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2024

SPRING  
EDITION



*SWSP Segment B3 Tunnel Tour - Page 8*





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# 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)  
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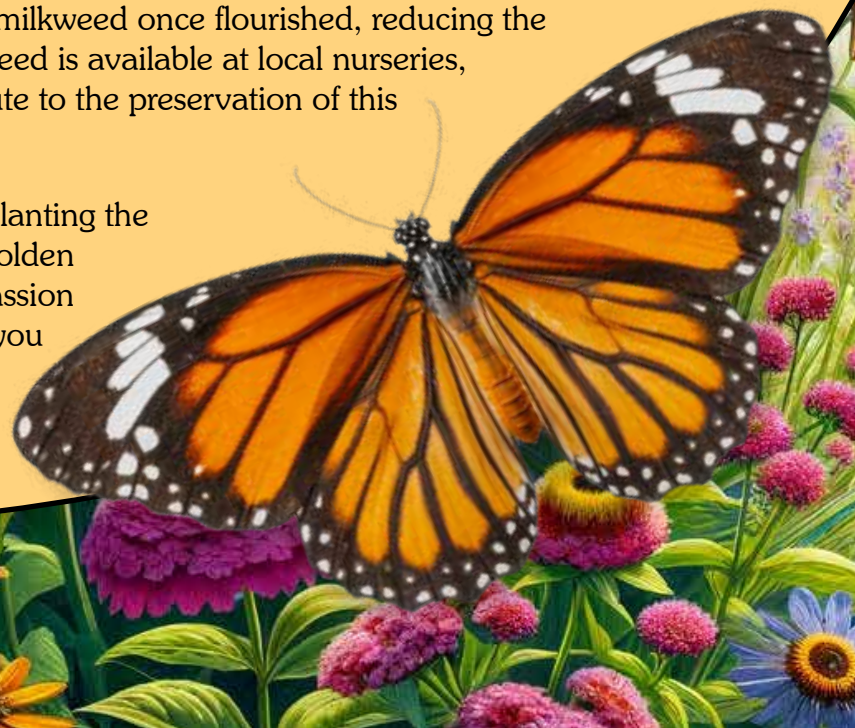
## The Wonder of Butterflies: Nature's Vibrant Metamorphosis

Architect Buckminster Fuller once noted, "There is nothing in the caterpillar that tells you it is going to be a butterfly." This transformation from a modest caterpillar to a vibrant butterfly captivates us, illustrating that change is the essence of nature's beauty. With their wings painted in a spectrum of hues, butterflies are not just a delight to behold; they serve as a gentle reminder of the transformative power of change. There are countless species of butterflies, each adorned in its unique palette of colors.

Butterflies, as inadvertent agents of pollination, flit from flower to flower, savoring the nectar. To attract these creatures and perhaps even encourage them to settle, provide their preferred flora and ensure a water source is close at hand. Interestingly, while they avoid bird baths, male butterflies have been known to gather at puddles to drink.

Each butterfly species has specific plant preferences. The Monarch butterfly, for example, exclusively relies on milkweed as its 'host plant'. These majestic migratory insects are facing threats as urban development encroaches upon the areas where milkweed once flourished, reducing the butterflies' vital food sources. Fortunately, milkweed is available at local nurseries, offering an opportunity for gardeners to contribute to the preservation of this species by cultivating these plants.

To support the life cycle of butterflies, consider planting the following: Purple Coneflower, Indian Blanket, Golden Eye Daisy, Turk's Cap, Phlox, Texas Lantana, Passion Vine, and Bee Brush. By fostering these plants, you become an active participant in sustaining the butterfly population for future generations. ♡







# Spring Forward:

## The Ultimate Checklist for Home and Garden Renewal

Spring is traditionally the ideal time to tackle outdoor, yard, and garden projects. With the threat of winter storms finally behind us, it's important to thoroughly inspect your home and property for any damage and carry out necessary repairs. If you're planning any landscaping or renovation projects, it's advisable to secure reliable, licensed contractors who can provide designs and estimates well in advance. This ensures there's ample time to agree on a detailed plan and start the work before the onset of the hot summer days.

