PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

WHCRWA WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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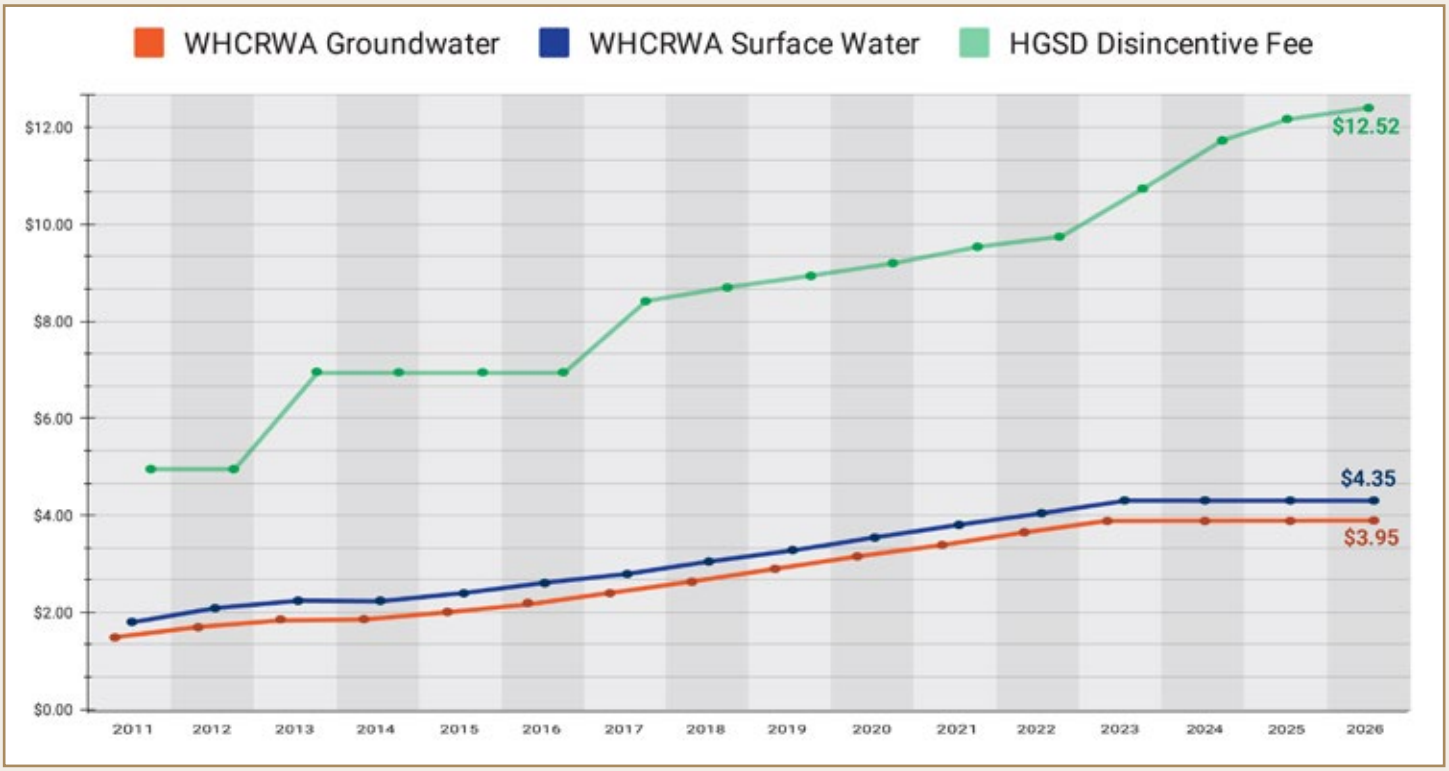
No increase to the current Groundwater Reduction Plan Fee and the Surface Water Fee this January 1, 2026

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, 2026. The Authority's fees have remained the same since January 1, 2023.

The Authority's fees will continue to be used 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 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 appreciates our strong partners in reducing land subsidence ensuring that our community has sufficient water supplies for decades to come.

Understanding the Difference: WHCRWA Fee vs. the HGSD Disincentive Fee



The **West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) fee** that appears on home and business water bills helps pay for the region's required transition from groundwater to surface water from lakes and rivers. This conversion was imposed to control land subsidence caused by decades of heavy groundwater use across Harris County and surrounding areas.

