



**Barton Springs
Edwards Aquifer**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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For more information, contact: Alan Andrews at aandrews@bseacd.org

Aquifer District Declares Stage II Alarm Drought

The District's Board of Directors declared Stage II Alarm Drought at a meeting on April 24th. This drought declaration is effective immediately and affects some 60,000 groundwater users in parts of Hays, Travis and Caldwell counties.

Lovelady monitor well, one of the District's two drought-trigger sites, has fallen below its Stage II Alarm Drought water level of 478.4 feet above mean sea level. 10-day average discharge at Barton Springs, the District's other drought trigger site, still remains above its Drought threshold of 38 cubic feet per second, but is expected to drop below sometime in May. Only one of the two drought stage triggers needs to be reached for a drought declaration to be made.

Declaration of Stage II Alarm Drought requires all of the District's permittees to implement mandatory measures specified in their User Drought Contingency Plans to meet monthly pumpage reduction requirements. All permittees must achieve at least a 20% reduction in monthly pumpage. Permittees with certain conditional permits may have to reduce use even further. 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. Generally, restricting outdoor water use, including limiting landscape irrigation, pool filling & refilling, and non-essential water use such as water fountains, is sufficient to reach monthly pumpage targets for Stage II Alarm Drought. Permittees are expected to be compliant with drought curtailments upon reporting their May meter-readings.

Since the start of 2014, the District rain gauge has collected less than 40% of historic average rainfall. These predominantly dry conditions have not generated significant recharge to the aquifer and as a result, groundwater levels have been progressively dropping. Demand reduction measures now will help slow water level declines and protect springflow and water availability for groundwater users going into what NOAA's Climate Prediction Center expects to be a drier than average remainder of spring.

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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