

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Notification of Sanitary Sewer Overflow in The Woodlands During Recent Rainfall Event

The San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) is the regional wastewater collection and treatment provider for The Woodlands, Texas. On Wednesday, March 11, SJRA responded to a report of a sinkhole at the intersection of West Branch Crossing Dr and North Regan Mead and found a collapsed sanitary sewer manhole resulting in a spill from the wastewater collection system.

SJRA employees and contract support crews immediately initiated response activities. Vacuum trucks were brought onsite to remove wastewater, soil, and portions of the collapsed concrete manhole from the area so that repairs could be initiated. Bypass pumping equipment was installed so that there would be no interruptions to residential wastewater service while the repairs were conducted.

SJRA was notified of the spill at about 3:00 PM on Wednesday, March 11. It is estimated that the spill resulted in a discharge of approximately 300,000 gallons of domestic wastewater into the adjacent drainage ditch. The area potentially affected by the spill would include the zone immediately surrounding the manhole and also the drainage ditches into which the spill flowed, which ultimately drain into Spring Creek.

The suspected cause of the spill appears to be a failed force main connection to the manhole; however, recent heavy rains and saturated soils surrounding the manhole have made investigation of the cause difficult.

SJRA notified the appropriate local government officials and the TCEQ regional office. SJRA addressed the spill by applying granular chlorine to mitigate bacterial impacts in the immediately-surrounding area and is continuing to monitor downstream drainage systems that may have been impacted by the release. Thus far, no impacts to aquatic life have been observed.

All drinking water customers in the area are served by The Woodlands public water supply system, which is supplied by groundwater from water wells. SJRA is not aware of any private drinking water supply wells within ½-mile of the spill site. SJRA is required by 30 Tex. Admin. Code Section 319.303(c) to issue the following precautionary statements:

(1) Persons using private drinking water supply wells located within 1/2-mile of the spill site or within the potentially affected area should use only water that has been distilled or boiled at a rolling boil for at least one minute for all personal uses including drinking, cooking, bathing, and tooth brushing. Individuals with private water wells should have their well water tested and disinfected, if necessary, prior to discontinuing distillation or boiling.

(2) Persons who purchase water from a public water supply may contact their water supply distributor to determine if the water is safe for personal use.

(3) The public should avoid contact with waste material, soil, or water in the area potentially affected by the spill.

(4) If the public comes into contact with waste material, soil, or water potentially affected by the spill, they should bathe and wash clothes thoroughly as soon as possible.

For further information, please contact SuEllen Staggs at (281) 367-9511.

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