



WATER YOU USE IS TAKEN AWAY FROM THE GROUND UNDER YOUR FEET.

Every County currently uses more water each year than is being put back into the aquifer. About 4.5 million gallons too much. And, that number is growing each year.

THE PROBLEM?

Using water faster than the Gulf Coast aquifer can be replenished, or refilled. Years of overpumping and overuse have not only reduced our water supply, but have caused structural damage to the Gulf Coast Aquifer and subsidence above it.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOU?

Overuse of the Gulf Coast Aquifer increases how much you pay for water. Pumps operate less efficiently, producing less water, so eventually more wells must be drilled. More wells means more pumping, which further strains the aquifer and greatly decreases water quality. A more serious problem is the potential for subsidence, the gradual caving in or sinking of land above the aquifer. Subsidence occurs when large amounts of groundwater are pumped from the soil.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OVERPUMPING THE GULF COAST AQUIFER

- Speeds up subsidence, which causes flooding and destroys land, roads, neighborhoods and ultimately, the aquifer itself.
- Decreases pump efficiency, which increases the cost of producing water.
- Reduces sand saturation, further limiting the availability of usable groundwater.
- Increases potential for higher levels of arsenic and radioactive contaminants (radionuclides) in our water.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

Extreme water loss and subsidence are already occurring in Texas, causing flooding and structural damage due to the changes in groundwater levels. Not only that, but we are expected to exceed the Gulf Coast Aquifer's recharge rate by 20 percent by 2010 and 140 percent by the year 2040. Conserving now is the only way to meet our water needs for the future.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

When gasoline topped \$4 per gallon, people used less by changing their driving habits. Likewise, we shouldn't wait for rising water costs to change our usage habits. Only about half the water we use is essential – for drinking, cooking and bathing. The rest is used on our lawns or wasted. Using just 15 percent less water can delay the county's investment in new water supplies by as much as 10 years. The result: savings of over \$150 million.



HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Every day is a chance to save water. Little changes to your daily routine can go a long way to saving the Gulf Coast Aquifer, our groundwater resource.

• CLEAN YOUR TEETH. NOT YOUR SINK.

Turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth saves 6 gallons of water a day.

• LATHER. RINSE. DON'T REPEAT.

Cutting just five minutes from your shower saves 12 gallons of water a day.

• GET ON A SMART SCHEDULE.

Never water your lawn during the heat of the day when most of the water evaporates. Watering early or late saves 25 gallons a day.

• ONE SLOW DRIP.

Check for leaks in faucets, pipes and sprinkler systems. A drip can waste thousands of gallons a year.

• SWEEP IT, DON'T HOSE IT.

Sweep your driveway and sidewalks with a broom instead of spraying with a hose. You'll save 150 gallons a day.

Learn more water-saving tips at WaterIQ.org.