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# What is the WHCRWA Fee on my water bill?

The West Harris County Regional Water Authority fee that appears on many home and business water bills is a fee that pays for the State mandated conversion to surface water from lakes and rivers to address the significant subsidence problems affecting the region of Harris County and other surrounding Counties. Subsidence, the sinking of land, has been a problem in Houston since the early 1900s due to heavy groundwater use. By the 1940s, it became evident that groundwater withdrawal was causing the land to subside. To address this, the Texas Legislature created the Harris Galveston Subsidence District in 1975 to regulate groundwater use. The Subsidence District has mandated the region convert to 60 percent surface water by 2025 and 80 percent by 2035 and there are very expensive penalties for failing to meet these requirements.



It takes an incredible amount of money to keep our water flowing. The fees collected not only pay for surface water, but also fund operations and maintenance, as well as providing the money needed to plan and build the water infrastructure to deliver surface water to the MUDs and Cities.

Regional water authorities, including the West Harris County Regional Water Authority which was established in 2001, were formed to manage the transition to surface water. Like most water authorities in Texas which aren't granted taxing authority, the West Authority relies on water usage fees to fund infrastructure and pay for treating surface water from the San Jacinto River, Trinity River, and Lake Houston.

Each MUD or City in the Authority is charged for the amount of groundwater pumped from its wells as well as for the surface water the Authority delivers.

The MUDs and Cities then apply the Authority fee to their customers' water bill. The fee is charged to all Cities, Utility Districts, and water well Owners.

The regional water authority amount shown on your water bill is based on how much water you use, and the amount of the fee may change from month to month depending on how much water a household uses.

The West Harris County Regional Water Authority fee is the same for all users within the Authority. However, SOME Utility Districts and Cities may modify the Authority fee to cover such things as leaks in their system, flushing of fire hydrants, administrative costs, etc., which will cause an increase in the actual fee shown on your bill.

**THE MORE WATER YOU USE, THE HIGHER THE FEE AMOUNT ON YOUR BILL WILL BE.**

*USE LESS*  
**SAVE MORE**

To learn more scan the QR code below to watch a short video or visit [whcrwa.com/what-is-the-whcrwa-fee](http://whcrwa.com/what-is-the-whcrwa-fee) ♦



# How to Winterize Your Irrigation System

As temperatures drop during the winter months, it's important to protect your irrigation system from damage caused by freezing. In Northwest Harris County, where we occasionally experience dips below freezing, taking preventive measures ensures that your irrigation system remains functional and damage-free when spring arrives. Here's a guide on how to winterize your system.

## 1. Turn Off the Water Supply

Start by shutting off the water supply to your irrigation system. This step is crucial to prevent water from sitting in the pipes, where it can freeze and cause pipes to crack or burst. Locate the shut-off valve—typically near your home's main water supply—and turn it off completely.

## 2. Drain the System

Once the water supply is off, you need to drain any remaining water from the system. There are three primary methods for doing this:

- **Manual Drain Valve:** If your system has manual drain valves, open each valve to allow the water to flow out of the pipes. Make sure all water is drained to avoid any freezing in the lines.
- **Automatic Drain Valve:** If your system is equipped with automatic drain valves, they will automatically release water when the system is shut off. However, it's always a good idea to double-check that no water is trapped in the pipes.



- **Blow-Out Method:** For a more thorough approach, consider using compressed air to blow out any remaining water. This method involves attaching an air compressor to the system and pushing air through each zone to clear the pipes of water. It's highly recommended to hire a professional for this, as too much air pressure can damage the system.

### 3. Insulate Exposed Pipes and Backflow Devices

Even in Northwest Harris County, where freezing conditions are not as severe as in colder regions, it's still essential to insulate any exposed pipes, valves, and the backflow prevention device. Use foam pipe insulation or insulating tape to wrap these components. The backflow preventer, often located outside near your irrigation system, is particularly vulnerable and should be covered with an insulating cover or wrapped with a heavy-duty material.

### 4. Shut Down the Controller

If your system is controlled by an automatic timer, make sure to turn off or switch the controller to a "rain" or "off" setting. Many modern controllers have a "winter" setting that will maintain the schedule without running the system. If your controller doesn't have this option, simply turn off the power to avoid accidental operation during freezing conditions.

### 5. Inspect for Leaks or Damages

Before shutting down for the season, inspect your system for any leaks or damage. This will allow you to make repairs now, rather than discovering problems when you need the system in the spring. Look for cracked pipes, leaking valves, or malfunctioning sprinkler heads.

## 6. Consider Professional Help

While these steps are straightforward, hiring a licensed irrigation professional to winterize your system can offer peace of mind. They have the tools and expertise to ensure every part of your system is properly protected, especially if you choose to use the blow-out method.

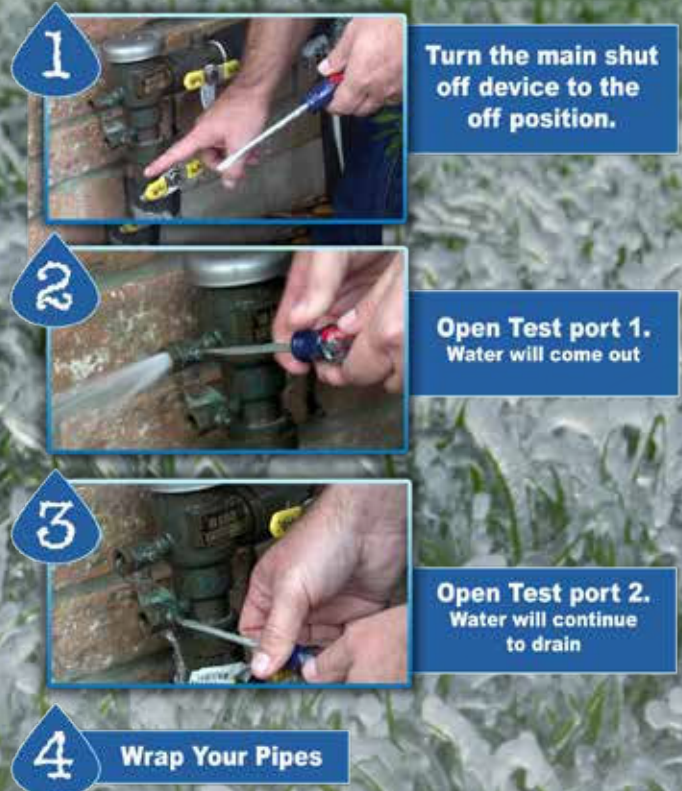
### Why Winterizing Your Irrigation System Is Important in Northwest Harris County

