

An aerial photograph of a park. A winding concrete path leads from the bottom left towards a lake on the right. The path is bordered by green grass. In the background, there is a pavilion with a green roof and a wooden deck. A soccer field is visible on the left side. The sky is overcast.

Spring Creek

UTILITY DISTRICT

March 2025

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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ANNUAL

**Water Smart
Event**



We Kindly Invite You to Join Us for Our Annual Water Smart Event!

Tuesday, April 8th From 5 pm-8 pm.

Fox Springs Park

Bring your kids, friends, and neighbors for family fun!

We look forward to seeing you there!

FIRST A WORD FROM THE BOARD

In this first issue of 2025, we are providing a brief update on the many projects underway in the Spring Creek Utility District (SCUD) or jointly with MUDs 88 and 89. The next 2 years are going to be very busy as the design phase is nearly completed for some of these projects and we are about to send requests for proposals. Many of these projects will also be financed with bonds and the SCUD is preparing the documents to be submitted to the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for their review and approval.

Spring is upon us and many of our residents will want to spruce up their yards with new plants or to replace some that didn't survive the winter. Our first featured article introduces you to 10 native plants. As these native plants are more resistant to heat and drought, they require less water, and this will align with our ongoing water conservation efforts while helping you lower your monthly bill!

The second featured article deals with the impact of storm water runoffs on Spring Creek and what we can /must do to minimize or eliminate the risks of contamination.

Next, as in the next few weeks, homeowners will start receiving their Notice of Appraised Value from the Montgomery County Appraisal District (MCAD), we are presenting a brief refresher on the Tax Cycle and the main exemptions that you might be entitled to claim.

We started this quarterly newsletter a year ago and we would like to hear from you. Let us know what your thoughts are and what specific subject(s) you would like to learn more about.

Also, mark your calendar for our next Water Smart event on April 8, 2025. More information will be provided soon. Until next time!

Claude Humbert

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



Claude Humbert
PRESIDENT



Mark Fusca
VICE PRESIDENT



Frederick Sunderman
SECRETARY



Leslie Gourley
ASSISTANT SECRETARY



Paul Sterling
DIRECTOR

TOP TEN NATIVE PLANTS

The benefit of growing native plants in the yard and garden is that native plants don't require as much water as non-native plants, and they are much more heat and drought tolerant as they are adapted to our environment here in Texas. The plants you place in and around your home have a direct impact on your water bill and on water consumption/conservation. Houston is in "Zone 9" when it comes to the Planting Hardiness Zone. Below will be listed the top 10 plants that Residents can plant in their gardens to make more heat tolerant and water smart gardens and yards. It's important to note that native plants does not mean no maintenance, watering, or upkeep. Residents will find their plants will be much happier and healthier if they are rated for the right climate or endemic to the area.

Eastern Purple Coneflower

This beautiful purple flower is a Texas native that loves full or partial sun, thriving in the Texas Spring and Summer. Coneflowers also provide food and shelter for bees, butterflies, and birds. This is a garden must-have this year.



Yaupon Holly

Yaupon Holly is a shrub native to the Houston area that is known for being evergreen and deer resistant. This is a popular plant for landscaping due to its low hedge. They are drought tolerant and have resistance to insects and diseases. It's a tough and hardy plant that tolerates a range of soil conditions.



Black-eyed Susan

Although it is a short-lived perennial, Black-Eyed Susan's are one of the toughest flowers that tolerate the Houston climate and range from beautiful yellows to oranges and reds. These flowers are full sun loving and bloom in the late summer and early fall. They are considered draught resistant flowers and a great addition to any home garden



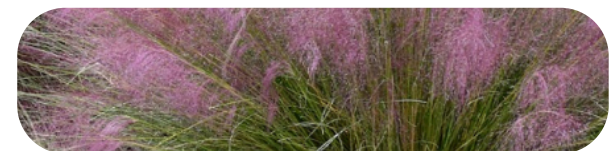
Texas Lantana

Texas Lantana is a gorgeous native perennial that requires full sun to partial shade. This plant blooms in wonderful oranges, reds, and yellows, attracting wildlife such as bees, birds, hummingbirds, and butterflies. These plants can bloom in the spring, summer, and fall and have a low water demand.



Gulf Coast Muhly

A tough native grass that grows in full to part sun. These grasses are often overlooked by gardeners when deciding on plants for their landscaping and beds, but they can create beautiful scenes in the garden and landscape. This grass is also a perennial. When in bloom, this grass has beautiful purple tufts that plume over the top of the grass creating a stunning effect!



Blackfoot Daisy

Blackfoot Daisies can survive the Texas heat, in full sun or partial shade with little water. They are dark green with white and yellow flowers, that grow low to the ground in a bush like shape. They are a great addition to any garden, as they also attract bees and butterflies!



