



Water



N E W S November 2002

Water Resource Plan Enters Third Year

In October, 2000, San Antonio's City Council approved a Water Supply Fee that funds the development of new water supplies and secures San Antonio's water future.

Year 3 of Water Supply Fee Effective in December

The current fee of \$0.0708 per hundred gallons became effective January 2002. The increase approved by SAWS Board is \$0.0136 for a total rate of \$0.0844 per hundred gallons. This rate is 10% less than the scheduled maximum increase approved by City Council in October 2000. On the average customer bill for 8,900 gallons of water, the fee will add approximately \$1.21 to the bill.

The Water Supply Fee appears as a separate line item on customer bills and is the same rate for both residential and commercial customers.

Funding Projects for Our Future

San Antonio's City Council unanimously approved a long-term water resource plan in 1998. Since that time, SAWS has been steadily working on developing water resources in addition to the Edwards Aquifer, protecting the quality of the Edwards, and making the most of the water we use. The Water Supply Fee is being used to develop additional water resources.



City and SAWS officials broke ground in July for the Aquifer Storage and Recovery project – a new short-term water project funded by the Water Supply Fee

As one the fastest growing regions in the country, San Antonio's water needs are expected to double by 2050. While it helps that we have one of the most successful conservation programs in the country, even our best conservation efforts won't completely allow the Edwards to always meet all our water needs. The Edwards will continue to be the cornerstone of our water supply, even as we actively develop and use additional water sources.

New Short-term Water Resources

San Antonio's future water supply needs will be met through a combination of short- and long-term water strategies. Short-term needs will be met through continued conservation efforts, purchasing additional Edwards water rights, and developing new water projects.

One such water project funded by the Water Supply Fee provided customers in northern Bexar County with the first non-Edwards drinking water. This area started receiving water from the Cow Creek formation of the Trinity Aquifer in February of this year.

SAWS Donates Former Applewhite Property to Land Heritage Institute

At the November 5th SAWS Board meeting, members voted to proceed with plans to transfer the property originally acquired for the Applewhite Reservoir Project to the Land Heritage Institute Foundation.



Representatives of the Land Heritage Institute and SAWS celebrate after SAWS Board approved the transfer of the Applewhite Property.

The foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and developing the property as a public open space.

The property will serve as both an educational and a recreational site, preserving the rich traditions of Native American, Hispanic, African-American, Anglo, and other settlers of the San Antonio region.

The land will be used to create a major archeological, historical, and anthropological park and educational center. It will also create a large greenspace for future San Antonians.

The 1,221-acre property is located in Southwest San Antonio, south of the Medina River, and adjacent to Applewhite Road.

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Water Resource Plan – Year 3 (cont.)

Another project funded by the Water Supply Fee is the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project, which began this summer in far south Bexar County. While new to San Antonio, the ASR program is a proven technology for storing water in existing aquifer formations – in our case, the Carrizo Aquifer.

"The ability to store water is an integral part of every water plan, and this ASR project will give us that ability," said SAWS Vice Chairman Nancy Bohman. "We will be able to store large quantities of water from the Edwards during wet months for use during our hot and dry summers. This will reduce our pumping from the Edwards during those summer months by as much as 25 percent, and reduce the amount of time we're affected by drought restrictions. That's a major benefit for the whole region."

Long-term Projects

Long-term projects under study include the Lower Guadalupe and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) – SAWS Water Supply Projects; water from the Simsboro Aquifer in Milam and Lee Counties; and further development of storing water in the Carrizo Aquifer for use in times of need. Another project will recharge the Edwards Aquifer in key areas. Research is also under consideration on the feasibility of desalinating water from the Gulf of Mexico.

All of these water projects have been accepted as part of the State's water plan. The Water Supply Fee is an important part of investing in the quality of life for San Antonio/Bexar County and the surrounding region.

Guidelines for Winterizing Your Lawn

When putting together your landscaping 'To Do' list this month, you should remember to add winterizing your lawn to the list. There are several activities that you can do now to maximize the performance of your lawn.

As long as the lawn is actively growing in the fall, it's OK to fertilize. But if we have cold weather, and the lawn goes dormant, wait till next spring. You know the lawn is dormant when the blades turn completely brown.

Fertilization is important in the autumn because the nutrients are used to organize the grass' defenses against cold, and to establish a reserve to allow a fast green-up in the spring. It seems counter-intuitive but fall fertilization has more influence on spring green-up than spring fertilization.

Every fertilizer brand has a "winterizer" version. The formula is usually in a 3-1-2 ratio. A common formula is 15-5-10 (15% nitrogen source, 5% phosphorus source, and 10% potassium source). Apply one pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet of lawn. The label usually tells you what setting to use on the spreader.

A "winterizer" formulation is usually a fast release fertilizer, but organic and other slow release fertilizers work nearly as well. Once the grass goes dormant it loses its ability to take up nutrients, so some of the nitrogen released after that point is wasted. Nitrogen is also lost during the rush of nitrogen release from the "winterizer" fertilizer.

Of major importance in the fall is that the amount of water applied to the lawn is reduced. Temperatures cool and growth is greatly reduced, so much less water is needed (see SIP recommendations at SAWS website, www.saws.org). Also, too much water can cause brown patch.

Conserving Water Now Can Lower Bills in 2003

Now is the time when you can make a difference in your sewer bills next year. How? Your sewer bills for 2003 are based on the water that you're using right now.

SAWS, like many utilities uses winter averaging to calculate your sewer bills. Since most water during the winter is used indoors and will likely go to SAWS treatment plants through the sewer system after use, this amount of water serves as your Winter Average and is the basis for your sewer bill.

SAWS tracks the level of water you use between mid-November to mid-March, averages it on a monthly basis through three consecutive billing cycles, and uses this Winter Average to calculate your year-round sewer rates.

So, save on next year's sewer bills by restricting indoor and outdoor water use now through March. You can call 704-SAWS to find out when your winter averaging cycle begins.

If you'd like a free Home Water Conservation Audit that can give you ideas on how to save water, call 704-7354 to set up an appointment.

Affordability Programs

SAWS offers a number of programs to help customers having financial hardship with their water bills. To determine if you qualify, please call San Antonio's Community Action Division at 207-7830.

SAWS Vision: SAWS will be the best water and wastewater utility in the United States by 2006.

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
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 website at www.saws.org