While we enjoy mild winters in Northwest Harris County, we still experience periodic freezes that can damage unprotected irrigation systems. A cracked pipe or damaged backflow preventer can lead to costly repairs. Taking the time to winterize ensures that your system is ready for the warmer months without the risk of costly repairs or disruptions.

By following these expert steps, you can protect your irrigation system and avoid expensive repairs when the weather warms up. Preparing ahead of time will keep your landscape healthy and your irrigation system functioning at its best for years to come.

If you have any questions or need assistance with winterizing your system, consider contacting a local irrigation professional to ensure everything is done properly and safely. 💧

# WINTERIZING YOUR LAWN'S SPRINKLER SYSTEM



**Scan the QR Code to watch the video “How to winterize your irrigation system in Houston, Texas” on YouTube.**

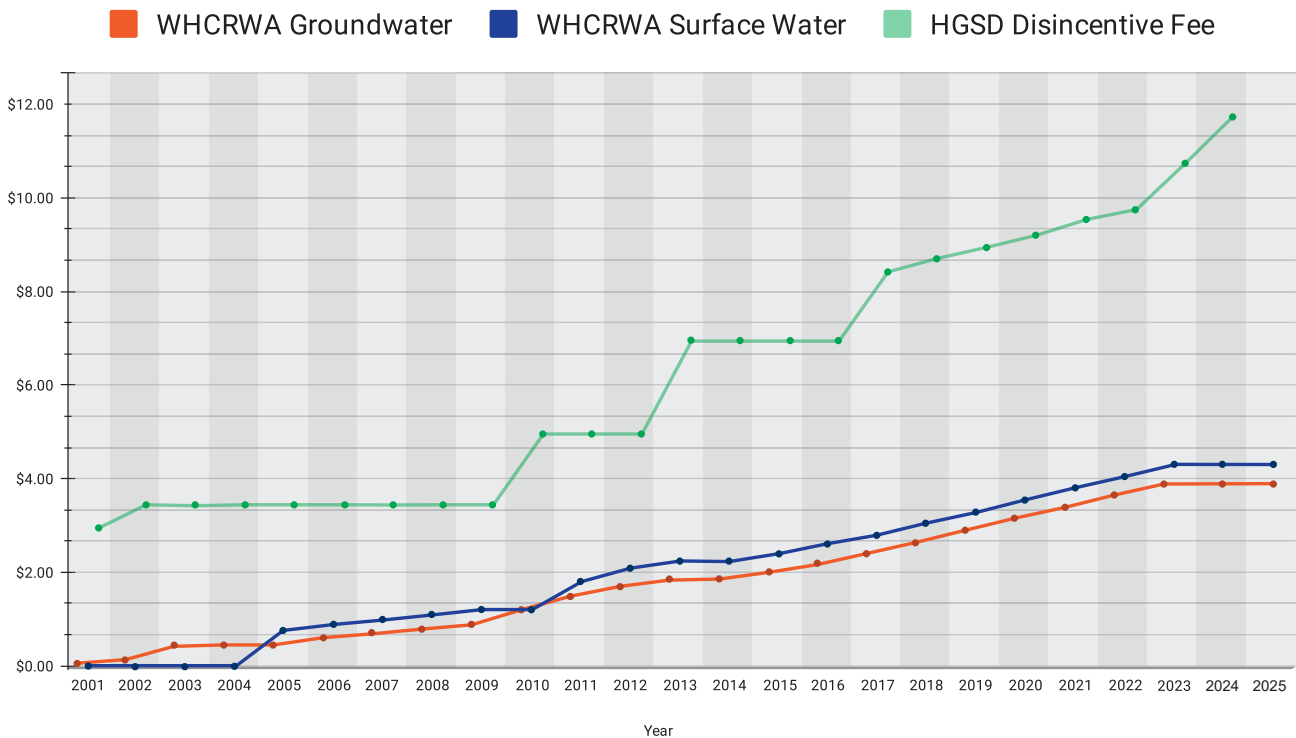
# No increase to the current Groundwater and Surface Water Fee this January 1, 2025

The Authority's Board of Directors is pleased to report that there will be no increase to the current Groundwater Reduction Plan Fee and the Surface Water Fee this January 1, 2025. The Authority's fees have remained the same since January 1, 2023.

The Authority's fees will continue to be utilized to fund the cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining the Authority's current surface water supply system, as well as the capital costs associated with constructing the additional large-scale infrastructure projects needed to meet the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District's (HGSD) groundwater reduction requirements. The Authority will continue to evaluate costs, population growth, and water demands, and the impacts of these factors on rates in the future.

The Authority thanks you for remaining strong partners to reduce land subsidence together and to ensure that our community has sufficient water supplies for decades to come.