Texas Sage

The official sage of Texas, Texas Sage is a beautiful, full sun, drought tolerant bush with silver, greyish green leaves. It takes two years to fully mature then blooms into beautiful pink, purple, and lavender flowers. This plant prefers well drained soil and can also tolerate partial shade.



Lance-leaved coreopsis

A beautiful yellow flower that blooms in Spring, lance-leaved coreopsis prefers full sun and well drained soil. They grow approximately 2' tall and can be aggressive self-seeders. It is deer resistant and attracts butterflies, bees, and other pollinating insects.



Esperanza

Esperanza is another Texas native summer perennial that tolerates high temperatures and draught conditions very well. They prefer full sun and grow 4-6 ft tall. They grow beautiful yellow trumpets that bloom in the summer. It's best to plant these early spring after the threat of the last freeze.



Southern Maidenhair Fern

The Maidenhair fern, or Southern Maiden hair fern, is a beautiful delicate green shade-loving Texas native fern. This plant is great for shady spaces and indoors or potted plant gardens, often growing in moist forests in its native spaces. These plants enjoy moist, well drained soil and low light or bright indirect light.

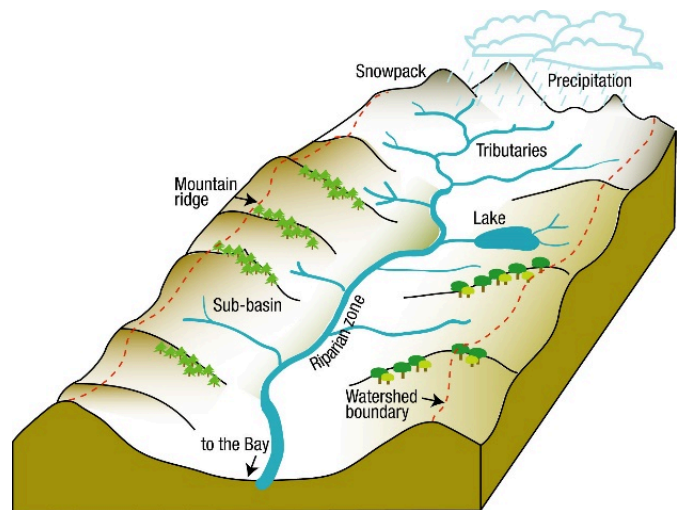


Both residents and native pollinator species can benefit from native plant landscaping and gardening. Incorporating even a few of these plants into your home's garden can provide a pit-stop for your local bees, butterflies, and other pollinator species.

PROTECTING SPRING CREEK

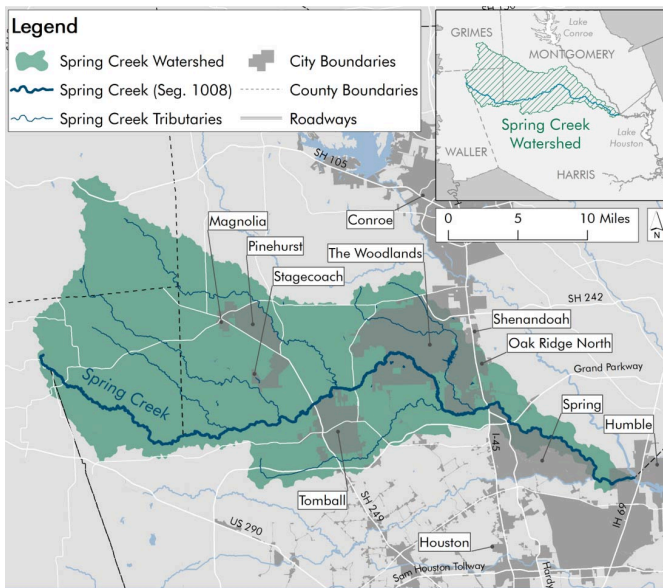
Spring Creek is approximately 111 miles in length and as a watershed, which is an area that leads into a river or creek, covers approximately 440 square miles and runs through Grimes, Montgomery, Waller, and Harris County. This watershed leads all the rain and runoff in the area into our stream, Spring Creek.

Spring creek is home to many animals, including deer, otters, raccoons, opossums, and alligators. Many fish also call this water home, such as white fish, catfish, crappie, largemouth bass, and bluegill. Many birds also pass through this area such as bald eagles, herons, and egrets.



The watershed is vital to supporting the local ecology, fisheries, our local economies, recreation, and our water quality in the area around us. We must do our best to protect our waterways and do what we can as residents to improve the conditions and maintain clean waterways for the future.

