



# NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY  
933 EAST COURT STREET □ SEGUIN, TEXAS 78155 □ FAX [830] 379-9718

## BACKGROUNDER WIMBERLEY WATER AND WASTEWATER STUDY HISTORY

For more information, contact Judy Gardner, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority  
Tel: 830/379-5822; or email [jgardner@gbra.org](mailto:jgardner@gbra.org)

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SEGUIN –  
History:

In 1994, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and The Texas Water Development Board conducted a regional wastewater study for the area of Hays County, including Wimberley.

The study examined stream standards, population growth, existing methods of wastewater treatment, and the potential for a regional facility to serve present and future wastewater treatment needs, to protect the water resources of Cypress Creek, the Blanco River and other local tributaries.

Participants in the study included Hays County, the Wimberley ISD, the City of Woodcreek, the Wimberley Water Supply Corporation and the Wimberley Citizens Water Resources Group.

Areas of emphasis were the Wimberley downtown square, and the Ranch Road 12 commercial area. While there was substantial input and support from the community in the preparation of the study, implementation was delayed due to lack of a local governmental entity with which to work.

The study stated, “it requires a governmental entity to assume a continuing, regulatory responsibility to assure that construction and operation rules are enforced.”

Developments since Incorporation:

GBRA, in an effort to protect the water quality in Cypress Creek, tried to get a central sewer system in Wimberley on two previous occasions and failed because of lack of consensus and accountable officials to work with. Cypress Creek is on the state’s 303d list of impaired water bodies, and is currently undergoing TMDL (total maximum daily load) tests to determine why the creek has depleted oxygen levels. This finding, coupled with the GBRA’s discovery of elevated *E. coli* and fecal coliform bacteria in the creek waters, points to failing septic tank systems as a possible source.

Following the Village of Wimberley’s incorporation two years ago, GBRA and city officials have worked closely to study and develop options to address Wimberley’s current water and wastewater treatment needs. This joint effort includes the filing of a Certificate of Convenience of Necessity (CCN) for Wastewater Service in the name of Wimberley, and the completion of an interlocal Agreement and an Operating Agreement between the Village and GBRA. Through these efforts, the Village will maintain local control of a phased wastewater system to be designed, constructed and operated by GBRA, with

the City having the right to ultimately own the system. The Master Plan for the system has been authorized, and public meetings will be held during the planning process. Area of priority include the downtown square and other areas of concentration near streams.

Almost half of Wimberley's regular voters cite the environment of Wimberley as a major concern to them. That concern is second only to preserving the small town feel of Wimberley.

The city and GBRA are on track for completing a wastewater treatment system that would serve the most densely-populated sections of Wimberley within the next two years.

GBRA has forged an agreement with City officials that provides two distinct advantages to Wimberley. First, according to the operating agreement between GBRA and Wimberley, GBRA 'will develop, design, finance, permit and construct any and all capital improvements necessary to own, operate and maintain sewer facilities for Wimberley and to provide retail sewer service to customers within the service area of Wimberley's CCN.'

Second, under the agreement, Wimberley has the exclusive right to purchase the portion of the wastewater project located within the Wimberley service area.

The project is contingent on a May 4 initiative that will decide the future of Wimberley's incorporation. If the initiative passes, and the city government is dissolved, all of the currently-established agreements will be voided and require re-negotiation. This means the project could be severely delayed, if not jeopardized.

In order to construct systems like the one proposed for Wimberley, a city or county must secure a number of approvals and permits, including a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN). GBRA's sponsorship of Wimberley's CCN application, combined with the city's priority on establishing a wastewater treatment system, have allowed Wimberley to be on a relatively fast track for replacing its 9-square-mile network of septic tanks.

Starting from square one would wipe out two years of work. It would take much longer than two years to reach this point again.

While the process could happen without the City of Wimberley behind it, practically and politically, it would be extremely difficult.