



Heartbeat of the Hickory

District Activities

The District recently entered into a contract with D.B. Stephens and Associates for that entity to conduct an availability study of the area. Utilizing high tech computer software, hundred of well logs, and plain old good science, D. B. Stephens will be able to give a better depiction of how much groundwater actually exists within the District. The study will take about six months to complete.

In other news, if you've attempted to access our website recently, you might have noticed it's currently under "re-construction." Texas Water Development previously hosted the site but due to cuts, they are no longer able to provide this

service. We're currently in the process of moving files and re-designing the site.

In the next week, we will be sending out reminder letters to all permit holders who did not complete water use reports for 2007. The deadline for these forms was March 15. These reports are for permitted wells only—that is, those wells which have received a permit through the District for irrigation, municipal, industrial or other large use. If you have a domestic or livestock well, you are NOT required to complete these forms.

Once again the District is inviting interested high school aged students to ap-

ply for the Texas Water Camp scholarship. The District pays the tuition for two students to attend the 5-day camp held in Monahans, Texas. This year's camp is scheduled for July 13-17. The objective of this event is to help older youth appreciate and understand the current water issues facing the State of Texas and implications of agricultural, industrial, municipal and home water use on water quality and quantity. The camp features field trips, tours, and hands-on project work. An student interested in attending this camp should contact the District office for an application. Entrants will be chosen by the Board of Directors based on a short essay.

Learn a Little

According to 2005 United States Geological Survey (USGS) figures, groundwater provides an estimated:

- * 22% of all freshwater withdrawals
- * 37% of agricultural use (mostly for irrigation)
- * 37% of the public water supply withdrawals
- * 51% of all drinking water for the total population
- * 99% of drinking water for the rural population

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Hickory UWCD No. 1
P.O. Box 1214
111 East Main Street
Brady, TX 76825

Phone: 325-597-2785
Fax: 325-597-0133
hickoryuwcd@yahoo.com

www.hickoryuwcd.org



Spring Thoughts

Spring has sprung...or at least, it's getting there. I noticed several hummingbirds in my yard, a scissortail, and tiny green leaves on the local mesquite. This wonderful sense of newness has inspired us, once again, to print a few paragraphs on the wonders of xeriscaping.

According to <http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/extension/xeriscape/xeriscape.html>, xeriscape landscaping incorporates seven basic principles which lead to saving water:

- * Planning and design
- * Soil analysis
- * Practical turf areas
- * Appropriate plant selection
- * Efficient irrigation
- * Use of mulches
- * Appropriate maintenance

Of course, you need a plan. Sketch out your yard, and plan your plantings. Take

into account hours of sunlight, soil conditions, slope, etc. as well as what you want to achieve. Are you interested in a butterfly garden? Maybe you want a more formal area. Plan, sketch, design.

Next, you might consider having your soil analyzed. Contact your Extension for more information. You can have a routine analysis done through Texas A&M for less than \$20.

Then decide how much turfgrass you want. Grass often requires a great deal of water and maintenance. Aim for low water usage turfgrasses adapted to your region.

The next step is the fun part – deciding what you want to plant and where you want to plant it. The Texas A&M Coordinated Education and Marketing Assistance Program (CEMAP), is made up of horticultural researchers and Extension spe-

cialists and agents. Through a rigorous testing program, this group has compiled a list of plants known as Texas Superstars. You can read more at http://www.picktexas.com/hort/plants/sstar_plant_over.htm. A list of outstanding landscape plants for Texas is also available on the previously mentioned Aggie-horticulture site.

Now you can decide on irrigation or watering. Drip hoses work well in some flower beds. If you use a sprinkler, remember that across the board a lot of water is never absorbed by the plants. Much water, as well as vital nutrients, is lost to runoff. Watering guides for turfgrasses are available at the District office.

Using mulch conserves moisture and makes maintenance much easier by reducing weeds. Some maintenance will still be necessary however. Remember to fertilize, mow, prune, etc. Once you've put this much work into your beautiful landscape, you certainly want to keep it looking great.

Brochures and more information are available at the District office. Drop by, call or email.