According to a study done in 2018 by the Spring Creek Watershed Partnership, Spring Creek faces many challenges with elevated fecal bacteria in the water that could have an impact on public health. The majority of this was pet waste. Keep in mind that Spring Creek Utility District gets its drinking water from a well deep in the Evangeline aquifer, not surface water. However, it is still a public safety concern to have fecal bacteria in the water that populates the rivers and streams.



A major contributor to this pollution comes from storm water runoff. Anything that runs over the concrete has the potential to be collected when it rains and is carried into the storm water drains. Common contaminants such as pet waste, oil, and debris get carried into the storm water system and end up in the nearest rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water. Unlike the drains in our home, storm water drains are not designed to filter material or remove contaminants out of the system. These contaminants flow directly into fish and wildlife habitats and pollute our environment.

Storm water does not soak into the ground but runs off into the storm drainage system. "Impervious surfaces" such as concrete, packed soil, and rooftops, allow the flow of water into the storm drainage system, with the rain picking up all contaminants sitting on the surface as it moves along. This runoff can damage the ecosystem when contaminated with pollutants.

Common pollutants and contaminants:

- Pet waste
- Oil
- Grease
- Fertilizer
- Motor oil
- Detergents
- Trash
- Debris
- Lawn clippings
- Household chemicals



What can you do?



Pick up after your pet

Yes, even in the backyard. Picking up after your pet is an important step in keeping the water runoff clean. Ensuring that pet waste is thrown away rather than left outside in the yard or on the ground on walks is vital to keeping Spring Creek safe. Use pet waste stations, and at home dispose of pet waste in the trash.



Use Rainwater as a resource.

Rainwater can be used to water gardens, wash vehicles, and much more. Collecting rainwater diverts some of the water from the storm drains and reduces the amount of contaminants put into the system. It's also free! Meaning a lower water bill. During drought seasons, rainwater can be used to water gardens and keep plants thriving. Install rain barrels around your home to collect water for future use and help keep our storm drains clean. By collecting water, you are helping keep the environment clean and protect local fish and wildlife.



Reduce Litter

How can you reduce litter in your local waterways? If you see something, say something! Problems such as illegal dumping, pedestrian litter, and litter from cars and trucks all contribute to the waterway's cleanliness. If you see trash on the street, be a good Samaritan and discard it in a nearby trash can. If you witness illegal dumping of debris or items down a storm drain, contact your local water authority to report any illegal activities.



Remove or replace toxic materials.

Some items are too toxic for our trash. Our environment has neither the capability nor the appetite to digest harmful chemical compounds. Luckily, there are facilities where you can turn in paint, batteries, pesticides, motor oil, and other similar materials for proper disposal. For safety and environmental reasons, it is illegal to dispose of these hazardous chemicals in the garbage, sewers, or storm drains. Residents of Spring Creek Utility District can follow [this link](#) to find their local hazardous materials drop-off point.

Participate in local clean-ups

There are many ways to get involved in keeping Texas clean. Here are some of the many programs you can join to help keep our state clean.

- [Adopt-a-Highway](#) dedicated to keeping Texas roadways clean.
- [Adopt-a-Beach](#) dedicated to keeping Texas beaches clean.
- [Don't Mess With Texas](#) dedicated to community outreach.
- [Trash Bash](#) dedicated to keeping local waterways clean.
- [Volunteer Trash Clean-Up Events](#) With the Harris County Flood Control District



You can find more resources to participate locally or statewide [here](#).

Texas residents must address the challenges posed by stormwater runoff to protect its waterways and preserve the biodiversity that makes the state unique. By implementing rainwater collection, litter reduction, replacement of chemicals, and participating in local cleaning efforts, Texans can work towards a healthier, more resilient environment for generations to come. Addressing stormwater runoff is not just an environmental imperative; it is a commitment to safeguarding the natural beauty and ecological balance that defines the Lone Star State.

THE TAX CYCLE AND EXEMPTIONS

Property market value:

Estimated worth or price at which a property can be bought or sold in the Texas real estate market.