Let's start at the top:

1. Winter storms can take a significant toll, so carefully inspect the roofs of all structures. Look for missing shingles, damaged or missing metal pipes, or anything that seems amiss, especially following any hail storms. Springtime often brings roofers into neighborhoods seeking business. Beware of disreputable workers claiming to have multiple jobs in your area. Always verify the references of roofing contractors, and seek personal recommendations from those you trust.

2. Damage to gutters and downspouts can lead to rotting of the wood trim at the eaves. Such deterioration creates ideal entry points for various critters into your attic space. Moreover, ensuring your gutters are clean and unobstructed can prevent further damage from spring rains, effectively diverting water away from your house and preventing accumulation around the foundation..



3. Wooden decks, fences, railings, trellises, pergolas, and other outdoor structures will last longer and maintain better condition when they're stained or resealed every one to two years. Also, allocate time for any necessary repairs to woodwork.





4. Checking your sprinklers or irrigation systems in the spring can conserve water, protect your plants, and reduce expenses. Begin by manually running the system through all zones and walking the property to inspect it. Ensure no heads are broken or damaged. Adjust any heads that are directing water towards the house, especially windows, as this can lead to moisture problems. Also, realign heads that spray onto the street, sidewalk, or porches to prevent water waste. If you're unsure about maintaining your sprinkler system, hiring a professional can be a wise investment. This not only helps lower your water bill but also safeguards one of our most precious natural resources.



5. Starting in March and continuing through May or June, keep an eye out for termites. The presence of numerous flying insects emerging from a hole in the woodwork is a likely sign of termites. Enlisting the services of a licensed professional pest control company can prevent significant expense and inconvenience in the future.

6. If repainting your home's exterior is on your to-do list this year, consider spring as the ideal time to plan it. Remember to engage only reputable contractors. Verify their references and seek recommendations from friends to ensure quality work.



7. In recent years, the threat posed by mosquitoes has extended beyond mere annoyance to significant health concerns, as they can transmit diseases like West Nile virus and Zika virus. These diseases underscore the importance of mosquito control as part of public health efforts. The most effective way to reduce the mosquito population is by eliminating standing water where mosquitoes breed. This means diligently draining, tipping over, or removing containers that hold water and maintaining these areas regularly. Be especially vigilant with pet bowls, planter pots and saucers, children's toys, and wheelbarrows, to name a few common culprits..

8. Schedule an air-conditioning service to maximize the lifespan and efficiency of your cooling system. It's advisable to change the filters at least once every season and engage a licensed professional to service the equipment before summer begins. This proactive approach ensures your system runs smoothly and efficiently during the hotter months.💧

