

National Drinking Water Week Starts Next Week

Home and Business Owners Can Make a Positive Impact in Protecting a Water Supply

National Drinking Water Week is being celebrated throughout the country May 6-12. This year's theme, "Protect the Source," challenges cities, water companies and water consumers alike to take responsibility in caring for their tap water and protecting it at its source.



"When we get to know our local drinking water sources, we come to understand that it is our duty as consumers and community stewards to protect and preserve them," said Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District General Manager George Wissmann. "Drinking Water Week provides a great opportunity to learn the various ways in which we can each protect our source water so it's available for future generations as it is for us today."

For more than 40 years, the country has celebrated Drinking Water Week, a unique opportunity for both water professionals and the communities they serve to join together in recognizing the vital role water plays in daily lives.

"In San Antonio, we are fortunate to have two very unique aquifers, the Edwards Aquifer and the Trinity Aquifer," Wissmann noted. "While most people have heard of the Edwards Aquifer, the Trinity Aquifer is the lesser known of the two. The Trinity is a massive aquifer that covers a large area in Texas. The Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District is charged with overseeing the preservation of a portion of that aquifer that is located in northern Bexar County, north of Loop 1604, spanning from the Helotes area on the west to near I-35 on the east. And while the Trinity Aquifer doesn't supply all of the water in this area, it does provide about eight billion gallons of water to homes and businesses each year."

Continue on the next page...

National Drinking Water Week - Continued

Both the Edwards and Trinity Aquifers are sources of “groundwater.” Surface water comes from lakes and rivers. Groundwater is found in the spaces between particles and cracks in underground rock in formations known as aquifers. Even though it is out of sight, groundwater should not be far out of mind. In Texas, groundwater provides 62% of all freshwater used, supplies 75% of the water used by agriculture, and is a source of drinking water (from both public and private wells) for over 11.14 million Texans. Additionally, 50 percent of the people in the United States rely on groundwater for its drinking supplies, including almost everyone living in rural areas.

Because groundwater starts off as surface water after a rainfall, there are many ways a groundwater source can be contaminated. For example, any trash, chemicals, oils, detergents and fertilizers we use outside at our homes or businesses can run into the storm drain system and percolate into an aquifer. Most people don’t know that storm drains connect to creeks and rivers rather than the sewer system. So any of those harmful materials we use outside can be washed into a storm drain by a heavy rain and wind up contaminating a creek. The same goes for pet waste. Not picking up after your dogs is not helpful to the community’s environment.

“The State of Texas monitors groundwater contamination issues, and in 2016 alone, there were 3,444 cases investigated,” Wissmann explained. “Most of issues were found near large cities. That statistic definitely points to why it is so important that each of us takes responsibility for knowing about our water supply and also in doing smart things to protect it.” 💧

How You Can Help Protect Our Water

- **Dispose of chemicals properly.**
 - **Take used motor oil to a recycling center.**
 - **Limit the amount of fertilizer and pesticides used.**
 - **Take shorter showers.**
 - **Shut off water while brushing teeth.**
 - **Run full loads of dishes and laundry.**
 - **Check for leaky faucets and have them fixed.**
 - **Water plants only when necessary.**
 - **Get involved in your community’s land and water use planning decisions.**
 - **Properly dispose of pharmaceutical products. Find out if your city or pharmacy has established programs for disposal of expired medications and other pharmaceuticals.**
 - **If you have a private well, it is your responsibility to protect and maintain it.**
- Water wells should be sampled and tested at least once a year to help ensure safe water consumption.**

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Did you know...

Texans served by a municipal water utility use about 1.2 billion gallons of drinking water from groundwater sources each day. Also, more than 2.2 million Texans obtain water from their own water wells.