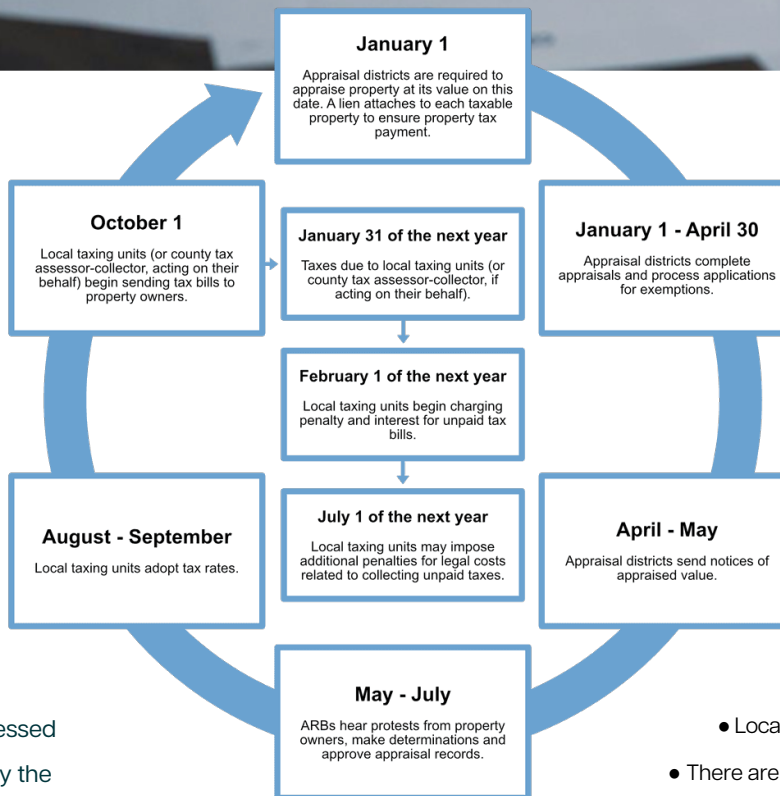
Property appraised value:

Assessed or estimated value of a property, as determined by a professional property appraiser or by the local county appraisal district.

Your property's value is assessed each year on **January 1st** by the appraisal district and used to calculate your tax

bill. Once the values are certified by the county appraisal district, the Board of Directors sets the tax rate for SCUD based on input from their financial consultants. Your tax bill is calculated by multiplying your property's appraised value by the tax rate. There are a few exemptions that may apply to you, such as the Homestead exemption and the over 65 exemptions.

You can protest the value with the county appraisal district if you think it's unfair or overvalued. Local entities set tax rates, and exemptions may apply. You should expect to receive your property tax bill in the mail by the end of October. You have until the end of January 31st of the next year to pay it without penalty.



Factors of Appraisal Price:

- Location of residence
- Condition of home
- Size of home
- Recent Sales of Similar Homes

Remember:

- Your property's value is assessed every January 1st.
- You can protest your appraised value if you think it is too high or low.
- Local entities set their own tax rates.
- There are a few exemptions that may apply to you.

- You have until the end of January to pay your property tax bill without penalty.

Tax Bill Formula: (Home Appraised value – Exemptions) Divided by 100. Then multiply the product by the tax rate = your bill.

[Watch this informational video](#) produced by the Association of Water Board Directors (AWBD) to learn more.

- SCUD has an over 65 or disability exemption of up to 55k.
- SCUD has a homestead exemption of 20%

Residents should keep in mind they can now file for exemptions status year-round. For more information on tax exemptions and status, visit the [Montgomery County Appraisal District Website](#).



PROJECT UPDATE

As mentioned in previous Newsletters, Spring Creek Utility District (SCUD) has many projects underway. Here is a brief update on the status of these projects.

- 1. SCUD water Plant #3:** The plant design has been approved by the relevant authorities and the drilling permit was submitted recently to the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District. We intend to send bid inquiries shortly.
- 2. Booster pump addition at the SCUD Water Plant #2:** This project is nearing completion. See photos
- 3. Increase pumpage from Legends Ranch well #3 (Jasper Aquifer):** This is a joint project with Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) 88 & 89. MUD 89 Engineer oversees this project. Submission of the project documentation to the various authorities has been done, and it may take a few months to get the necessary approvals. We anticipate being able to submit for bidding by the end of May.
- 4. Surface Water from SJRA:** The contract with San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) has been finalized and signed by SJRA and MUD 89. MUD 89 is the lead for this joint project. Preparation for easement acquisition, including surveying, has started but cannot be completed until the actual connection point to the SJRA existing pipeline is finalized. SJRA is performing a hydraulic study to ensure that the proposed connection point is acceptable.





- 5. Reclaimed Water Project:** The design of the plant has been completed and approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). This project is about to be advertised for bidding. The reclaimed water distribution system will be built in multiple phases, and the first phase of this project will be combined with the drainage improvement project in the Fox Run subdivision.
- 6. Fox Run Drainage Improvement:** The design is still in progress. Surveyors continue

to obtain additional field information.

- 7. District Building:** The design is finalized, and all necessary permits have been obtained. This is a design-build project, and the construction costs were developed during the design stage. A pre-construction meeting was held at the beginning of the month and the contractor should mobilize during the week of March 17.
- 8. Pedestrian Bridge on Birnham Woods Drive:** This is a joint project with MUDs 88 and 89. The Engineer for MUD 88 is finalizing the design and plans to submit it to the County sometime this month and hopes to be in a position to start the bidding process in May.
- 9. The Alcove at Bender's Landing:** The developer has started clearing the lot for its mixed-use project that will include a multi-family component in its first phase and a commercial portion later.

