

PECAN GROVE MUD NEWS

The Latest on Surface Water

Construction of the Pecan Grove MUD (PGMUD) Surface Water Treatment Plant (SWTP) is well underway and is expected to be complete by the end of 2011. In the past two newsletters, we provided you with information on surface water treatment and how the treated drinking water is delivered to your home. PGMUD is required by the Fort Bend County Subsidence District to find alternative sources of water to reduce pumping from our existing water wells. Our new surface water source, the Brazos River, will require treatment that will be accomplished at the SWTP. Water transmission lines will carry the water from the SWTP to our existing water plant facilities where the surface water will be mixed with ground water, pumped into the public water system and delivered to your home.

You've likely seen the water in the Brazos River and in Oyster Creek. There is quite a bit of silt in both of these water bodies. We have conducted extensive pilot testing of the treatment systems to ensure that the PGMUD SWTP is designed with the ability to remove the silt and other materials existing in these natural waters. The SWTP is designed with a high-efficiency silt removal system, called the "sedimentation basin". Following the sedimentation basin will be a treatment process known as Micro-Filtration. The filtration process will remove the smallest of particles. Additionally, chemical treatment and disinfection systems that follow filtration will ensure that other dissolved constituents are removed. The combination of these processes will result in high quality drinking water that will be safe and pleasant to drink.

Water that will be delivered to the public drinking water system will be a combination of surface water and ground water. The final product delivered to your home will be similar

to the water you receive today, with a few minor differences, including:

1. **The type of chemical used for disinfecting the drinking water.** Today, and in the past, ground water has been treated with chlorine for disinfection. As we approach the time when the SWTP begins providing surface water, that chemical will be changed from chlorine to chloramine. This change is required to reduce the potential for other compounds in treated surface water that react with the chlorine and form treatment byproducts. By using chloramine disinfection, we will continue to be able to provide water that is free of unwanted biological organisms. The conversion to chloramine disinfection will require additional public notifications prior to this change. PGMUD's plan is that throughout this conversion, the water that will be delivered at your tap will continue to meet and exceed the national and state public drinking water standards.

2. **Water Hardness.** It is likely that the surface water that will be treated at the SWTP will have less "hardness" than you are currently accustomed to. Water from our water wells is "hard" because it contains a variety of nat-





PECAN GROVE MUD – FIRE PLAN

On May 31, 2011, the Pecan Grove MUD (PGMUD) Board received requests from the POA, CIA and Pecan Lakes HOA to create a Fire Plan for the District. The Board voted unanimously to pursue the creation of a plan.

The Community Associations and the PGMUD Board consider the health and safety of our residents as our number one priority. To improve services in the District, many individuals have expressed a desire for the PGMUD to contract for Fire Service in our Community. The State Law that governs Municipal Utilities Districts grants PGMUD the authority to provide fire service within the District. In order to do so, PGMUD must create a Fire Plan that is approved by the State and then the voters within the District. The Plan must contain certain information describing how service will be provided, any capital costs for the Service and how those services will be paid for.

Two PGMUD board members – John Minchew and Richard Stolleis – were appointed to gather input from representatives of all property owners associations within the District, and to work with the District’s Attorney to develop the Plan. The Fire Plan will be developed following a two-step process:

• Step One will be for the District to develop a consensus on which services will best meet the needs of the Community as a whole. Data will be

gathered regarding the fire service resources available to serve our Community. An initial meeting has been held with the community association representatives and the PGMUD Board will be holding public meetings with the Community to discuss the Fire Plan. Check the PGMUD website (www.pecangrovemud.com) for information on specific dates and times. In the future, there will also be meetings with community association representatives to develop various aspects of the Fire Plan. Once input from the community association representatives is received, support for the Plan will be determined. While the exact process is still being developed by the committee, input from the Community may come in the form of an independent opinion poll/survey, meetings and/or other methods yet to be determined.

