



Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
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GBRA Officials Urge Conservation Measures

For More Information

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SEGUIN--- Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) officials are urging citizens in its 10-county statutory district, which includes Caldwell, Calhoun, Comal, DeWitt, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hays, Kendall, Refugio and Victoria counties, to conserve water and comply with drought management measures implemented by local municipalities.

The water conservation plea comes amidst National Weather Service reports indicating that the period of September 2007 through May 2008 for San Antonio, TX, is the driest on record at 6.57 inches - 2 inches lower than the previous record of 8.89 inches noted in May 1956.

Other factors contributing to implementing conservation steps, include the decreasing flows at Comal and San Marcos springs. On June 15, Comal spring flow measured 290 cubic feet per second (cfs) and the San Marcos spring flow was 131 cfs. When flows drop below 150 cfs at Comal and 100 cfs at San Marcos, endangered species, including the Fountain Darter and the San Marcos Gambusia are technically in "jeopardy." According to the USGS website, Barton Springs in Austin was at 31 cfs Monday, and the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District indicated it anticipated entry into "alarm stage drought" no later than the first week of July.

"While protecting endangered species is important, protecting water resources during times of drought is critical to meeting the overall needs of the region," said Bill West, GBRA general manager. "People need to understand that spring flows are essential to the water supply in the Guadalupe and San Marcos Rivers. This water is used by cities, industries and agricultural producers all the way to the Texas Coast, and is the basis for many water rights issued by the State of Texas. The springs also are critical to instream flows for the Guadalupe River and fresh water inflows to San Antonio Bay."

The city of San Marcos will enter for the first time in two years, Stage 1 of its Drought Response Plan. Stage 1 limits outdoor watering with sprinklers to once a week on designated days, along with other water restrictions. Water Utility Director Tom Taggart ordered Stage 1 outdoor watering restrictions to take effect on Monday, following the publication of official notice in the San Marcos Daily Record on Sunday. The restrictions are necessary to comply with Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) emergency rules and state law.

West said that short-term forecasts were not predicting very much relief from the current drought conditions in the central and south central Texas regions.

High temperatures and lack of rainfall are contributing to the declining water levels throughout the Guadalupe River Basin and Edwards Aquifer. The aquifer was 660.5 mean sea level (msl) when read June 15. A level of 650 msl triggers Stage 1 of the EAA Demand Management/Critical Period drought restrictions for aquifer users in Bexar, Medina, and parts of Atascosa, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays and Caldwell counties.

"Just as we share in abundance, we must share in conservation. Effectively managing the watershed and the aquifer, and protecting those resources are so important," West explained. "We must all work together to ensure that everyone who depends upon these water sources will have enough water to meet their basic needs."

GBRA officials urge all individuals to conserve water throughout the summer months and suggest the following indoor and outdoor conservation tips:

- Check local papers, radio or TV stations for drought restrictions.
- If vehicles must be washed, do so in a grassy area instead of a driveway. This waters the lawn and prevents used water from going into streets. Turn off the hose while foaming the vehicle.
- Report any residence or business suspected of water misuse to utility officials at local municipalities.
- Reuse dish water when finished washing dishes by hand. It can be used to water the lawn or outdoor plants.
- Install low-flow shower heads and sink aerators. These items can be purchased inexpensively at local hardware stores.
- Check toilets for silent leaks by dropping a "dye tablet" (or food coloring) in the tank. If blue water appears in the bowl after flushing, a silent leak may be present. (Contact GBRA at comments@gbra.org or 1-800-413-4130 for dye tablets.)
- Turn off water faucets while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Check the heads on automatic sprinkler systems every other week to make sure the heads have not shifted direction, spraying water on the sidewalks or driveway instead of the lawn.