



Volume 24

June 2019

No. 6

## THE RISING COST OF WATER

*From: North Harris County Regional Water Authority (NHCRWA) Brochure*

Residents may remember that we had an increase in our water bills in April 2018 (please refer to Willow Talk issues: July 2018-front page and September 2018-page 5 for how to calculate your bill). This article contains excerpts from a brochure titled: WHY DOES THE COST OF WATER KEEP GOING UP? printed 02/2019 and included in your MUD bill, prior to April 1, 2018. Based on the success of their initial effort, the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD) was created by the Texas Legislature in 1975 to study and control subsidence in Harris and Galveston counties. The District issued a regulatory plan requiring industries on the Houston Ship Channel to convert from groundwater to surface water. The results were dramatic – subsidence in the Baytown-Pasadena area was dramatically improved, and has since been largely halted.

**Groundwater Reduction Regulations for NW Harris County** The combination of subsidence in northwest Harris County and evidence that aquifers were beginning serious decline confirmed the need to convert to surface water. Based on the success of their initial effort, the HGSD took a similar approach in north and west Harris County.

The first phase of the District's mandate was completed in 2010, which reduced reliance on groundwater by 30%. The next deadline is 2025 – requiring 60% conversion to alternative (or surface) water.

Back in the 1950's some visionary Houston officials understood that achieving the city's future economic potential hinged on securing the rights to nearby surface water resources. Their foresight led to the construction of three man-made lakes as water storage reservoirs – Lake Houston, Lake Livingston and Lake Conroe – fed by the San Jacinto and Trinity Rivers.

Fortunately, the Houston region can now rely on the surface water resources secured all those years ago. There are still some hurdles ahead, however, because there is not enough water in the San Jacinto River system to meet our 2025 needs and beyond.

### **Where will these future supplies come from?**

Since its creation in 2000, the NHCRWA has complied

with the HGSD groundwater reduction mandates. It is also responsible for building the water infrastructure to deliver treated water to the municipal utility districts (MUDs) to serve hundreds of thousands of residents...and that's no small task. The current challenge is to complete the planning and engineering stage of the multi-pronged 2025 conversion system.

A new alliance of regional water providers has teamed up to initiate the Luce Bayou Interbasin Transfer Project with the capacity to bring raw water from the Trinity River to Lake Houston and the City's Northeast Water Purification Plant. The partners include the City of Houston; the North, West and Central Harris County Regional Water Authorities; the North Fort Bend Water Authority; and the Coastal Water Authority.

Construction of the 90-acre Capers Ridge Pump Station on the Trinity River's west bank is underway. When fully functional, it will be able to divert up to 500 million gallons of water a day from the Trinity River and pump it into side-by-side underground pipelines. The water will flow through these huge waterlines to a storage and sedimentation basin, and then into a canal that runs to the northeastern tip of Lake Houston.

In anticipation of more raw water coming into the Lake Houston reservoir, regional water authorities and the City of Houston forged a partnership to accomplish an expansion of the Northeast Water Purification Plant with each paying its fair share of the costs. This multi-billion dollar project – to be completed in phases over the next 6 to 9 years – will increase the treatment capacity from the current 80 million gallons a day to 400 gallons a day.

In addition to the cost of purchasing the surface water from the City of Houston, there are shared transmission, operations and maintenance expenses to be paid. All of these factors – coupled with the cost of constructing the NHCRWA's 2025 water supply system – will impact the future cost of water.

### **How will we pay for our future water resources?**

The NHCRWA was not given taxing authority when it was

*(Continued on Page 3)*

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## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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Harris County Flood Control.....	713-684-4000
Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) .....	713-221-6000
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Poison Control Center .....	800-222-1222
Reliant/NRG.....	713-207-7777
Trash - Best Trash .....	281-313-2378
Vacation Watch (to place) - HCSO Pct. 4 .....	281-290-2100
W. Harris County MUD #11 .....	281-807-9500
(Tops Water Management)	
Willow Place Post Office .....	281-890-2392

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2825 Wilcrest Dr., #600 Houston, Tx. 77042

*If you have any questions or comments regarding the neighborhood please contact the numbers above.*

## BOARD MEETINGS

**QUARTERLY MEETINGS:** 4th Thursday of January, April & July @ 6:00 pm. **ANNUAL HOMEOWNER'S MEETING:** 4th Thursday of October @ 6:00 pm. Additional meetings may be held as determined and NOTICED by the Board of Directors via the marquee and website.

