



**Barton Springs
Edwards Aquifer**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

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Water users express concerns about groundwater supplies during drought

District solicits public input on proposed rule changes

June 11, 2009 – Groundwater users in the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District expressed concerns about groundwater supplies holding up if the current Critical Stage drought worsens. The District held two town hall meetings on June 2 and June 8 in Sunset Valley and Buda to review and get feedback on proposed rule changes that would better prepare the District to regulate and conserve groundwater resources during extreme drought.

Approximately 50 people attended the informational meetings, which were held to explain prospective changes to District rules dealing with drought and to get informal feedback from the public, groundwater users, well owners, and groundwater permit holders. An additional public comment period on the rule proposals will be held in July and August, once the District Board of Directors formally proposes changes in its rules.

“The public concerns about adequate groundwater supplies reinforce our belief that the District should prepare now for the worst-case scenario in drought,” said Kirk Holland, General Manager of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District. “We will continue to work with our constituents to develop tools to manage resources in a drought that’s expected to worsen.”

The District also plans to meet with permittees and take input from its Policy Advisory Committee in the coming month, Holland said.

The District is currently in one of the worst droughts in its history – just as the hottest, driest time of year starts. Aquifer levels and spring flows are expected to drop further during the summer, when rainfall is historically low and water usage high.

The District is proposing rule changes in two main areas:

- Drought stages for the Edwards Aquifer – introduction of one new stage, the Exceptional Stage, which would be more severe than Critical Stage (currently the most severe drought stage). Specific management measures also are proposed for an Emergency Response Period if and when the Edwards Aquifer is imperiled; and
- Management zones – introduction of zones to allow more equitable regulation and precise management of the different aquifers in the District.

The District has had a moratorium on new Edwards groundwater permits since April 9, 2009.

Links to the presentations made at the town hall meetings are available on the District website's homepage, at www.bseacd.org. Summaries of the prospective changes and a markup of the language changes currently under consideration are available at www.bseacd.org/rules.

The Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District is a local agency of the State of Texas that conserves, protects and enhances the groundwater resources in its jurisdiction. It covers parts of South Travis County, North Hays County, western Caldwell County and a small part of western Bastrop County.

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