

# This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

[watersmartinnovations.com](http://watersmartinnovations.com)



# Motivating Water Customers through Social Media

Jessica Woods

Water Conservation Coordinator

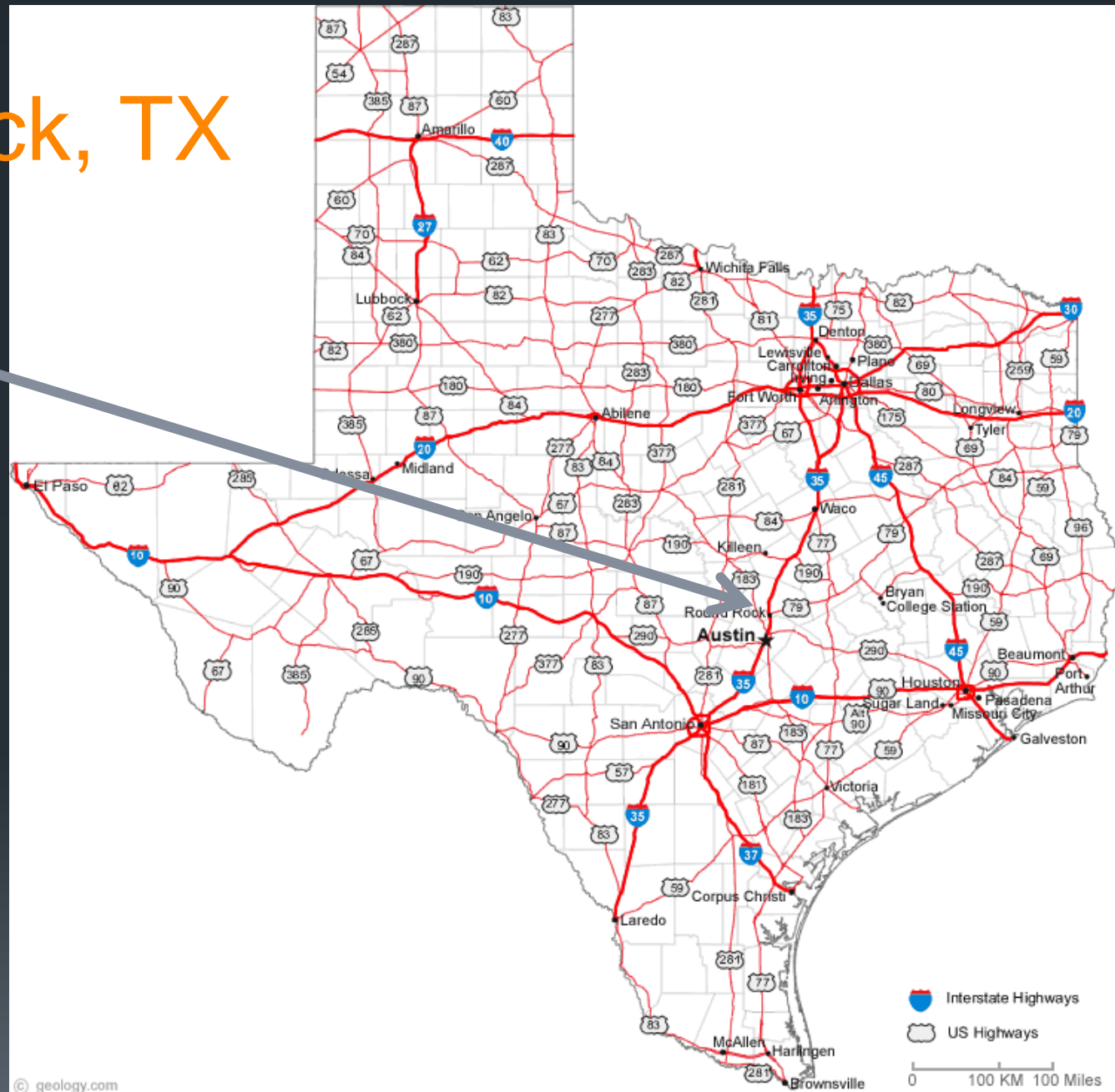
City of Round Rock



# Round Rock, TX

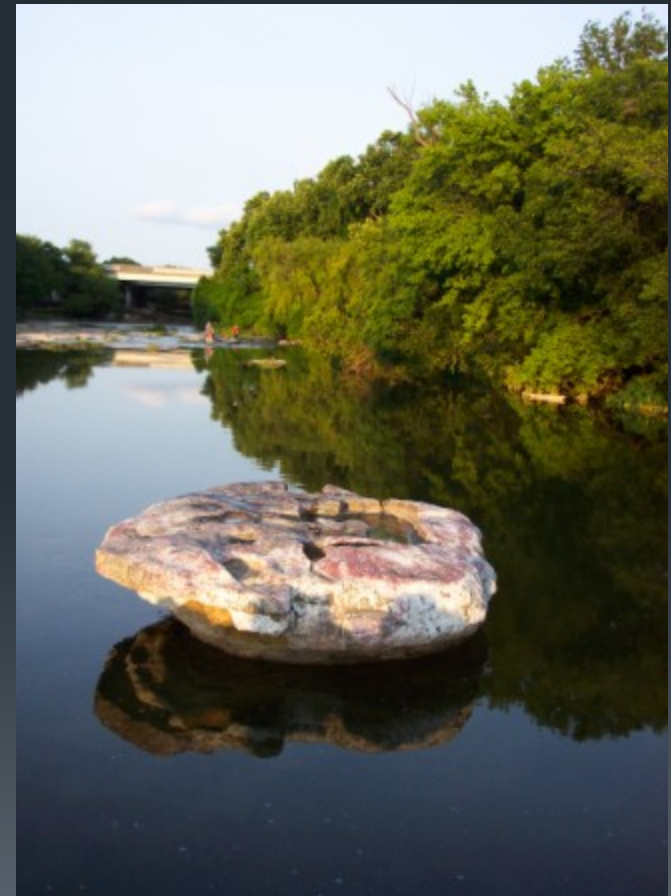
## Where?

- Williamson County  
(*conservative*)
- Just north of Austin
- IH-35 corridor
- Avg rainfall = 34"
- Water planning group G
- Brazos River Authority