• Step Two will be the formal process required to comply with State Law for the District to implement a Fire Plan. The Plan will be submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), as their approval is required prior to District implementation. Once the District receives TCEQ approval, the Plan can be placed on the ballot at the next available District election date.

Once the District voters approve the Fire Plan, PGMUD will provide fire service for the District. With approval, PGMUD will be authorized to implement a contract for professional

fire services for the entire District. Depending on details of the Fire Plan, the District may purchase facilities, equipment, and/or services to provide effective fire protection within the PGMUD boundaries. When a Fire Plan is adopted, all properties within the District will benefit and will share the cost of providing fire service to the Community. Details of the Fire Plan and related costs have not been determined for PGMUD, but the typical monthly costs for fire service in other Fort Bend County utility districts are in the range of nine to ten dollars per unit for residential homes and apartments and per 2,000 square feet of floor area for commercial property.

The steps required to adopt and implement a Fire Plan for PGMUD have been initiated. Committee meetings for the Board have been scheduled and the meetings with the Community representatives have been initiated. The formal process to obtain TCEQ approval may take nine months or longer. The District is hopeful that it can obtain the approvals necessary to present the plan to the voters on a future official election date. This is the first of many articles that will be provided to present the facts related to a Fire Plan. Please watch for the latest information in future newsletters and on the District’s web page. We plan to keep you updated as the process continues and the details of the Fire Plan become available.

Continued from Page 1

urally occurring minerals. “Hard” water often creates scaling inside piping and around fixtures, resulting from minerals dissolved in the existing ground water supply. The surface water planned to be delivered later this year, will have less mineral content, therefore, causing less scaling and mineral deposits. This “softer” water will act differently in your normal day-to-day water use. Less soap may be required to accomplish the same tasks and the “soft” water is less effective in removing that soap when you shower or wash your hands. Water spots on your windows and stains on fences and walls from your sprinkler overspray may be less evident. In homes with older galvanized steel piping (20 years or more), there is typically quite a bit of mineral scale build-up within the pipes. This build-up can keep old pipes from leaking where the galvanizing on the pipe wall has corroded away. With the addition of water that is less scale-forming, it is possible that some of the build-up inside old pipes may dissolve. PGMUD’s plan is to minimize the descaling characteristics of the treated surface water to minimize any effect on the piping in your home. We want you to be on watch during the months following conversion of our water supply, because changes in water characteristics may lead to water leaking through the holes that had previously sealed by scaling in your pipes.

Your health and safety is our highest priority in delivering drinking water to our Community. It is our goal to make the transition to surface water as seamless as possible. We will continue to keep you updated on the progress of the SWTP construction in future newsletters, on our website (www.pecangrovemud.com), and through other news outlets as we proceed to reduce our ground water use. We plan to keep you informed in advance of future changes. Our doors (and all District Board meetings) are always open. Call the PGMUD office or come to see us if you have any questions and/or wish to hear more from our experts regarding our surface water conversion.

PGMUD PROJECT UPDATES



Storm Water Management

Pecan Grove MUD (PGMUD) is currently wrapping up Year 4 of our Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP). The Plan – developed in 2008 - was required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to obtain a 5-year permit for discharging storm water into rivers, lakes and streams. Under this Plan, the District must meet certain conditions, including:

- 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

Currently underway are routine inlet inspections, inlet markings, channel and basin inspections and outfall inspections for the District.

We are looking for community volunteers to assist in marking inlets throughout the District. Inlet marking not only plays an important role in our Storm Water Quality program, but it also helps to deter residents from dumping trash and chemicals into our waterways. Education is a key component to protecting our precious water sources. It is important for the PGMUD community to understand that **everything** dumped into inlets is carried by our storm sewers to the Brazos River. Only rain water is permitted to enter the storm water system, and volunteering in the inlet marking program

will help to get this vital message out. If you are interested in volunteering in the effort, please call 281-238-5000.

