



For Immediate Release: May 18, 2009

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As Montgomery County's Population Increases, Residents Challenged to Cut Water Use
Landscaping and water-saving efforts heat up before summer

CONROE, Texas—With hot summer months around the corner, the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District is showing people how to save water.

Lone Star GCD was the first groundwater conservation district in East Texas to launch Water IQ, an official state of Texas water education campaign, and they're continuing the public education effort this year with informational tips for Montgomery County residents.

"The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that our area has grown by more than 130,000 people since 2000, and that places a greater demand on our water supply," said Kathy Turner Jones, general manager of the Lone Star GCD. "We must ensure our county's water needs are met, and the Water IQ water conservation campaign is a fun and easy way that residents can get tips and learn about our precious water source."

Currently Montgomery County relies on one water source: the Gulf Coast Aquifer, which is an underground water supply.

"Our goal is to continue education through Water IQ because our research from last year revealed that 49 percent of people in Montgomery County believed their water came from lakes and reservoirs, but our actual water source is the underground aquifer," said Jones. "And it's a limited supply, so we need everyone to help us make it last for our kids and grandkids."

Tips: Saving Water, Landscaping and Aquifer Information

- Read your latest utility bill and note how many gallons you consumed. Multiply that number by .10 to determine how much you should reduce your use next month.
- Repair broken or missing sprinkler heads, a main cause of wasteful water runoff. Operate your sprinkler system manually, so you water only when your landscape needs it.
- Raise your lawnmower blade to a height of at least 3 inches so your grass will grow taller, its roots will grow deeper and your lawn will be healthier.
- Choose "water-wise" plants like Texas Sage, Winecups and Red Yucca. Experts also recommend that you use 3 inches of mulch in your beds to prevent evaporation and keep soil moist.

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- When you water during the heat of the day, most of the water is lost to evaporation, so water early or late and save 25 gallons a day.
- Address and fix leaks. Wasting water can lead to over-tapping or over-extending of Montgomery County's water supply — the Gulf Coast Aquifer.
- Groundwater is the water found below the land surface. It flows to the surface naturally in springs or seeps, or can be tapped artificially by digging wells. When too much water is taken from the aquifer, subsidence, or sinking of the ground, can occur. Subsidence can also make areas more susceptible to flooding.

Water IQ Visits Montgomery County

Residents can visit www.WaterIQ.org (scroll to Lone Star GCD) for updates about upcoming events throughout the summer. The theme of Water IQ this year is "Every Day is a Chance to Save." At events, people can play water trivia games, and winners of the game will receive a free Water IQ reusable sports water bottle. There will also be drawings for Home Makeover Kits — a wagon filled with a variety of water-saving products, including soaker hoses, low-flow showerheads, mulch, gardening supplies, push brooms and more.

About Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District

Lone Star GCD is one of nearly 94 groundwater conservation districts statewide, created by the state legislature to conserve, protect and enhance groundwater resources. In 2008, Lone Star GCD became the first groundwater conservation district in East Texas to utilize Water IQ.

Other entities that have used Water IQ to educate their citizens include the City of Austin, Cedar Park, High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1, Lower Colorado River Authority, Lubbock, North Texas Municipal Water District, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, San Angelo and Tyler.

About Water IQ

"Water IQ: Know Your Water" is a statewide public awareness water conservation program. In Montgomery County, the campaign includes print and outdoor educational advertising, information via the WaterIQ.org Web site and free public education outreach events. Water IQ is based on research by the Texas Water Development Board, which revealed the more people know about their water source, the more willing they are to save it.

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