# STOP THOSE

# WATER LEAKS

Save water and money!  
Stop leaky faucets and toilets

Leaks can account for over  
10% of residential water usage

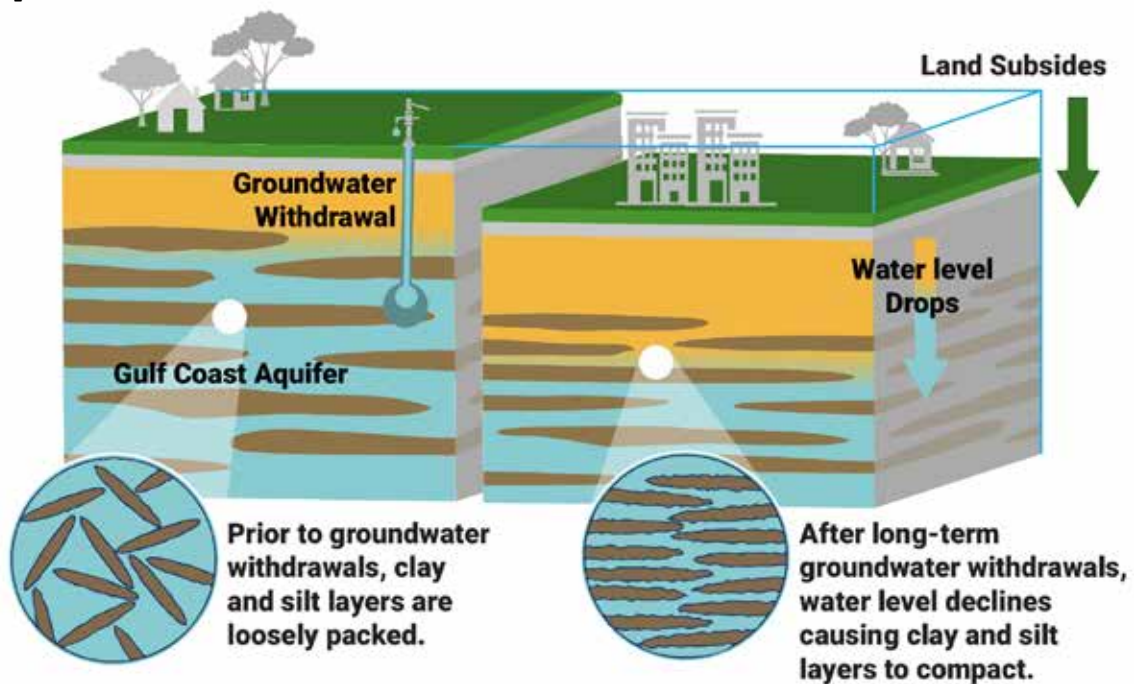


**WATER LESS  
SAVE MORE**

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Visit [whcrwa.net/20tips](http://whcrwa.net/20tips) for 20 tips on conserving water and energy

Land subsidence occurs when large amounts of groundwater have been excessively withdrawn from an aquifer. The clay layers within the aquifer compact and settle, resulting in lowering the ground surface in the area from which the groundwater is being pumped.



Visit [whcrwa.com/subsidence](http://whcrwa.com/subsidence) to learn more about Subsidence.





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**SURFACE WATER  
SUPPLY PROJECT**

To meet the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District and Fort Bend Subsidence District's groundwater reduction requirements for 2025 and beyond, 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)***



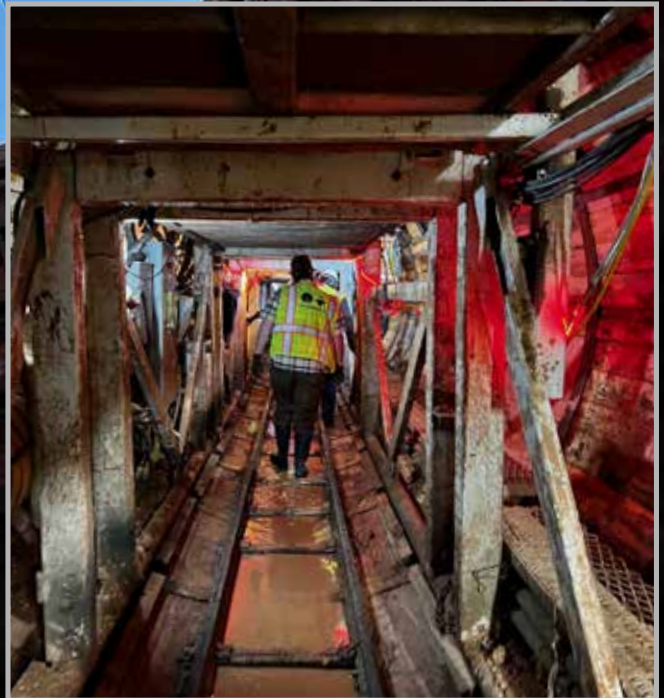
# SWSP Segment B3 Tour

On January 30, 2024 the Surface Water Supply Project (SWSP) Team attended a tour of the Segment B3 126-inch tunnel between IH-45 North Fwy and Hopper Road. This tour provided the team with an opportunity to gain valuable insights into its construction, functionality and ask the construction team questions.



Pictured (left to right): Chase Juhl, Tonya Kenneda, Eric Hansen, Yovani Zelaya, Larry Wepler, Wayne Ahrens, Melinda Silva, Gary Struzick.







## EXAMINE

# IRRY GATOR'S AN SYSTEM MAIN

Examine your irrigation system for clogged, broken, or missing sprinkler heads. Better yet, call in the pros... schedule a complete irrigation system evaluation performed by a licensed irrigator.

## AIM

Aim irrigation water where it belongs. Nothing is going to grow on your driveway, sidewalk, or other paved areas so make sure the sprinklers water ONLY yard or landscaped areas.



