

## LONE STAR GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT-PART 2: SJRA

In the last article on LSGCD, we discussed the evolution of the LSGCD proposed project to replace ground water use in Montgomery County with treated surface water from Lake Conroe. This article will describe current activities by San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) to continue development of a ground water to surface water conversion project in Montgomery County.

SJRA is empowered with authority to issue bonds to pay for this proposed ground water conversion project. In order to determine actual demand by large water suppliers and the scope of final project, SJRA has developed a document titled: “Agreement for Joint Development of Water Resources Assessment Plan” or WRAP. The WRAP has been established to continue developing a county wide plan for the conversion from ground water to surface water in Montgomery County.

This WRAP study has been offered to all large water users in Montgomery County for participation at a designated *initial* cost of \$3,000 to \$9,000 depending on projected 2008 water demand.

There is currently no SJRA projection on future costs to be charged to water districts like MUD 8 for future development or capital costs. Although large water suppliers (MUD’s) can opt out of the WRAP, they must be able to locate an alternate supply of surface water and/or demonstrate they can meet mandated reductions in ground water usage by LSGCD. There is no assurance that LSGCD will not impose greater than 30 percent reductions in ground water usage in the future. There are also not very many alternatives for surface water available to large water suppliers in Montgomery County, so it is likely that most water districts will need to join the WRAP and participate in the SJRA surface water treatment facilities.

Timing on completion of this planning phase of the project is uncertain but is expected to be sometime in 2009. **The bottom line is that water is going to become much more expensive in Montgomery County in the very near future.** How expensive? Using numbers from the May, 2008 LSGCD report Table 56, page 89, and the same type of *progressive rate schedule* used by MUD 8 in 2008, **we can “guess”** the possible impact, water only, for a 40,000 gallon per month MUD 8 consumer in future dollars.

**Table 1**

Projected 40,000 gallon monthly bill in future dollars for years shown.

**Does not include 25-30% rate recovery for lost water sales due to conservation or LSGCD mandate.**

2008	2009	2015	2035	2045	2055
\$59.95	\$127.75	\$155.16	\$427.82	695.03	\$1,015.00

Remember, these are projections before completion of WRAP work and may change. Hopefully, the WRAP work will lower projected capital investment and operating cost to more manageable levels. Projections in Table 1 are pretty grim and emphasize the need for all of us to conserve water. Because Montgomery County currently uses significant volumes of potable water for irrigation, we need to get smarter about alternative irrigation methods to help us meet the groundwater reduction goals and potentially reduce the cost of converting to surface water.

The next article will discuss changing irrigation methods to save ground water and your money.

*Data and information included herein has been assembled to the best of MUD 8 ability and is believed to be correct. MUD 8 and Staff assume no responsibility or liability for the use of this information by party or parties outside of the direct supervision of MUD 8 and Staff.*