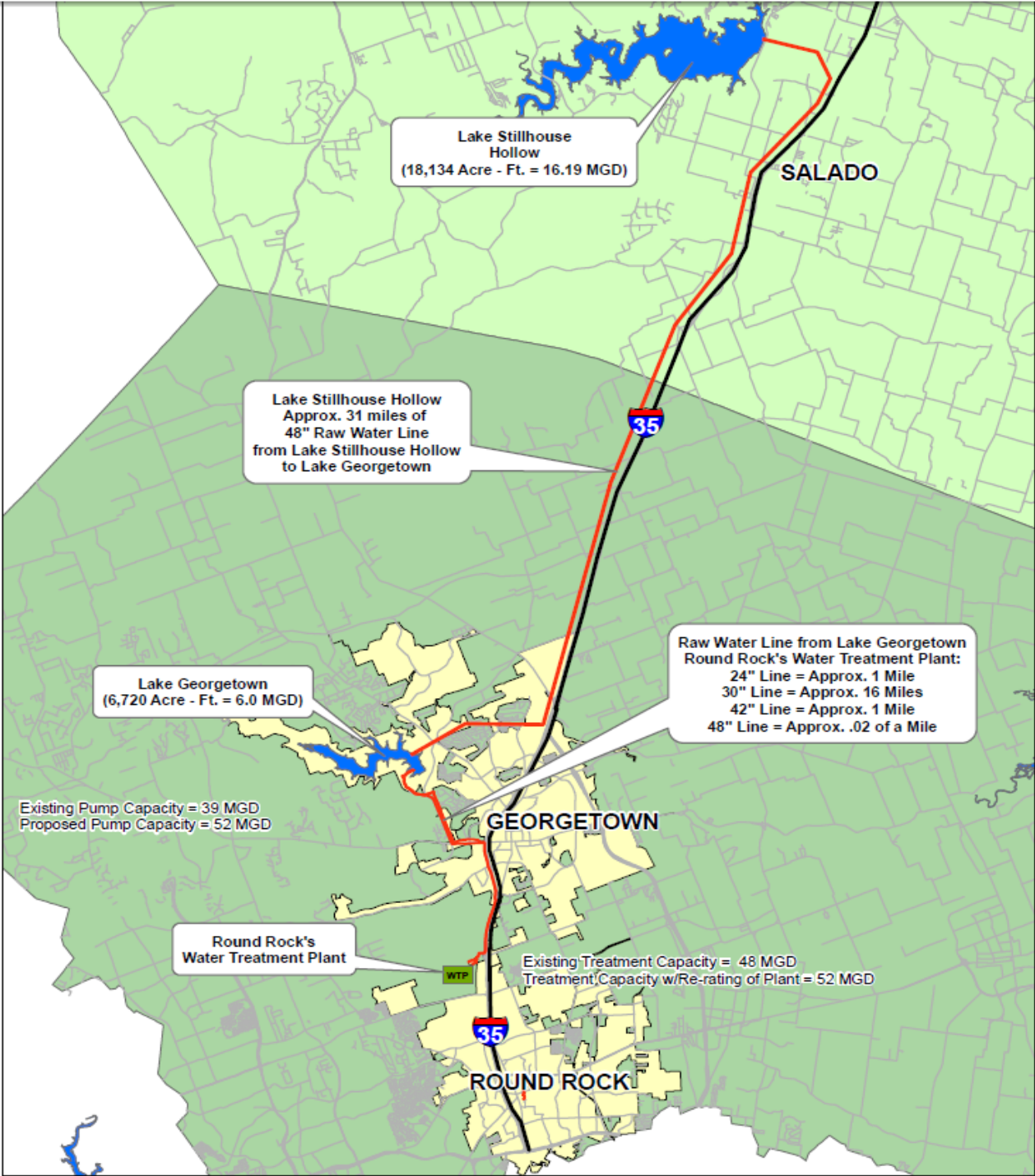


# City Stats

- **Rapid** population growth:
  - 1990 = 30,923 residents
  - 2000 = 61,136 residents
  - 2010 = 99,887 residents
  - Service area population ~ 140,000
- ~32,000 direct **water connections**
  - Of those 29,500 are **residential**
    - Summer Avg = 12,900 gallons
    - Winter Avg = 6,100 gallons
  - Wholesale to 8 MUDs
- **Water Sources:**
  - Lake Georgetown – Lake Stillhouse Hollow
  - Edwards Aquifer (<8 mgd)



**Raw Water Lines from  
Lake Stillhouse Hollow  
and Lake Georgetown**



# Why communication has it's challenges:



- Very **close proximity** to Austin
- One local newspaper that publishes as a supplement to Austin paper
- One **monthly** printed free paper
- No “real” TV station
- No local radio stations
- Round Rock is on a **different water source** (read: different restrictions) from many of our neighbors

# Water Outreach Outlets

## Usual Suspects:

- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Water bill message
- Bill insert



The screenshot shows the Round Rock, Texas website. The header includes navigation links: News | Calendar | Blogs | eSubscription | Jobs | Documents | Community Links | Land Development | FAQ | Site Map | Contact Us. The main navigation bar features: RESIDENTS | BUSINESSES | KIDS | Search... | GO. Below this is a secondary navigation bar: Home | About Round Rock | What's New | City Services | Library | Parks & Recreation | Departments.

The left sidebar lists various city departments, with "Utilities & Environmental Services" expanded to show sub-items: Director's Message, Boil Water Notices, Capital Improvement Projects, Customer Service, Environmental Services Laboratory, Facility Tours and Educational Programs, and Solid Waste and Recycling.

The main content area is titled "Water" and features a section for "Stage I Water Restrictions Still in Effect" with a link for "More information". Below this, there are links for "Customer Service", "Boil Water Notices", "Water Quality", "Conservation", "Water Re-Use", "Water Resources", "Water Treatment Process", "Line Locates", and "Backflow Prevention".

