

Water Matters

April - July 2023

Drinking Water Week is an annual observance in May sponsored by the American Water Works Association to recognize the critical role drinking water plays in our daily lives and the professionals who work around the clock to ensure their community's supply is safe and plentiful.

Water Needs versus Wants

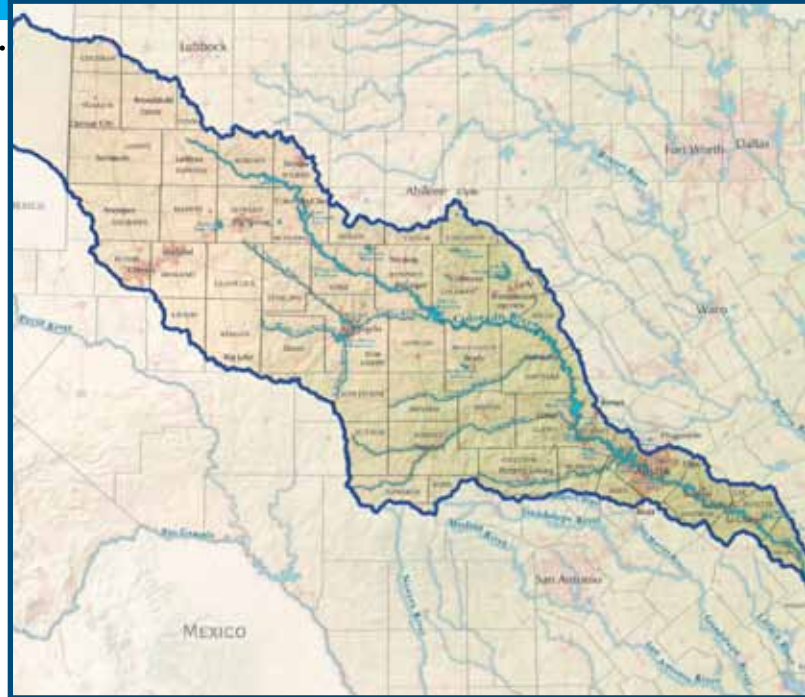
How often do you consider what you actually need versus what you just want? Do you prioritize those needs? What about forgoing your wants to prioritize the needs of others? Our wants definitely make life more enjoyable and convenient, ideally improving our overall quality of life, but there are ways to create a sustainable balance so that needs don't, one day, go unmet.

Our basic needs (required for survival) are food, shelter, some clothing, and of course – water. Water is the most basic of human needs as well as for plants and animals. We can't live without it! For those of us with reliable access to clean drinking water, be thankful it isn't an unmet need.

But, Americans consume more water per person than any other country, averaging 82 gallons of water per day at home according to a recent United States Geological Survey. There are plenty of ways we use the tap water provided to our homes and businesses in ways that do not constitute a "need." The long showers, year-round green grass, a pool, clean cars, and so much more are all wants. There are other ways we indirectly use excess water to fulfill our wants since almost everything takes water to produce – from food to clothing to smartphones and cars. Sustainable water management may not be something you think about on a daily basis, but as a water utility, it's top of mind for us. But the best laid plans can only take us so far without active participation from the masses.

Around the Highland Lakes, we've all seen the lake levels drop. For most water utilities in the area, this water is our only source for raw water; we use it to produce clean drinking water for our customers. Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying, "When the well is dry, we know the worth of water." Does it take this drastic of an event to change our attitude towards this precious resource?

Using water wisely requires a change of habit. You begin by realizing you don't need to take the 10 minute showers every day, or that your lawn won't die when it's watered less fre-



*At over 800 miles long, the Texas Colorado River is one of the longest rivers to start and end in the same state.
Image courtesy: Colorado River Alliance, coloradoriver.org*

quently. You then start thinking, "What other small changes can I make that will create a big impact?" Strategies like quickly fixing leaks, installing drought-resistant landscaping, water-efficient fixtures and appliances, or a rain-barrel for watering plants, and keeping your water footprint in mind when making purchases, can make a big difference when applied by more people.

Water connects us all. Our Highland Lakes are not an independent source for water; they are a part of the Texas Colorado River, an 800 mile long stretch that runs from northwest Texas down to the Gulf of Mexico. Its watershed (the land that drains into the river) makes up about 15 percent of our great state. The good and bad news is that any areas upstream from us impact our lake levels (leading to drought and flooding or anything between). The status of our water supply (it's quality and quantity) can change drastically in a short period of time, but if we remain prepared for all potential outcomes by using water wisely, we'll all be ready for life's next big water challenge.

