growth in its burgeoning metropolitan areas, combined with Harris County's mandated conversion of ground water usage to surface water (to stem subsidence), we can't dismiss the possibility of a major water shortfall in our near future.

At this writing, eleven West Texas cities are battling serious water problems. Officials cut 2008 water allotments to these cities because a major water source, Lake Meredith, is dangerously depleted resulting from severe drought conditions in 2005 and 2006. The Canadian River Municipal Water Authority provides water from Lake Meredith as well as groundwater wells in Roberts County. For the third straight year, the cities (Pampa, Borger, Amarillo, Plainview, Lubbock, and six smaller cities) will get 5,000 fewer acre feet of water (one acre foot equals about 325,800 gallons).



And if you have friends or relatives in Dallas or its surrounding areas, or had the opportunity to read Texas Monthly's February 2008 article: **The Last Drop***, you're aware of how quickly a

change in weather can shed light on the importance of our precious and limited water supply. When we are faced with its obvious depletion - when it begins to disappear before our very eyes, and mandatory restrictions are placed on its consumption - we realize that fresh water is quite literally worth its weight in gold.

Texas Monthly's article describes the ramifications of the recent drought in detail: "...consider the events of the summer of 2006 in the northern and eastern suburbs of Dallas, a part of the area known to state water planners as Region C. An eighteen-month drought had left Plano, Richardson, Mesquite, and other suburbs in a precarious position, and there was still no rain forecast, no end in sight. As the cities smoldered, the huge reservoirs that served them dropped to ever more alarming levels. Jim Chapman Lake emptied to 15 percent of its capacity, Lavon Lake to 36 percent.

People began to realize that there were no backups, no lines to other reservoirs. Water hogs were slapped with fines -- more than six thousand levied in Plano alone. Locks were unceremoniously clamped onto delinquent sprinkler systems. Nervous citizens were told they might soon face a stage four emergency, a condition that would mean the end of nearly all lawn watering (and thus, soon enough, of nearly all lawns) and eventually strict rationing."

Rains in late 2006 and the spring and summer of 2007 brought relief to the area, but not before -- as the article in Texas Monthly continues -- "1.6 million people had come within a meteo-



rological whisker of a catastrophic water shortage. And the drought of 2005-2006 was not even a particularly bad one. It was nowhere near as severe as the seven-year drought of the fifties, during which Dallas had to build an emergency pipeline to the Red River. That fix worked, but only because the population of Dallas proper was just 600,000 or so. Today it is 1.2 million." Take into account that Texas is expected to roughly double its population by 2060 (to 46 million) and you see the time for change - big change - is no longer something we leave to the responsibility of future generations.



Texas cities are not alone!

A drought of epic proportions in the U. S. Southeast threatens the water supply for millions

including Georgia's fast-growing Atlanta area. Florida anticipates inadequate water resources to supply its continuing population boom. And those vast deposits of fresh water, The Great Lakes, are actually shrinking while upstate New York's reservoirs have dropped to record lows. And out west, the Sierra Nevada snowpack is melting faster each year.

The federal government projects that no fewer than thirty-six states will face water shortages within five years. Solving the problem means an end to cheap water in most areas. Experts estimate that upgrading just the pipes alone to handle reliable new supplies will cost this country \$300 billion...yes, billion...over the next thirty years.

According to the U. S. Geological Survey's latest figures, the United States consumed more than 148 trillion gallons of water for residential, commercial, agricultural, manufacturing and miscellaneous uses in 2000, almost 500,000 gallons per person (by 2010, we'll have an additional 27 million citizens).

But water scarcity is not just an American problem. Asia has



60% of the world's population and only 30% of its fresh water. By 2050, according to the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, upwards of 2 billion people across the globe could face major water shortages.

Why the anticipated shortfall?

Across America, freshwater supplies are predicted to be inadequate to meet our needs due to many factors, including population growth, urban sprawl, waste/excessive use, and drought. Counter measures...conservation, gray water use, etc... can be taken to address some of these problems. Others, like the devastating southeast drought, pose a larger challenge. By definition, a drought is a long period of consistently below average precipitation in a region. If it persists, the conditions

surrounding a drought gradually worsen and its negative impact on the affected population -- its ecosystem and agriculture -- increases.

Drought mitigation strategies...

There are steps we can take to minimize the impact of drought conditions, including widespread voluntary conservation to prevent overuse of available supplies, using treated and purified recycled water, the collection and storage of rainwater from roofs and other catchments and, when water shortages are extreme, mandated regulation of water use.

Water is one commodity we simply cannot live without. Conservation is no longer something we merely talk about. It must become a necessary part of our daily routine. We must think about it as we brush our teeth, take our showers, wash our dishes, plan our landscaping, and update our appliances. Creating new, simple, and beneficial habits will help us to truly understand that: **The water we conserve today can serve us tomorrow!** ♦

* Source: *Texas Monthly February 2008 edition - The Last Drop*

Now, tell me again... exactly how much water do you think your lawn needs?



Nope...not even close. There's no need to use your lawn irrigation system more than twice a week -- only more often if there is no rainfall for an extended period of time. Frequent watering creates a shallow root system that requires excessive water during hot, dry periods.

If you have an irrigation system -- plan to complete your watering by 4:30 am -- well before morning water demand is at its peak. If you move the sprinklers around yourself, arrange to water after the morning peak demand time, but before the sun gets too high in the sky. You can use water more efficiently and still maintain a terrific looking yard!

Ft. Bend County Crime Stoppers, Inc.



