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Lack of Rainfall, Greater Demand on Water Supply Reinforce Need for Conservation

Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District launches Water IQ education campaign at Woodlands Earth Day Festival

CONROE, Texas—An abnormally dry year and a growing population are straining Montgomery County's water supply.

The Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (LSGCD) is asking residents to save water to help protect the Gulf Coast Aquifer, the region's primary water source.

LSGCD is kicking off its consumer water conservation campaign — Water IQ — at the Woodlands Earth Day Festival April 18.

LSGCD serves Montgomery County, where the U.S. Census Bureau estimates the area has grown by more than 130,000 people since 2000.

"Our community is experiencing booming growth, but our water supply is limited so we're asking everyone to take simple steps to conserve," said Kathy Turner Jones, general manager of the Lone Star GCD. "Water IQ helps consumers get quick, simple water-saving tips and learn about our supply. We are committed to educating the community while we ensure Montgomery County's water needs are met."

"Water IQ: Know Your Water" is a statewide public awareness water conservation program. LSGCD was the first in East Texas to adopt Water IQ. 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.

The U.S. Drought Monitor Map lists Montgomery County as abnormally dry. With summer approaching and most water waste occurring outdoors, LSGCD will kick off Water IQ at the Woodlands Earth Day celebration. Staffers will offer a fun atmosphere to educate the public about how to extend the water supply:

Woodlands Earth Day Festival

April 18, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Woodlands High School, located at 6101 Research Forest Dr.

Event-goers can play water trivia games, and winners of the game will receive a free Water IQ reusable sports water bottle. There will also be a drawing for a Home Makeover Kit — a wagon filled with a variety of water-

saving products, including soaker hoses, low-flow showerheads, mulch, gardening supplies, push brooms and more.

The Real Montgomery County Water Supply

Last year, Lone Star GCD conducted quantitative research and learned that 49 percent of people in Montgomery County believe their water comes from lakes and reservoirs. Instead, their actual water source is the Gulf Coast Aquifer — an underground water supply.

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.

“It is critical for residents to know that their everyday actions of not addressing leaks, watering at the wrong time of day and wasting water in other ways can lead to over-tapping or over-extending of the water supply,” said Jones. “The theme of Water IQ this year will continue to be ‘Every Day is a Chance to Save.’ The Gulf Coast Aquifer cannot last without concerted efforts to conserve.”

Water-Saving Tips

- 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.
- 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.

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 water provider 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.

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