A paragraph states: "Effective Monday, Oct. 14, 2013, the City enacted Stage I of the Drought Contingency Plan. This is a twice weekly outdoor watering schedule. If you choose to water your yard, it must be on one (or both) of your allowed watering days, and not between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. See below for the watering days. A twice per week watering schedule is too much for our current freezing temperatures. Watering by hand is allowed on any day."

Below this, a link directs users to "roundrocktexas.gov/waterconservation" to learn more about water conservation.

Property Type	Watering Days
Residential Odd-Numbered Address	Wednesday and/or Saturday
Residential Even-Numbered Address	Thursday and/or Sunday
Commercial, Industrial, Multifamily, Institutional, Government	Tuesday and/or Friday

**Water rates**

Our water rate structure is designed to encourage conservation as well, with heavy users charged increasingly higher rates during the watering season. The rates below are per 1,000 gallons. To estimate how much you could pay under the rates, use the calculator at



# A Blog is Born

- more flexibility than web

## The Water Spot

The City's water conservation program coordinator will write about interesting information relating to City water projects, water reuse projects, water conservation program and rebates, drought information and timely news regarding water use within Round Rock.

Jessica Woods | [Edit Profile](#) | [Sign out](#) | [Help](#)

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### Common Tasks

- [Write a Blog Post](#)
- [My Blog Dashboard](#)

### Archives

- [October 2014 \(1\)](#)
- [August 2014 \(3\)](#)
- [July 2014 \(3\)](#)
- [June 2014 \(1\)](#)
- [May 2014 \(2\)](#)
- [April 2014 \(2\)](#)
- [March 2014 \(1\)](#)
- [February 2014 \(2\)](#)
- [January 2014 \(2\)](#)
- [December 2013 \(1\)](#)
- [November 2013 \(2\)](#)
- [October 2013 \(3\)](#)
- [September 2013 \(2\)](#)

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### E-mail Updates

Blog updates directly to your inbox.