## HARRIS COUNTY ROAD AND BRIDGE

To report street or curb damage, missing/damaged street signs and street flooding: (281) 353-8424 or [www.hcp4.net](http://www.hcp4.net).

If a resident wants to request a new sign or replace a damaged one, they have to go online and fill out a request.

## STREET LIGHT OUT?

If you notice a street light out PLEASE report it to CenterPoint Energy. We pay for all of the street lights in our subdivision... every month...regardless if they are illuminated or not!! This is also a serious safety issue. To report an outage, follow these steps:

- By Phone: During normal business hours (7 am – 7 pm)
- Call (713) 207-2222
  - Give the Customer Service Representative the 6 digit pole number (located approximately 6 feet up the pole), the street name and closest address.
  - Online (anytime): [centerpointenergy.com](http://centerpointenergy.com)

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Newsletter Article submission Deadline is 3rd of each month. Please give a 2 month advance notice.

[willowbridgenews@gmail.com](mailto:willowbridgenews@gmail.com)

(Continued from Cover)

created by the State Legislature. Instead of taxes, fees are charged for groundwater pumped by the utility districts and their customers within the NHCRWA's boundaries. They are also charged for delivery of surface water. These fees are collected to pay back the bonds and State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) funds incurred by the Authority for the costs of the infrastructure and operating costs.

While the Authority has pledged to keep the fees as low as possible, for as long as possible, we know the cost of water will continue to go up in the future. Here are the new rates, effective April 1, 2019: Groundwater - \$3.85/1000 gallons\* Surface water - \$4.30/1000 gallons

The NHCRWA invites you to visit [www.nhcrwa.com](http://www.nhcrwa.com) and watch their new video presentation. If you did not receive the brochure regarding the increase please visit their website or call 281.440.3924.

*\*Please remember that the increase in your West Harris County MUD #11 bill is TOTALLY contributable to the increase in fees by the NHCRWA, not an increase in our water or sewer rates.*

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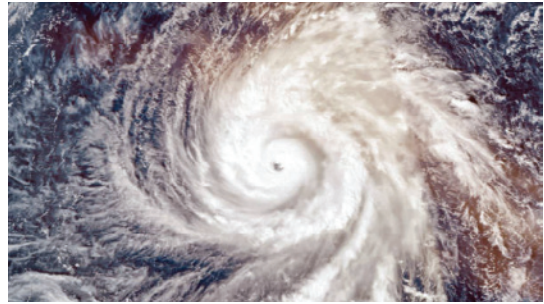
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## HURRICANE SEASON 2019



### What's in a Name?

The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season begins June 1, peaks on September 10th and ends November 30th. The season is expected to be slightly above average, but less active than last year. This doesn't necessarily mean it will be less dangerous, according to an outlook released by The Weather Company, an IBM business. A total of 14 named storms, seven hurricanes and three major hurricanes are expected this season which is slightly above the 30-year average of 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes. The past two hurricane seasons have been particularly destructive. In 2017, seven named storms impacted the U.S. Who can forget Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, which battered Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, respectively? In 2018, four named storms impacted the U.S. coast, most notably hurricanes Florence and Michael within a month of each other. In the past three seasons, eight hurricanes were so destructive and/or deadly their names were retired from further use by the World Meteorological Organization. Each year a new set of hurricane names is developed, and most years, 21 new ones are on tap and ready to be put to use. But, every six years, the names cycle back around and get reused (which is the case in 2019). If a hurricane does tremendous damage, such as Katrina, Sandy, or Harvey (Florence and Michael are now added to the list of retired names), the name is retired and replaced by a different name beginning with the same letter.

