



**Barton Springs  
Edwards Aquifer**  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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For more information, contact: Robin Gary, Senior Public Information and Education Coordinator, (512) 282-8441 or rhgary@bseacd.org

## **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 Drought at its Board meeting on October 24th, effective immediately. Despite a particularly dry summer, the succession of small rains in September and October set the scene for significant recharge associated with the larger October 12-13 storm. Both of the District's drought triggers have now crossed back over their respective Stage II Alarm Drought thresholds. The Lovelady Monitor Well water level elevation is 465.3 feet above sea level; the Barton Springs is flowing about 68 cubic feet per second.

While water levels in the aquifer are on the rise, the rate of rise appears to be slowing and without continued rainfall the District could find itself back in Stage III Critical Drought in a matter of months. "In 2000, a short wet spell reversed water level declines temporarily. Without more rain we could see a similar situation this time around," commented Brian Smith, Principal Hydrogeologist with the District.

Under Stage II restrictions, permittees must limit monthly pumping by at least 20% for historical-use permits and from 20 to 100% for conditional-use permits, depending on permit class. End-user customers served by water utilities on groundwater wells are required to comply with their utility's water use restrictions for this drought stage. Although 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).

"The drought is not over. Recent rains have provided a respite from Stage III Critical Drought conditions, but water levels in the aquifers are still low," noted John Dupnik, the District's General Manager, "We're looking at this with cautious optimism. If the rains continue we'll see water levels continue to rise. If they don't, we'll be ready to tighten pumping restrictions again. All our groundwater users need to continue to conserve water and use it wisely. There's nothing like drought to remind us how precious water is."

*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 three 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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