

# Star-Telegram

## Fort Worth's new pipeline will help conserve drinking water

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When Fort Worth completes an 11.5-mile reclaimed-water pipeline this summer, it will allow Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, Arlington and Euless to shift some of their usage away from potable water.

The reclaimed water can be used on ballfields and golf courses and even in the airport's cooling towers.

It was a distinctive enough approach that the Environmental Protection Agency awarded a \$16.3 million interest-free loan to help build the project.

Funded with federal stimulus money, the pipeline is "a creative solution to increased demands on regional wastewater treatment plants," J. Kevin Ward, executive administrator of the Texas Water Development Board, said in the state agency's annual report.

"We expect to have the pipeline completed hopefully in May so the system can become operational no later than early June," said Mary Gugliuzza, a spokeswoman for the Fort Worth Water Department.

### Easing strain on lakes

Water Department officials expect the pipeline to carry 2 million gallons of reclaimed water per day at first, but it will have the capacity to carry 14 million per day.

By comparison, the department, including its 29 wholesale customers, used 170 million gallons per day last year. But water usage can be much higher. In 2006, Fort Worth set a record with an average of 207 million gallons per day.

Anything that eases the strain on Tarrant Regional Water District lakes is welcomed. The 50-year water plan calls for 23 percent of future needs to come from conservation and reuse.

"Our sources are all the same," Gugliuzza said. "We're all tapping into those lakes."

At D/FW Airport, officials hope to shift about 25 percent of water usage from potable to reclaimed water for irrigation, gas drilling operations and the cooling towers. The airport cools about 700,000 gallons of water at night to keep terminals air-conditioned during the hottest part of the day.

In its 2007 Reclaimed Water Priority and Implementation Plan, Fort Worth identified the potential top 125 users of reclaimed water in its system, including wholesale customers. D/FW Airport, Euless and Arlington were in the top 20.

Interest from developers

Water Department officials have talked about adding more reclaimed-water capacity to the controversial Mary's Creek wastewater treatment plant, which is on the drawing boards on the city's west side. Fort Worth is studying the potential environmental impact on Mary's Creek. Neighborhood groups oppose the plant, saying the creek cannot handle additional flows.

But the treatment plant could bring reclaimed water to new subdivisions when the Walsh Ranch area in far west Fort Worth is developed.

"There have been some discussion with developers to initially plumb for dual systems when those subdivisions are built," Gugliuzza said. "That's really the obstacle. It's not cost-effective to go back into developed areas. It's a lot more cost-effective to do that on the front end of development. There are no commitments from developers, but there is some interest."

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