

# PECAN GROVE MUD NEWS

SUMMER 2008

## **SURFACE WATER, LEVEE CERTIFICATION, FEMA FLOODPLAIN ELEVATION, H.R. 3121 AND STORMWATER REGULATIONS UPDATE**

*By Joe Taylor, President Pecan Grove MUD*

### **SURFACE WATER TREATMENT PLANT**

The Surface Water Treatment Plant design has been started by Malcolm Pirnie, Inc., the engineers hired by Pecan Grove MUD to design and contract manage the construction of the Surface Water Treatment Plant. Jones and Carter, Inc. (PG MUD Engineer) are authorized to design the piping to connect the Surface Water Plant to the existing Pecan Grove MUD water system, provide construction inspection services and design the improvements to each of the existing Ground Water Plants for the conversion to surface water. The Surface Water Treatment Plant is scheduled to be completed in approximately 30 months or by January 2011.

### **LEVEE CERTIFICATION**

After surveying, verification of elevations, geotechnical testing and operations and maintenance information, Jones and Carter, Inc. have certified that the Pecan Grove MUD levee system meets all current FEMA requirements for height, structural adequacy, stability and maintenance, based on the current base flood elevation in the Brazos River.

### **FEMA FLOODPLAIN ELEVATION**

The Brazos River is currently under study, by FEMA, to determine a new flood elevation. When the new flood elevation is certified, Pecan Grove MUD will have to re-certify that the levee height meets the new FEMA criteria. Based on the projected new flood elevation, the existing Pecan Grove MUD Levee will have to add some dirt along the levee that borders FM 359. The cost to fund the additional levee height is expected to be paid out of operation funds.

Also, based on the new flood elevation, Pecan Lakes Subdivision (Part of Pecan Grove MUD) may also require a levee or some type of flood protection placed around the perimeter of the subdivision, in order to have the same level of protection as the rest of Pecan Grove MUD. (Currently Pecan Lakes is mapped out of the flood plain.) The cost to provide flood protection to Pecan Lakes will most likely require additional bonds to fund such a project.

### **H.R. 3121**

There is proposed legislation (H.R. 3121) that may make it mandatory that all homeowners living within a levee structure be required to purchase flood insurance. Residents should follow this issue closely and contact your US Congressman and US

*Continued on page 5*



# **PECAN GROVE MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT**

## **PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

### **FOR**

## **STORM WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

**On July 29, 2008 at 7:00 p.m., during the regular July Board meeting, the Pecan Grove Municipal Utility District (PGMUD) will have a special presentation on its Storm Water Management Plan to comply with new regulations for storm water pollution prevention. To implement the proposed management plan, PGMUD is seeking community input and participation. This presentation will provide a brief highlight of the overall program and possible ways residents can get involved to help improve storm water quality in our area. Please visit the Storm Water Management Plan section of the District's web site, listed below, for a brief background on storm water regulations, a copy of the District's current Storm Water Management Plan and information on the July meeting.**

**<http://www.pecangrovemud.com>**

# Texas Sized Steps to Improve Water Efficiency in Landscape Irrigation

*(Reprinted by permission from the Alliance for Water Efficiency's Water Efficiency Watch Newsletter, July - August 2008)*

**“The TCEQ has adopted new rules regulating landscape irrigation in Texas. The new rules address design, installation and operation of irrigation systems...”**

Texas landscapes could become more efficient in the near future. At the direction of the 80th Texas Legislature, the states' environmental agency, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), on June 4, 2008 adopted new rules regulating landscape irrigation in Texas. The legislature said the rules must specifically address: The connection of irrigation systems to any water supply; the design, installation and operation of irrigation systems; water conservation; and the duties and responsibilities of irrigators. The new rules become effective January 1, 2009.

Texas irrigators will be faced with some additional requirements designed to result in more efficient irrigation systems. Among the major changes - the irrigator must complete an irrigation plan for every new installation, and the plan must be on the site during construction of the system.

Once the system is complete, the irrigator must provide a copy of the plan reflecting any changes made during installation to the property owner. The owner must receive instructions for operating the system efficiently, including the precipitation rate and flow rate of each irrigation zone, and a recommended watering schedule based on evapotranspiration. The new system must include rain or moisture shut off technology. Some specific design standards include no overhead spray irrigation in areas with a width less than 48", e.g., between a curb and walk. No water may be thrown onto impervious cover.