The fees collected support not only the purchase and delivery of surface water, but also the operation, maintenance, planning, and construction of the regional infrastructure needed to deliver surface water to municipal utility districts and cities within the WHCRWA boundaries.

The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD) disincentive fee is a regulatory penalty assessed when a water provider does not meet required groundwater reduction or surface water conversion requirements. Compliance may be achieved through a combination of reduced groundwater pumping, increased surface water use, or approved credits.

Unlike the WHCRWA fee, disincentive fees are not used to construct regional surface water infrastructure or fund local conversion projects. Paying the disincentive fee does not directly reduce groundwater use or subsidence—it reflects the cost of failing to meet required conversion goals.

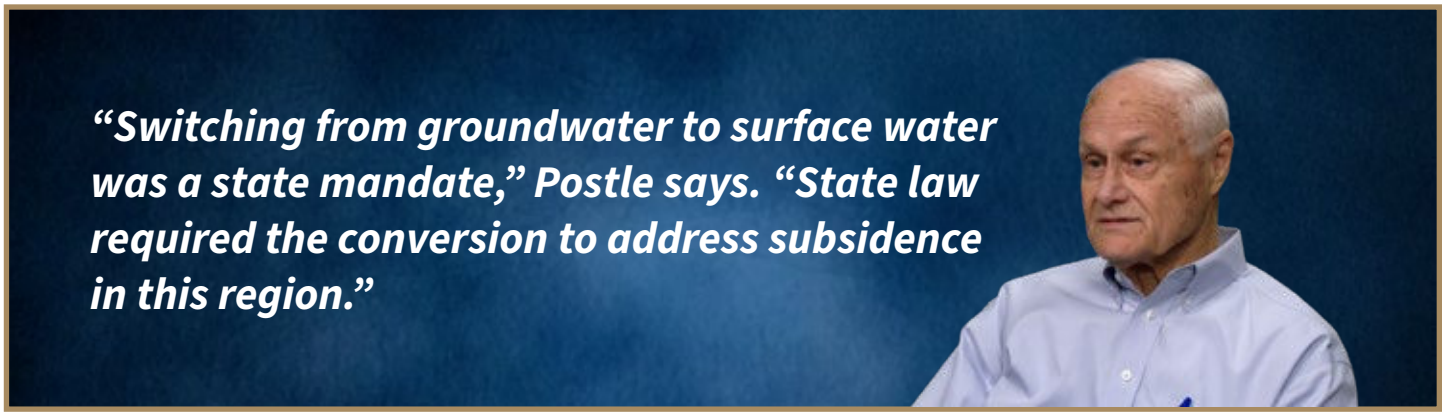
The HGSD disincentive fee has increased significantly over time, while the WHCRWA fee has remained comparatively stable. The difference highlights the contrast between investing in infrastructure that reduces groundwater dependence and the escalating penalties associated with continued over-reliance on groundwater. ♦

Celebrating 25 Years of Progress at West Harris County Regional Water Authority

This year marks 25 years since the West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) was created—a milestone that reflects how long-term planning continues to shape the region's water future.

WHCRWA was established by the Texas Legislature in 2001 as groundwater use increased and land subsidence became a growing concern across northwest Harris County. Rather than leaving individual communities to solve these challenges on their own, the Authority was created to take a regional approach—one focused on converting from groundwater to surface water and protecting water supplies for the long term.