A new program also being implemented this year is the creation of a Reporting Hotline which allows residents to report any illegal dumping into our inlets and storm sewer system. If you witness any such activity, please call the hotline number (District office) at 281-238-5000.

Surface Water Transmission Lines

Construction has started on the surface water transmission lines. This project is part of Pecan Grove MUD’s conversion to surface water. The project includes the construction of a 16-inch water line and associated work necessary to deliver treated water from the new Surface Water Treatment Plant to the storage tanks at all three (3) of Pecan Grove MUD’s ground water plants. Once delivered to the ground water plants, the water may be stored or pumped into the Pecan Grove MUD’s water system.

These facilities were located extensively within current district owned easements, within the levee right-of-way parallel to Skinner Lane, the boundaries of a golf course, and the right-of-way of a major drainage ditch on the south side of the district. To reduce the impact to the community, the Contractor is boring under sensitive areas like Belin Park and through the Pecan Grove Plantation Country Club Golf Course.

Currently, the Contractor is ahead of the construction schedule and completion of this project is on track for December 2, 2011.





Composting: A Simple Way to Make a Big Difference

To many, the idea of composting can seem a bit, well, “1970s Mother Earth”, or at the least, a task too difficult to bother with. The reality is, composting is extremely economical, creates the best possible food for your flowers, plants and garden, keeps unnecessary materials out of our overflowing landfills, and is actually quite simple to manage.

Want to give it a shot?

Congratulations for considering composting! This process will not only benefit the look and health of your outdoor area, but will also benefit our planet. Think about this:

- Composting enriches your soil. As bacteria and fungi break down organic material, the byproduct is humus, a nutrient-rich material that retains moisture.
- Composting prevents pollution. Materials that end up in landfills produce methane gas and leachate runoff. By composting your yard waste, you’ll be putting less in landfills and preventing runoff of your existing soils.
- Composting reduces the need for water, fertilizers, and pesticides. Rather than spending time and money at your local home and garden store, composted materials naturally retain more water and enrich existing soil.

In this article, you will find many helpful tips on what to do, and what **not** to do to keep the composting cycle simple and successful. So, let’s get started!

Where should a compost pile be located?

There are a number of options when it comes to compost pile locations and bin types (from the very rudimentary to the top-notch, fancy bins). It’s really up to you. Talking to an expert at your local nursery or garden center is always a good idea, but following are a few options to consider:

- When choosing a site for your compost pile or bin, make sure it is handy to your garden and kitchen, yet is out

of plain sight. It can be placed in the sun or shade – either will work – but to speed up the composting process and avoid the pile becoming too wet, a sunny spot is recommended.

- Although a bin can keep compost contained and looking neat, it is not necessary. You can have an open pile or you can corral compost in a simple wire column made from a 4-foot wide by 8-foot long piece of stiff wire mesh.
- If you would like to keep things a bit more organized and contained, you can buy a more permanent bin or build a three-bin compost system made from slatted wood or recycled pallets. Leave the bins open on one side so you can add compost materials and turn the pile easily. Cover the top of the bins with a sheet of plywood if we start getting regular rains. A three-bin system allows you to turn the compost from one bin to another and store finished compost until you are ready to use it.

The Right “Ingredients”

The two basic elements that make up compost are **GREEN** (organic) materials, and **BROWN** materials. Green ingredients are high in nitrogen and brown ingredients are high in carbon.

Green materials can be comprised of only garden debris, but can also include certain kitchen scraps and other organic materials.

Examples of green materials:

- **Garden Debris:** fresh grass clippings, fresh leaves, old annuals, peat moss, etc.
- **Kitchen Scraps:** Fruit and vegetable peelings; egg shells, tea bags, coffee grounds and coffee filters; breads (with no spreads on it); plain pasta (no sauces or oils on it); peanut shells; corn cobs and corn husks (corn can take a full season to decompose – but it will break down).
- **Other Organic Materials:** clean cotton or wool rags, dryer lint, string, rope, hair (untreated) and paper tow-

els (with no oil or sauce on them).