WHCRWA Fee vs paying the HGSD Disincentive Fee



The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District's current disincentive fee is \$11.86 per 1,000 gallons of well water pumped. In other words, if a MUD or water authority does not meet the conversion requirements each year, it is charged \$11.86 per 1,000 gallons of well water pumped over the amount allowed until it meets the requirement. 💧

# FAQ

## HOW DOES THE WHCRWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS SET ITS RATES



### How does the West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) fund its operations and expenses?

The WHCRWA does not have any taxing authority and levies no tax. Instead, the WHCRWA relies on usage fees for groundwater pumped and surface water delivered. These fees are used to cover the annual expenses of the WHCRWA that fall into two main categories: operating expenses (24%) and debt service for outstanding bonds issued to pay for projects (76%). Annually, the WHCRWA establishes rates/fees that will be sufficient to cover these expenses. The WHCRWA is also required to maintain certain balances in its Debt Service Reserve Fund, Coverage Fund and Operating Reserve Fund. In addition, the WHCRWA tries to maintain a balance in its savings account (the Improvement Fund) of \$30-\$50 million, which represents less than 50% of annual expenses.



### How does the WHCRWA set its rates?

In the Fall of each year, the WHCRWA's Finance Committee and consultants review the expected expenses for the upcoming year and recommend to the WHCRWA's Board of Directors the proposed fees to be charged for the next calendar year. At the time of the recommendation to the Board of Directors, the WHCRWA sends out a notice to all municipal utility districts, cities, and well owners that pay its fees to let them know the proposed fees for the following year and to let them know the date and time that the WHCRWA Board of Directors will consider rate changes.

The Surface Water Fee is the charge for surface water that is delivered to the WHCRWA's wholesale customers and the Pumpage Fee is set at \$.40/1000 gallons less than the Surface Water Fee because those customers must pay for operational costs of their own wells. If the well owners



were not part of the WHCRWA, they would be subject to the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District's disincentive fee which is currently \$11.86/1000 gallons.



### **How often are the rates analyzed?**

At least annually.



### **How are the analysts selected?**

The consultants, which mainly includes the financial advisors, bookkeeper, and engineers work with the Finance Committee annually to recommend the Surface Water Fee and Pumpage Fee to the Board of Directors. In addition, the WHCRWA hires an outside rate consultant every 2 or 3 years (or more frequently) to provide a rate study to the WHCRWA Board of Directors. The WHCRWA has historically hired Dan Jackson and his team at Willdan for these rate studies.



### **What does this process mean for rate payers/residents?**

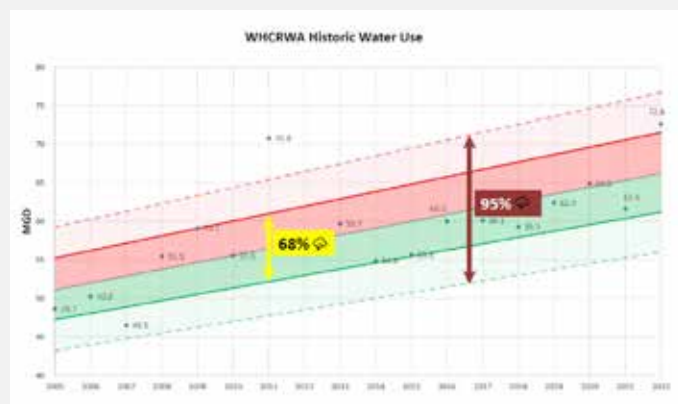
The process assures that the rates/fees are not set any higher than they need

to be, but are high enough to cover the WHCRWA's costs without causing disruptive ups and downs to the fees. The WHCRWA's goal has been to have steady, predictable fees allowing its wholesale customers to budget and plan accordingly.



### **How accurate has this rate setting method proven to be?**

In most years the WHCRWA's expenses are consistent and predictable. Revenues, however, can vacillate depending on weather conditions. Looking at the last 18 years (2005-2022), there has been only one year in which water usage exceeded 2 standard deviations from the norm, and two other years in which water usage exceeded only 1 standard deviation.



Therefore, 15 of the past 18 years have been within 2 standard deviations of normal water usage. During dry years, revenues have exceeded expenses and the resulting surplus was used to pay off high interest rate debt or to pay for construction costs of the conversion to surface water. 💧



