

## Blackhawk Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility

**Location:** Friendswood, TX

**Process:** Activated sludge with atmospheric aeration

**Capacity:** 9.25 million gallons/day

While GCA's other facilities primarily treat industrial wastewater, Blackhawk is solely dedicated to regional treatment of municipal sewage, serving the City of Friendswood, Harris County Municipal Utility District (MUD) 55, Baybrook Municipal Utility District 1, and extreme southern portions of the City of Houston.

Blackhawk came on line in 1979 after the City of Friendswood invited GCA to create a regional facility to treat its and other entities' wastewater more efficiently and economically. Its capacity was more than tripled during the 1990s to accommodate customer growth and the facility is currently operating at roughly half capacity.



Wastewater is transported by pipeline to the facility, where it undergoes primary, secondary and advanced treatment, including filtering through sand and charcoal and disinfection by ultraviolet (UV) light, prior to discharge into Clear Creek.

Blackhawk personnel also operate a small wastewater treatment plant near the City of Baytown for the Cedar Bayou Park Utility District.

## BLACKHAWK REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY



### Gulf Coast Authority

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### Gulf Coast Authority

Protecting the waters of the State of Texas through environmentally sound and economically feasible regional waste management practices

## Gulf Coast Authority

The Gulf Coast Authority (GCA) has successfully fulfilled its mission of protecting the waters of the state of Texas since its creation by the Texas Legislature in 1969. In June 2017 Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 1489, officially changing GCA's name from the original Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority to Gulf Coast Authority. The change was made to better reflect the regional services GCA provides, including industrial and municipal wastewater treatment, solid waste and water systems, all of which promote economic development statewide.

GCA's operations include: several regional industrial wastewater treatment facilities serving over 80 industrial customers in the Houston - Gulf Coast area and in the City of Odessa; a regional municipal wastewater treatment facility serving the City of Friendswood, a small part of Houston, and two Municipal Utility Districts; a municipal wastewater



treatment plant serving the Cedar Bayou Park Utility District; a receiving station for trucked-in non-hazardous wastewater; a landfill for non-hazardous industrial solid waste; and a Central Laboratory accredited by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) that tests incoming wastewater, treated water before discharge and samples from outside customers.

In 2013, the Texas Legislature expanded GCA's purview to permit the treatment of water that falls outside of industrial wastewater settings. The bill granted the Authority the same powers with regard to the acquisition, construction, and operation of such water systems that it has with regard to disposal systems. Water systems covered by the legislation include pipelines, conduits, canals, pumping stations, force mains, plants storage and other facilities used for the treatment, collection or distribution of water treatment, collection, disposal or distribution.

## Why communities and industries contract with GCA

GCA offers significant advantages for municipal and industrial customers:

### Industrial

- Favorable economies of scale save money and improve efficiency;
- Industries avoid the cost of installing and operating extensive treatment systems;
- GCA can provide tax-exempt financing for pipelines and solid waste facilities;
- GCA fees are an operating expense, rather than a capital expense;
- GCA responsible for permits and dealing with regulators;
- GCA staff are experts in wastewater treatment and industrial solid waste management.

### Municipal

- Favorable economies of scale save money and improve efficiency;
- Infrastructure financed by GCA preserves municipalities' capacity to issue bonds for other purposes;
- GCA fees are an operating expense, rather than a capital expense;
- GCA responsible for permits and dealing with regulators.

Many of the same advantages of working with GCA to provide regional municipal and industrial wastewater treatment solutions also apply to water treated under the Authority's expanded scope granted by the Texas Legislature in 2013.



### Core values

GCA's core values guide every aspect of operations:

- **Stewardship** of the environment and of the health and safety of employees, customers and neighbors;
- **Communication**—open, honest, frequent—with all stakeholders;
- **Reliability**—ensuring that our operations are safe, compliant and cost effective;
- **Integrity** of our staff who operate in a simple, clear, transparent and honest manner;
- **Planning** to ensure continuity of service, innovation, sustainability and financial responsibility; and
- **Teamwork** to foster trust, commitment, enthusiasm and innovation.

What makes GCA function so well are the dedicated employees, managers and board members who do their very best, every day, to protect the waters of the State of Texas and work with our customers and government officials to help foster economic development that is the envy of the nation.