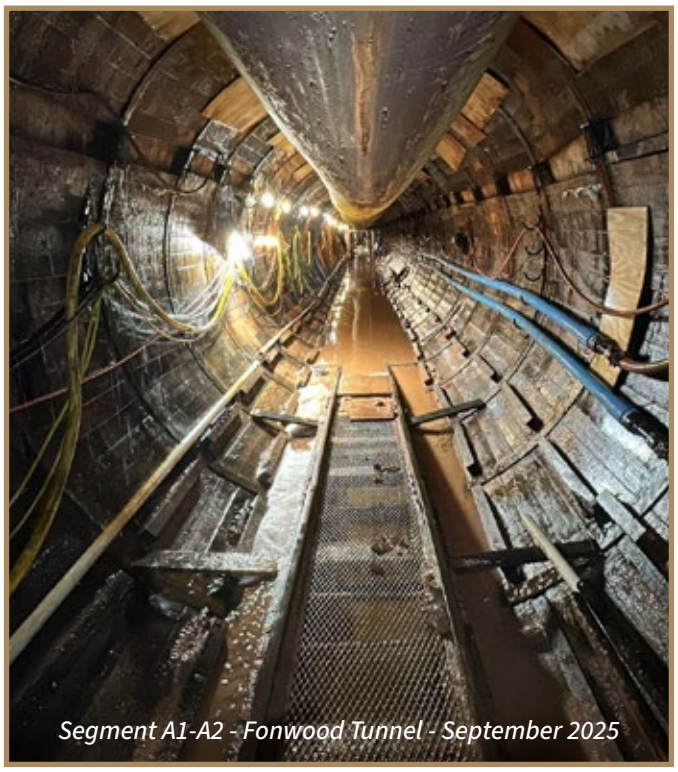
As Douglas (Cam) Postle, Secretary and Precinct 6 Director, explains, the shift to surface water was not optional. "Switching from groundwater to surface water was a state mandate," Postle says. "State law required the conversion by certain dates to address subsidence in this region."



Over the past 25 years, WHCRWA has helped guide major surface water projects that support communities across the region. While much of this work happens behind the scenes, its impact is felt every day. As Gary Struzick, Assistant Vice President and Precinct 7 Director, notes, "People turn on the tap and expect water to come out, but they don't always realize the size and complexity of the system it takes to make that happen."

Central Pump Station January 2026

That long-term focus is intentional. As WHCRWA President and Precinct 3 Director Eric Hansen explains, “Part of the Authority’s role involves planning for generations. The work that we’re doing today, and the cost of that work, is spread out over 30- and 40-year bonds because this infrastructure is designed to last 50, 60, even 70 years and longer. This is a water supply for the future, not just for today.”

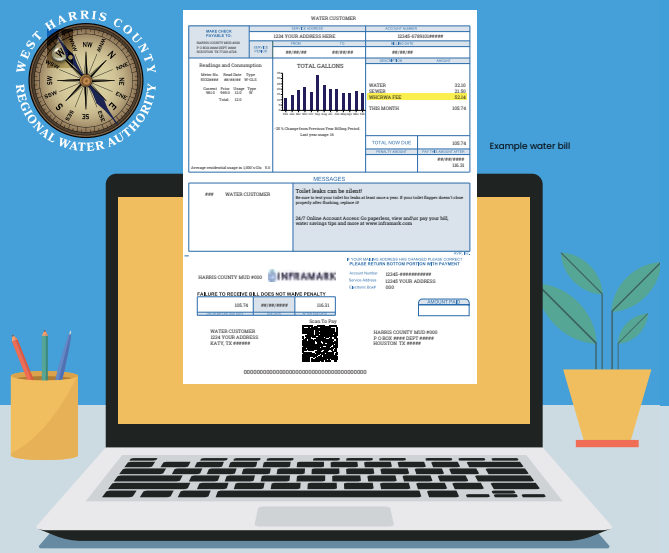


Segment A1-A2 - Fonwood Tunnel - September 2025

Throughout the anniversary year, WHCRWA will be sharing stories, milestones, and behind-the-scenes content that highlight how these efforts came together—and where they are headed next. Updates will be shared on the WHCRWA website and across social media, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and X, along with periodic e-blast updates.

A dedicated 25th Anniversary edition of this newsletter is planned for later this year. ♦

What is the West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) Fee on my water bill?



The WHCRWA 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.