Examples of brown materials:

- Woodchips; hay; twigs, wood ashes; dried-out leaves; dried-out lawn clippings; shredded paper

Materials that SHOULD NOT be added to your compost pile:

- Meat, dairy products, and food containing oils or sauces can attract pests, and therefore should not be composted.
- Pet waste is not recommended as it may contain organisms that humans should avoid.
- Inorganic materials such as plastic, metal, rubber, glass, stone, chemicals or greases will not compost.
- Do not add diseased plants, weeds that have gone to seed, or plants treated with pesticides or herbicides.

The Right “Mix”

For the most part, compost piles with a balance of one part green to two parts brown break down fastest.

- When first starting your compost pile, place a layer of twigs or sticks about 3” to 4” high. This will allow air to circulate at the bottom of the pile and prevent odors.
- Add a layer of your ‘green’ materials on top of the twigs, and cover the green with a layer of ‘brown’ items.
- Sprinkle some soil over top. This adds micro-organisms to the compost that will help to speed up decomposition. It also helps to keep away insects and pests.
- The easiest way to achieve the right balance is to add one garden forkful of green material, topped by two forkfuls of brown material. Mix them together to ensure proper aeration and to prevent odors. Continue adding greens and browns until the pile is at least 3 cubic feet (3 ft. x 3 ft. x 3 ft.). Piles of this size heat up quickly and break down faster.

For composting to occur, a combina-

tion of organic waste, air and moisture must be present. A lack of air can produce a soggy (and smelly) pile, and too much air can slow down the composting process by over-cooling the pile. You can control the amount of airflow and avoid these two extremes by adjusting the size of the openings in the composter.

Compost does need the correct amount of moisture to breakdown. The right moisture level could best be described as a damp, wrung-out sponge. Check the moisture level once a week and adjust as necessary by adding water to increase moisture or adding more browns to help dry out the pile. It’s also good practice to turn the pile once a week to move material from the outside of the pile in. This also keeps the pile from compacting - which reduces airflow and slows down decomposition.

Composting works in any season, especially in our part of the world where winters are relatively mild. It does, however, yield the best results in hot temperatures (summer months). Needless to say, our long, hot summer months are a perfect place to give composting a try!

How do I know when my compost is ready to use?

Composting time varies according to climatic conditions. Finished compost can be available anytime between two months and a year. Because of high temperatures, composting time tends to be a bit quicker in our area.

You’ll know your compost is ready when it no longer heats up and you can’t identify any of the original materials. It will be dark in color, moist, and ‘earthy’ smelling. Try to add your compost material to your garden a few weeks before you plant. Mix it into the existing soil for the best results.

Compost creates a very happy garden. We hope you give it a shot and enjoy the fruits of your labor!

*Sources: WCA; eHow.com; allaroundthehouse.com

Did You Know?



Fort Bend County and the Texas Gulf Coast have experienced the impacts of hurricanes throughout the recorded history of this area. As we navigate the current hurricane season (which extends through November 30th), we should remember the impacts of past hurricanes, remain watchful of threats from the Gulf, and always stay informed and prepared. For information on the preparedness of our District, see the article included on Page 7 of this newsletter. For a comprehensive checklist on how best to prepare your family for a hurricane, go to the District website (www.pecangrovemud.com) and click on the “September 2007” issue in the “Newsletter” section. Another great resource for tips is the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management website at www.fbcoem.org.