Beginning Jan 1, 2010, a licensed irrigator or licensed technician must be on the site during all new irrigation construction. The licensed technician is a new license developed to provide on-site supervision of the ongoing work.

Enforcement of the states' irrigation laws and rules has been an ongoing problem since the inception of the irrigator licensing law some 35 years ago. In the past, the state has attempted to provide enforcement with a very limited staff.

With the passage of HB 1656, the legislature required all municipalities with a population of over 20,000 to enforce the new rules, and require permits for new irrigation systems. Now, there will be enforcement officers on the streets to catch unlicensed operators and ensure the systems are being installed efficiently. 💧

# Are You Over Watering Your Lawn?

Deciphering all the information out there about “green” living, water conservation and the inevitable rising cost of water can be a confusing task at best. Environmentally-responsible practices are necessary (and can help to stem those rising costs), but where do you start, and how do you know if what you’re doing is truly making a difference?

Pecan Grove MUD is dedicated to providing you with the proper tools to help you get started (or improve upon) your contribution to protecting and preserving our precious natural resources. One simple and highly effective way to begin that process is to implement water-saving lawn irrigation practices.

The most common question we’re asked on this subject is: “How much water is enough?” The simple answer is: “You water when it’s needed.” And the surprising truth is...it’s not near as often as you think. IF you water properly.

## **Encourage deep roots.**

Watering infrequently and deeply is the key to forcing grass and plants to grow deep roots. In doing so, you allow them to access water for a longer period of time and thrive through the long, hot summer. In fact, homeowners who water every other day are over-watering and promoting shallow roots. Why? Because water close to the surface evaporates long before deeper moisture. Air is forced out of the continually saturated soil and since roots need air - voila - shallow roots!

## **Let’s get specific.**

As a general rule, proper watering means applying ONE inch of water per week. Now, how long this takes depends on the irrigation system you have in place. A simple way to assess the output of your system is to place small, one-inch deep empty cat food or tuna cans (at least three) over the area your sprinkler covers. Check periodically until the cans are filled and mark the amount of time it took to fill them up. That’s your watering time! Note: if the cans have an uneven amount of water, your water distribution may need to be adjusted.



According to the Texas Water Development Board’s Lawn Watering Guide, you should apply enough water to wet the soil to a depth of 4-6 inches. Pick up a soil probe at your local garden center to help determine exactly how deep the water penetrates.

It’s also important to use a sprinkler that emits large drops of water that remain close to the

ground as opposed to sprinklers that spray a fine mist (consider “drip irrigation” if you’re installing a new system). Set your system to water during the early morning or evening hours as watering in the heat of the day can result in up to a 60 percent higher evaporation loss. To avoid peak demand for other household uses - like showers, kitchen chores, and the use of laundry appliances - set irrigation system timers to complete the cycle before 4:00 a.m.

Do not water on windy days, and make sure your sprinkler is set to water your lawn, not sidewalks and driveways. A rain sensor is also a great investment and will keep your lawn from being unnecessarily watered when Mother Nature has already done the job!

## **What does mowing have to do with water conservation?**

Quite a bit, actually. It’s best to base your mowing on the growth rate of the grass versus a set time schedule, so set the mower to the highest setting during hot summer months. Longer grass keeps the soil cool, minimizing evaporation, reducing root stress (because the soil won’t dry out as quickly) and conserving water.

This smaller amount of cut grass means the clippings won’t have to be bagged and can actually return the nutrients to the soil. Look at that! Now you have a legitimate excuse for lazing around on Saturday afternoons!

## The scoop on fertilizer.

A reasonable amount of fertilizer 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. And remember those lawn clippings? They help you out here as well. They supply organic matter and up to one-third of your fertilizer needs.

Speaking of "organic"... when choosing a fertilizer, consider the organic, slow-releasing kind. Organic fertilizers have to be broken down by soil microbes and converted to a form plants can use. Therefore, they do not deliver too much nitrogen to the grass at one time and are less susceptible to leaching into ground water. By

contrast, high nitrogen, water soluble fertilizers can leach into ground water and can also cause abnormal cell growth of grass, making it more susceptible to diseases such as brown patch.