# **DON'T BE AN ACCIDENTAL POLLUTER!**

## **What is stormwater pollution and will you help stop it?**

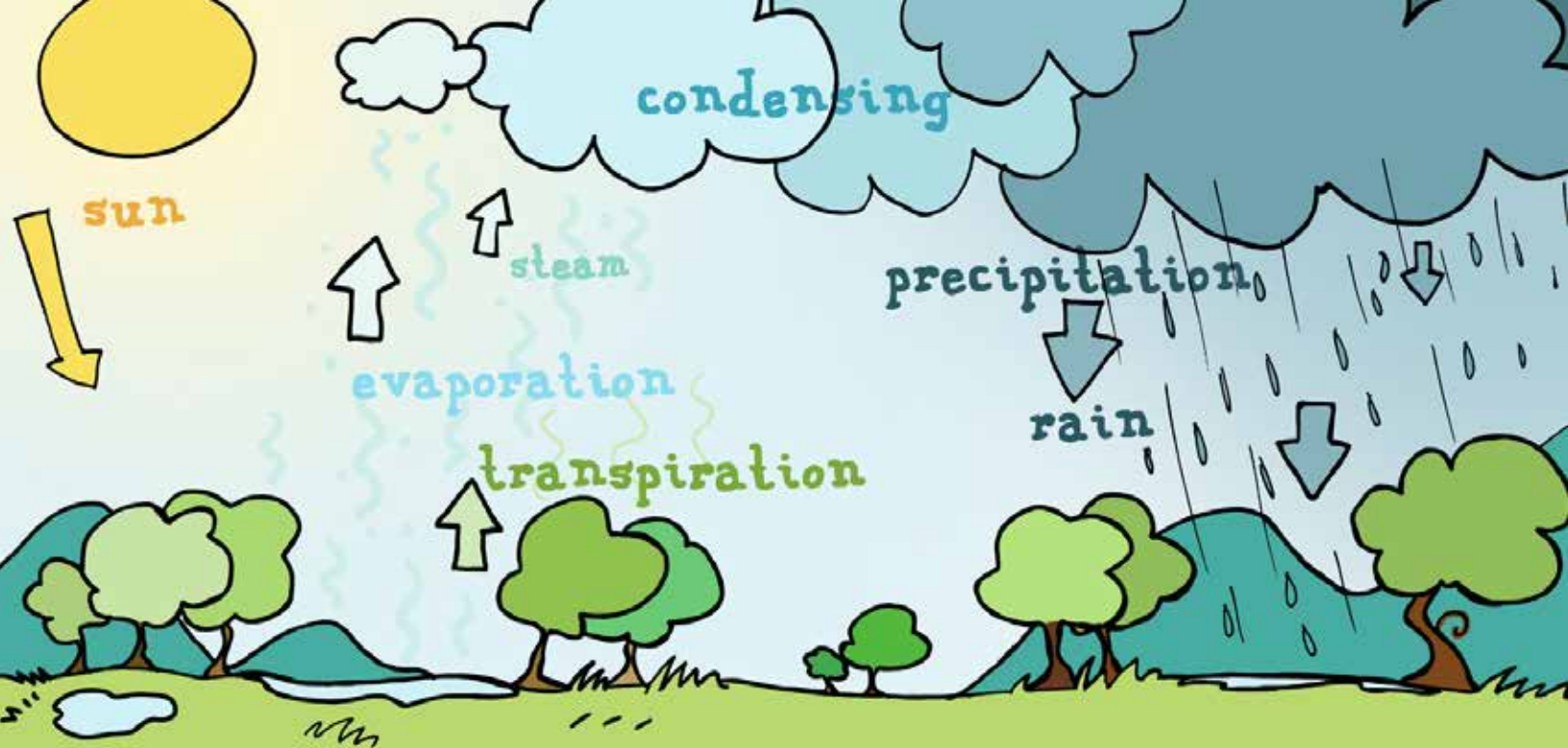
Stormwater runoff is water from rain that does not soak into the ground. It flows from rooftops, over paved areas, bare soil, and sloped lawns. As it flows, stormwater runoff collects and transports animal waste, trash, litter, pesticides, fertilizers, oil & grease, soil and other potential pollutants into the storm drains.

Rain washes pollutants from impervious surfaces (e.g., sidewalks, driveways, streets, parking lots) construction sites, shopping and commercial centers, and residential yards into storm sewers or ditches, and then flows untreated into nearby creeks, fish and wildlife habitats, downstream recreational areas, and drinking water supplies. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen can cause algae to grow which depletes oxygen in waterways. Toxic substances from motor vehicles, as well as the careless application of pesticides and fertilizers also threaten water quality and can kill fish and other aquatic life. Bacteria from pet and animal wastes get washed into lakes and waterways making them unsafe for water sports like wading, swimming, water skiing and fishing.



**A sanitary sewer system and a storm sewer system are not the same.** Water that goes down toilets, sinks, showers, or other inside drain flows to a wastewater treatment plant. **Storm sewer flows are not treated**, so it's important to remember that any type of surface water runoff -- not just rainfall -- will be collected in the stormwater management system. When you wash your car on the driveway, for example, all that water, road oils, dirt and grime ends up in the storm drain.💧





## How a Simple Science Lesson Can Help Us Understand the Water Issues of Today

Most of us learned about the hydrological or water cycle by the time we were in the fourth grade. It is a crucial science lesson, but many years may have passed since then, so here's a recap:

The water cycle has no particular starting point, but let's begin with the oceans since that's where most of Earth's water is found. The sun—the energy behind the water cycle—heats the Earth's surface water, causing it to evaporate into the air. Rising air currents carry the vapor into the atmosphere, along with water from evapotranspiration, which includes water from plants, soil, and other surfaces. As the vapor rises, it cools and condenses into clouds. Air currents move these clouds around the globe,

and when cloud particles collide, they fall back to Earth as precipitation—rain, sleet, or snow.

Some of this precipitation accumulates as ice caps and glaciers, storing frozen water for thousands of years. The majority of precipitation returns to oceans or land, where it becomes surface runoff due to gravity. Some runoff travels into rivers, eventually flowing to the oceans. Surface runoff and groundwater seepage collect in lakes, rivers, and streams, storing freshwater. The remaining runoff infiltrates the ground, recharging aquifers (underground layers of water-bearing rock), which hold vast amounts of freshwater for long periods. Groundwater is also absorbed by plant roots and later returns to the

atmosphere as evapotranspiration. This endless movement of water defines the water cycle.

Now that we're reminded of how the water cycle works, here are some concerning facts: Only about 0.5% of the Earth's water is accessible freshwater available for human use. In the 20th century, the world's population tripled, while water usage increased by sixfold. By the middle of this century, the population is projected to grow by another 2 billion people. Currently, about 2 billion people do not have reliable access to safe drinking water. Groundwater depletion is becoming a critical issue globally. More than 2 billion people rely on groundwater as their primary water source, and many of the aquifers that provide this water are becoming increasingly stressed.

Think of this as millions of straws dipping into the same glass of water—eventually, the glass will run dry.

Are you starting to see the picture? While the Earth may have plenty of water overall, it's not always available where and when people need it most. Isn't it time to stop taking our limited freshwater resources for granted? Will you and your family commit to using water more efficiently? 💧

**USE LESS**  
**SAVE MORE**

## Surface Water Conversion Projects

Created by the Texas Legislature in 2001 to comply with groundwater reduction as mandated by the Harris Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD), the WHCRWA is committed to securing a long-term supply of quality drinking water as well as promoting water conservation.

### Luce Bayou Interbasin Transfer Project



### Northeast Water Purification Plant Expansion Project



### Surface Water Supply Project



### WHCRWA Distribution Lines



Visit  
[whcrwa.com/projects](http://whcrwa.com/projects)  
to learn more.



