

Fern Bluff Municipal Utility District

October 2024 Newsletter

2024 Tax Rate

At the August Fern Bluff MUD board of directors meeting the 2024-2025 budget was approved by the board, and after the public hearing at the same meeting, the tax rate was lowered from \$0.20 per \$100 to \$0.19 per \$100 assessed value. This is the fourth year that the MUD tax rate has been reduced. The MUD continues to operate in the black with no debt liability.

Service Rates Increase

As a result of supplier rate increases, new rates will be effective October 1, 2024

| Service | New Rate | Increase over 2024 |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Base Water Rate | \$21.00 | \$1.00 |
| Base Wastewater Rate | \$7.75 | \$1.00 |
| Stormwater Drainage Fee | \$0.55 | \$0.10 |
| Garbage Collection Rate | \$24.50 | \$1.50 |

Fall Bulk Trash Pickup

Mark your calendars for **October 19, 2024**, for the Fern Bluff MUD Annual Fall Pickup. All items must be **at the curb by 7 a.m.** on the collection date. Items may be placed at the curb on Friday evening.

Excluded items and items placed at the curb after 7 a.m. will be the resident's responsibility to discard. For more information visit the MUD website at this link (<https://fernbluffmud.org/fall-bulk-pickup-day-saturday-october-19-2024-2024-08-28>)

Trash Day Reminder

Just a reminder that on trash days your trash cans should be out on the street, wheels into the curb by 7AM. Our trash pickup provider Republic Services has been working to normalize pickup times across the district since their merge with CTR. Meanwhile, our contract does provide for up to six additional bags or bins which can be placed out weekly for pickup. If you have additional items or bulk items that you would like collected (outside of our designated bulk pickup days), you can contact Republic Services Customer Resource Center at 512.243.2833 for pricing and scheduling.

Backflow Prevention Device Inspections

Our district is aging and to protect our water supply from contamination we will be requiring homeowners to have their backflow prevention devices professionally tested as required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Testing is required once every seven years for permanent irrigation systems with no chemical feed system or annually for swimming pools with auto-fill valves and/or irrigation systems with chemical feed systems. Residents with pools that are filled with a water hose will need an AVB (atmospheric vacuum breaker) installed at the hose bib. BSI Online (bsionline.com) is our tracking software vendor and as such, will be sending

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letters on our behalf. For more information, please visit the backflow program page on our website: <http://www.fernbluffmud.org/utilities/backflow-prevention-program>.

Styrofoam Recycling

The city of Round Rock now allows our district residents to drop off Styrofoam and cardboard at no charge at the Deepwood recycling center during operating hours. For hazardous waste you can still get a voucher from the MUD offices.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Vouchers

Fern Bluff MUD residents may pick up a free HHW voucher at the MUD office (the district will be covering the cost of the disposal) and take their HHW to the **Deepwood Recycling Center**, located at 310 Deepwood Drive on the **1st Wednesday of each month from 3pm to 6pm**. There will also be special spring and fall collection days each year. Proof of residency in the district will be required (please bring your MUD water bill and a valid Texas Driver's License).

Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Remember when it rains, pollutants illegally dumped into storm drains can be carried to our local waterways during rain events. It is against our storm water regulations to contribute toxic or poisonous substance, solid waste, or landscape debris such as leaves or grass clipping into the street and stormwater inlets. Violators may be required to pay the cost of cleanup as well as a damage fee of \$250.00 per day per violation. Please help prevent stormwater pollution. To report any issues, call Fern Bluff MUD at (512)238-0606.

New Water Restrictions (Irrigation Schedule)

Our lake levels are low! The Fern Bluff MUD purchases its wholesale water from the City of Round Rock and follows the city's drought contingency plan. Stage 1 Drought Restrictions were lifted on June 13th; however, the new **year-round restrictions** are in place.

Outdoor irrigation is limited to twice per week, before **10 am or after 7 pm**, and is based on the last digit of your address.

| Property Address or House Number Ends in | Year Round Water Days | Stage 1 Water Days |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 0 or 3 | Monday / Thursday | Monday / Thursday |
| 1, 5, or 9 | Wednesday / Saturday | Wednesday / Saturday |
| 2, 6 or 7 | Tuesday / Friday | Tuesday / Friday |
| 4 or 8 | Sunday / Thursday | Sunday / Thursday |

**Residents may hand water at any time.

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MUD Community Center/Office Center Gates

You may have noticed that gates have been installed at the MUD Community Center/Office. Due to the increasing, unsafe cut through traffic from the Brightwater/Creek Bend intersection, electric gates were installed at two of the three entrances. The driveway nearest to the building's front door does not have a gate and access to the payment box is unimpeded. The entrance off Creek Bend has sensors so residents may enter at any time.

Fall and Dropping Leaves

Please do not blow your leaves, grass, debris nor dump chemicals, paint or solvents into the district storm drains (curb cuts.) **Remember: Only rain belongs in drains!** No person shall illegally discharge into the district's storm water drainage system. Violators may be responsible for all costs of repairing or restoring the drainage system as well as subject to a damage fee of \$250.00 per day per violation.

Winter Wastewater Averaging – November 15, 2024 to February 15, 2025

The MUD calculates your wastewater (sewer) bill based on the amount of water you use during three consecutive winter billing cycles. Water used during the winter is generally only indoor use, it's a good measure of the volume flowing into the sewer system. You may lower your sewer costs for the upcoming year by conserving water during these months so we recommend that you turn-off irrigation systems, fix leaking faucets and toilets, and check and repair pool auto-fills. during the averaging period.

Oak Tree at Brightwater Park

The Fern Bluff MUD has been trimming trees in preparation for new playscapes as well as removing some dead trees. We consulted two arborists, specifically regarding the Brightwater Park oak tree and the two large pecan trees at Olson Meadows Park.

The one remaining large oak tree at the entrance to Brightwater Park (the other was destroyed in the 2023 ice storm) had some serious safety issues. We trimmed what was critical for safety and are trying to save the tree. We know many residents are dismayed by the trimming but, unfortunately, it had to be done as several of the limbs that the kids climbed on were cracked at the top of the limbs and some at the trunk. The safety of the children in our parks is our highest priority.

Regarding Trees: This fall, please assess your trees for any low hanging limbs over the streets. Our trash trucks are having a hard time maneuvering in our neighborhoods. If your limbs are too low for the trash truck to reach your carts, they will skip your services. Raising the limb height will also protect your tree from breakage and allow for safe travel for delivery and emergency vehicles.

We are still seeing the aftereffects of the 2023 ice storm in trees all over the district. Please check your trees!