We hope the information featured in this article will spur you to make some subtle, simple

changes - helping us to ensure the availability of clean and plentiful water sources in the years to come. As always, if you have any questions, call us at 281-238-5000 or visit [www.pecangrovemud.com](http://www.pecangrovemud.com).

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



## District Update...

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Senators regarding this matter. (All three voted for the bill.) Pecan Grove MUD has already sent correspondence to each supporting the removal of the language that requires mandatory participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, for those communities situated on floodplains, behind levees, dams and other manmade structures. Check our web site at [www.pecangrovemud.com](http://www.pecangrovemud.com) for a copy of the letter.

### US Congressman, Nick Lampson:

DC Address:

The Honorable Nick Lampson  
United States House  
of Representatives  
436 Cannon House  
Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-4322  
DC Phone: 202-225-5951  
DC Fax: 202-225-5241  
Electronic Correspondence:  
<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

### US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison:

DC Address: The Honorable Kay  
Bailey Hutchison

United States Senate

284 Russell Senate

Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510-4302

DC Phone: 202-224-5922

DC Fax: 202-224-0776

Electronic Correspondence:

<http://hutchison.senate.gov/contact.cfm>

Website:

<http://hutchison.senate.gov/>

### US Senator John Cornyn:

DC Address:

The Honorable John Cornyn

United States Senate

517 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510-4304

DC Phone: 202-224-2934

DC Fax: 202-228-2856

Electronic Correspondence:

[http://cornyn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?](http://cornyn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Contact.ContactForm)

[FuseAction=Contact.ContactForm](http://cornyn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Contact.ContactForm)



Your Insurance Agent should also have information on the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

## STORMWATER REGULATIONS

At 7:00 pm on Tuesday July 29, 2008, at the Pecan Grove Country Club, Pecan Grove MUD will give a presentation and receive Public Input for the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program currently being developed by Pecan Grove MUD. For more information on this public presentation, check page 2 in this newsletter, visit us online: [www.pecangrovemud.com](http://www.pecangrovemud.com) or call us at 281-238-5000.💧

# CHILDREN AREN'T WATERPROOF

Swimming is a great form of exercise, a fun activity, and also a way to combat the often stifling heat of a southeast Texas summer day. We must be keenly aware, however, of the inherent dangers present when children are in and around swimming pools or other bodies of water. We've all heard the tragic news reports of the drowning or serious injury of a small child in a backyard swimming pool.

It's easy to assume that this is something that happens to someone else's child, but without the proper precautions and supervision, this tragedy can strike any one of us. In fact, 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. \*A May 2008 report by The U.S. Consumer Product and Safety Commission (CPSC) states that "there were, on average, 2,700 pool and spa related emergency department (ED)-treated submersion injuries each year for 2005-2007 and 283 pool and spa related fatalities per year for 2003-2005 for children younger than five years of age".

## Layers of Protection

Many parents put their kids in swim lessons at an early age...and that's a good thing. But children should also be taught to have a healthy respect for the water...whether they are in it or just around it. Simply learning to swim does not guarantee their safety. The vast majority of people who drown never intended to get in the water in the first place.

So what else can be done to decrease the likelihood of a drowning on your watch? The U.S.

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) strongly advises that parents use "layers of protection" around the pool.

One important (and mandatory) protective measure is fencing. Local laws and regulations call for all Houston pools - public and private - to be enclosed by a fence at least four feet high. The fences should have self-closing, self-latching devices and there should be no footholds or handholds that will allow a child to climb over.



It is also recommended that fences with vertical slats be less than four inches apart, and if your fence is chain link, no part of the diamond-shaped opening should be larger than 1-3/4 inches. Fences are not just the law, they work: The American Red Cross statistics indicate that 50 percent of pool accidents involving young children can be prevented if adequate fencing and barriers are in place.

In addition to mandatory safety requirements, consider the following suggestions offered to provide even more "layers of protection" for your family this summer:

## Don't swim alone.

Experts insist that no one - of any age - should EVER swim alone. Drownings are often called "silent" accidents...they usually happen quickly, without a cry for help. Parents should not take their eyes off children when they are in or around water...not even for a second.

