

Municipal Utility District No. 18
Newsletter
April 2008

Status of Expansion of Our Wastewater Treatment Plant:

You may have noticed that construction has begun on the \$3 million expansion of our wastewater treatment plant. This expansion will increase the capacity of this facility to 900,000 gallons per day to provide for the growing development. The estimated completion date is December 2008. As part of this project, additional trees will be planted on the western boundary to assist in screening the treatment plant from the direct view of homeowners.

Responsible Flushing:

Because Bentwater is built on low rolling hills, dropping down to lake level, it is necessary to have lift stations lift the sewage over these hills to our wastewater treatment plant. We currently have 23 such stations in our collection system. Maintaining these lift stations is a high expense item for the district ---average of several thousand dollars per month. To manage these costs, we have a maintenance plan that replaces the older equipment with better performing technology when there is a cost benefit to do so.

However, one of our continuing high maintenance culprits is the removal of debris from the pumps in the lift stations. Much of the problem material is plastic which is flushed down residents' toilets. Please keep all plastic, rubber and other non-biodegradable material (including doggie refuse bags and plastic feminine hygiene products) out of the system. These products increase costs, which in turn affects our rates.

How much water does your yard really need?

While some areas of the country have faced water supply challenges for many years, this region has enjoyed access to underground water that seemed everlasting. However, we are entering a new era -- an era where water conservation will be a responsibility shared by all of us. Recent studies have concluded that the population growth in Montgomery County has already strained the underground reservoirs which have supplied our water. Discussions are underway to determine the best long term plan for providing the county's water supply. The Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District, the San Jacinto River Authority and the various utility districts (including MUD 18) are working to develop a plan that is fair and equitable for our long term water supply. Much more work is needed before a plan is developed that is acceptable to all parties.

However, one thing is clear -- water conservation will be a responsibility for each of us. As a first step in that direction, we urge all residents to reevaluate your lawn care practices. Large amounts of water can be seen running down the streets from excessive irrigation -- sometimes during a multi-day rain storm. Landscape irrigation accounts for 75% of the average Bentwater home's water usage. Our water usage begins to increase in March and reaches its peak in August. The monthly average volume triples from March to August.

Here are some tips to help us conserve in this area of obvious water overuse:

- If your irrigation system has a water sensor, check to be sure it is still functioning. If not, take steps to replace it or repair it. If you do not have a sensor, add one to your system. This may be the most important step you can take to avoid watering when Mother Nature has given us rain. And it will save you money on your water bill!
- Water deeply versus frequently. Healthy properly irrigated lawns require no more than one inch of water per week during the summer months.
- Check you irrigation system timers. It's best to water in the early morning hours (3 to 5am) for maximum effectiveness.
- If you choose to install or upgrade to a new irrigation system, consider low output sprinkler heads, bubblers, or drip irrigation systems.
- Mulch in flower beds and landscape areas will help hold moisture and cut down on water needed to keep plants healthy.
- When purchasing plants, choose varieties that do not require frequent waterings.

We encourage all residents to be aware of your water usage patterns. Your monthly bill from MUD 18 provides usage information. Doing so may save you money. It will also help our community be conscious of water conservation opportunities. As our water becomes scarce, the price will go up. Conservation will save you money.

Bag It. Don't Blow It.

Our storm drains are important to help prevent flooding. So help keep them clear of debris. Don't blow your leaves or grass clippings down the drain. Either bag or compost the trimmings from your yard. If you use a yard service, it is your responsibility to ensure that the clippings are not going down the storm drain. Keeping our storm drains clear is important all year, especially during hurricane season which is only a couple of months away.

Housing Report for Bentwater:

As of March, there are currently 71 homes under construction. Thirteen additional homes have been approved for construction, but not yet started. Adding all these to the currently built homes brings the total to 1635 homes.

Need to report a Problem?

If you have any problems, such as a water leak, sewer odors, discolored water, open manholes, etc., call:

Hays Utility Service
588-1166

They have someone in Bentwater everyday, seven days a week. They can and will respond 24 hours a day. Their general office hours are from 8:00AM to 4:30PM Monday through Friday.

Meetings Open to the Public:

Our regularly scheduled meetings are the third Tuesdays of each month. Our meetings are open to the public. An agenda for each meeting is posted on the message board in the breezeway entrance to the Country Club Grill near the Golf Pro-shop.

Sincerely,

Your MUD Board:

Lou Tichacek	President	597-7010
Bill Newsom	Vice-President	597-6839
Linda Pierce	Treasurer	597-5463
Roy Champagne	Secretary	597-8786
Joe Constantino	Assistant Secretary	597-8029

Recycling Tip:

In our last newsletter we provided information and guidelines from Waste Management including local recycling centers in our area. A handy web site to learn where the nearest recycle center for items from batteries to motor oil to paint to computers is <http://earth911.org> The top of the first page of this website contains a "recycling locator". Just type the kind of material you want to recycle and your zip code. The locator will give you the location of the nearest recycling center in our area.