WATER  
SAVE

# IRRY GAT



# ANNUAL SPRINKLER MAINTENANCE TIPS



TM

## INSPECT

Inspect the connection points where the sprinkler heads join the pipes and hoses. Be especially alert for any mysterious, persistent puddles or pools of water in the yard or landscaped area that could indicate a leak in the system. If you FIND one, FIX it!

## CONTROL

Control the controller. When the seasons change, review and update the system's settings. Don't just set it and forget it!

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E MORE  
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WHAT DO YOU KNOW  
ABOUT INSECTS IN  
TEXAS?

**The GOOD...**  
**The BAD...**  
**and The UGLY.**



## THE GOOD

There are roughly 100,000 species of insects in the US and almost a third of them can be found in Texas. Visitors and newcomers to the Lone Star state are often amazed and astonished at the sheer size and abundance of them.

There's a popular tale of a new resident's first encounter with a Texas roach. She was reported to have gone screaming out of the kitchen saying, "No one told me they can FLY!"

As with insects everywhere, Texas "bugs" play a critical role in our ecosystem. Most plants need insects to reproduce. Without them, there would be no flowers to look at or fruits and vegetables to eat. Insects also act as garbage collectors to clean up dead trees, vegetation, and animals. Without insects there would be fewer songbirds, lizards, frogs and small mammals -- like bats -- that feed on insects.



## THE BAD


Some insects are pests; some spoil or eat plant life or animal food. And in the "bad" category, some thrive on human blood and cause disease. For better or worse, we share the planet with all kinds of insects.



## The GOOD – Ladybugs.

Legend has it that seeing or catching a Ladybug (or Lady Beetle) brings good luck. They're considered beneficial because they EAT other plant-eating insects. Their bright color also warns predators not to eat them. A winter chill doesn't bother them; they live through all seasons. Ladybugs can live for 2-3 years and can eat 50 aphids a day and as many as 5,000 aphids in their lifetime. Rose growers often buy quantities of the insect to keep away aphids, their most popular pest.

## The BAD. – Mosquitoes.



These annoying, buzzing “vampires” can carry and transmit deadly diseases when they suck human blood they need to reproduce. Many health organizations consider the Mosquito one of the most deadly of Earths' animals. They are the most common flying insect in Texas.

## The UGLY – Roaches.

Cockroaches are, unfortunately, one of the most common household pests throughout Texas, thanks to the state's warm climate which is ideal for breeding.

The ugly critters may be especially active in spring and summer, they can survive even during colder months. The most common variety of cockroach in



Texas is the American...also referred to as water bugs or wood roaches. They are also the largest species in the Lone Star State, with an average length of 1-1/2 inches. The most efficient way to rid your home of these nasty bugs is to call a professional exterminator. ♣



A close-up photograph of a person's hands and arms, wearing a red wristband and a brown sleeve, using a wooden-handled shovel to plant purple flowers in a garden bed. The garden is filled with various plants, including yellow flowers and green foliage. The background is a lush green garden.

# The Truth about Xeriscaping... Debunking the Myths!

Let's face it...Xeriscaping has gotten a bum rap over the years; in fact, lots of people simply shut down when the landscaping technique is mentioned, and display the same kind of revulsion as when hearing the word "slug". Over the years, xeriscaping has become synonymous with UGLY or barren or even desolate. So, let's go back to its origins and try to figure out where such a great concept went wrong. We invite you to keep an open mind...some of the information might surprise you!

The concept of "Xeriscaping," with its pronunciation rooted in 'zer-i-scaping,' was developed through a collaborative effort led by the Denver Water Department alongside the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado (ALCC) and Colorado State University. This initiative was spurred by the acute water shortages that followed the 1977 drought across the western United States, highlighting the need for more water-efficient landscaping practices.

The term "Xeriscape" derives from the

Greek "xeros," meaning dry, and "scape," implying a view or scene. However, the interpretation of Xeriscape as merely a "dry scene" is a misconception. Xeriscaping embodies a much richer philosophy and aesthetic, aiming not just to reduce water usage through drought-resistant plantings but also to create visually appealing, sustainable landscapes that thrive in their local environments.

Originally conceived over three decades ago by a visionary task force, Xeriscaping's core principles emphasize the use of slow-growing, drought-resistant plants to minimize the need for water, fertilizers, and maintenance. Beyond the selection of water-wise plants, Xeriscaping involves strategic planning and planting based on grouping plants with similar water needs. This holistic approach to landscaping not only conserves valuable resources but also encourages biodiversity and supports the development of resilient garden ecosystems.