**Check that barriers are secure at all times.** Children are naturally drawn to the sparkling allure of water. A sliding glass door that successfully separates a child from a backyard pool one day can be opened by young fingers the next. Doors to pool areas should be secured with out-of-reach locks and protected with audible alarms, and, as an extra precaution, it's a good idea to remove toys from in and around the pool when it is not in use. They can attract young children to the unattended area.

A power safety cover -- a motor powered barrier that can be placed over the water area - might also be considered. The cover should meet the requirements of the ASTM pool cover standard: it must withstand the weight of two adults and a child to allow rescue if an individual falls onto the cover, and allow for quick removal of water from the cover. A young child can drown in just two inches of water.

Steps and ladders leading from the ground to the pool should also be secured and locked, or removed when the pool is not in use. Never take barriers for granted; constantly check to see that they are secure to prevent unwanted access to a pool area.

*Continued on next page*

## Set pool rules -- and enforce them

Insist that all who use the pool are aware of, and follow, strict rules. There should be no running, no pushing others under water, and no diving (except in designated areas with adult permission and supervision).

Be prepared if an emergency situation arises. Preparation in case of emergency is imperative. Keep rescue equipment (pole, rope and personal flotation devices) and a cordless or cellular phone near the pool whenever it is in use, and make sure those supervising children learn CPR and are able to administer it at a moments notice. These skills can prevent death or brain injury, which can occur in two to six minutes after oxygen is cut off from the brain.



Flotation devices cannot be relied upon to keep a child safe in the water. Teach children how to float on their back and reach the side of the pool if they should ever fall in. Also instruct them to YELL FOR HELP immediately - it could be your only indication that they are in danger.

Always remember to check the pool first if a child is missing. Seconds count in preventing death or disability. Go to the edge of the pool and scan it in its entirety.

To minimize the risk that you or someone you love will be

involved in an aquatic accident, follow the simple rules and suggestions outlined in this article and enjoy summer water activities for what they can be...a great way to spend quality time with family.

For more information on proper barriers or other pool safety tips, visit: the Consumer Product Safety Commission's

website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) and the American Red Cross -- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) (click on "Health & Safety Services" then "Swimming & Lifeguarding").

*\*Pool and Spa Submersion: Estimated Injuries and Reported Fatalities, 2008 Report (May 2008). U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.*

## In the NEWS: "Dry" Drowning

Just when you thought you had done everything possible to protect your children when they're around water...here's another reason to keep a constant eye on youngsters while they are swimming and after they leave the pool. This little-known danger -- called by several names, including dry drowning -- is NOT caused by the presence of water in the lungs, which prevents organs from transmitting oxygen into the bloodstream. In fact, in most cases, no water is found in the lungs at all.

A recent network news story focused on the sudden death of a young boy AFTER he had been swimming for the first time.

There are a number of theories about how someone can drown and not be in the water; but the important thing to understand is that it can happen, and that observing good water safety rules - and being alert to any unusual behavior or symptoms after swimming - can indeed make a difference.

As always, observation is key. If any kind of water incident occurs - taking in water through the nose or mouth resulting in choking or coughing - keep a close watch on the person. Difficulty breathing, painful breathing or shallow breathing are all red flags.

A persistent cough, chest pain, a change in mood or mental status, lethargy, increased agitation when lying flat, sweaty skin or changes in skin color are also strong indicators that something isn't right. If these signs are present, call 9-1-1 immediately, especially in cases involving children who suffer consequences much faster than adults.

Dry drowning usually occurs anywhere from one to twenty-four hours after an incident, but if caught early, treatment (which involves supplying oxygen to the lungs) can be very effective.

For more information on water-related injuries (including dry drowning), visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website at: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm). ◆



## HEY KIDS!

### Pansophigus Says...

It's summer again and you have lots of time to play and have fun. While you are playing outside, be alert to any water leaks around your house and be sure to tell Mom or Dad if you find any.

Leaks are responsible for wasting thousands of gallons of our precious water each year. This is unnecessary because leaks are easy to fix once they have been discovered!

Also, when your sprinkler system is on, check to see if it is "overspraying" to include driveways, sidewalks and streets. If so, this is something else to tell your parents about.

If you're given the chore of cleaning up grass clippings after the lawn has been mowed, there are two things to remember: 1. Use a broom and not the hose and, 2. NEVER sweep grass clippings and other debris down the storm sewer! ♠



## 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**

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Richmond, TX 77469**

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