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North Texas Municipal Water District Ends Mandatory Water Restrictions

Drought officially over for 1.6 million North Texans;
Residents encouraged to continue using water wisely

(WYLIE, Texas)—Heavy, consistent rainfall has returned area lakes to full capacity, allowing the North Texas Municipal Water District to lift mandatory water restrictions.

The move affects more than 1.6 million North Texas residents.

"It's hard to believe this time last year we were experiencing the worst drought in more than half a century," said Jim Parks, NTMWD executive director. "That's Texas weather for you. Anyone who's lived here for more than a few days understands how unpredictable our weather can be. That's why we will always encourage people to implement simple water-saving tips to ensure our water resources last."

NTMWD is moving from its Stage 3 Drought Plan into what the District calls its Conservation Plan—its routine, non-drought plan. Since June 1, 2006, residents served by NTMWD have been required to observe mandatory outdoor water restrictions. The restrictions affected everything from watering landscapes and filling swimming pools to washing vehicles and hosing driveways and sidewalks.

"We faced an urgent water challenge, and North Texas responded," said Parks. "In the middle of a severe drought, our customers saved 200 million gallons of water a day. We're grateful for their support and hope all of us can make saving water a life-long habit."

The existing NTMWD Conservation Plan does not have mandatory watering requirements, but rather recommendations for its Member Cities and Customers. The NTMWD service area includes approximately 60 cities and communities in and around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Member Cities and Customers may now begin to transition to a conservation plan within the coming weeks instead of the existing mandatory water restrictions.

The Difference a Year (and Lots of Rain) Makes

NTMWD relies on three reservoirs to serve customers — Lake Lavon, Lake Jim Chapman/Cooper and Lake Texoma. Lake Lavon's lowest elevation was in November 2006, when it was more than 17 feet below normal. Lake Lavon did not completely fill back up until May 2007. Lake Texoma is also full, while Lake Jim Chapman/Cooper has gained more than 16 feet and is currently at 91 percent capacity, 1.5 feet below normal. Lake Jim Chapman/Cooper was last full in April 2003.

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Water Rights

The State of Texas regulates how much water NTMWD is permitted to draw from its reservoirs. Because of the recent rainfall, there has been low consumer demand for water in recent months, allowing NTMWD to stay within the State's approved water rights for the remainder of the year. NTMWD is confident it can remain within its allotted water supply even as summer continues.

Long-Term Water Projects

Prior to the drought, several water supply projects were initiated to bring additional supplies to the growing region. These projects, including the East Fork Raw Water Supply Project, Upper Sabine Supply Project and Lower Bois d'Arc Creek Reservoir, will help meet current and future water demands.

Recommended Water-Saving Tips

NTMWD was the first utility in Texas to implement "Water IQ: Know Your Water," a public education campaign. For the past two years, Water IQ has been a resource to help people understand where their water comes from and provide easy tips to save water like:

- Limit daytime watering, which results in evaporation and waste.
- Prevent excessive watering that creates runoff.
- Refrain from hosing non-pervious surfaces like driveways and sidewalks.
- Don't water your lawn when it's raining.
- Limit outdoor watering to no more than twice per week.

NTMWD is recommending North Texans adopt these simple tips into their lifestyle, regardless of weather conditions. An interactive Web site at www.WaterIQ.org offers details about the campaign.

About the North Texas Municipal Water District

NTMWD directly serves the following cities and/or water supply agencies: Allen, Farmersville, Forney, Frisco, Garland, Mesquite, McKinney, Plano, Princeton, Richardson, Royse City, Rockwall, Wylie, Caddo Basin S.U.D., Cash W.S.C., College Mound W.S.C., Copeville W.S.C., Crandall, East Fork S.U.D., Fairview, Fate, Forney Lake W.S.C., Gastonia-Scurry W.S.C., GTUA, Josephine, Kaufman, Kaufman Four-One, Lavon W.S.C., Little Elm, Lucas, Melissa, Milligan W.S.C., Mt. Zion W.S.C., Murphy, Nevada W.S.C., North Collin W.S.C., Parker, Prosper, Rose Hill S.U.D., Rowlett, Sachse, Seis Lagos M.U.D., Sunnyvale, Terrell and Wylie Northeast W.S.C.

Media Note: Lake level numbers are accurate on press release date only. Please contact Mike Rickman for the latest statistics.

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