Below are some notable hurricanes that have impacted this area:

- **1875 and 1886 Hurricane - Indianola Hurricanes:** During the 19th century, the town of Indianola on Matagorda Bay was a booming port – second only to Galveston among Texas port cities. In 1875, a powerful hurricane blew through, nearly destroying the town. Indianola was rebuilt, but a second hurricane in 1886 caused residents to simply give up and move elsewhere.
- **1900 Hurricane “The Galveston Hurricane” - September 8, 1900:** The Galveston Hurricane is the deadliest natural disaster in United States history. This powerful storm inundated the entire City of Galveston - killing over 8,000 people.
- **Hurricane Carla - September 10, 1961:** Carla was the largest and most intense Gulf Coast hurricane in decades. On the 9th of September, 1961, the largest mass evacuation to that date occurred, as an estimated one-half million residents of low coastal areas and islands off Texas and Louisiana were evacuated to higher ground. The winds of this hurricane were estimated at 150 mph near its center. Severe damage along a wide expanse of the Texas coast was caused by unusually prolonged winds, high tides and flooding from torrential rains. But due in large part to early warnings, only 46 lives were lost during this storm.
- **Hurricane Alicia, August 18, 1983:** Alicia was the first hurricane to strike the continental USA since Allen in 1980. It was the longest period in this century that the U.S. mainland had gone without a hurricane landfall (though tropical storms did hit within that time). Alicia was a small-to-medium size hurricane, but despite its small size, Alicia caused over \$2.4 billion in damage.
- **Hurricane Ike, September 13, 2008:** Hurricane Ike made landfall at Galveston as a large Category 2 hurricane (with a storm surge comparable to that of a Category 5). Ike was the most destructive hurricane to ever hit Texas and one of the deadliest.





Touching Dedication at Plantation Park

Plantation Park is one of four community parks maintained and operated by the Pecan Grove Municipal Utility District (PGMUD). This park, which is located north of the intersection of Plantation Drive and Morton League, has remained undeveloped and relatively unused since the development of the Pecan Grove subdivision. Through the vision and dedication of a few caring residents, the park was recently transformed into a memorial park to honor those who have served and died to protect the freedoms of the United States of America. At the center of the park are five flags to honor the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Additionally, there is a sixth flag to honor those veterans who have been Prisoners of War or Missing in Action (POW-MIA). Flanked to either side of this center piece is a United States flag and the state flag of Texas.

The construction of the memorial was initiated in early May with the goal of having the walkways, architectural wall and the United States and Texas flags in place for Memorial Day. This goal was accomplished and the flags of our nation and state were flown for the first time on Monday, May 30, 2011, Memorial Day. The six flags to honor the United States Military and POW-MIA were added in the weeks following May 30th and on Flag Day, June 14, 2011, Plantation Park was officially dedicated. For this event, Pete Olson, United States Representative for Texas' 22nd Congressional District, gave Pecan Grove a United States flag that flew over the United States Capital in Washington DC. Additionally a Texas State flag that flew over the State Capital in Austin was provided by Glenn Hager, Texas Senator representing the 18th District. These flags were ceremoniously raised by Boy Scout Troop 1000. Frank Jarrett, Major, U.S. Army (retired), officially dedicated the park in remembrance of the past and present veterans who have served to make this country what it is today.

The Pecan Grove MUD board would like to give a special thanks to Fred Ross, Chuck Bertrand and the many others who dedicated numerous hours of personal time to help deliver this special project.



The Benefits of a Proactive Approach

In southeast Texas, we are no stranger to extreme weather conditions. From hurricanes to record heat, torrential downpours to, more recently, almost nonexistent rain – we certainly keep the local weather forecasters on their toes.

At PGMUD, we believe in a proactive approach...not only in our day-to-day operations and maintenance, but also in ensuring that top-notch equipment and reliable procedures are in place in case of emergency.

A major concern during destructive weather events, or other unforeseen issues, is the loss of power. Clean water and working sewer services are essential to our daily lives. With the proper back-up equipment and a well-trained operations staff, the chance of an extended time with interrupted service is minimal. In fact, PGMUD has emergency power available for all lift stations, two water plants, and the wastewater treatment plant. The larger facilities are equipped so that when main power is lost, an automatic transfer switch is triggered and the generators will automatically start up. Our District Operator, EDP, also has workers stationed in our area. After a storm passes, and as soon as it is safe to venture out, they evaluate the facilities and personally handle any issues that might need to be resolved.

