

SJRA Announces Partnership with Save Water Texas!



For the past two years, as we have been getting prepared to reduce reliance on groundwater by converting to surface water, developing sound conservation and reuse strategies have been at the heart of our efforts. In fact, while there is no single solution to satisfying our long-range water demands, we know that the cheapest source of water is conserving -- water we don't use.

As mandated conversion timetables get closer, the San Jacinto River Authority is stepping up outreach efforts that offer ways to use water more efficiently. As part of this effort, the SJRA has joined forces with www.SaveWaterTexas.com to offer a number of water resource and conversation education programs to provide knowledge and awareness to our communities, with several unique programs designed for children and parents. Many similar water conservation programs have been implemented in Texas cities and have proven effective and cost-efficient.

While each of the state's geographic regions has its own unique water supply and demand conditions, the recent drought served as a 'common denominator'...reinforcing the

critical need for greater public awareness about using this precious natural resource more efficiently. The SJRA has made conservation a priority internally and has made public awareness of water resources practically a portion of its mission statement — a key element of the goals of the organization.

Statewide research on the topic of water conservation revealed that far too many people are unaware of where their water comes from...what it costs...or that they could be wasting water without knowing it. Adults have a hard time understanding and visualizing those ideas - imagine how our young people are literally in the dark about water and all the issues that relate to it. As one element of its multi-faceted program, the SJRA intends to implement programs that help students better understand water resources and how to conserve them.

There are some actions that can demonstrate an almost immediate savings; actions that don't require expensive retrofitting or replacing 'thirsty' appliances. Two of these are irrigation system evaluations and leak detection and repair. If you could stop wast-



ing water and money down the drain with a minimum effort on your part, why wouldn't you do it? First, you have to be aware of the NEED to do this...and then you'll need to learn how this can be done. The easier it is to accomplish, the greater the likelihood that you'll follow through -- the more you know, the more you can do to help.

It is these kinds of considerations that SJRA has been investigating to adopt the approach and methods we will use as part of our water management strategies in the years ahead. Distributing informational leaflets, dedicating portions of our website to conservation issues, and facilitating educational workshops have been offered as a part of the GOAL to raise awareness of the importance of conserving one of our most valuable natural resources. We plan to continue incorporating many more approaches...including ramped up outreach and continued education; incentives to reward efficiency; perhaps initiating policies and procedures designed to end wasteful practices (irrigation overuse, peak usage); incentives for water saving technology; and efforts to achieve long-term behavioral change. The greatest opportunity for this change to occur is to work with young people so that they learn respect and stewardship for our precious water resources before they develop wasteful habits that have been unintentionally, or intentionally, taught throughout their entire lifetime. (See this month's SJRA Kids' Page.)

Many people are not aware that since 2004 the SJRA has co-sponsored, with the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District, a Texas water education program for elementary school children. The program is designed to teach the student and their parents about Texas' major water resources, how water is taken care of, the transportation of water to homes and schools, and conservation. Providing water conservation knowledge to our communities is the first step in changing people's attitudes and bad habits when it comes to the proper utilization of water.

The San Jacinto River Authority intends to do significantly more than pay lip service to water conservation in the months and years ahead. In the process, we will be asking for your support, your cooperation, and your participation in committing to using water more efficiently. We will be updating our website's conservation section as these programs are adopted, and we will include information about our outreach and education programs in our Dock Line articles. Remember YOU are major part of the equation for decreasing our use of water resources... the smallest effort can literally move mountains and insure water for our future. Visit us online at www.sjra.net, and do your part in aiding in the fight to conserve water. ♦



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