To learn more scan the QR Code to watch a short video or visit the url below

whcrwa.com/what-is-the-whcrwa-fee

SWSP Segment B3 wins BEST 2025 Project of the Year

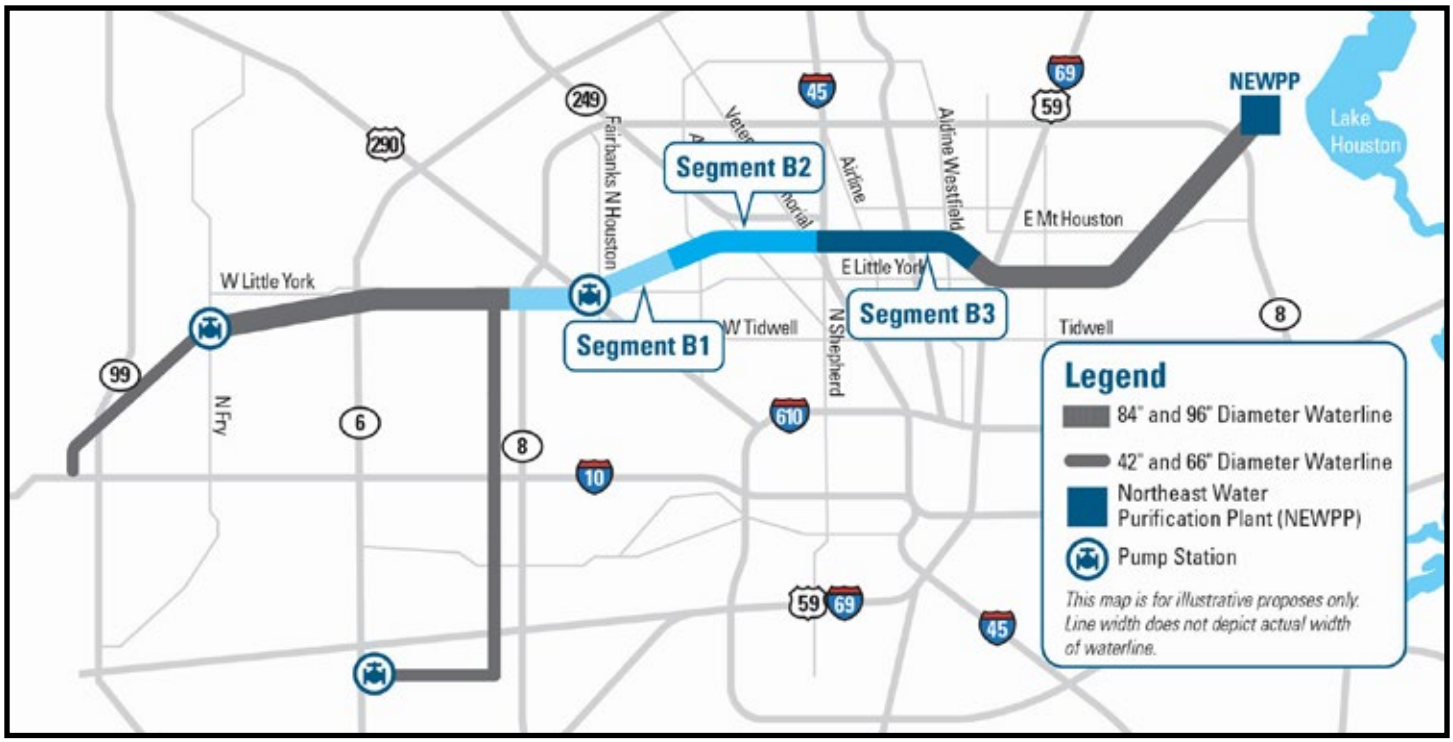
CMAA Houston Honors SWSP Segment B3 with BEST 2025 Project of the Year – Water Project Over $100M

The Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) Houston Chapter has awarded the Surface Water Supply Project (SWSP) Segment B3 its BEST 2025 Project of the Year Award in the Water/Wastewater category for projects over $100 million.

The recognition was presented at CMAA Houston's annual Hard Hatters Gala BEST Awards ceremony on November 14, 2025, where project partners, engineers, contractors, and representatives from regional authorities gathered to celebrate notable achievements in construction and program management.

About the Awarded Project: SWSP Segment B3

Segment B3 is a major component of the larger Surface Water Supply Project, jointly developed and funded by the West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) and the North Fort Bend Water Authority (NFBWA).



Key features of Segment B3 include:

- 96-inch diameter steel waterline
- Approximately 4.4 miles long
- Continuous 128” tunnel alignment running west of I-45 to Hopper Roard on the northeast side of Houston
- Alignment made use of an active oil and gas pipeline corridor through a developed area minimizing impact to the community
- The tunnel utilized ribs and lagging for primary liner support and a “Lovat” tunnel boring machine
- Designed by Black & Veatch
- Constructed by Jay Dee Contractors, Inc.

Construction began in Spring 2022 and reached substantial completion on October 16, 2025.

A Crucial Link in a Regional Surface Water System

Segment B3 is one of many interconnected components of the Surface Water Supply Project, a regional initiative designed to meet the groundwater reduction mandates set by the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD) and the Fort Bend Subsidence District (FBSD) for 2025 and beyond.