WHCRWA  NFBWA

# SURFACE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

To meet the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District and Fort Bend Subsidence District’s groundwater reduction requirements, the West Harris County Regional Water Authority has partnered with the North Fort Bend Water Authority to construct the Surface Water Supply Project.

The Surface Water Supply Project is needed to conserve groundwater and reduce land subsidence. Pumping large amounts of groundwater causes the ground to settle, lowering the elevation of

the land. This project will help to reduce land subsidence and will meet the water needs of a rapidly growing population.

Once complete, surface water from Lake Houston will be supplied to retail water providers by way of the City of Houston’s Northeast Water Purification Plant through over 55 miles of pipeline and two large pump stations. These transmission pipelines will vary in diameter from 42 inches to 96 inches, depending on the pipeline segment. ♡

[SurfaceWaterSupplyProject.com](http://SurfaceWaterSupplyProject.com)

# Trees and the Water Cycle: More Than Just Shade Providers

Trees, like people, need to “drink” a lot of water. But trees are more than just water users; they are an integral part of the water cycle.

The water cycle is often taught as a simple circular process of evaporation, condensation, and precipitation. Water evaporates from bodies such as oceans, rivers, and lakes; condenses in the atmosphere; and then returns to the ground as rain or snow. A key element that is sometimes underplayed or skipped altogether is transpiration.

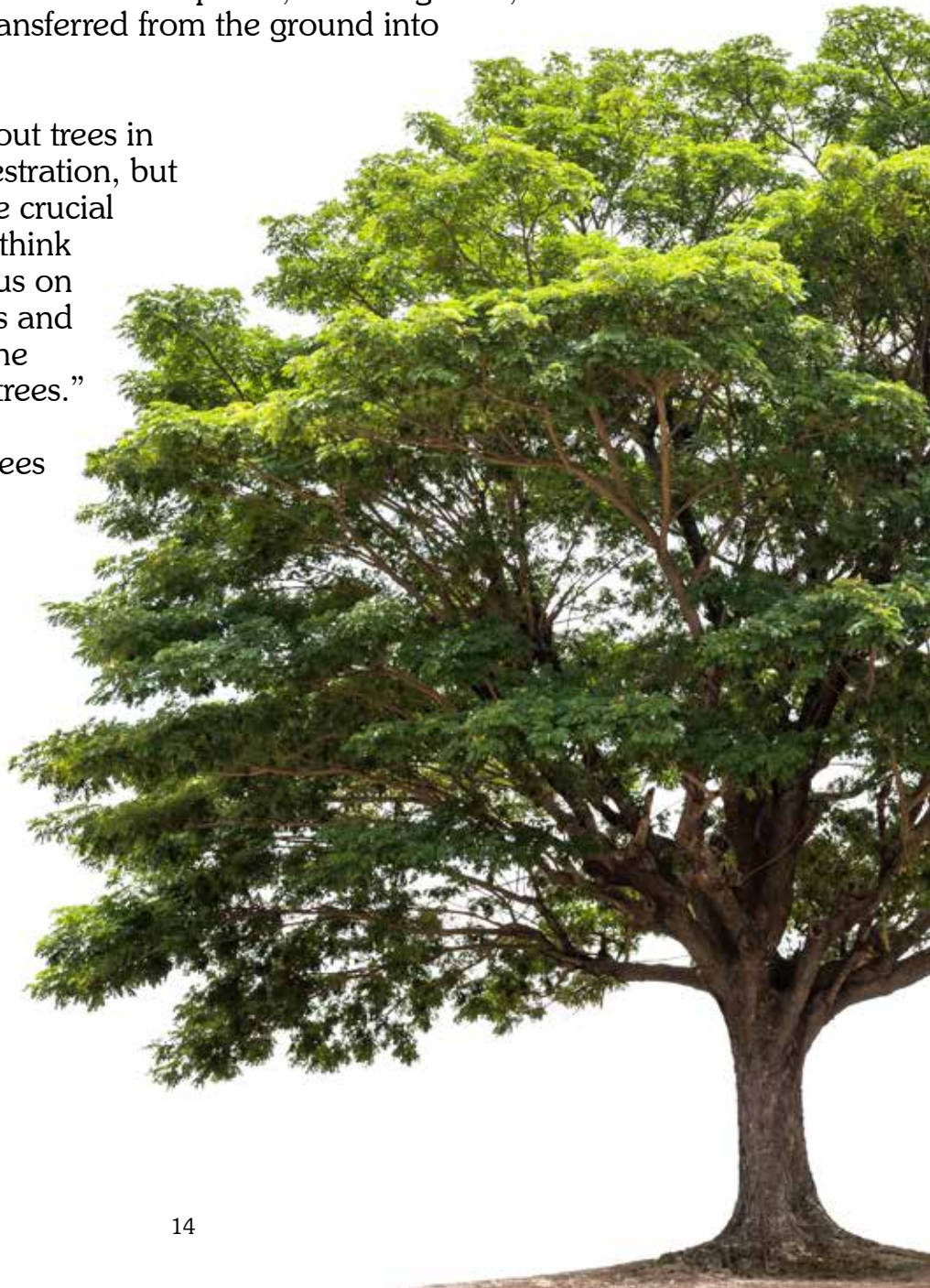
Transpiration is the evaporation of water from plants, including trees, and it accounts for a significant portion of the water transferred from the ground into the sky in the water cycle.

“People might also only think about trees in terms of shade and carbon sequestration, but they may not realize that trees are crucial to the water cycle. When people think of the water cycle, they often focus on evaporation from rivers and lakes and forget that water in the soil and the atmosphere also passes through trees.”

Here are some of the key ways trees contribute to the water cycle:

**Transpiration:** Trees absorb water through their roots and release it into the atmosphere as water vapor through transpiration. This process helps regulate local humidity and cloud formation.

