

WATER IN TEXAS

Texas is dependent on water because of its reliance on it for irrigation and usage needs. According to the U.S. Homeland Security website, Texas's population of 24.3 million is expected to hit approximately 45.5 million by 2060, and its water supply cannot come close to keeping pace. This could have detrimental effects on the state's economy and agricultural practices if precautions are not taken.

One of the most effective methods of attaining water in Texas is to divert it from rivers and construct dams to impound it. These dams are used to create synthetic lakes that provide the state with large amounts of water for irrigation and usage purposes.

One prime example of this is the John T. Montford Dam, located in Hockley County. According to the city of Lubbock, on April 19, 1991, Lubbock, in cooperation with the Brazos River Authority, started construction of the John T. Montford Dam, which is named in honor of the Texas Senator John T. Montford. Senator Montford was instrumental in passing the need for legislation to create Lake Alan Henry. Randy Green, Lubbock resident, recalls when Senator Montford was in office.

"Senator Montford did a lot for Texas, he worked hard to pass legislation that others sometimes did not agree on, he fought for us back when many others would not," Randy Green said.

According to the city of Lubbock, the Montford Dam diverts water from the South Fork of the Double Mountain Fork (Brazos River,) thus creating Lake Alan Henry. Standing over 130 feet high and 3,600 feet in length, the dam consists of 6.5 million cubic yards of soil, clay and soil cement. The dam's service spillway is designed to pass 15.6 million gallons of water per minute, and the emergency spillway is designed to pass 211 million gallons of water per minute.

Conservation efforts in Texas also play a vital role in maintaining sufficient water levels. According to Sandra Offutt, Coordinator for Technical Programs and Education for the City of Lubbock Water Utilities

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Department, Lubbock has taken steps to conserve water in minimize usage. Water consumption in the Lubbock jumps approximately 40 percent from winter to summer, due primarily to lawn watering. In order to combat this radical increase in water consumption, Lubbock residents are urged only to water their lawns two days a week, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

According to the Texas Water Foundation, few Texans recognize the importance of water. Although there are many techniques to conserve water,

there are still people who do not practice them. Lubbock residents who practice water conservation become, irritated when others do not respect conservation practices.

Steve Matthews, Lubbock resident, said "People will not start caring about how much water they waste until it is gone. This lack of appreciation for water really bothers me."

Although some people do not value water, it is good to know that others practice water conservation consistently.

Lubbock resident, Matthew Green, has practiced water conservation since he was a young child.

"Ever since I could remember, I was taught not to waste anything, I remember my father getting on to me for leaving the water on while I was brushing my teeth. Although I could not see what the big deal was then, I now respect the lesson that he taught me, and I will teach my children the same," Matthew Green said.

With attitudes toward water conservation, like Matthews Greens, and projects like the John T. Montford Dam, Texas can combat the water problems that they are expected to face in the next 50 years. **T**

Tanner Ray Green | Lubbock, Texas