Bottom line: It's impossible to know for certain if a U.S. hurricane strike, or multiple strikes, will occur this season. Keep in mind, however, that even a weak tropical storm hitting the U.S. can cause major impacts, particularly if it moves slowly and produces flooding rainfall.

*Top 10 hurricane names for 2019: Andrea, Barry, Chantal, Dorian, Erin, Fernand, Gabrielle, Humberto, Imelda & Jerry.*



# Willowbridge - Stonebridge

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## GUTTER CLUTTER (AKA STORM DRAIN TRASH)

*- An ARC Violation Article -*



As a homeowner, **it is your responsibility to keep the curbs and drains bounding your property**, clean and uncluttered. Adhering to this process will aid the drains in doing their job more efficiently and certainly make our entire properties look better! At this time of year, this problem is compounded by many trees losing their leaves and the wind blowing them into the street gutters along the curbs. If dirt has accumulated in the cracks, allowing grass and tree seedlings to grow where the street meets the curb, it tends to create a damming effect and the water drains much slower than it should, especially when the debris begins to pile up against the “dam”. Please be a responsible homeowner (or tenant) and keep our curbs and drains clean.

Some of the things spotted along the curbs and piled on top of the storm drain grates (not everyone has these right by their house so it should be a shared responsibility by everyone on the block); leaves & branches; beer cans & bottles; small plastic wine bottles; juice boxes & bottles (cardboard, plastic & foil); drink cups; partially eaten take-out meals in paper bags (with & without ants); tennis, soccer & other rubber balls; paper & plastic bags; bottle caps; newspaper; firework's debris; balloons; broken glass; cigarette butts (lots of them) & cigarette packages; cigar plastic tips; banana peels; dirty diapers; nuts, bolts & screws; tar paper & shingle remnants; money (coins & currency-in a bank bag without the owner's name, but with a little detective work was returned to the pizza delivery person that lost it); and the strangest thing ever....a ferret hiding in the drain (actually sniffed out by my dog) and returned to owner.

Also, please remember that you are responsible if your contractor(s) don't clean up after themselves. This includes your curbs, storm drains (grates), sidewalks and common areas adjoining your bounded property,

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## THE FLOOD ZONE: FLOODING DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN ON THE COAST

*By: Assurant*

### 10 WAYS TO BE PREPARED

1. Maintain a flood insurance policy.
2. Review your policy to become familiar with what is covered and to make sure your limits are adequate.
3. Itemize and photograph possessions.
4. Save your flood insurance agent's contact information in your phone.
5. Make an emergency kit and include a spare cellphone charging cord.
6. Keep important papers in a safe, watertight, portable container.
7. Plan an evacuation route.
8. Have a phone plan worked out with family members.
9. Have a place to meet in case you get separated.
10. Have a plan for any pets, too.

## THE SCHOOL ZONE CY-FAIR ISD'S \$1.76 BILLION BOND PASSES GO!

Community Message from the Superintendent – May 6, 2019

Dear CFISD community,

I was so proud to see that more than 15,000 voters came out to make their voices heard over the past two weeks in the 2019 CFISD Bond Election. The \$1.76 billion referendum PASSED with a 70% approval mark, and will address instructional and support facilities; safety and security enhancements; transportation; technology; and facilities renovations and additions through the year 2025.

I appreciate the overwhelming support for CFISD. My commitment to our community is that we will continue to be good stewards of your trust as we move forward with the bond program. We will continue to update the district on the progress of bond projects on our website ([www.cfisd.net/bond](http://www.cfisd.net/bond)) and social media channels (#CFISDbond).

Voting is a necessary component of a successful democracy, and it delighted me to see so many of you sharing your voting selfies and stickers on social media throughout the last two weeks. Thank you for being a key part of the CFISD community that I am proud to call my home.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

**Listed below are the major new construction projects that will be funded by the bonds:**

1. Elementary School No. 59
2. Middle School No. 20
3. A District Wide Performing Arts Center
4. New Instructional Support Center (replacing current location Jones Rd. at Fallbrook Dr.)

