

Water Matters

Aug.-Nov. 2021

National Water Quality Month (August) is dedicated to making the most of the relatively small amount of fresh water we have, because having clean water is vital to our individual health, our collective agricultural needs, and the needs of our environment.



When Natural Disasters Strike, Be Prepared

For the first time in history, the entire state of Texas was recently placed under a record-setting Winter Storm Warning when a frigid arctic blast gripped much of the U.S. Across the state, thousands of residents suffered hardships due to loss of power, water pressure, and communication (internet and phone) services. Roads were quickly encased in ice, making emergency services slow to respond and personal travel nearly impossible. But hope was found in the hard working professionals going above and beyond to restore these services as well as neighbors helping neighbors: sharing what supplies and services they could offer. Although this extreme, rare storm was unpredictable, what can we do to better prepare ourselves when emergencies arise? As an essential services provider, it is a question we address with our team on a regular basis to help protect our infrastructure, staff, and customers.

"Infrastructure in this part of the country is not built to withstand the extensive periods of below freezing temperature we recently experienced," said Raf Mendoza, LMUD's Water

Department Supervisor. "When we talk about extreme weather, our focus has been withstanding extreme heat, drought, flooding, and wildfires. Rarely do we discuss extreme cold because all predictions indicate our climate is getting warmer, not colder. Thankfully, Lakeway's water infrastructure is fairly new and well-maintained, compared to a lot of systems across the United States, so materials used and regulations followed during the installation process are built to withstand severe weather common in our area."

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Continued inside...

REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS IN THE HOME IGNITION ZONE

INSIDE, PROJECTS AND TASKS THAT INCREASE A HOME'S POTENTIAL SURVIVABILITY IN A WILDFIRE

Limiting the amount of flammable vegetation, choosing ignition resistant building materials and construction techniques; along with regular exterior maintenance in the home ignition zones, increases the chances your home will survive a wildfire.

www.Firewise.org



Use this foldout poster's easy-to-follow checklists to track your wildfire risk reduction accomplishments.



FIREWISE USA™
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

This publication was produced in cooperation with The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the USGS Forest Service, the US Department of the Interior and the National Association of State Fire Chiefs. NFPA is an equal opportunity organization. Firewise USA™ is a program of the National Fire Protection Association.

LMUD customers can pick up a free copy of various LTFR-provided FireWise publications at our District Office: 1097 Lohmans Crossing.

Spotlight! Reducing Wildfire Risks

“ An excellent resource on how to track your wildfire risk reduction accomplishments.

“Not if, but when” is a common stance held by those involved in fire and rescue. Thankfully, wildfires have been a rare occurrence in Lakeway, but with the long, hot summers, any dry vegetation can quickly act as kindling for the smallest spark. Lake Travis Fire Rescue (LTFR) invites local residents to sign up for the free Home Ignition Zone Assessments as part of their Wildfire Readiness Program which, they hope, will help minimize the impact of a wildfire when (not if) one occurs. For information, e-mail wildfire@lfr.org. •

Natural Disasters...cont.

“We've learned, however, that our own preparedness can only take us so far. It's really a continual community effort that helps keep the impact of disasters to a minimum,” said Stephanie Threinen, LMUD's Public Information Liaison. “For a small utility, we publish a lot of information to help educate our customers about maintaining their home's plumbing system because it can greatly impact our ability to continue providing reliable water and wastewater services. For example, putting grease down drains cannot only clog a home's plumbing, but if it reaches our mainlines, can cause a clog that impacts a whole neighborhood! Conservation is also key; all of our raw water comes from Lake Travis and with predicted hotter temperatures and longer periods of drought, there could easily be water shortages.”

Emergency preparedness is something everyone can do to help protect their assets and family. Knowing which threats are more likely in your area during different times of year can help you know how to prepare. For example, in Central Texas severe weather threats typically include:

Extreme heat has the highest weather-related fatality rate. Texas summers are long with highest average temperatures occurring in July and August, often reaching 100 degrees Fahrenheit for several days in a row.

Flooding is common near rivers and low-lying areas. In fact, some meteorologists proclaim Austin and the outlying Hill Country as “Flash Flood Alley,” the worst area in the country for intense flooding. The wettest months of the year are April and May with average annual precipitation ranging from 21 to 35 inches.

Drought in Texas is much more likely during La Niña. La Niña, or the cooling of South Pacific Ocean water temperatures, translates to warmer, drier atmospheric conditions for much of the South that peak through fall and winter seasons. Because of these dry conditions,



View from Apache Shores of the 2011 wildfire that broke out in Steiner Ranch. Photo courtesy Anna Culina.

much of western Austin and Travis County are at high risk for wildfire. Lake levels can also quickly drop with too little precipitation to replenish them.

Thunderstorms can bring dangerous lightning and damaging hail. These storms can happen any time of year, but are most common in the spring.

Tornados are possible, but not common. “Tornado Alley” stops short of Central Texas. The most likely time to see a tornado in Texas is March, April, and May.

The old Lone Star adage, “If you don't like the weather, just wait a day, it will change” rings true, but as we recently experienced, the aftereffects of a few short days can last a much longer time. Stay prepared, neighbors and plan ahead! •

Originally written by LMUD for Lake Travis View, published February 2021

CONSIDER THIS:

Since stormwater is not treated, it can pick up and carry pollutants into our waterways. Many of these pollutants can cause problems in very small amounts. Polluted stormwater runoff is often considered a non-point source pollutant, meaning that it comes from such varied and widespread sources across the landscape that it is difficult to identify where the pollution starts.