Once complete, the SWSP will:

- Deliver treated surface water from Lake Houston
- Convey it from the City of Houston's Northeast Water Purification Plant (NEWPP)
- Transport it through more than 55 miles of large-diameter pipeline
- Supply water to retail providers—including MUDs, PUDs, and WCIDs—within both WHCRWA and NFBWA boundaries

These transmission pipelines range from 96 inches to 42 inches, depending on the segment. Segment B3 forms a critical part of this system, helping move a substantial volume of surface water from the NEWPP toward the growing communities that depend on it.

Recognized Project Partners

CMAA Houston acknowledged several organizations for their roles in Segment B3, including:

- West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA)
- GFT, Inc.
- Project Surveillance
- Tunnel Tex, LLC
- Black & Veatch
- HB Trenchless
- Jay Dee Contractors, Inc.

Their combined work reflects years of planning, engineering, and construction effort to deliver one of the region's most complex tunnel segments.

Previously, SWSP Segment C2 was recognized for excellence, receiving Water Project of the Year honors at the Underground Infrastructure Conference (UIC) 2025 in Houston. Together, these awards underscore the scale, complexity, and long-term importance of the project in delivering a reliable surface water supply for communities within the WHCRWA and NFBWA boundaries.

2025 Show and Tell Workshop Recap

The WHCRWA Show & Tell event brought together district representatives, partners, and guests for an interactive look at the Authority's outreach efforts and the work that supports long-term water planning. Attendees visited exhibits, gathered outreach materials, and had one-on-one conversations with WHCRWA Board members and consultants about key water issues that affect the region. The event created space for open discussion, learning, and connection around the shared goal of keeping water flowing across the region.

A special thank you to the volunteers -- identified by the blue vest -- who helped make the Show & Tell possible. Many of them first connected with WHCRWA through the focus group and generously volunteered their time to help welcome attendees, support the exhibits, and keep the event running smoothly.

How to Winterize Your Irrigation System

As temperatures occasionally drop during the winter months, it's important to protect your irrigation system from damage caused by freezing. In Northwest Harris County, 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, 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 protected 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 usually 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.

Proposition 4: What the Passage Means for Water Infrastructure Planning in Texas

Texas voters have approved Proposition 4, a constitutional amendment that establishes a long-term funding commitment for water infrastructure across the state. The amendment authorizes the dedication of up to $1 billion per year in state sales tax revenue to the Texas Water Fund over a 20-year period, beginning in 2027 and extending through 2047.

The passage of Proposition 4 provides a reliable, predictable source of funding to support water supply development, infrastructure rehabilitation, and flood mitigation projects administered through existing Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) financial assistance programs.

How Proposition 4 Works

Proposition 4 does not create a new grant or loan program. Instead, it dedicates a portion of state sales and use tax revenue to the Texas Water Fund, which is administered by the TWDB. Funds deposited into the Texas Water Fund may be transferred—subject to legislative appropriation and revenue availability—to existing TWDB programs, including those that support large-scale regional water supply projects.

Sales tax revenue is expected to begin accruing in state fiscal year 2028, which starts on September 1, 2027.

The Legislature is anticipated to first appropriate these funds during the 2029 legislative session, with financial assistance potentially becoming available through TWDB programs later that year.

Emphasis on Water Supply Development

State law requires that no less than 50 percent of the constitutionally dedicated Proposition 4 revenue be used for water supply development. Eligible uses include projects related to water conservation, reuse, desalination, aquifer storage, permitted reservoir projects, and infrastructure needed to transport or integrate water supplies into regional systems.

The remaining funds may be used for repairing or replacing aging infrastructure and for flood protection projects, consistent with TWDB program requirements.

Relevance to Regional Surface Water Projects

For regional water authorities such as the West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA), Proposition 4 strengthens the long-term financing framework used to plan, construct, and deliver surface water supplies. By reinforcing the Texas Water Fund and related TWDB programs, the amendment supports the type of large-scale, multi-jurisdictional projects necessary to meet groundwater reduction requirements and long-term regional water demands.

Considerations for Municipal Utility Districts

Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) may be eligible to receive Proposition 4 funds for certain projects. In addition, MUDs may benefit indirectly through participation in regional surface water projects and through reduced financing costs when projects are supported by TWDB programs backed by Texas Water Fund revenues. Over time, this structure may help improve affordability and long-term system reliability for retail water providers.