Are some of the plants used in Xeriscaped areas also found in arid desert areas – such as cactus, native grasses, and succulents?



The answer is, yes, of course. But does this technique involve ONLY cactus and rocks? Certainly not! Xeriscaping also translates into a lush display of plant material that is ‘at home’ – and therefore thrives in its environment. The areas are often green, lovely landscapes of colorful plants that are maintained water-efficiently. The technique is used in almost every state all across the country to conserve water, so obviously it works. The results are impressive: residential water usage for landscaping can be reduced by as much as 60 percent!

Originating with that dedicated task force, there are seven basic principles of Xeriscaping. The words and explanations may differ region to region, but these core concepts followed by most water-resource organizations across the country are exactly the same:

- Planning and design
- Soil analysis and amendment
- Practical turf areas
- Appropriate plant selection
- Efficient irrigation
- Use of mulch
- Appropriate maintenance

Visit <https://whcrwa.net/xeriscaping> to read more about Xeriscaping or scan the QR code below. 💧



## A Spotlight on WHCRWA

Learn about the essential role of the West Harris County Regional Water Authority in managing and conserving our water resources. Watch our latest video, “A Spotlight on WHCRWA,” for a compelling insight into water management in West Harris County, Texas.

Available now on our website and social media!



**SCAN ME**



**[whcrwa.net/spotlight](https://whcrwa.net/spotlight)**



# YES

# Kids can Conserve

Everyone knows that all living things need water to survive. Sadly, we have taken our water supplies for granted and have not always been careful about how we have used this valuable natural resource. Our drinking water is going to cost more in the future, so it is important that kids learn to use it wisely and develop some efficiency strategies that will help when they are adults and have families of their own.

Here are some things you can do to help make our water resources last longer...

## Bathrooms:

About 75 percent of the water used inside our homes is used in the bathroom. Experts estimate that in an average household about 40+ percent of the water gets flushed down toilets, and the other 30 percent is used in showers and baths.

- **Take shorter showers.** A five-minute shower uses 25 gallons of water. One option is to turn the water on to get wet, turn it off while you lather up and wash your hair...then turn it back on to rinse off. This bathing method



can save as much as a hundred gallons of water a week!

- Here's a "two-for-one" idea — place a bucket or plastic container in the shower to catch extra water. They used to call this a "Navy Shower" since this is how sailors shower on ships and in submarines! Use the captured water for indoor plants.

- Don't use the toilet as a trash can — flush only when necessary. And, while we're talking about toilets... **NO WIPES IN THE PIPES!** Do not flush anything but toilet paper — which was designed to decompose.

- Don't run the water while brushing your teeth. Turn it back on to rinse your toothbrush and clean the sink. Only use the water you actually need for washing your face, too.



- Tell your parents if you see a leaking faucet or if the toilet "runs" after flushing. These leaks can waste

thousands of gallons of water a year and that is just money down the drain.

- It also takes a lot of water to wash dishes and to do the laundry. If you help with these household chores, use the right

water level, and only run these appliances with full loads.

A huge amount of water is used outside the home...for lawns and landscaped areas. It is true that kids may not design and plant these areas, but they are often responsible for helping to maintain them.

- Adjust the lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer blades of grass will help shade the ground and this helps hold moisture longer.
- Water lawns only when necessary. Providing a deep soaking less frequently will help build good roots for better drought resistance.
- Water the yard, not the sidewalk or concrete. If there's a sprinkler system, tell your parents if any of the heads are not functioning properly.
- In every case, only use the amount of water you actually need. Make a commitment to conserve — look for new ways to use water wisely in and around your home! ♡





The top half of the page features a composite image. On the left, the Texas state flag is shown, with its characteristic white star on a blue field and horizontal stripes of white and red. On the right, an aerial view of a modern residential neighborhood with numerous houses and paved streets is visible under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

# ARE YOU NEW TO THE LONE STAR STATE?

## **Understanding MUDs in Texas.**

If you're new to Texas, you may have encountered the acronym "MUD" and wondered what it means. MUD stands for Municipal Utility District, a political subdivision of Texas focused on building and maintaining roads and providing utility services such as stormwater drainage, sewer access, and clean water. These districts are overseen by the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

New construction developments, such as many master-planned communities, often establish a MUD or MUDs to bring infrastructure and water/wastewater services into neighborhoods needing utilities, as these new subdivisions frequently span outside the boundaries of existing city service delivery areas.