**Tree Canopies:** The leaves and branches of trees capture rainwater, slowing its fall to the ground and reducing the impact on the soil. This helps prevent flooding and erosion, particularly in areas with high rainfall.



**Groundwater Recharge:** By allowing water to filter through the soil instead of running off quickly, trees assist in the recharge of underground aquifers. This ensures more consistent water supplies over time, particularly in urban areas.

**Drought Resistance:** Certain tree species are highly drought-resistant, with deep root systems that allow them to access groundwater far below the surface. This capability helps sustain trees and the ecosystems around them during dry periods.

Trees act as natural guardians of our water supply, regulating how water moves through the environment and ensuring its availability when needed.

In Houston, groundwater remains a crucial component of the region's water supply. Trees play an important role in the recharge of groundwater aquifers by allowing rainwater to seep slowly into the ground. As urban development paves over more land, trees' ability to break up compacted soil and promote water infiltration becomes even more essential. This process helps replenish the region's aquifers, ensuring a more stable and long-term water supply.

Houston's unique environment—where urban sprawl intersects with natural ecosystems—presents both challenges and opportunities for managing water resources. Trees are silent, yet essential participants in this complex water system. Their contributions often go unnoticed but have long-lasting impacts on the region's sustainability. Protecting and expanding our urban forests is not just an environmental responsibility but a necessity for the future of Houston's water security. 💧

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IRRY GATOR FEATURING  
JAY B BLUE, AND WESLEY  
THE WATER WASTING  
WEASEL!**



# Can you really tell how old a tree is by its rings?

Most of us learned as children that the age of a tree could be discovered by counting its rings. Rings of trees growing in temperate climates can indeed tell their age through their annual rings.

An examination of the patterns of a tree can not only reveal insights into a tree's age — but can also yield information on whether a tree thrived or struggled during its lifetime

According to the National Park Service, “An especially wet year might result in broader rings, since the tree is able to grow more than it might have in a drier year. A blackened scar can indicate a wildfire, and other marks could point to an insect infestation.

Every year, trees form new tree rings. Some of the oldest trees in the world are thousands of years old, and have lived through major environment changes, climate shifts and numerous historical events.

But what do the tree rings actually indicate? If someone walks through a park or forest and sees a fresh-cut stump, the outer ring would be assigned to the year it was cut — and by recognizing each of the rings inward, one could count the rings to discover its age.

Factors like tree species and geographic location can impact the size and growth of tree rings..Long-lived species like oaks will have narrower tree rings, while species like willows and aspen will have wider rings because of their short life cycle.



The study of tree rings can provide an abundance of history. Experts say that tree rings can be used to date wood in historical and archaeological structures and tree rings can be used to reconstruct various weather events including precipitation, snowfall, soil moisture, temperature, streamflow and more..

Tree rings are also used in ecological studies to assess the environment to which the trees were exposed — including weather, fire and insect pests.

The next time you're passing a tree stump, take some time to think about what you're seeing. There's a lot of history there -- not only about the tree's age -- but about its life story and its impact on the surrounding ecosystem. 💧

Source: FOX News



# History can reveal some interesting surprises

As another year draws to a close, we think about counting our blessings and enjoying familiar traditions. Now that Mom has finished packing away the autumn decorations and the serving platter with the turkey on it (Yes, virtually every family has one!), we invite you to take a moment to think about the first Thanksgiving in this country.

We picture somber-clad Pilgrims as they left their cramped shipboard accommodations and stepped onto a stack of rocks along the Massachusetts coast on November 21, 1620. The story continues that the travelers were warmly welcomed by a tribe of friendly Indians who generously shared an elaborate feast with them.

There's just one thing wrong with this popular imagery...that was NOT the first Thanksgiving in this country



-- not by quite a long shot! This isn't "revisionist history" -- actual facts confirm that 500-600 years ago a whole lot was going on in this country OUTSIDE of the "original" east coast colonies! There are even more surprises in our history!

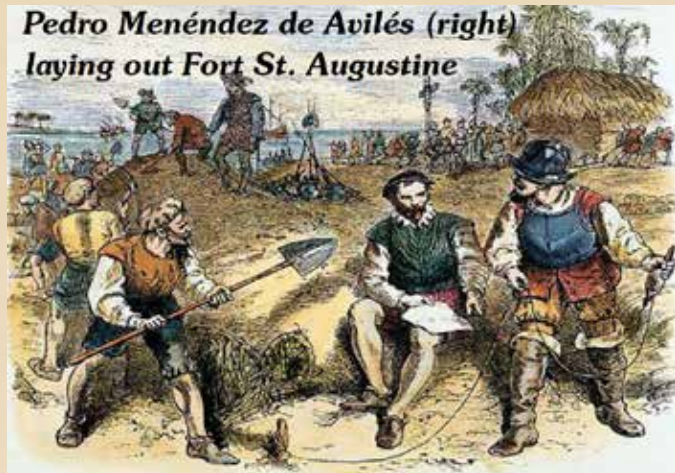
In a special supplement on Native Americans, National Geographic included some astonishing information: "Long before 16th century Europeans began to explore what would become known as North America, the land was already home to more than 30 million people by some estimates. With diverse languages and cultures they lived in thousands of communities, some established for centuries."

That being said...it's quite a stretch to think that Columbus "discovered" much of anything in North America...millions of Americans were already here by the time he arrived!

Back to the first Thanksgiving. The concept of Thanksgiving has always been a part of the European culture and religion, and included celebrations of various "feast" days. It is logical that explorers from England and Spain would bring their traditions with them when they came to the "New World".

There are also many contenders for being the "first explorers" of this continent -- including the Vikings, and Siberians who arrived on foot over the land bridge that formed across the Bering Sea at the end of the Ice Age. Virginians insist that they celebrated the first Thanksgiving in their

Jamestown colony, founded in 1610, after surviving an especially harsh winter. But there is some compelling evidence that this credit should fall instead to Spanish explorers.