Planning Ahead

Although Proposition 4 funding will not be immediately available, significant planning and coordination will take place in advance of the first appropriations. This includes updates to state and regional water plans, refinements to TWDB rules and processes, and continued coordination among state agencies, regional authorities, and local water providers.

Looking Forward

Texas faces substantial long-term water infrastructure needs driven by population growth, aging systems, and variable hydrologic conditions. Proposition 4 represents a major step toward addressing those needs by providing a durable funding framework that supports long-term planning, regional coordination, and infrastructure investment.

For more information, visit the Texas Water Development Board's Proposition 4 and Texas Water Fund – Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.twdb.texas.gov/financial/programs/TexasWaterFund/Prop4FAQ.asp

WHCRWA Video Wins Silver at 2025 Telly Awards

The West Harris County Regional Water Authority (WHCRWA) won a Silver Telly Award in the category of General – Government Relations (Non-Broadcast) for its informational video "***What is the WHCRWA Fee on My Water Bill?***"

The video was produced to clearly explain the purpose of the WHCRWA fee and how it supports the infrastructure, water supply, and regulatory requirements within the Authority's boundaries. This engaging short animation simplifies a complex topic—water funding and fee structures—making it easier for residents and ratepayers to understand how their monthly bill helps fund the infrastructure needed to deliver reliable surface water.

The Telly Awards, established in 1979, honor excellence in video and television across all screens. With more than 13,000 entries submitted annually from around the world, this recognition places WHCRWA's communication efforts among the most effective and creative in the industry.

"We're proud to be recognized for our efforts to provide clarity and transparency about where public dollars go and how they support long-term water reliability," said a WHCRWA spokesperson. "This video is just one example of our commitment to clear and accessible public communication."

This marks the second consecutive year that WHCRWA has been honored by the Telly Awards. In 2024, the Authority received a Silver Telly for its animated public service video "***Irry Gator – Don't Be a Water Wasting Weasel***," which focused on water conservation education. The continued recognition underscores WHCRWA's commitment to producing creative, effective communications that inform and engage the public on critical water issues.

Watch the award-winning video: https://youtu.be/38I8UltxTF0

Simple Tips for Personal Property Safety

Protecting your personal property doesn't have to be complicated. A few small habits can go a long way toward preventing loss, damage, or theft.

Start by **keeping valuables out of sight**. Whether it's a vehicle, home, or office, items left in plain view are more likely to attract unwanted attention. Lock doors and windows consistently—even for short trips or quick errands.

At home, **outdoor lighting and motion sensors can be effective deterrents**. Inside, document valuable items by taking photos and keeping serial numbers on file. This can be especially helpful for insurance claims if something is lost or stolen.

For everyday items like phones, laptops, and tools, **consider using tracking features** or labels. And when traveling or attending events, be mindful of where you place bags, purses, or equipment—most losses happen when people are distracted.

A little awareness goes a long way. Simple precautions today can save time, money, and stress later.

What's Happening Beneath Our Feet

Subsidence sounds like a technical term, but its effects are anything but abstract. It's the slow sinking of land caused primarily by excessive groundwater pumping — and in parts of the Houston region, it has permanently reshaped drainage patterns, increased flood risk, and damaged roads, pipelines, and buildings.

In West Harris County, subsidence has long been one of the driving reasons behind the shift away from heavy groundwater use and toward regional surface water supplies.

Why Groundwater Pumping Causes Subsidence

The aquifers beneath Harris County are made up of layers of sand and clay. When groundwater is pumped faster than it can be naturally replenished, pressure inside those layers drops. Over time, the clay compacts — permanently.

Once that compaction happens, the land does not rebound, even if groundwater levels recover. That's what makes subsidence so costly: it's gradual, cumulative, and irreversible.

USGS scientist, John Ellis, showing how much the land has subsided in the Houston area since 1915.

What the Latest Data Shows

According to the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District's 2024 Annual Groundwater Report, subsidence rates across the Houston region vary widely depending on how much groundwater is still being used https://hgsubsidence.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/HGSD-2024-AGR-Infosheet.pdf .

- Areas that converted to surface water decades ago are now seeing little subsidence — and in some cases, slight uplift.
- The highest subsidence rates remain in areas that historically relied most heavily on groundwater, particularly where conversion projects are still underway.
- From 2020 to 2024, the highest average annual subsidence rates occurred in northern and western Harris County — areas that historically relied most heavily on groundwater and are now the focus of major surface water conversion projects.

