

# Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District  
Date: November 14, 2005  
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### FILLING PONDS A WASTEFUL PRACTICE

La Grange, Texas—

In recent weeks, the Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District has received numerous reports of people running their pumps continuously for long periods of time to fill or top off a pond. It has even been reported that some local realtors are building and filling ponds with groundwater in order to make the properties more attractive for sale. A lot of property in Fayette County is being bought up by people from large cities like Houston, who aren't accustomed to thinking about where their water comes from.

The District wants to remind everyone that the use of groundwater to fill a surface reservoir, such as fish or recreational ponds, is a wasteful practice. The District has adopted a rule that defines waste as the "supply of groundwater to a surface reservoir of any nature (stock tank, lake, vanity pond, or other confinement) which has a capacity greater than 50,000 gallons..." One reason for this rule is that there is a tremendous loss of water due to evaporation and pond leakage or seepage. That water is generally not recoverable, as there is very little recharge to the aquifers within Fayette County. A pond can easily lose 1/4 inch per day to evaporation alone. For a one acre pond, that equates to a rate of roughly 6,800 gallons lost per day, nearly 2 1/2 million gallons, or 7 1/2 acre feet, per year. One acre foot of water can easily supply a family of four for an entire year.

This District was created by the State and confirmed by the people of Fayette County as a governmental agency to provide for conserving, preserving, protecting, and recharging the underground water, and the prevention of waste of groundwater. Groundwater is our most precious natural resource. The District has found that most of the people in Fayette County are equally conservation-minded. The people who make their living on and from the land understand perhaps better than anyone else the thin line between environment and economics. They understand that if you take, without putting back, the resource is destroyed – and everyone suffers. Once people understand the potentially damaging effects of this practice, most are willing to try other alternatives. The most efficient alternative for watering livestock and wildlife, for example, is the use of troughs with floats that trigger automatic shut-off valves.

District rules also provide that, if such pumping causes a detrimental effect on existing groundwater or on a neighboring well, the offender may be held financially liable for any damages. With the current long term drought conditions in Fayette County, many of the shallow wells are especially vulnerable to over-pumping from a nearby well. Although the recent rains helped, the drought level is still considered "moderate", which means the area still needs another 12 to 15 inches of rain to ameliorate the drought. Fayette County normally averages only 35-38 inches of rainfall per year.

For more information or questions on this or any other topic, please contact the District office at (979) 968-3135 or stop by the office in the Fayette County Agricultural Building at 254 North Jefferson, Room 600, in La Grange. You may also visit the District's website at [www.fayettecountygndwater.com](http://www.fayettecountygndwater.com).

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**SOURCE: FAYETTE COUNTY GCD**