

March 2005

## Charity Car Washes Can Prosper Under New Conservation Ordinance

### **Attention all fundraisers!**

If you or someone you know raises money through car wash events, please know that the rules have changed.

That's right, there are now rules for conducting car wash fundraisers. Years ago City Council realized that car washes held at restaurants, shopping centers and other business caused a huge waste in Edwards Aquifer water as well as violated existing storm water and aquifer protection regulations.

So, as part of the recently-passed Conservation Ordinance, all charity car washes can only be held at permanent car wash businesses. This new provision is effective March 1 of this year.

"Many car wash events have already been adapted to working with car wash owners," said Ruby Perez, SAWS Conservation Planner, "and without fail the charity organizations end up making more money. The only slight

drawback is that these church groups and high school clubs need to plan at least two weeks in advance and contact the owners directly."

SAWS is working closely with business owners in the Southwest Car Wash Association. Many of these owners, listed below, are certified in the SAWS Vehicle Wash Conservation program. Part of the certification process includes an agreement by the owner to host at least three charity washes each year. Although, when your group is looking for a potential location for your event you can obviously contact any car wash owner in town.

Please keep in mind if you want to sponsor a car wash event you'll need to plan ahead and

negotiate the specific arrangements with the car wash owner. For more information on this please contact Ruby Perez at (210) 704-7382.



## New Exhibit Opens at Witte Museum

### World of Water

Dive into the World of Water exhibit at the Witte Museum, March 5-September 5, 2005 and enjoy an interactive hands-on experience that illustrates the history of water use in South Texas. A theater presentation highlights a 3-D, underground

tour of the Edwards Aquifer and the creatures that live in the underwater ecosystem.

Other interesting points include an interactive exploration of the weather cycles in South Texas of floods and droughts;

pumping water at the UTSA Roadrunner water tower; and using state-of-the-art satellite imaging to learn about the watershed area around your home.

SAWS Conservation House at the exhibit features demonstrations on plumbing and infrastructure and how to use water wisely inside the home.

The World of Water exhibit has been over two years in development and offers opportunities for both children and adults to learn more about the water issues that affect South Texas.

The World of Water is the first stage in the Witte's new

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## Don't Fertilize Yet!

By Calvin Finch, Ph.D.; Conservation Manager

As temperatures increase many people want to start the warm-weather ritual of fertilizing and watering their lawns. Don't rush! Wait on fertilization until you have mowed real grass (not weeds or rye) twice. If you fertilize earlier, the nutrients are partially wasted.

Until the soil warms and roots become active, St. Augustine, zoysia, Bermuda, or buffalo roots can't absorb the nitrogen. Nitrogen is active, so if the plant can't use it, the material dissipates into the air or leaches into the soil past the root system. If you have weeds in your lawn, they will love the early fertilization.

The best time to fertilize in this part of the country is usually the last week of April or first half of May.

The yearly advertisements for "weed and feed" products have begun. If fertilizing early is a waste of nutrients, using "weed and feed" is a double waste of resources. "Weed and feed" products don't work in the South.

In this part of the country, the best time for herbicides is in February and the best time for fertilizer is May. If you apply "weed and feed" now you are trying to kill weeds that have already started to decline and to fertilize too early. The weeds in place now are cool weather weeds. They are mature and going to seed. The hot weather will kill them before the herbicide can take effect.

Soils are well-soaked from the plentiful winter rains we've enjoyed. So watering is also a waste now. After about three weeks of warm

weather the lawn is ready to start to green up, so wait until then to begin watering.

Now is a good time to have your sprinkler (or irrigation) system checked before the irrigation season begins. Leaks and worn out heads cause high water bills and uneven watering.

As of January, 2006 rain sensors will be required on all in-ground sprinkler systems. The sensors detect rain/moisture and prevent systems from running. If customers do not install rain sensors and a complaint is made, they will only receive one warning before being issued a water waster ticket. SAWS offers a 50% or \$50 rebate (whichever is less) if you add a qualifying rain sensor to your irrigation system.

For more details on rain sensors, or for your application for a rebate, visit our web site at [www.saws.org](http://www.saws.org). You can also call us at 704-7527 for more information.

### Birdathon 2005

Enjoy a fun morning on April 30 at Mitchell Lake while supporting conservation and education! Count bird species and collect pledges to benefit Mitchell Lake Audubon Center.

For more information, call 628-1639 or e-mail [shouston@audubon.org](mailto:shouston@audubon.org).



## Witte's New Exhibit Features World of Water (Cont. from pg. 1)

focus on water, science, and South Texas heritage. The exhibit is a prototype for a Water Resource Center to be built on the Witte campus.

Admission for the World of Water exhibit

is \$1 in addition to the regular museum admission of \$7 for adults, \$5 for children ages 4-11, and \$6 for seniors ages 65 and up. Admission to the museum is free on Tuesdays from 3 to 8 pm.



### Drinking, bathing, cleaning, cooking....

Many people take water for granted. But everyday, families risk losing water service because they can't afford to pay their water bill. If you'd like to help keep water flowing to our neighbors in need, you can contribute to Project Agua, a non-profit program from SAWS helping customers pay their water bill. It's simple and no contribution is too small to help. Just look for the donation box on the return portion of your SAWS bill.

## Water Conservation Scholarship

### Local High School Students Eligible

Do you know a graduating Bexar County high school student who is interested in an environmental career and is entering a Texas college or university?



SAWS is sponsoring a Water Conservation Scholarship to help with educational costs associated with any study leading to a career in the environmental field.

The Water Conservation Scholarship is sponsored by SAWS in conjunction with KTSA Radio, San Antonio Business Journal, and KENS 5.

For more details on the scholarship, or to apply, call SAWS at 704-7527.

## WaterSaver Awards

### Nominees Sought

We're looking for "water wise" businesses and schools in the San Antonio area who deserve recognition for their special water conservation efforts.

WaterSaver Awards acknowledge non-residential water users who have significantly increased their own water use efficiency or have contributed through education or technology to water conservation in the San Antonio region.

SAWS has once again teamed up with the San Antonio Business Journal, KENS 5 and KTSA Radio to present the Ninth Annual WaterSaver Awards.

If you have a business you'd like to nominate, visit our web site, or call us at 704-7527. Applicants are not required to be SAWS customers.

Water News is published for customers of the San Antonio Water System. For more information regarding Water News, contact the Public Relations Department at (210) 704-7320.

#### Numbers to Know

Business Office	704-SAWS (704-7297)
Customer Account Information	704-SAWS
Jobline	704-SAWS
T.D.D.	704-1852
CleanStream Hotline	212-5326

#### 24-Hour Emergency

Customer Service/	
Water Waste Reporting	704-SAWS
Visit our web site at <a href="http://www.saws.org">www.saws.org</a>	