This is why long-term water planning matters. Subsidence isn't something you "fix" after it happens — it's something you prevent.

Progress Through Conversion

The report also shows continued progress in reducing groundwater use:

- Groundwater pumping dropped by 8% from 2023 to 2024, even as total regional water demand increased slightly.
- Alternative water supplies — primarily surface water — now make up the vast majority of the region's water use.
- Large-scale infrastructure projects, including the Surface Water Supply Project, will play a direct role in reducing pressure on the aquifers beneath West Harris County.

These changes don't happen overnight. They require decades of planning, coordination among utilities, and significant investment in regional infrastructure.

Why This Matters Locally

Subsidence doesn't make headlines the way floods or droughts do, but it quietly increases risk over time. Lower ground elevations affect drainage, worsen flood impacts, strain buried infrastructure, and create long-term maintenance challenges for communities.

By supporting surface water conversion and regional water supply projects, the West Harris County Regional Water Authority is helping protect not just today's water supply, but the ground everything is built on.

A Long-Term Commitment

Subsidence prevention is one of the clearest examples of why water planning must look generations ahead. The choices made today — how water is sourced, how infrastructure is built, and how groundwater use is managed — directly shape the future resilience of West Harris County.

The progress shown in the 2024 data confirms something important: when groundwater use is reduced, subsidence slows. That's not theory. It's measurable, visible, and already happening. ♦

Mobile Teaching Labs Continue Community Outreach

WHCRWA's Mobile Teaching Labs remained active during November and December, participating in three public outreach events that brought hands-on water education directly to the community. The labs were featured at Katy ISD STEAM Night on November 7, 2025, community events hosted by Harris County MUD 374 and MUD 433 on November 15, and Harris County MUD 71's Holiday in the Park on December 13.

Throughout 2024, the Mobile Teaching Labs were utilized by school districts, municipal utility districts, and community events within West Harris County Regional Water Authority boundaries to support water education and outreach efforts. Demand for the Mobile Teaching Labs continues to remain steady, reflecting ongoing interest in interactive, on-site learning opportunities that help connect residents and students with the importance of water resources and conservation.

To learn more or to book a Mobile Teaching Lab for your next school or community event, visit whcrwa.com/labs. ♦

From Focus Group to Volunteers: Industry Professionals Supporting Community Outreach

What began as a focus group formed within the past few years has evolved into a valuable group of volunteers supporting WHCRWA's community outreach efforts.

The volunteers assisting at events are members of the Authority's inaugural focus group, originally convened to provide feedback and perspective. As WHCRWA expanded its presence at community events, many of these same individuals stepped forward to volunteer their time and expertise.

These volunteers are not only community members—they are professionals with direct experience in the water industry. Many serve as board members for Municipal Utility Districts within the Authority's boundaries, and others are operators or professionals who work closely with water systems and infrastructure. Their knowledge and familiarity with regional water issues

allow them to engage meaningfully with the public and support outreach efforts in a credible and informed way.

At community events, volunteers help WHCRWA with outreach booths and displays, assist with educational materials, and support event logistics. Their involvement helps ensure events run smoothly while reinforcing accurate, consistent information about water resources and regional initiatives.

This group has become an important part of WHCRWA's ability to participate in community events. Their willingness to volunteer time and apply their professional experience strengthens outreach efforts and reflects a shared commitment to responsible water management and public education.

What started as a focus group has grown into a dependable group of volunteers who play a meaningful role in helping WHCRWA connect with the communities it serves.

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

Behind the Scenes: People Behind the Progress

Recently, The Texas Network spent time capturing interviews for People Behind the Progress—a video series highlighting the individuals who have helped shape the West Harris County Regional Water Authority over the past 25 years.

The series focuses on firsthand perspectives from board members, consultants, and partners who played key roles in planning and delivering long-term water infrastructure for the region. Their reflections provide context around the decisions, challenges, and milestones that continue to guide WHCRWA's work today.

The People Behind the Progress series will be shared throughout the anniversary year, offering insight into the people whose work continues to support a reliable water supply within the Authority's boundaries.

You can rely on WHCRWA to supply water for today, tomorrow, and generations to come.

whcrwa.com