Our Water Supply

As of the writing of this article, the possibility of a continuing drought is top of mind. Water supply is the main concern when extreme heat and little (to no) rain are combined. We will keep you informed at all times if drought conditions persist and the District needs to start looking at voluntary water rationing. If there is an emergency, related to water and/or weather, all District residents will be notified via a voice recording at home, a text message on your cell phone or through email (if you have provided us with your email address).

Conservation is Key

Water conservation practices are suggested throughout the year, but are more important than ever during drought conditions. Please work with your fellow neighbors to limit water usage as much as possible. When watering your lawn, do so in the late evening or early morning hours to cut down on evaporation and allow your yard to soak it in before the heat of the day kicks in. Watering every day is not necessary. A good soaking once or twice a week should suffice. Remember, watering deep is much more effective than watering often.

For more tips on how to conserve outside and inside the home, visit our website at www.pecangrovemud.com and click on the "Newsletter" tab. There are dozens of articles throughout our archived newsletters that can help you to get started conserving today. Also, please take note of any water conservation information and flyers included in your monthly bills. These simple tips can make a big difference not only in maintaining our water supply, but in cutting down on your own water costs.

We wish you all a happy and safe summer!

PECAN GROVE RESIDENTIAL TRASH SERVICES AFTER A TROPICAL STORM / HURRICANE

Should a significant gulf storm strike Pecan Grove, your residential solid waste provider, WCA Waste Corporation, will service the community on your regularly scheduled collection days, Mondays and Thursdays, as soon as the roads and highways are cleared and opened. Please note the following suggestions and guidelines:

- Should a storm cause extended loss of residential electricity, initial priority may be placed on the removal of household garbage only, particularly foodstuff and other waste with the proclivity to become putrid. This may delay the normal collection and removal of heavy items and regular yard waste. To distinguish these items, WCA asks that they be placed at the curb in bags or cans and marked with some type of orange-colored product (paint, ribbon, etc.) to ensure collection.
- Once the initial removal of household garbage is completed, WCA will resume the curb collection of normal amounts of bagged and bundled yard waste (not attributable to the storm), with initial limits of six bags and/or bundles per home per service day.
- The post-storm cleanup may necessitate the temporary suspension of the curbside recycling program to free up more trucks and personnel for cleanup. WCA and/or the Pecan Grove MUD will notify you of any such issues.

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Pecan Grove Redistricting Update

According to the Pecan Grove Redistricting Committee Representative, Paula Gibson, the Commissioners Court-appointed re-districting committee presented three (3) maps outlining new County Precinct lines. Map 1 and Map 2 moved Pecan Grove into Precinct 4. Map 3 (Andy Meyers' version) kept Pecan Grove as it has been for the past ten years. The Committee voted unanimously for Map 3, which keeps Pecan Grove in Precinct 3. Pecan Lakes will still remain in Precinct 1.

The map was presented to the Fort Bend Commissioners Court on Tuesday June 28th, and, as noted in the special insert in your July bill, two dates for Public Comment were held on July 26th and July 27th.

The fact that Pecan Grove Subdivision relies on the County for police (Sheriff), streets, drainage, Emergency Medical

Services (EMS) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) makes it very important that we keep the continuity we have with Precinct 3 County Commissioner Andy Meyers, Justice of the Peace Ken Cannata, and Constable Rob Cook.

It is important that our voice be heard and we appreciate all those who took advantage of the Public Comment opportunities. For information on future Public Comment dates and/or to coordinate attendance, please call or email Paula Gibson (832-423-3264; paulafgib@yahoo.com) or Jim Ashmore (281-342-8636; jashmorepoa@hotmail.com).

Paula Gibson is one of the Redistricting committee members and she was appointed by the County Judge. Paula is also the Republican Party Precinct Chair for 3041. Jim Ashmore is President of Pecan Grove POA.

**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. & 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!