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### Recent Posts

- [Catch the rain before it's gone!](#)
- [Rain Barrel Sale Going on Now](#)
- [Do I Have a Water Leak?](#)
- [Smart Irrigation Month, part 4](#)
- [Smart Irrigation Month, pt 3](#)

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## Do I Have a Water Leak?

During the hottest parts of the year the phone calls increase with concerns from people asking if they have a water leak, or maybe their neighbor is using their water to fill up their pool. There's just no way they had used that much water this past month. Or the meter reader must have read the meter wrong! Or the meter is just wrong, or the water lines are crossed because the neighbor waters every day and I don't and my bill is higher... I think I've heard it all! Rarely do we find anything more than leaks or an irrigation system that is using more water than the homeowner realizes. Nothing too exciting in the grand scheme of things.



If you think you may have a water leak, then there are simple steps you can take to figure out if you have one, before calling a plumber. The first thing to do is to locate your water meter. It is outside, typically near the front property line on one of the sides of your house, near the sidewalk. The box is rectangular and either has a metal lid or black plastic lid. If you can, open it up. Inside the meter box are typically two water meters. I keep saying usually, because there are always exceptions! Anyway, your meter is closer to your house, and the other meter is your neighbor's.

Looking at the face of the meter, there is a hand that sweeps around the face, much like the hands of a clock. When that hand moves one time around the face that means 10 gallons have been used, or have gone through the meter. If the hand is moving when you open up the meter, then that means water is currently going through the meter and is being used at your property. When no water to your knowledge is on at your house, that hand should be perfectly still.



There's also a small star- or triangle-shaped feature on the face that we commonly call the "leak detector." It moves when we often can't see the hand moving, because it's a little more sensitive to lower flow water. If this is perfectly still too, then good, no leak. If it's moving, then again, something is using water. You can see the difference between water meters brands in the pictures--one has a triangle leak detector, the other has a silver center star piece.

There is also numbers on the face of the meter, like an odometer in a vehicle. This is the number that gets read every month to calculate how many gallons have gone through the meter. At the end of the day, before going to bed, you can write down these numbers. In the morning, before water is used at the house, go read the numbers again. If they are the same, great, no leak. If they have changed, then water has been used on the property. To find out how much water was used, subtract the morning number from the night number. The answer you get is the gallons that were used. (i.e. the meter read 58673 in the morning and 55492 at night. So 58673 - 55492 = 3181 gallons were used overnight!) Oh yes, that's right, my irrigation system went off; that's how much water it used.

Watch our latest video to see how to perform this meter check yourself. Good luck!



[\[Edit Post\]](#)

Great post Jessica, but you forget another way to save water for the lawn. A Zoysia lawn might require HALF the water St. Augustine does. And a Buffalo grass lawn can



# Blogging

- Goal is 2/month
- Variety of topics
- Very little feedback
- High readership

Blog Title	Month	Views
July is Smart Irrigation Month, pt 2	Jul-14	9,767
July is Smart Irrigation Month, pt 1	Jul-14	8,683
Sooo...What is Water Waste?	May-14	6,663
At the Car Wash	May-14	9,067
Water Workshop at Home Depot	Apr-14	11,031
Summer is Headed our Way	Apr-14	8,985
RB Sale reminder	Mar-14	10,571
Irrigation Workshop	Feb-14	8,950
Springtime Sprinkler Check	Feb-14	7,980
Rainbarrel Sale	Jan-14	7,248
Leave the Leaves	Jan-14	8,853
Shower Smarter	Dec-13	7,892
Best Seat in the House	Nov-13	8,234
RW Collection--Top 5 Reasons to do it	Nov-13	8,145
Vote for...	Oct-13	7,019
When (Not) to Water, part 2	Oct-13	6,455
Water Restrictions in Effect	Oct-13	6,342
When (Not) to Water	Sep-13	6,536
Welcome to the Water Spot	Sep-13	6,084



So...

- Is it working?
- Are people reading and following advice or making any changes at their homes?

# Yes!

- Toilet rebate program participation levels—
  - Blog posted November 27, 2013
  - Had 65 participants in program during December 2013
    - 30 participants December 2012
    - 12 participants December 2011
  - Another blog posted June 3, 2014 “program returns”
    - 107 participants July/August 2014 compared to 23 previous year
- Rainbarrel sale participation—
  - 2 blogs posts—Feb & March 2014
    - 183 barrels sold in 2014
    - 88 barrels in 2013



Only difference between years is addition of blog.

# Why is the blog working?

Two main reasons:

1. Regularly posted water content
2. Conservation / Water staff is posting directly  
*(not waiting on others)*





# Thank you!

Jessica Woods

Water Conservation Program Coordinator

City of Round Rock

[jwoods@roundrocktexas.gov](mailto:jwoods@roundrocktexas.gov)

512.671.2872 office

512.844.8514 mobile