If we think about early explorations in what is Florida today, just about everyone will come up with the name Ponce de Leon...who came in search of the Fountain of Youth in March, 1513. This state actually has the distinction of holding the first Thanksgiving on September 7, 1565. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the Spanish founder of St. Augustine, and 800 of his settlers celebrated a Thanksgiving Mass that was followed by a communal meal shared by the Spaniards and the Timucuan natives who lived there when the explorers landed. The natives were initially friendly to the Spanish, and they existed side by side for a number of years, before European diseases took a terrible toll on the Timucua.

### **Another historical surprise**

But wait. There's more. The second Thanksgiving occurred on April 30, 1598 in TEXAS -- before Capt. John Smith sailed from England or before the

Pilgrims' Mayflower had even been built!

On January 26, 1598 a man that some historians have dubbed The Last Conquistador, Don Juan de Oñate, won permission from Spain's king, Philip II, to explore and colonize what is now New Mexico. Here is a man whose name should be as familiar to us as Jamestown's Captain John Smith or the Puritan Governor William Bradford. Oñate was from a noble Basque Spanish family that had become very wealthy in the New World in silver mining, their ranches, and his father's marriage to an heiress. Don Juan was not born in Spain, however, but was born in Zacatecas, Mexico around 1550, which made him a criollo -- a Spaniard not born in Spain. He also became wealthy like his father, but as a criollo, "real" Spaniards considered him to be physically, mentally, and morally inferior, so he worked twice as hard to attain his wealth and stature.

After suffering a number of setbacks, Don Juan assembled 400 men and their families, ox carts, carriages and wooden-wheel wagons, 7,000 to 8,000 head of livestock (horses, sheep, goats, and long-horn cattle), along with some Franciscan priests, and set out from Santa Barbara, Chihuahua, Mexico traveling in a four-mile-long procession across the desert.

It was a long, arduous journey...one that almost defeated them. Don Oñate (at age 43) set out to establish a short, direct route to his destination through 200 miles of the Chihuahuan desert. This trail ultimately became the famous El Camino Real.

The expedition dealt with extremes -- raging rivers or no water at all -- and by the time they reached the banks of the Rio Grande, men and animals alike were exhausted and crazed with thirst. Don Oñate called a halt, and they rested for a week along the river bank as scouts searched for a suitable place to cross the river. They were at the site of present-day El Paso, Texas.



### Offering thanks for survival

It was on April 30, 1598 that Oñate instructed the Franciscan priests to celebrate a solemn high Mass, the first Thanksgiving celebration in New Spain. Then Don Juan held the ritual (both secular and religious) of La Toma -- the formal ceremony of taking new land for the King of Spain. The conquistador and his army arrived on horseback, their armor polished and shining, and with a trumpet fanfare and musket shots, they raised the Spanish flag with a flourish in the camp. The colonists, priests and soldiers who had so nearly perished were triumphant and devoted the remainder of the day in giving thanks, feasting on fish, “many cranes, ducks and geese” and enjoying games, foot races, and competitive sports.

After the celebration, Oñate’s expedition continued up the Rio Grande and subsequently occupied the Acoma Pueblo near Santa Fe.

As of April 1989, the residents of El Paso enjoy The El Paso Mission Trail Association’s yearly re-enactment of the arrival of Oñate’s first Spanish settlers in the area in April 1598 and their Thanksgiving celebration. A company of costumed actors and dancers represent the Native Americans and Spaniards, who give thanks and celebrate after their perilous crossing of the Chihuahuan desert and arrival at the banks of the Rio Grande. 💧

When you want to save money on your light bill, you start by turning off the lights.



If you want to save money on your water bill, use less water.



**THE MORE WATER YOU USE, THE HIGHER YOUR BILL WILL BE!**



**WATER LESS SAVE MORE**

[whcrwa.net/20tips](http://whcrwa.net/20tips)



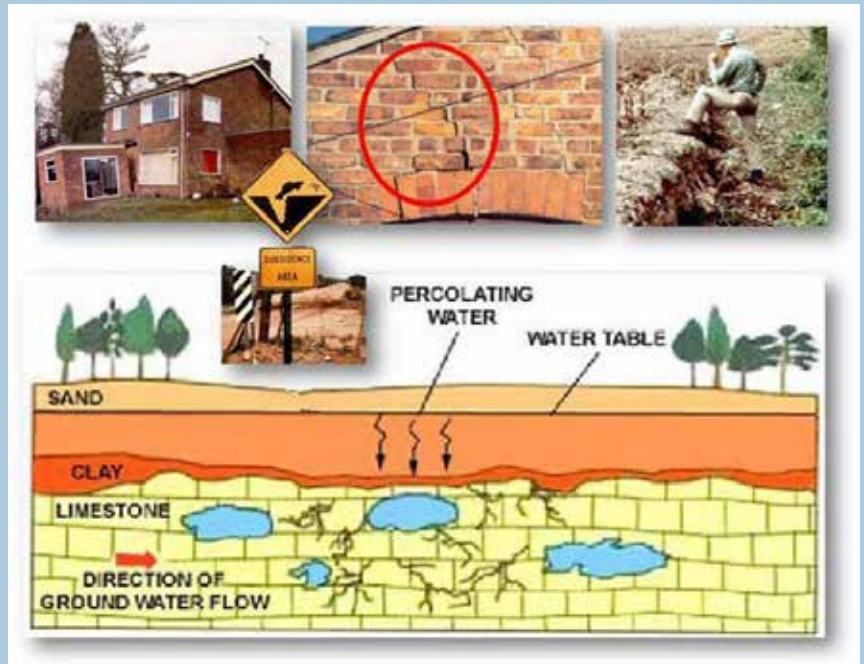

# WHY DO WE HAVE TO CONVERT FROM GROUNDWATER TO SURFACE WATER?

The conversion from groundwater to surface water is designed to halt subsidence and help give aquifers the opportunity to recharge.

