



**Barton Springs  
Edwards Aquifer**  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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## **Aquifer District Eases, Doesn't Remove Drought Restrictions**

(Austin) The Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District eased drought restrictions from Stage III Critical Drought to Stage II Alarm at its Board meeting this evening, effective immediately. With above average rainfall this winter, soils reached saturation and runoff created enough creek flow to contribute some recharge to the aquifer. Both of the District's drought triggers have now crossed back over their respective Stage II Alarm Drought thresholds. The Lovelady Monitor Well depth-to-water is above 190.7 feet and continues to rise; the Barton Springs 10-day average discharge is well above its 20 cubic feet per second threshold.

While water levels in the aquifer are on the rise, without continued above average rainfall, the District could find itself back in Stage III Critical Drought this summer. "In 2010, Hurricane Alex and Tropical Storm Hermine brought record rainfall to Central Texas. This time we've seen smaller, more frequent rain events that are finally causing slow rises in our monitoring wells," commented Brian Smith, Principal Hydrogeologist with the District.

Under Stage II restrictions, permittees are now required to restrict monthly pumping by at least 20% for historical permits and from 20 to 50% for conditional permits, depending on permit class. Water utilities supplied by groundwater in the District will restrict outdoor water use to comply with watering schedules that each of them established, and that the District approved. Though Stage II Alarm Drought restrictions generally allow for some outdoor water use, groundwater users should continue to conserve and maintain a monthly water use of less than 4,000 gallons per person (less than 16,000 gallons for a family of 4).

"Our region's hydrologic drought is not over. Water levels in the aquifers are still low," noted Kirk Holland, the District's General Manager, "but we finally received enough rain in the right places to start having some effective replenishment of the aquifer. However, all our groundwater users need to continue to conserve water and use it wisely. High water use and dry conditions could send us back into Stage III Critical Drought this summer."

*BSEACD is a groundwater conservation district charged by the Texas Legislature to preserve, conserve, and protect the aquifers and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction, which includes parts of four Central Texas counties. It is governed by a Board of five elected directors and staffed with hydrogeologists, groundwater regulatory compliance specialists, environmental educators, geospatial systems specialists, and administrative support personnel.*

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