• Originally published in Lake Travis View, Aug. 2022

COMMUNITY LMUD Presents at LT Elementary Career Day



It's never too early to help kids start thinking about what they want to be when they grow up. While a profession in the water industry may not be top of mind for most elementary-age students, water is something that will always be in high demand and there is a job opportunity for every education level, so we asked Christianne Castleberry, our engineer to present at this year's Lake Travis Elementary Career Day on March 10. Standing in front of five first grade classes, Castleberry described how all life needs water and that we help make it safe for humans and the environment. While all engineers are problem solvers, she said, as a civil engineer specializing in water/wastewater, she helps design the pipelines that bring water to and wastewater away from homes and the systems that treat it. Students asked a lot of great questions like, "how do you make water?" (water is a molecule so we don't make water, we clean it) and comments like, "we need to stop putting oil in the water" (yes, we not only need to conserve water, we need to protect it). •

CAREERS LMUD Operators Go Above & Beyond

With Lake Travis currently sitting about 640 feet above mean sea level (ft msl), about 45 percent full, it seems like a lifetime ago that our area was under a Flash Flood Watch. The flood of October 2018 is recognized by LCRA as the fifth highest level for Lake Travis on record to date, peaking at 704.39 ft msl on Saturday, October 20, 2018, just 10 ft msl short of the Mansfield Dam spillway. In response, LMUD recognized two employees who went above and beyond their job responsibilities to manage LMUD's water quality: Raf Mendoza, water supervisor, and Kyle Wilds II, water operator. While other areas were under a Boil Water Notice due to a rapid high-level increase of debris, silt, and mud requiring additional filtration at a slower pace to effectively treat the water for consumption, LMUD's team was working non-stop to ensure our customers' supply remained safe and readily available. With lake levels rising at a rate of two feet per hour, the water department's primary concern was securing our intake barge where we pull water from Lake Travis for treatment which required checks every hour for a 48 hour period.

"We were just doing our job," Mendoza said. "We needed to stay on top of things, monitoring the lake levels, turbidity levels, and storage tank levels. I credit the whole water department for our success in keeping LMUD customers out of a Boil Water Notice. It really took the whole department to handle this monumental situation. It could have gone real bad, real fast, but each member of our team handled the extra pressure and I was highly pleased with their level of commitment to supply safe and adequate supply of drinking water to LMUD customers."



Sundancer Grill on Lake Travis under water during the historic flood of Oct. 2018. Image Credit: Lake Travis Guide

In another historic weather event, Winter Storm Uri dropped an unprecedented amount of snow on the southeastern United States from February 13 to 17, 2021, causing failed power grids, burst water pipes, and limited travel. At LMUD, all hands were on deck, working tirelessly around the clock to keep water flowing, pipes from bursting, and lift stations from overflowing.

But it's not just in extreme circumstances that water and wastewater operators go above and beyond. When you go to turn on the faucet to fill up a glass of water, or flush the toilet, it's the operators who are helping keep us and our environment safe. This is partially why the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recognizes Water as one of the "16 critical infrastructure sectors" which includes industries that are essential to the way we live and are critically important in emergencies. The Department states, "Safe drinking water is a prerequisite for protecting public health and all human activity. Properly treated wastewater is vital for preventing disease and protecting the environment. Thus, ensuring the supply of drinking water and wastewater treatment and service is essential to modern life and the Nation's economy." •

EVENTS



APRIL 17 Earth Day Preschool Storytime

LMUD will be reading water-themed children's books, providing a coloring activity and songs! 10:30am at the Lake Travis Library.

MAY 5 Lakeway's Heritage Trail Bus Tour

We are honored to have been selected for a Lakeway historic marker installed Feb. 2020 in recognition of our contributions to the development of the City. Residents can visit key Historical Marker sites throughout Lakeway during the bus tours, sponsored by the Lakeway Heritage Commission. Reservations required: lakeway-tx.gov/1171/Heritage-Trail

JUNE 12 – 16 LMUD Open House

Enjoy refreshments while you peruse the available literature and goodies to take home including water-saving information and fun/helpful household tools. Conversation Starters on various water-related topics will be held at 10am and 2pm daily. Visit our website for details and schedule: lakewaymud.org.

JULY 4 Lakeway's Fourth of July Parade

Independence Day is the City of Lakeway's biggest celebration of the year and last year, our float was awarded first place in the "By Land or By Sea Award" category. 8:30am, Lakeway Dr. •

QUICK TIP: CHECKING YOUR POOL FOR LEAKS

Fill a 3 to 5 gallon bucket with pool water and place it on the top step of your pool, making sure the water level is the same both inside and outside the bucket. Mark the water level on the inside and outside of the bucket. Wait 24 to 48 hours, then check the levels. If the pool level is lower than the water level in the bucket, you have a leak. •

Image Credit: bullseyeleak.com

Earth Day

WATER CHALLENGE

Can you guess how much water it takes to do common tasks around the house? It depends on how efficient your appliances are. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGA), on average, each person uses about 80 - 100 gallons of water per day, for indoor home uses, such as:

- TURNING ON THE FAUCET: 1 - 2 gallons per minute
- FLUSHING THE TOILET: 2 - 4 gallons per flush
- TAKING A SHOWER: 2 - 5 gallons per minute
- RUNNING THE DISHWASHER: 6 - 16 gallons per cycle
- DOING THE LAUNDRY: 25 - 40 gallons per load
- FILLING A BATHTUB: 36 gallons on average

Track your water use.