MUDs issue bonds to pay for the costs of constructing such infrastructure. A Board of Directors is responsible for allocating funding for neighborhood projects under the MUD's jurisdiction.

## **What Are MUD Taxes?**

The MUD levies taxes on commercial and private properties located within its boundaries. These property taxes are then used to pay off the bonds issued to fund the utility services infrastructure.

MUD taxes are in addition to county, school district, college, and other local Texas property taxes. However, the MUD taxes specifically pay for the utility services installed in the neighborhood, while the other taxes go toward their respective taxing entities.

Since the MUD tax is paying off a bond or loan, as more payments are made, the tax rate decreases over time. Additionally, as more residents move into a MUD, the shared cost of the bonds is spread across more taxpayers, further lowering the tax rate.

## **How Long Do MUD Taxes Last?**

As the bonds or debts are paid down using the MUD taxes, the tax rates lower gradually over time. This means that newer developments will have higher rates, while more established neighborhoods will have



lower MUD tax rates.

In a growing development, as more people purchase homes, the shared cost of the bonds decreases with more taxpayers contributing to the MUD. The MUD may continue collecting taxes to maintain or repair the infrastructure, or it is possible that a city may annex the MUD.

Paying off a bond can take up to 30 years. MUD administrators have the option to refinance the debt with lower interest rates, with Board approval.

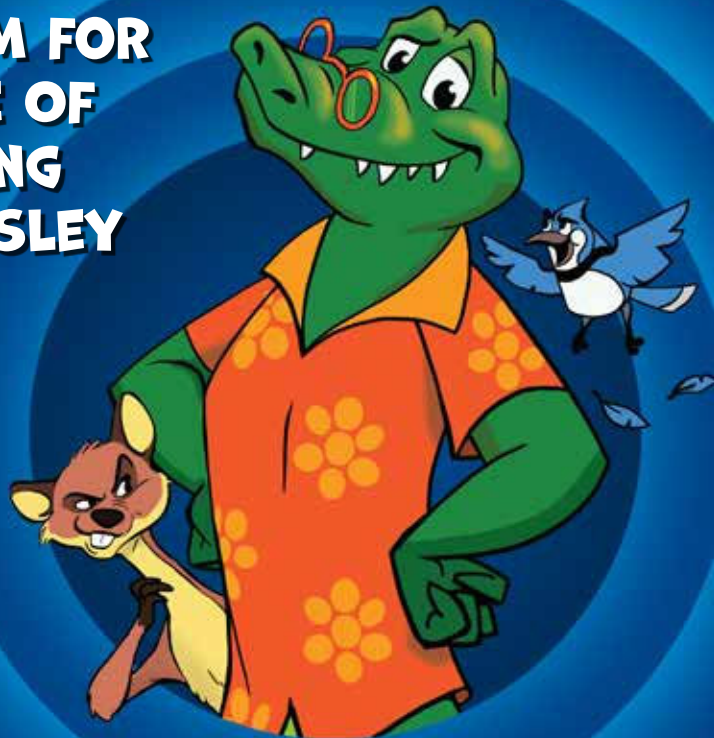
### How the WHCRWA Differs from Municipal Utility Districts

While Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) are commonly found in new residential developments across Texas, providing localized utility services to retail customers, the West Harris County Regional Water

Authority serves a different purpose. Unlike a MUD, it is not a political subdivision focused on constructing and maintaining infrastructure within a single neighborhood or master-planned community. Instead, the West Harris County Regional Water Authority is a political subdivision with the broader purpose of reducing land subsidence and securing and distributing water across the northwestern portion of Harris County.

While MUDs operate at the neighborhood level by issuing bonds for infrastructure and levying property taxes, the Regional Water Authority purchases treated surface water and uses its large-scale transmission systems to supply that water to the various MUDs and other wholesale customers within its boundaries and charges fees to pay for the bonds it issues. The Authority does not have taxing authority. ♦

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