## WHAT IS SUBSIDENCE?

When large amounts of groundwater are drawn out of the aquifers, the clay layers collapse under the weight of everything above them, and decrease the storage capacity of the aquifer. .. never to return to previous levels. Subsidence has increased the frequency of flooding, and has cost millions of dollars in damage to the area's industrial and transportation infrastructure.

## LAND SUBSIDENCE



## UNDERGROUND AQUIFERS

### UNSATURATED ZONE

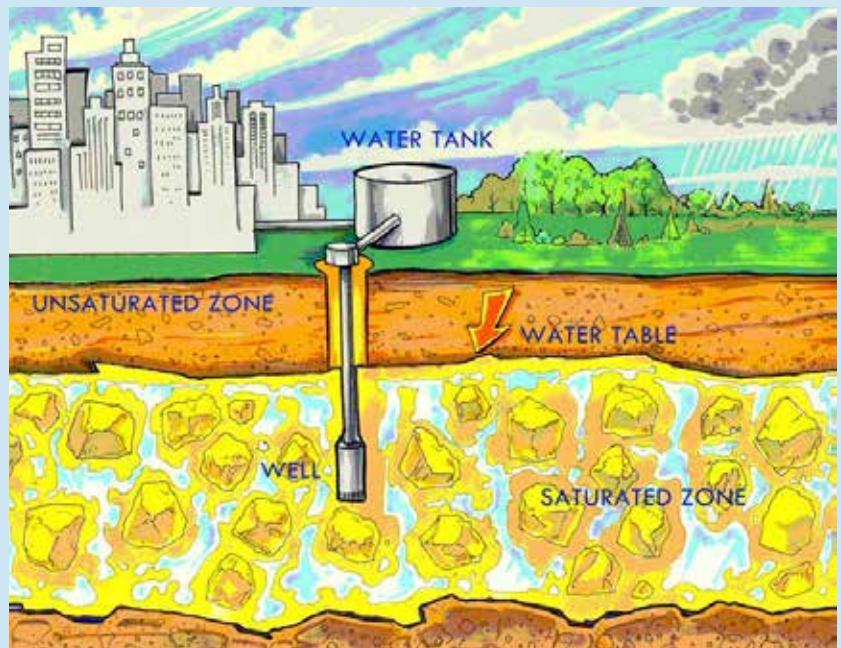
The area underground where the pore spaces between soil and rock are filled with both water and air.

### WATER TABLE

The boundary between the unsaturated and saturated zones.

### SATURATED ZONE

The area beneath the water table where pore spaces are filled with water.





# It's time to prepare for Winter's Chill: Safeguarding the Four P's

## PETS, PLANTS,



## PEOPLE, & PIPES!



**WHCRWA**.COM



# West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) Wins Silver at the 19th Annual w3 Awards for “Irry Gator - Don’t Be a Water Wasting Weasel” Campaign

The West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) is proud to announce its recognition as the sponsor of the Silver Award winning “Irry Gator - Don’t Be a Water Wasting Weasel” video at the 19th Annual w3 Awards in the Branded Entertainment-Animation category. The w3 Awards honor creative excellence across digital platforms, recognizing top-tier agencies, creators, and organizations for their work in websites, marketing, video, mobile apps, and social content.

The award-winning video, produced in collaboration with the Save Water Texas Coalition and The Texas Network, introduces Irry Gator, a playful and educational character designed to inspire Texans to conserve water and avoid being a “Water Wasting Weasel.” The video is part of WHCRWA’s commitment to promoting water sustainability and ensuring responsible water usage across the region.



**Irry Gator - Don't be a Water Wasting Weasel**  
Branded Entertainment - Animation

“We are thrilled to see the Irry Gator campaign receive such prestigious recognition,” said Gary Struzick, Assistant Vice President and Precinct 7 Director. “At WHCRWA, we are dedicated to spreading awareness about the importance of water conservation, and this campaign has allowed us to engage with our community in a fun, memorable way. Irry Gator has quickly become a beloved symbol of our efforts to encourage responsible water habits, and this award speaks to the creativity and impact of the campaign.”

WHCRWA worked closely with the Save Water Texas Coalition and The Texas Network to bring Irry Gator to life, helping to shape the character and message to resonate with audiences of all ages. The success of the campaign is a result of this collaboration, leveraging the Coalition’s mission and The Texas Network’s expertise in animation and storytelling.

“We’re extremely proud of our role in the Irry Gator campaign and grateful to have partnered with such creative and dedicated teams,” continued Director Struzick. “This award is not just a win for our organization but for everyone committed to protecting Texas’ water resources.”

With this w3 Award, Irry Gator has now won six prestigious honors. Earlier this year, Irry took home the Telly Award, earning Gold for General Public Interest and Awareness and Bronze for Craft 2D Animation. The program also received recognition at the NYX Awards, winning the 2024 NYX Gold for Educational Video and securing both the Grand Winner title and Gold for 2D Animation at the 2023 NYX Awards. These accolades highlight the success of Irry Gator as an engaging and effective educational campaign. 💧



## Mobile Teaching Labs Available for Community Events



WHCRWA offers two Mobile Teaching Labs—Water is Life Mobile Teaching Lab and Water Quality Mobile Teaching Lab—equipped to educate your community about vital water topics such as subsidence, water conservation, and groundwater versus surface water. These mobile classrooms feature interactive exhibits designed to engage students and residents alike, offering hands-on experiences that demonstrate the importance of protecting our water resources.

The mobile teaching labs are available at no charge to districts, cities, and educators within WHCRWA boundaries. Whether you’re planning a MUD event, a school presentation, or a community gathering, they provide a unique opportunity to learn about water management.

Visit [whcrwa.com/education/mobile-teaching-labs/](https://whcrwa.com/education/mobile-teaching-labs/) to reserve a lab for your next event! 💧

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