

Notorious No More — Catfish Farm Well Permanently Plugged

It's been nearly 30 years since the largest known artesian well in the world was drilled in southwest Bexar County to feed a controversial catfish farm. Now San Antonio Water System has permanently sealed off the infamously abundant 30-inch well with mud and concrete.

Not just any old well, this notorious gusher fed the Living Waters Artesian Springs Catfish Farm with about 53 million gallons a day from the Edwards Aquifer — enough water to serve a town of 250,000, or nearly a fourth of San Antonio's population at the time.

"When you see it, it is just a water well," said Kevin Morrison, SAWS project coordinator.

"But it all had such far-reaching consequences and was the catalyst for changing Texas water law."



SAWS purchased the property, equipment and water rights for about \$30 million in three transactions from 2000-2003. The water rights today would cost more than \$123 million.

In 2013, SAWS sold the land to the San Antonio River Authority for \$315,000, but maintained an easement so it could manage the infamous well.

The site had been used occasionally as a test well in recent years, but deterioration of the well casing led to the

decision to cap the monstrous geyser for good. SAWS plans to return the site to its native brushland origins.

Saluting a SAWS Staple

SAWS President/CEO Robert R. Puente and the SAWS Board of Trustees said farewell to and recognized Steve Clouse, senior vice president and chief operating officer, for more than three decades of service to SAWS and the San Antonio community during a Dec. 4 board meeting.

"We all consider ourselves fans of Steve Clouse," said Puente, noting that about half of SAWS' 1,700 employees worked under Clouse. "He has developed relationships throughout the city and state that allow this utility to continue its work of providing basic water services to almost two million people."



Puente also recounted Clouse's many accomplishments, including the so-called "environmental trifecta" at Dos Rios Water Recycling Center. The plant is believed to be the only major urban wastewater facility in the nation to recycle all three treatment byproducts for direct reuse: water, biosolids and methane gas.

"I will always work as an advocate for SAWS," Clouse said. He also expressed confidence in his successor Mike Frisbie, a former San Antonio city engineer and director of transportation & capital improvements. "Mike will fit in very well with this team. I know he'll do a great job helping SAWS move forward."

Clouse retired at the end of 2018 after 33 years of service.

Make sure your in-ground irrigation system has a functioning rain sensor to keep it from running while it's raining. San Antonio city ordinance requires it.

Event Calendar

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo

Feb. 7-24

AT&T Center/Freeman Coliseum
3201 E. Houston St.
sarodeo.com

Asian Festival

Feb. 9

UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures
801 E. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.
asianfestivalsa.com

Confucius Wishing Lanterns

Feb. 9

The River Walk
Downtown
thesanantonioriverwalk.com

Explore the Canyon

Feb. 16

Government Canyon State Natural Area
12861 Galm Road
tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks

Bird Tour

Feb. 24

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center
10750 Pleasanton Road
mitchelllake.audubon.org

Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency

210-704-SAWS (7297)
saws.org/waternews

Last Chance to Prune Oaks

If you plan to prune your oak trees this winter, there's not much time left if you want to minimize the chance of oak wilt. During the coldest days of the year, the beetles that carry the spores of the oak wilt fungus are very few and unlikely to fly.

Pruning is done for three reasons (in order of importance): safety, tree health and appearance. Although appearance is often mentioned as a reason for pruning, it's really the least significant. (After all, trees don't get pruned in the forest.)

Some helpful dos and don'ts:

- Prune narrow branch junctions that are V-shaped; these are structurally weak, especially if two or more of the branches are of equal diameters.

- Long branches that have been repeatedly stripped of their lateral branches should be shortened or removed completely.
- Look for the "3-D" branches — dead, diseased and dying. These are a source of disease and insects.
- Never cut through the branch collar. This donut-shaped ring at the junction of two branches or trunks has specialized cells that reduce decay and disease.

Finally, **always paint fresh oak wounds** — this is essential to preventing oak wilt.



Connect with SAWS on the Go

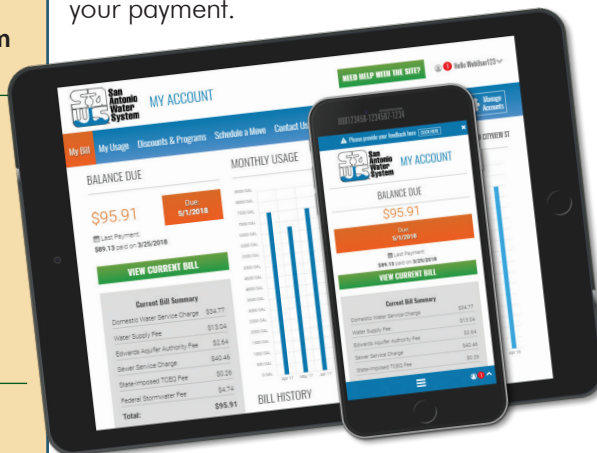
Just realized you forgot to pay your SAWS bill? No need to rush home to dig for your account number and a stamp to mail in your payment.

Access your SAWS account right from the palm of your hand with our mobile-friendly My Account website. Pay your bill anytime, anywhere with just a few taps.

Enjoy easy access to your account history and compare water use month to month.

You can even start and stop service if you're moving into a new place. While you're at it, why not set up automatic payments from a checking or savings account so you'll never miss a due date again.

To access your account online, visit saws.org/MyAccount.



Basura Bash and Electronics Recycling

Get ready to clean it like you mean it — 2019 marks the 25th year for Basura Bash!

The one-day, all-volunteer event to help clean up San Antonio's rivers and streams is Feb. 16 from



8 a.m. to noon. Join Basura Bob, everyone's favorite trash-slashing, fish-faced mascot, and sign up to volunteer.

Visit basurabash.org for more information and to join the clean-up!