

## **The Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District Urges Water Conservation**

Despite above average spring rainfall across the county, hot and dry weather is taking its toll. The Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District (RCGCD) is monitoring the current dry spell and its effect on groundwater levels.

RCGCD monitors water levels in wells across the county monthly and quarterly. Since January of 2022, only twice have water levels shown a downward trend – February and June. For June, the drop of -0.3 ft. was less the average drop for June of -0.46 ft. or almost one-half foot. For the spring, the county received 16.93” of rain. This was above the average of 12.14”.

Through the end of May, Rusk County was ahead in its year-to-date total average for rain at 3.22”. Then, the hot weather hit. In the summer months, water use typically goes up, as the heat builds, and especially when rainfall is lacking. The average rain for the summer is 9.51”. It will be hard to reach the average should the hot and dry weather continue. The U.S. Drought Monitor in mid-June showed Rusk County to be “abnormally dry” with the northwest corner in a “moderate drought.” The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) shows East Texas trending warmer for the summer months. In addition, the “US Seasonal Drought Outlook” produced by the CPC shows most all of East Texas in the “Drought Development Likely” category. Pray for rain!

RCGCD urges Rusk County residents to be aware of water use, not only in dry spells, but all the time. It also believes in the importance of citizens making water conservation practices a habit. Encouraging children to conserve water can foster lifelong water conservation practices. Water demand will only increase, as the population of Texas and East Texas increases. This makes conservation necessary!

Some indoor conservation tips include taking shorter showers, using restrictive shower heads, using a bucket to catch shower water while it is heating (then using it for other purposes), turning off the water faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving, installing low flow toilets, checking for plumbing leaks to prevent water loss, and not running the water faucet needlessly while cooking or cleaning dishes. Some outdoor conservation tips include rainwater harvesting (rain barrels), planting drought tolerant plants and grasses, mulching areas around trees and shrubs, utilizing rain sensors on irrigation systems to prevent watering during rain events, watering in the early morning or evening, and limiting water use in general around your house and property.

RCGCD will continue monitoring groundwater levels, rainfall, and the potential need to enact its drought contingency plan.

To learn more about RCGCD visit [www.rcgcd.org](http://www.rcgcd.org). Click on the “Education” link of the homepage and go to the “Water Conservation” link for water conservation ideas. Like and follow us on Facebook!