Storm Drains:

Untreated Runoff

Stormwater and irrigation runoff carry pollution through the storm drain system to our waterways untreated.

Sewer System:

Treated Wastewater

The sanitary sewer system treats wastewater from sinks, showers, and toilets but does not clean stormwater or runoff.



LMUD manages wastewater; City of Lakeway manages storm drains. Image Credit: Galveston County Health District

FACT:

Even though water makes up over 70% of Earth's surface area, the total amount of freshwater found on Earth only makes up around 3% of the water supply, 1% of which is easily accessible. This 1% accounts for all of our lakes, rivers, groundwater, aquifers, and streams.

8 THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME TO PROTECT YOUR WATER

- ✓ **Wash your car at a car wash:** Even though it might cost more than washing your car at home, taking your car to a car wash saves water and prevents toxic chemicals from being flushed down your storm drains that eventually empty into our lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans. Professional car washes are legally required to drain into sewer systems so that the water can be treated before being re-used.
- ✓ **Pick up after your pet:** Animal waste is full of nitrogen which can remove oxygen from the water leaving it completely unusable for aquatic life.
- ✓ **Don't hose down your driveway:** use a broom.
- ✓ **Don't use fertilizer made with phosphorus:** After heavy rain-fall or watering, these chemicals can leak into nearby groundwater sources. Try using organic materials or waiting for drier weather if you absolutely need to use lawn care products.
- ✓ **Do not flush expired or unwanted medication down the toilet:** These products have toxic chemicals that should not be flushed down the drain.
- ✓ **Properly dispose of used oil or antifreeze** by taking it to a service station or recycling center.
- ✓ **Avoid using antibacterial soaps or cleaning products** in your drain as they are also toxic to marine life.
- ✓ **Use a rain barrel to collect rainwater:** Installing a rain barrel will not only save you money, but can also be used for watering your lawn or washing your car.

For more information on National Water Quality Month, visit nationalwaterqualitymonth.org.





To everyone at LMUD who spent many hours making sure water was available or being restored to all of us during the terrible weather. Thank you for risking your own safety for all of us to be able to stay at home safely.
 – Dennis and Patt,
 RE: Feb. Winter Storm

Thank you for your patience with all our questions and always getting us answers. All the work you've done this year to communicate the what, when, how, and why has truly been appreciated.
 – Frances,
 RE: ODWW Project

I appreciate you taking the time to break down the costs on a line by line basis... as usual you went the extra mile and gave a detailed breakdown.
 – Dave B.,
 RE: Clarification on rates

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 78738

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

Updates



Our Out of District Wastewater (ODWW) Project, bringing public sewer access to the first 17 sections of Lakeway is fully underway. Last summer, heavy equipment could be seen at the Lakeway Swim Center as a sewer line was extended down the Lakeway Airpark airstrip, across Lakeway Blvd., to a wastewater treatment plant on Highlands Blvd.

Information on the ODWW Project can be found at lakewaymud.org/odww-project.

LMUD APPROVES SELF INSTALLS FOR ODWW PROJECT

In response to a rapid influx of requests for an Early Connection to the Lakeway Municipal Utility District (LMUD) public sewer system from eligible property owners, and in an effort to increase the availability of approved connection requests within a specified time frame, LMUD approved the option of performing Self-installs of a grinder pump system. Approval is based on the feasibility of completing any required main line extensions within the property owner's desired time frame. For property owners choosing an LMUD-install, an anticipated connection date based on the current project schedule will be provided at the time of approval, however this date is not guaranteed and will be adjusted based on factors such as weather, supply availability, urgency of need, and other potential project delays. More information is available at lakewaymud.org/odww-project.

81 ACRE LAND SALE TO LEGEND COMMUNITIES PENDING

HSD – Lakeway Holdings, LLC exercised their first extensions in March 2017; extension fees are in addition to and not applicable to the closing or sales price. Parcel 1 closed in April 2021. The next closing, on Parcel 2, is scheduled for January 2022. The last parcel is scheduled for closing

in September 2022. For updates and a timeline of events, visit lakewaymud.org/update/timeline-of-lmud-land-sale-of-81-acres

2020 WATER QUALITY REPORT RELEASED IN JUNE

Public water systems, like LMUD, are required to follow strict standards and submit regular reporting to local and federal authorities. Most public water systems, including LMUD, treat water above these standards. Each summer, by federal and state laws, public water systems are required to develop a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) and distribute it to their customers. This annual water quality report provides residents information about the quality of their tap water. It includes information about the source of their water (ie: rivers, lakes, reservoirs, or aquifers), chemical contaminants, bacteriological contaminants, and



more. A copy of this report was enclosed with our customer's bill in June. To view the report, visit lakewaymud.org/about-us/about-your-water.

AMI METER PILOT STUDY CONTINUES

We are currently in the process of improving our water meter reading system. The pilot study, initiated in July 2020, is testing the advantages of Advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) water meters: high-tech water meters with capabilities beyond what our current automated meter reading (AMR) water meters can offer our staff and customers. Unlike AMR meters, which we read every two months, AMI meter are continually read, opening up the possibility of detecting leaks earlier and getting feedback to customers on their water usage sooner. We are studying the new meters for their accuracy, reliability, and depth of available real-time data. Once the study's findings are presented to and approved by the board, we will move ahead with fully implementing the system by hiring subcontractors to change out the remaining meters throughout our service area. •

Do you know your irrigation schedule?
 VISIT:
lakewaymud.org/customers/irrigation-schedule