REWARD

Fort Bend County Crime Stoppers, Inc.
is offering up to \$5,000.00 for information which leads to the apprehension of
the Suspect(s) who committed these crimes throughout the Pecan Grove
Subdivision on February 16, 2008

Criminal Mischief Suspect(s)

Several residents awoke early Sunday morning to find the windshields of their vehicles had been broken out. Thus far, (5) five incidents have been reported and are believed to have taken place the night before. According to Detectives, the incidents appear to be random acts of criminal mischief using a landscaping brick. A thorough investigation into the incidents is being conducted by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office.

Detectives are seeking the assistance of the Pecan Grove Community and are requesting anyone with information on the suspect(s) or details surrounding these Criminal Mischief Incidents to please contact
Fort Bend County Crime Stoppers, Inc.

**Information, which leads to the apprehension and filing of charges on the
suspect(s) involved, could earn you up to
\$5,000 CASH REWARD**

All calls to Crime Stoppers are ANONYMOUS

**Anyone with information is asked to call
Fort Bend County Crime Stoppers, Inc.
(281) 342-TIPS (8477)**

Update: Surface Water Treatment Plant

The Surface Water Treatment Plant proposed to be constructed by the District is pending authorization for design to begin once the Bonds to finance the project are authorized. The purpose of the Surface Water Treatment Plant is to comply with the unfunded mandate from Fort Bend County Subsidence District (authorized by the Texas Legislature) that Ground Water Systems reduce the amount of ground water being pumped from the underground aquifer in order to slow or stop land subsidence.

In an effort to comply with this mandate, Pecan Grove MUD considered all available options and determined that building our own plant puts us in control of our water quality, slows or stops the sinking of the ground in our area and on a cost basis is only slightly more than the other options (none of which are inexpensive). In the end, the concerns about assuring water quality became the number one reason the Board focused on in deciding to build our own plant.

If you have questions about the new Plant, please contact the Pecan Grove MUD office at 281-238-5000. ♦

Pecan Grove MUD Now Responsible for Sheriff's Contract Deputy Program

On October 1, 2007, responsibility for the Sheriff's Contract Deputy Program was transferred - from Pecan Grove's HOA, POA and the CIA - to the Pecan Grove Municipal Utility District (PGMUD). This change allowed PGMUD to enter into a contract with the Sheriff's Office covering the complete MUD district (the

HEY KIDS! HERE'S A WORD PUZZLE FOR YOU TO SOLVE!



HELP STOP POLLUTION

Find the hidden words within the grid of letters.

```

R K S G X O W K Y P A F Y R C
E K N T X L R A O M F E T U I
T E M E O E W L V N J R I N X
A H O K K R L R S M N T N O O
W F P A E U M Z X O T I U F T
D G L T T T N S I E D L M F S
N D A I X P R T E G W I M A U
U W O E T R A G C W K Z O V J
O N T M P R P O N D E E C T M
R S T N E M T A E R T R E E Q
G B T P C O N C R E T E A R P
S T O R M W A T E R R D Y P C
R O S E E U O Y A B O A Q N K
C S M W W A T D A W K J I W J
W U N V N Z M U N D J C N N L
    
```

bayou	creek	meadow	runoff	toxic
community	fertilizer	pollution	stormsewer	treatment
concrete	groundwater	pond	stormwater	waterway
cooperation	lake	rain	stream	

Puzzle results are on our webpage -- www.pecangrovemud.com

previous contract was limited to only the outlined patrol areas stipulated in their contract).

PGMUD Director, John Minchew - a retired Chief of Police with over thirty years of experience in law enforcement and security in the State of Texas and Florida - will oversee the project.

"I will be in contact on a daily basis with the Sheriff's Office," Minchew said. "We will be on top of what is happening in this community and react accordingly. Crime statistics will also be sent to

me and posted on the PGMUD website."

Specific duties for contracted deputies will not change and costs for 2008 will stay the same.

For additional information on the Sheriff's Contract Deputy Program, or to pass on any comments or concerns, email the PGMUD Board of Directors through our website at www.pecangrovemud.com, or call Director Minchew at 281-300-3730. ♦

Protect Natural Resources

Continued from page 1

hood collection and recycling of household wastes (especially plastics, glass, and metals) and the proper disposal of hazardous waste, such as motor oil, paint cans, and fuel (items often thrown away or poured down storm drains). PGMUD also encourages residents to share their own ideas for keeping our waterways pollutant-free.

Look for updates on the progression of these programs in future newsletters, bill inserts, and on the Pecan Grove website:

(www.pecangrovemud.com).



WHO TO CALL:

Water, sewer and drainage questions:

PGMUD Customer Service Office

2035 FM 359, Suite 13 (located in the rear of the Sweet Mesquite Center)

(281) 238-5000

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

After Hours: (281) 238-5000;
24 hrs/7 days a week

NOTE: *If you have water or sewer related problems, PLEASE CALL US BEFORE YOU CALL THE PLUMBER! We will investigate the problem at no cost to you. If it is found to be a water district-related problem, we will arrange to correct it. If it is not a water district issue, we will provide our advice. Remember, we are here to help!*

Garbage or recycling service:

PGMUD at (281) 238-5000

WCA/TEW at (281) 368-8397

PGMUD Tax Questions:

Tax Tech at (281) 499-1223

Park Reservations:

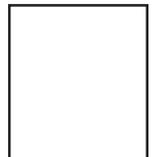
Ben Anders, YMCA at (281) 341-0791



The Pecan Grove MUD Board generally meets the last Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Pecan Grove Country Club. Meetings are open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend.

**Pecan Grove Municipal
Utility District**

**2035 FM 359, Suite 13
Richmond, TX 77469**



**Visit us online:
www.pecangrovemud.com**