Discover your WaterScore.

About 14 percent of indoor water use in US households is wasted through leaks. It's now possible for LMUD customers to track every drop of water they use and be notified of potential leaks. We challenge you to sign up for WaterSmart and track your water usage. Registration is free and easy! Access your personalized, secure online customer portal from any device (desktop computers, laptops, tablets, or smart phones):

STEP 1: LOG ON

Visit lakewaymudtx.watersmart.com

STEP 2: REGISTER

Enter your account number (listed on your water bill) and your zip code.

STEP 3: PERSONALIZE

Answer a simple profile survey to provide accurate comparisons to similar households.

For more information and helpful videos, visit:
lakewaymud.org/update/watersmart •



"I am, once again, so impressed with the service and assistance Lakeway MUD offers. I've had a handful of engagements with the good people at MUD over the last 6-8 months and without exception every single person I've engaged with has been kind and generous and helpful. It's truly impressive.

- Debbie S.,
RE: Customer Service



Lakeway Municipal Utility District (LMUD), established in 1972, provides water, wastewater and some reuse services to many of the homes and businesses in the City of Lakeway and a portion of the Village of the Hills.

District Office:
1097 Lohmans Crossing
Lakeway, TX 78734

Phone: (512) 261-6222 ext. 110
CustomerService@lakewaymud.org
www.LakewayMUD.org



Updates

ONE-DAY IRRIGATION REMAINS IN EFFECT

During the August 10, 2022 Board of Directors meeting, the LMUD Board approved a motion to switch customers from a two-day to one-day per week irrigation schedule. This effort was in response to ongoing drought to help further limit water use and remains in effect. Irrigation day is based on the last digit of your address. For schedule visit lakewaymud.org/customers/irrigation-schedule.

LMUD BOARD MEETINGS REMAIN OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

We welcome LMUD customers to attend the LMUD Board of Directors meetings, held the second Wednesday of each month, 9:30am at our District Office, 1097 Lohmans Crossing. Agendas and videos after each meeting can be found on our website lakewaymud.org/updates/meetings.

LAST REMAINING ODWW LIFT STATION INSTALL SCHEDULED

LMUD's public sewer expansion project has been underway since May 2019 when the first sewer line extensions began being placed for future connections around the Live Oak Golf Course. The majority of large construction including most main sewer lines extensions have been installed for all of Phase 1 (homes around Live Oak Golf Course) and most of Phase 2 (all other homes in the Project area). The last lift station needed to effectively carry wastewater to the treatment plant is scheduled to be installed over the next few months along the Live Oak Golf Course between holes 15 and 16.

ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT RELEASED IN JUNE

EPA requires community water systems to deliver a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), also known as an annual drinking water quality report, to their customers each year by July 1st. The most

PILOT MADE EMERGENCY LANDING HITTING LMUD LIFT STATION

On the morning of February 12, 2023 a small plane made an emergency landing, gliding into one of the LMUD lift stations near the Lakeway Airpark. The pilot was uninjured and the station remained operational with only cosmetic damages to the surrounding fence and casing for the generator.



recent version of this report is mailed or e-mailed annually to customers upon publication as well as made available on our website and at our office located at 1097 Lohmans Crossing Road throughout the year. LMUD complies with all state and federal water quality standards and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) confirms each year the safety of our drinking water. lakewaymud.org/about-us/about-your-water

80 PERCENT OF LMUD CUSTOMERS HAVE YET TO REGISTER FOR THEIR WATERSMART PORTAL

In November 2022, LMUD launched a WaterSmart portal which allows customers to track their hourly and daily water usage, self-identify and resolve leaks, understand where their water is being used, compare their water use to similar households, and set water use alerts. Customers can register for free with their ac-

count number and zip code at lakewaymudtx.watersmart.com.

WE'RE HIRING

Full-Time Maintenance Worker: No experience required, just the ability to work hard with a good attitude, be a team player, and have a willingness to learn a skilled trade. Responsibilities include the construction, repair, and maintenance of LMUD's water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Positions are full-time, 40 hours per week, with occasional overtime. Starting salary is \$17 to \$20 per hour based on experience plus benefits and available overtime. All work is located in Lakeway, Texas. Must have reliable transportation to and from job. Company vehicle provided while on site with valid driver's license. Must agree to drug free workplace policy and be able to complete strenuous manual labor.

Additional job information and application available at lakewaymud.org/about-us/job-openings or by visiting our District office. •