**Total Bond Package breakdown:**

1. Facilities: Renovations & Additions - \$968,991,531 million
2. Instructional & Support Facilities - \$258,208,345 million
3. Technology - \$238,980,763 million
4. Safety & Security - \$207,656,706 million
5. Transportation - \$88,162,655 million

The newest projected tax increase to homeowner's in the district is \$.03 in 2025, amounting to approximately a \$52.50 increase in a home valued at \$250,000, with a Homestead Exemption. Homeowners over 65 that have additional exemptions will not be affected by the increase.

For more information about how the proposed bond can affect your taxes: [www.cfisd.net/bond](http://www.cfisd.net/bond)

## MUD UPDATE

Why do we need a car wash at a very busy intersection (Quick Quack @ West Rd. and Bridge Park Dr.)? Even better....why another hotel (or 2) on West Rd.? We don't; however, if the prospective business meets the MUD requirements and the MUD has the capacity to furnish the water and sewer service they, by law, can't deny the business.

Here's the latest on what's happening on West Rd.

1. Starbucks – was scheduled to open in late May
2. Quick Quack Carwash – Under construction
3. TownePlace Suites by Marriott – West Rd. at Gessner – construction has started (95 rooms & a large, nice restaurant)
4. Econolodge – West Rd. on strip of land between Palace Inn and Exxon convenience/gas store
5. Small retail space behind the Texaco at West Rd. and Beltway 8 – Proposed
6. Harris County Sheriff's Contract - Renewed

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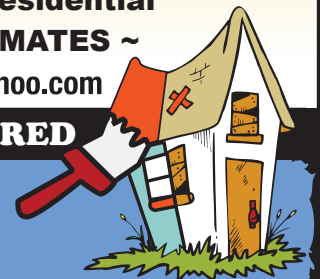
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## PET PLACE ESTATE PLANNING & PETS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

*By: Tripp Carter – Bradshaw Carter Memorial and Funeral Services*

The concept of legally transferring pet ownership should the pet's primary caretaker pass away or become physically incapable of caring for their animals is relatively new. The wildly publicized story of Leona Helmsley's "richest dog in the world" raised global awareness of the possibility of estate planning for pets. The truth is that estate planning for pets is not something that people frequently consider. Although pets are legally classified as property, to their owners, they are valued and loved members of the family. Attorneys that specialize in estate law can assist pet owners in creating a pet trust. This is a legally sanctioned agreement that ensures that the pet is cared for in the event of your disability or death. The trust not only delegates legal ownership of a pet to a specific person, it also generally includes a monetary amount to be used for food, veterinary costs and boarding. The trust also lists any other pertinent information for your animal's wellbeing, such as any known allergies, phobias, socialization, grooming, and how you want the pet's remains to be handled when they pass. Unfortunately, simple, verbal agreements between friends and family members are sometimes not honored. As a result, domestic pets are either abandoned or condemned to a life without love.

### **The Importance of a Pet Trust**

Essentially, when planning the estate of a pet owner, there are three legal documents to consider. The first is the will, which is valid after the pet owner's death. A will's primary purpose is to distribute property, including pets. A pet trust specifies a trustee by the trust's settlor. A pet protection agreement has fewer formalities than a stand-alone pet trust. It is a less expensive option that also allows the pet owner to establish continuing care for their companion. The trustee is solely responsible for making suitable arrangements for the care of the pet. Trustees can either be a friend or relative of the settlor, or they can be a professional trustee or corporation. The trustee also delivers the pet to the settlor's beneficiary, who becomes the pet's designated caregiver. There are two types of pet trusts: traditional and statutory. Traditional pet trusts are legally recognized in all states, while statutory pet trusts are only effective in 40 states. Traditional trusts are more expensive to draft, and are more complex. They leave more detailed care instructions for the beneficiary.

### **Do Your Homework**

Sadly, while funds can be allocated for the care of the pet, the beneficiary is under no legal obligation to use the money for that purpose. For this reason, thoroughly considering whom you are entrusting your loved one to is crucial. Contemplate a person's willingness to assume the responsibilities involved in caring for an animal. I would strongly recommend naming at least two other alternates in case your first choice is either unwilling or unable to serve as the pet's caregiver.



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