



# NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY  
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## GBRA, Sustainable Water Resources LLC announce major public/private water supply project for Central Texas growth corridor

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SEGUIN- The Board of Directors of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) today signed a Letter of Interest with Sustainable Water Resources LLC (SWR) to develop a regional water supply partnership that will provide economical and feasible water supplies for the rapidly growing populations along the IH-35 and SH-130 corridors in Central Texas. SWR will build and finance infrastructure to bring groundwater to the region, and aggregate groundwater from portions of the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer group north of IH-10 and east of IH-35, including the Simsboro Aquifer, and other potential supply sources.

“This public/private partnership is the first step in a regional solution that will bring new, diverse and sustainable water resources to meet the needs of this rapidly-growing area,” said GBRA general manager Bill West. “This will be a true regional project that other communities can join to obtain affordable water supplies, while also protecting the environment.”

The Simsboro Aquifer is relatively underutilized compared to the heavily pumped Trinity and Edwards Aquifer formations. One benefit of reducing future demands on the Trinity and Edwards Aquifers, for example, will be the protection of springflows at the Comal and San Marcos springs that supply much of the baseflow of the Guadalupe River.

“GBRA’s mission is to be the protector of the Guadalupe River -- and the lifeblood of the river is springflow from the Edwards Aquifer,” said West. “Communities, industries and agriculture from Kerrville to Victoria depend on the Guadalupe River for their water and economic well-being. GBRA will continue to seek long-term regional solutions that will protect their current and future water supplies.”

The use of groundwater also creates opportunities for reuse and can provide a new, additional source of instream flows to the river systems and their bays and estuaries.

SWR is a consortium of firms with national and international expertise, paired with local firms and ownership. The consortium includes Winstead Consulting Group LLC – a subsidiary of one of the largest full-service law firms in Texas; Bury+Partners – one of the largest Texas-owned, privately-held engineering firms; WaterTexas – a leader in the development of privately-funded wholesale water

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supply projects; Schlumberger Water Services – an expert in sub-surface modeling; JPMorgan – a leading global financial firm; and PB Consult (a unit of Parsons Brinckerhoff) and a leader in developing public/private partnerships.

Although the size and location of the project has yet to be determined, GBRA and SWR are committed to working closely with local groundwater districts, communities, private landowners, and other interests. The project will be structured to include acquisition of all necessary permits, and the drilling of test and production wells to help ensure the responsible development of portions of the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer group north of IH-10 and east of IH-35, including the prolific Simsboro Aquifer, and other resources. Communities where the groundwater will be sourced, as well as those involved in its delivery and end use, will be involved in as many aspects as possible, including an extensive public participation process.

“The groundwater policy adopted by the GBRA Board of Directors in May 2002 is the foundation for all our future programs and projects that involve the use of groundwater,” said GBRA's West. “It describes how we will work with local districts, structure projects based on the best available science, and develop a reasonable mitigation program, among other guidelines.” The complete policy is available at [www.gbra.org](http://www.gbra.org), key search ‘groundwater.’

“The IH-35 and SH-130 corridors have some of the highest growth rate projections in Texas,” said Pete Winstead, a managing partner of Sustainable Water Resources. “In this fast-growing region, communities are becoming increasingly interdependent as their boundaries merge into each other. It is critical that water resources be shared in a manner that is respectful of these interconnected communities and regions. Sustainable Water Resources was formed to provide a means for pairing up water supplies and users in a cooperative, fair and regional manner.”

The current regional planning process mandated by Senate Bill 1 strongly encourages the conjunctive - or combined -- use of surface and groundwater to balance the demand between these resources. Surface water availability is also becoming more limited – especially in the upper Guadalupe River basin and adjacent basins along the Central Texas growth corridor.

“The Simsboro is a prolific, sustainable, and replenishable groundwater resource,” noted West. “As this project develops, there is the further potential to expand these resources to meet future needs. GBRA will be the public partner and leading wholesale customer in the project. It will determine the need for, and conjunctive use of, groundwater in portions of its ten-county statutory district, and may also potentially coordinate the availability of water for other users along the IH-35 and SH-130 corridors. SWR will aggregate the water resources and, in cooperation with GBRA, finance and build the needed infrastructure within the region.”

The Letter of Interest provides a period of time during which GBRA and SWR will perform their respective due diligence and also work toward the development of a ‘Definitive Agreement’ that will describe in detail the terms, provisions and conditions for the overall project, including how the water produced will be purchased and used.